

OCDSB YAC PRESENTS

STIGMA AND THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

MENTAL HEALTH
Tip Sheets

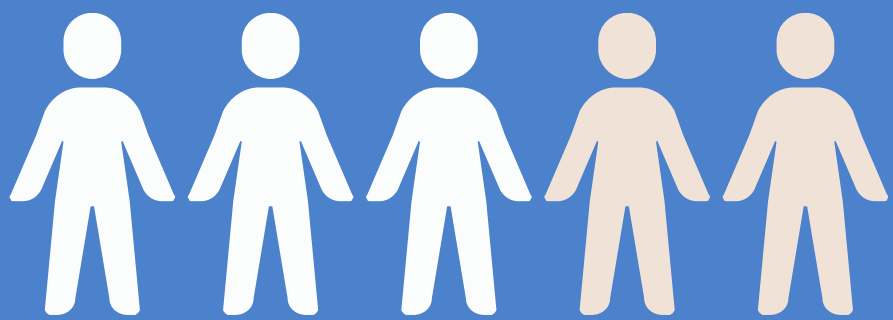
1 What is STIGMA?

Stigma, simply put, is when someone judges you in a negative way because of a particular characteristic or attribute

2 What role does LANGUAGE play?

Language can help with stigma but it also can hurt. We all need to pay attention to the language we use. For example, using negative words to describe mental health challenges can increase stereotypes and stop people from asking for help, while positive language can make it easier to talk openly and get support.

3 63% of students don't access MH support due to the stigma surrounding it



That's 3 in 5 students

4 Negative impacts of Stigma

- Low self esteem
- Feelings of isolation and shame
- Fear of judgement or rejection
- Impaired focus
- Anxiety, Depression, and other mental illnesses

It can be a barrier to getting help



STIGMA AND THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

1

How to REDUCE stigma?

1. Educate yourself! Learn about mental illnesses and factors that affect them
2. Challenge stereotypes
3. Think about your own beliefs
4. Know the facts and be kind and accepting towards others

Language MATTERS! RECOGNIZE HURT



For example, "a person who uses substances" and "an addict" imply different emotions!

Avoid negative words like **Crazy** or **Psycho** and instead use **Respectful and Neutral** words like **People living with a mental health challenge**

2

3

Talking About it

Listen and **Ask**
Break the
Silence

We all can be a part of the solution



Circle of Support

Remember that **everyone** has been touched by mental health challenges in some way whether directly or through a friend or family member

You don't need to hold this alone

Reach out for support!

YSB Crisis Line: 613-260-2360

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