

Stigma Training Video #1: WHAT IS STIGMA?

DEFINING STIGMA

Stigma can be defined as, *“the complex of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and structures that interact at different levels of society and manifest in prejudicial attitudes about and discriminatory practices against people with mental health and substance use disorders.”*¹

The Webster’s New World Dictionary defines stigma as *“a mark of disgrace or dishonor associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.”*²

WHAT IS STIGMA?

- Stigma is a SOCIAL PROCESS that groups of people (often people in power) create toward others.³
- Stigma is a COLLECTION of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and structures at different levels of society, which generates negative attitudes about people with a condition.¹
- Stigma can generate NEGATIVE ATTITUDES about people, which can lead to DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES.^{1,4}

STIGMA and PREJUDICE⁵

STIGMA traditionally focuses on people with certain conditions like deformities or illnesses, the social processes related to social norms and deviation from those norms.

PREJUDICE and **DISCRIMINATION** focus on the implications of overarching categories of the human conditions, like gender, age, race, and class.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How have you come to define or understand stigma over your life?
- Did the definition of stigma offered in the video match how you have come to view stigma over your life? What are some of the similarities or differences?

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016, p. 33.

² Stigma. (2016). In Merriam-Webster’s dictionary (16th ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

³ Hing, N., Russell, A. M. T., & Gainsbury, S. M. (2016). Unpacking the public stigma of problem gambling: The process of stigma creation and predictors of social distancing. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 5(3), 448–456. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.5.2016.057>

⁴ Livingston, J. D., & Boyd, J. E. (2010). Correlates and consequences of internalized stigma for people living with mental illness: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), 71(12), 2150–2161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.09.030>

⁵ Stuber, J., Meyer, I., & Link, B. (2008). Stigma, prejudice, discrimination and health. *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), 67(3), 351–357.