

National Mental Health No Stigma Week

Representatives Scott Peters (D-CA) and Gary Miller (R-CA) are sponsoring a bill which would designate the first full week in May as National Health No Stigma Week.

What does mental health stigma look like?

- Stigma can be reinforced by anything from casually calling someone “crazy” to telling a friend that they should “suck it up” instead of seeking treatment.
- Stigma has broad and serious consequences: it can directly lead to suicide, violence, and discrimination against those living with mental illness.
- Stigma discourages people from seeking treatment for mental illness; estimates show that two-thirds of those with a diagnosable mental illness do not pursue treatment.

Who is affected by mental health stigma?

- Approximately 1 in 4 adults in the United States (more than 61 million people) suffer from some diagnosable mental illness.
- Mental illness also affects millions of American children: 13% of children aged 8-15 and 20% of teenagers suffer from mental health issues.
- More than 300,000 Americans attempt suicide every year; those who attempt suicide list fear of stigmatization as one of the leading factors preventing them from seeking help.
- Only 26% of Americans agree that people are generally caring and sympathetic toward individuals with mental illness, demonstrating the prevalence of stigma.

Where does the U.S. currently stand on the issue?

- While mental health awareness efforts have been successful, stigma remains rampant in the United States.
- Studies have shown that mass media and campaigns to combat mental health stigma have affected positive changes, including possible reductions in suicide rates around the globe.
- California has already taken a lead on this issue by creating “California Mental Health No Stigma Week.”

It’s time for us to recognize that mental health stigma is a serious issue facing the United States. Together, we can begin the conversation to end mental health stigma. **Please join us in acknowledging this issue and co-sponsor the National Mental Health No Stigma Week resolution.**