

LET'S CHANGE YOUR MIND: REDUCING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS AMONG DEPENDENCY PRACTITIONERS

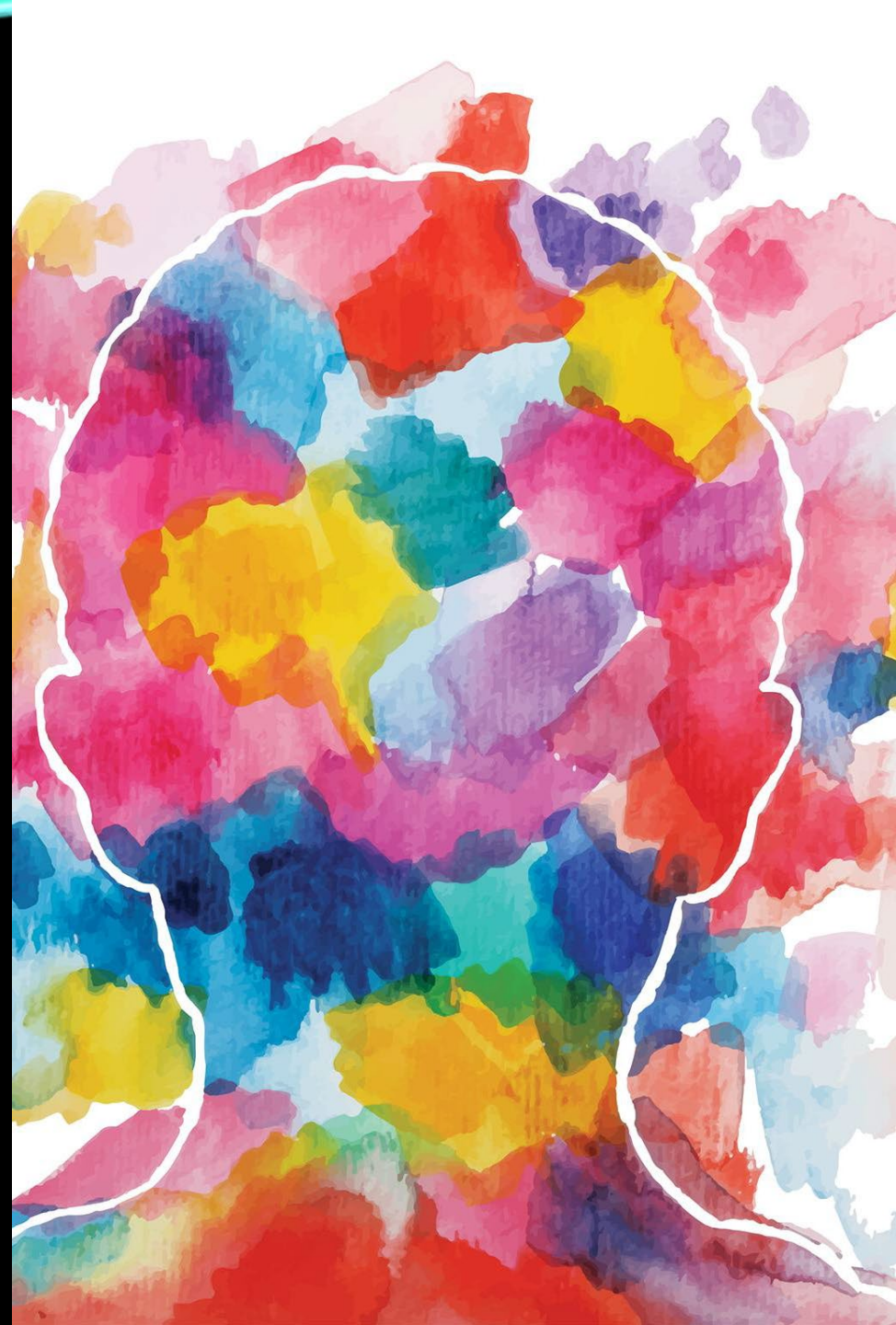
2023 OPD/OCLA/PRP Statewide Conference:
Families Stronger Together

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MENTAL HEALTH: THE FACTS



LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Nearly one in five Americans live with a mental illness.

A MENTAL ILLNESS IS:

(1) a medical condition; (2) common; (3) treatable.

A MENTAL ILLNESS IS NOT:

(1) imaginary; (2) something to “get over”; (3) a character flaw.

MENTAL ILLNESS CAN BE CAUSED BY:

(1) trauma; (2) brain physiology; (3) genetics; or (4) the environment.

WHAT ABOUT ATTORNEYS?

ATTORNEYS HAVE MUCH HIGHER RATES OF MENTAL ILLNESS/SYMPTOMS THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION.

In a 2016 study... Attorneys **self-disclosed** experiencing symptoms/living with mental illness:

1. Anxiety: 61.1%

2. Depression: 45.7%

3. Social anxiety: 16.1%

4. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: 12.5%

5. Panic disorder: 8.0%

6. Suicidal thoughts: 11.5% (0.7% reported at least 1 prior suicide attempt)

7. Self-injurious behaviors: 2.9%

8. Bipolar disorder: 2.4%

Source: Krill, Johnson, and Albert, "The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys," *The Journal of Addiction Medicine*, January/February 2016, Vol. 10, Issue 1, pg. 46-52

WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL WORKERS?

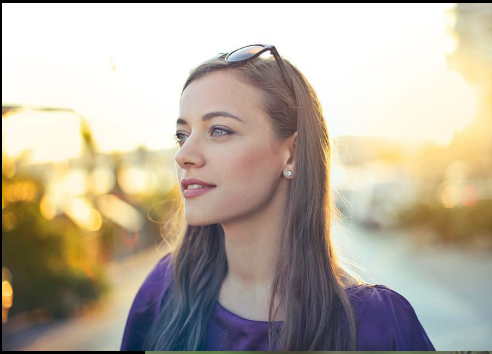
SOCIAL WORKERS ALSO HAVE HIGHER RATES OF MENTAL ILLNESS/SYMPTOMS THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION.

In a 2015 survey, Social workers **self-disclosed** experiencing symptoms/living with mental illness:

1. Depression: 29.2%
2. Anxiety: 28.7%
3. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): 7.7%
4. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: 4.4%
5. Eating disorder: 4.3%
6. Other mental health problems: 4.8%

Source: Straussner, Senreich, and Steen, "Wounded Healers: A Multistate Study of Licensed Social Workers' Behavioral Health Problems," *Social Work*, April 2018, Vol. 63, Issue 2, pg. 125-133

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE WITH MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS?



MENTAL HEALTH: THE STIGMA



WHAT WE SAY WHEN WE ADVOCATE FOR CLIENTS LIVING WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

- My client's **mental illness** is **not** a basis to take away my client's child/terminate my client's parental rights.
- My client's decision to take, or not to take, psychotropic medication **does not determine** whether my client is a fit parent.

WHAT WE SAY AND THINK ABOUT OUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH...

"I'm just tired."

"What if my boss thinks I'm making it up?"

"What if they think I'm not good enough to cope?"

"I'm feeling a bit under the weather."

"What if I get overlooked for projects and promotions?"

"I've just got a lot going on."

"What if they end up getting rid of me?"

WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS STIGMA?

- Stigma: a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society has about something.
- What does stigma look like?
 - ✓ Exclusion.
 - ✓ “Toughen up” or “snap out of it.”
 - ✓ Calling someone “crazy.”
 - ✓ Silence.



Sources: MakeItOk.org, What Is a Mental Illness?, available at <https://makeitok.org/what-is-a-mental-illness>; CrazyheadComics, available at <https://www.instagram.com/crazyheadcomics/?hl=en>

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF STIGMA?

- ✓ Shame.
- ✓ Isolation.
- ✓ Failure to get help or needed treatment.
 - ↳ Underfunding of mental health research and treatment development.
- ✓ Discrimination.
 - ↳ Housing.
 - ↳ Employment.
 - ↳ Medical Care.
- ✓ Bullying/Harassment.
- ✓ **SUICIDE.**

Sources: MakeItOk.org, What is a Mental Illness?, available at <https://makeitok.org/what-is-a-mental-illness/>; Seattle Times, "How Mental Health Stigma Prevents People From Accessing Mental Health Care and What Can be Done About It," October 22, 2021, available at <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mental-health/how-stigma-prevents-people-from-accessing-mental-health-care-and-what-can-be-done-about-it/>

THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND RACISM

- Racial trauma: the “physical and psychological symptoms that people of color often experience after being exposed to stressful experiences of racism” and/or “real or perceived experiences of racial discrimination.”
- Symptoms include feelings of fear and hypervigilance, insomnia, body aches or headaches, self-blame, confusion, shame, and guilt.

Sources: Carter, Robert T., “Racism and Psychological and Emotional Injury: Recognizing and Assessing Race-Based Traumatic Stress,” *Counseling Psychologist* 35(1), 2007, 13; Medical News Today, “What is the Link Between Racism and Mental Health?”, available at <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/racism-and-mental-health>

THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH, RACE... AND STIGMA

➤ **Stigma in BIPOC communities:** BIPOC populations are significantly less likely to access or receive mental health treatment than white populations.

- **White: 48.0%**
- **Black: 30.6%**
- **Latinx: 32.6%**
- **Asian/PI: 26.9%**



Sources: Medical News Today, "What is the Link Between Racism and Mental Health?", available at <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/racism-and-mental-health>; 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Asians/Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPI), SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health, at https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt23248/3_Asin_NHOPI_2020_01_14.pdf

MENTAL HEALTH: THE SOLUTIONS



mental
health
is
health

TALK ABOUT IT.

- Break the silence. Talk about mental health with friends, colleagues, and family.
- Language matters. Use appropriate language to talk about friends and colleagues living with a mental illness, and be sure to avoid language that portrays people living with a mental illness as weak or less-than. One resource: HealthPartners, “Mental Illnesses: Terms to Use. Terms to Avoid,” available at <https://www.healthpartners.com/blog/mental-illnesses-terms-to-use-terms-to-avoid/>.
- Normalize mental health illness and treatment. [#MentalHealthisHealth](#).

Photo Source: CAMH, “Mental Health is Health,” available at <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/mental-health-is-health>

STOP THE STIGMA.

As individuals:

- Recognize mental illness as a **disability**. Make it acceptable and safe to “come out” as living with mental health issues.
- Recognize your own **implicit biases** about mental illness.
- **Intervene** when you see others discriminating against someone living with mental health issues.

As employers:

- Hold campaigns to **raise awareness** about mental health stigma and its consequences.
- **Train managers** to identify when employees are in distress, and **accommodate** employees experiencing a mental health condition.

Sources: Women in Charge, “Stop the Stigma,” available at <http://womenincharge.org/blog/>; Seattle Times, “How Mental Health Stigma Prevents People From Accessing Mental Health Care and What Can be Done About It,” October 22, 2021, available at <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mental-health/how-stigma-prevents-people-from-accessing-mental-health-care-and-what-can-be-done-about-it/>



TAKE A BREAK.

- Demand breaks during the day.
- Take vacation/sick leave when needed.
- Consider rotating/doing different work for awhile.
- Develop a strong work support system.
- Set boundaries.

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**Is a sick day
really a sick day
if no one believes
you're sick?**

#MentalHealthisHealth

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Photo Source: CAMH, "Mental Health is Health," available at <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/mental-health-is-health>

FIND SUPPORT.

- Find resources available in the legal community.
 - ✓ ABA: Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs: videos, toolkits, and links to state-specific referral sites:
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/
 - ✓ National Association of Public Defense: BeWell Wednesdays: weekly virtual self-care meetings on various relevant topics: subscribe to receive notice/ zoom link at
BeWellWednesdays+subscribe@NAPD.groups.io

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Why do some illnesses get treatment while others get judgment?

#MentalHealthisHealth

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Photo Source: CAMH, "Mental Health is Health," available at <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/mental-health-is-health>

FIND COMMUNITY.

- -Anon Meetings (Al-Anon, Overeaters Anon, Celebrate Recovery). Many meetings are available 24 hours a day, both in-person and virtually. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_twelve-step_groups.
- Asian Mental Health Collective: provides therapist directory, community events, and resources with a mission to normalize and de-stigmatize mental health within the Asian community. <https://www.asianmhc.org/>
- Therapy for Latinx: database of Latinx therapists searchable by zip code. <https://www.therapyforlatinx.com/>
- Postpartum Support International: provides referrals, resources, and support around mental health issues experienced during pregnancy and postpartum. <https://www.postpartum.net/>

FIND TREATMENT.



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**Why do physicals
cover our bodies
but ignore our heads?**

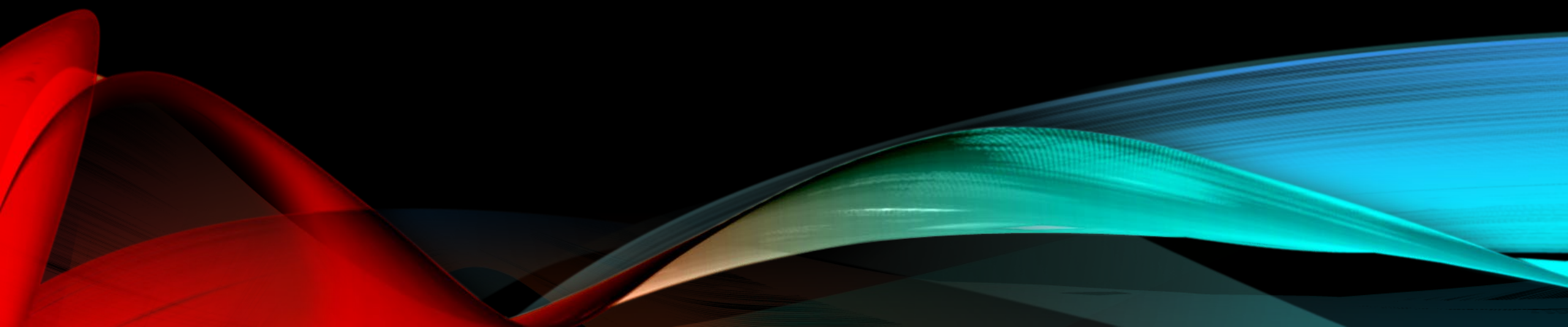
#MentalHealthisHealth



- Find resources available through your employer.
 - ✓ Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).
 - ✓ Reflective Practice Programs.
- Psychology Today: resource for locating therapists. Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): treatment locator by location. Available at: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>.
- Silence the Shame: non-profit providing mental health resources and referrals for vulnerable populations, including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, individuals in high-stress jobs, older adults, and rural communities. Available at: <https://silencetheshame.com/what-we-do/resources.html>

Photo Source: CAMH, "Mental Health is Health," available at <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/mental-health-is-health>

ANY IDEAS?
THOUGHTS FOR SHARING?
QUESTIONS?



Thank you!

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