



EMPLOYEE MESSAGE: HELP STAMP OUT STIGMA

Mental health and addiction continue to be misunderstood and rarely spoken of in America. Yet in a given year, mental health issues will personally impact one in four people in the U.S.—approximately 25 percent of us. Over 22 million people have a substance use disorder.

Mental illness and substance use disorders—just like high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes—are treatable health issues. Stigma linked to mental health and addiction often keeps people from seeking the help they need—yet for those who do, recovery is possible. Please take the pledge, wear a wristband and talk about it.

The Facts

- An estimated 26 percent of adults have a diagnosable mental illness in a given year; about 21 percent of children ages 9 to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive illness.
- One in two of us will have a mental health issue during our lifetime.
- Less than one-third of adults with a mental health issue will get help.
- Up to 90 percent of those who get help are able to significantly reduce symptoms and improve their quality of life.

Why We Need to Talk

Just like any other illness, there are things a person can do to make life better and manage the symptoms. Recovery is possible. We must educate and motivate ourselves and others with that fact. We need to say something. There's strength in talking about it.

Our Campaign

This important campaign was launched to change perceptions and perspective on mental illness and substance use disorders by talking about them. The name Stamp Out Stigma (S.O.S.) was selected to describe the campaign's chief mission: to defeat the obstructive nature of mental illness and addiction stigma.

Through wearing a visual symbol (wristbands) and sharing our own stories, the campaign will help remove the stigma of mental illness and addiction and those barriers to health-seeking behavior. Green, the campaign color, was chosen because it stands for health and wellbeing.

The three R's will help us successfully Stamp Out Stigma:

- **Recognize** when you or your loved ones need help. Recognize the signs. Recognize when someone isn't getting the help they need. Recognize when stigma is creating a barrier to care. Recognize the high prevalence of mental illness.
- **Reeducate** others to help them learn there is help and hope. Reeducate yourself and others on mental and emotional health. Reeducate yourself and others on how to find the path to recovery and that it is possible for all. Reeducate yourself on resources: What are your current benefits? Who can you talk to? What can you do?
- **Reduce** stigma. Reduce hesitation to seeking care. Reduce misunderstandings. Reduce bullying and insensitivity.

The S.O.S. Pledge

As a supporter to those who have a mental illness or substance use disorder, I understand the importance of recognizing the high prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorders. I also know that when recognition is coupled with reeducation and understanding, health-seeking action can be taken. These actions lead to recovery, which is possible for everyone.

The Three R's (recognize, reeducate and reduce) depend on each other to effectively Stamp Out Stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use disorders. This is what I, as an individual, charge myself to do—to fully Stamp Out Stigma and clear the path to health-seeking behavior. It begins with me.

Sources: The National Institute of Mental Health, Journal of the American Medical Association