

# Stigma

Stigma refers to the negative attitudes, beliefs, and/or stereotypes towards those with mental health conditions, like psychosis

## Stigma can impact us in a variety of ways:

- Lowering motivation to accept or seek treatment or help
- Impacts through negative labelling, stereotyping or discrimination
- Causing someone to isolate from others due to feeling judged, disapproved of or feeling shame
- Changes in self-confidence or self-esteem
- Denial of mental health struggles
- Self-blame or blame from others

## Why does stigma happen?

Most stigma is a result of misinformation or a lack of understanding about mental health and illness. Sometimes with mental illness, we blame the person for their symptoms - leading to less compassion.

## Examples of untrue stigma about psychosis:

- Psychosis is a “split personality”
- Psychosis makes people violent
- People with psychosis can't lead healthy or functional lives



## Internalized stigma

People can hold stigma against others or be the target of stigma. People can also hold stigma against themselves, called internalized stigma. Internalized stigma can cause you to blame yourself for your struggles or feel badly about who you are as a person.

## Think

- Have I experienced stigma?
- From myself? How?
- From family? How?
- From friends? How?
- From society (people at work or school)? How?
- When I experience stigma how do I react? How does it make me feel? What thoughts do I notice?



# BREAK THE STIGMA

You can combat stigma coming from yourself and others!

Here are some ways:

- 1) Gradually learn to talk openly about mental health
- 2) Educate others and provide information or recommend educational resources to others (for example [www.earlypsychosis.ca](http://www.earlypsychosis.ca), [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org))
- 3) Recognize similarities between physical illness and mental illness
- 4) Show compassion to others with mental health struggles Including **yourself**

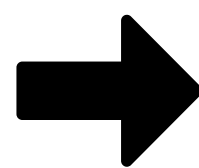


## Recognize that stigmatized attitudes are inaccurate

### Stigmatized Attitude

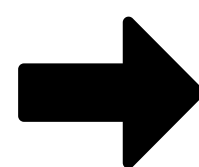
### Challenge it!

People with psychosis can't work



Psychosis doesn't define me or who I am or what I can do

There is something really wrong with me. I hear voices that no one else does



Many people hear voices or have hallucinations. Up to 15% of people who are not diagnosed with a mental health condition experience hallucinations from time to time

By catching, challenging, and changing stigmatized attitudes in ourselves and others we can help normalize mental health difficulties and reduce the burden of shame and blame on people dealing with psychosis.



epi

Early Psychosis Intervention