

Mental Health Stigma in Boys And Men



Overview

Mental Health Stigma is defined as the negative attitudes and disapproval of an individual or group of individuals experiencing mental illness. This may lead to discrimination, avoidance, and/or rejection of people who have mental illness.

3 Systems of Stigma

- **Public:** The negative or discriminatory attitudes that others have about mental illness and people who have mental illness
- **Institutional:** Systematic policies that (un)intentionally reinforce stigma or discriminate against people with mental illness
- **Self:** The internalized thoughts and feelings (e.g. shame, guilt) that people experience about their own mental health condition

Lack of knowledge and understanding

Traditional standards of masculinity

Fear

Portrayals of mental illness in the media

Historical, social, and cultural influences

Misinformation and stereotypes

Causes of Stigma

Examples of Stigma

Boys don't cry.

Don't be a ****.

Just tough it out.

Don't be so sensitive.

Man up.

Traditional standards of masculinity may encourage boys and men to suppress emotional expression. Adults may reinforce these societal expectations by the way we speak to boys. As a result, boys and men may not develop self-awareness or insight into their emotions, or the ability to recognize when they may need help.

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Men are 4 times more likely to die by suicide

Men are twice as likely to die from alcohol-related issues

Men are 2-3 times more likely to misuse drugs

Negative Impacts of Stigma

Social rejection, avoidance, isolation	Decrease in psychological well-being
Bullying/harassment	Delays in treatment
Increase in mental health symptoms	Increased feelings of shame or self-doubt
Hesitancy to seek out treatment or support	

Ways to Reduce Stigma

- Talk openly about mental health and emotions.
- Model use of healthy coping skills and emotional expression.
- Normalize and validate all emotions.
- Educate yourself about common mental health conditions.
- Avoid making jokes or comments that minimize mental health struggles.
- Treat mental health with the same importance as physical health.
- Encourage professional mental health treatment when needed.



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