



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

# STIGMA: THE FACTS

What is stigma?

- Stigma (or prejudice) describes a negative and unfavourable attitude.
- Stigma causes those living with a mental illness to be labelled, stereotyped, and feared.

What is discrimination?

- Discrimination is the action that results from stigma.
- It is how you treat those living with mental health issues because of how you think about them.

Why does it matter?

- Many people living with mental illness say the stigma is worse than the illness itself.
- Stigma is seen as one of the key barriers preventing people from seeking help.

*Imagine if you broke your leg, and your friends and family decided you were only looking for attention when it affected your ability to walk? Imagine if everyone around you treated you as if you had a serious character flaw because of that leg? How likely would you be to admit you had a problem? How likely would you be to seek treatment?*

- Seven million Canadians will need help for mental health concerns this year alone.
- Many will not get it because of the stigma attached to the illness.
- Every single Canadian is affected by mental health issues – either directly with firsthand experience, or indirectly in someone they know.
- Every day, 500,000 Canadians do not go to work due to psychiatric reasons.
- Mental illness costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$33 to \$50 billion per year in lost productivity.

***There is hope. Recovery is possible.***

*There are effective treatments.*

*Mental illness is an illness like any other.*

*It's important to seek help.*

*But we all have a role to play.*