English Department: Research for Change -
Wicked Problems in Our World

English Department

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Mental Health Stigma: A Wicked Problem (Slides)

Katelyn Yoh
kyoh539@live.kutztown.edu

Mental Health Stigma

Katelyn Yoh

How common is mental health illnesses/disorders?

Did you know that more than 50% of American's will be diagnosed with a mental health illness or disorder? Or that 1 in 5 American's experience mental health problems in general. Given this data, someone you know personally struggles with mental health.

How are people with illnesses/disorders typically viewed?

Patrick Corrigan, a member of the Columbia Union Press, lists examples: people who have behavioral disorders are dangerous, those with depression are just 'in their head', people who talk to themselves are weird, etc.

Why is it important to know about mental health stigma?

Someone you know personally can be struggling, whether you know about it or not. It is important for you to know what stigma is and why the usage of it needs to stop.

What will I learn from this powerpoint?

The question of:

- how has mental health stigma affected people in the past

- how is it affecting people today

- what are the consequences of stigma?

Mental Health Stigma: Wicked Problem

Mental health stigma IS a wicked problem, which is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of needs that are too hard to acknowledge.

Mental health stigma has been a wicked problem for a very long time.

PROBLEM — SOLUTION — MORE PROBLEM — MORE SOLUTION — CONTINUE

Has mental health stigma improved throughout history?

It has gradually improved as Unite for Sight states from the beginning of the 5th-18th century and has gradually improved since the 1840s.

Although it has improved, there are still many problems that exist currently.

How does stigma affect those who have a mental illness or disorder?

Causes them to feel:

- Unworthy of themselves
- Not reach out / seek help
- And negatively affects them: mentally, physically, psychologically

Feeling unworthy:

- Feel as though they don't fit in with society and are bad for those around them
- Told they are "different" and are even called "dangerous"
- This makes everyone feel as if the person suffering is the problem rather than their illness

Not reaching out or seeking help:

From research:
- By feeling that way they choose to stay quiet because of feeling like a burden
- Don't feel comfortable opening up to others because there is a fear of being different
- Told that treatment doesn't help and that is makes the person be viewed as weak

Negatively affects: mental, physical, and psychological health…

Mental health: not getting help creates more damage to both their disorder and could even cause another illness

Physical health: Ingyu Moon states that avoiding help can cause heart problems, breathing problems, and more.

Negatively affects: mental, physical, and psychological health (Continued)...

Psychological health: those who suffer with mental health concerns also suffer from psychological distress. "Psychological distress is the unique discomforting, emotional state experienced by an individual in response to a specific stressor or demand that results in harm, either temporary or permanent, to the person"(Ridner par. 17).

Consequences

Negatively affects:

- those of young age as well as men
- all health aspects
- causes stigma to internalize which creates self-stigma.

Those of young age / men:

- Caroline Heary states that stigma negatively affects children's mindsets
- Those of young age stereotype their peers as troubled, bad, weird, and etc. they are not exposed or taught about mental illnesses/disorders.
- Boys and men are supposed to be viewed as strong because of masculinity and is viewed as odd to express emotions
- They choose not to open up because they are taught to keep it bottled up

All health aspects:

Like mentioned before, it negatively affects all health aspects, which include: mental, physical, and psychological health.

Self Stigma:

Timothy Martin states different types of self stigma which include:

Stereotype endorsement - internalizing typical stereotypes and believing them
Perceived discrimination - negative and discriminates those surffering
Social withdrawal - not interacting with family, friends, peers
Alienation - isolating from people and environments (work, school)
Stigma resistance - refusing to accept stigma

How can **we** help eliminate mental health stigma?

- Educate ourselves as well as incorporate it into the education systems
- Stop using noun phrasing
- "Normalize" mental health illness as well as "normalize" seeking help

Eliminating stigma ~ Education:

Misunderstanding & lack of education is common and often how stigma is created. By becoming educated it will help mental health problems become more: understood, talked about, accepted, and talked about. For adults, it would be integrated into workplaces possibly through information meetings where different signs of disorders are explained and ways to help.

Eliminating stigma ~ Noun Phrasing:

Noun phrasing is defining and/or calling a person by their disorder or illness. Cutler explains how noun phrasing is proven to cause low self-esteem and self-stigma because it is made to seem as if a person's disorder or illness defines them.

Eliminating stigma ~ "Normalizing":

By "normalizing" mental health and seeking help it can lead it to become more commonly talked about, more understood, and more accepted. This may help encourage those to get help from a professional which is important because they can help improve and possibly cure the illness or disorder. By normalize, I mean make it common for you or others to openly talk about it.

Why will these solutions help?

- Those struggling will feel better understood
- Begin to open up more
- Feel comfortable to seek help
- They allow a better and healthier lifestyle and mindset

Conclusion

Mental health stigma causes harm to those who suffer with mental disorders and illnesses. In order to help we should educate ourselves and practice the solutions listed above. It will help those struggling become not only happier but also healthier. It will also benefit society because we will all look at everyone the same rather than different and allow everyone to feel equal.

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