



# HELPING HANDS



## *Destigmatizing Mental Health*

(excerpts from [positivepsychology.com](http://positivepsychology.com))

### How does stigma affect mental health?

Stigma affects those struggling with mental health by:

1. Limiting participation in society
2. Creating obstacles to seeking treatment
3. Inhibiting the ability to be authentic

### What causes stigma?

Stigma is most often caused by:

1. Fear
2. Lack of knowledge and understanding
3. Lack of empathy
4. Negative media portrayals
5. Labeling
6. Pejorative terms



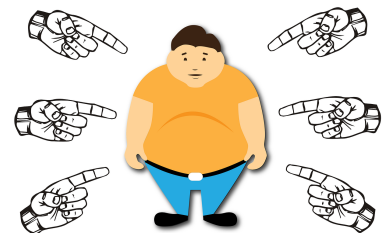
### How to cope with stigma?

If faced with stigma, the best way to cope is to:

1. Seek professional help
2. Find a supportive community
3. Use coping mechanisms to reduce stress and anxiety

### What are the 3 types of stigma in mental health?

1. Public stigma: "Patient" labeling and pejorative labeling
2. Self-stigma: Feeling damaged, weak, or vulnerable; holding back from sticking up for yourself
3. Structural stigma: Built into societal institutions



## How to reduce stigma in the workplace

### 1. Focus on language

Terms used in jest or casual conversation can create or add to stigmatization. Using derogatory terms such as “Mr. OCD” or “schizo” can sound like an attack to those struggling.

### 2. Rethink sick days

Normalizing the idea of tending to mental health using sick days can contribute toward an environment of mental and physical health.

### 3. Open and honest conversation

Creating a space where people can talk openly about mental health issues without fear of rejection or judgment creates psychological safety.

### 4. Response training

Train employees in Mental Health First Aid, a national program that helps recognize those struggling and connects them to resources that will help.

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peers do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations; however, they are trained to get an idea of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peers will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you were experiencing.



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## STIGMA

stigma /stɪg'mə/  
**noun**

1. An association of disgrace or public disapproval with something, such as an action or condition: *synonym*: **stain**. Similar: **stain**
2. A visible indicator of disease.
3. A small bodily mark, especially a birthmark or scar, that is congenital or indicative of a condition or disease.