



Combat Stigma 2020

STIGMA is Adding Insult to Injury

It is adding an unfair, avoidable, intangible, yet pervasive burden to someone who is already helplessly and hopelessly suffering!

At times just a difference in looks, accent, or behavior, which is blown out of proportion, finally ends up being a disability. Most often the actual cause and consequences are both bearable and curable, compared to facing stigma.

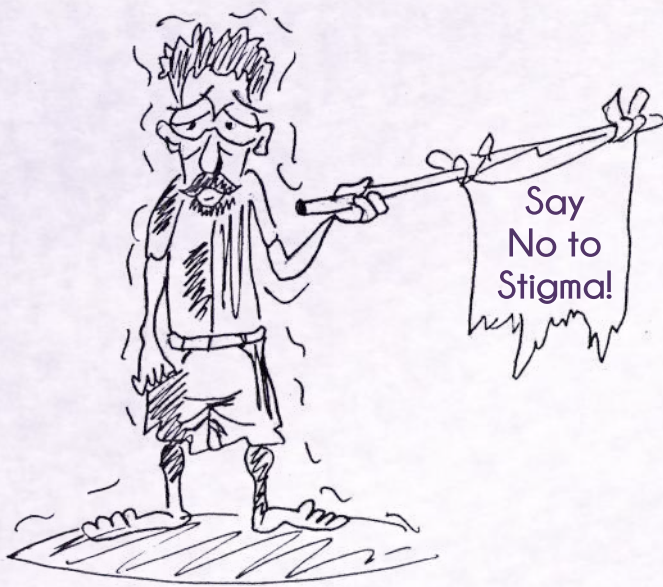
Stigma is a mixture of fear, that one may contract the illness; an aversion to the mostly unfamiliar issue and an arrogance that I and mine will never suffer. Stigma gives one the impunity to segregate, ostracize, neglect and even actively tease, taunt and abuse.

Stigma is also a subtle patronizing of, devaluing abilities beyond the actual deficits and persistent prejudice against the person, their kin and the very neighborhood, even after the problem has been solved.

Stigma prevents awareness, prevents people from seeking help and blocks quality service delivery. Even research and training will not be efficient, if the condition invites stigma.


Stigma has to be removed; eradicated on a war-footing from any human condition. Whatever be the reason - mental health issues, familial issues, communicable diseases, occupation-related problems, caste, creed, gender, sexuality, and so on.

It has to be radically replaced with Comprehension, Compassion, Care and Inclusion. To contemptuously ignore and cruelly ill-treat someone in a challenging situation and to generalize it unabashedly as a group, proselytizing hatred consciously or unconsciously is to be less than human and has far-reaching consequences.



By Dr. Anbudorai, Psychiatrist

JANUARY 2020

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 Jan - Mental Wellness Month						

FEBRUARY 2020

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 Feb 2 - Time to Talk Day - Mental Health						

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What STIGMA Feels Like

Here are actual quotes from people who have been stigmatized.

"Stigma is harder than illness itself. I was afraid that people will call me pagal [insane in Hindi] and hence I decided to hide myself."

Father of a young woman in a mental hospital: *"For fear of stigma, we decided to discontinue medicines at the time of her marriage, which worsened her mental health."*

"I decided to take treatment in a different city for the fear of stigma."

There are many more examples such as these, all indicating severe consequences of stigma.



JANUARY

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MARCH 2020

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 March 18 - World Sleep Day						

APRIL 2020

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 April 2 - World Autism Day April 7 - World Health Day						

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Different Forms of STIGMA

Stigma is not always blatant. It can be felt in a multitude of ways, such as:

- Use of disparaging words like *mental*, *psycho*, *weirdo* (and in vernacular- *loosu*, *paaqal* and so on,) that are thoughtlessly and casually thrown about, speak of an attitude that desperately needs change
- Discrimination while giving an affected person employment opportunities
- Choosing to socialize or make friends; those who are affected are often ostracized



MARCH

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MAY 2020

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31	 May 7 - International Laughter Day May 24 - World Schizophrenia Day May 24 - World Play Day					

JUNE 2020

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 June 10 - International Day of Wellness June 21 - International Day of Yoga June 26 - International Day Against Drug Abuse						

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Consequences of STIGMA

While stigma may seem subtle, it has far-reaching consequences. It is not just people with mental health challenges who struggle, their families and consequently, society as a whole, pays a heavy price.

Fear of being at the receiving end of stigma causes many unsavory repercussions such as:

- Completely avoiding going to a mental health professional for treatment
- Delaying getting treated and silently suffering for many years
- Wanting to stop treatment before recovery
- Feeling bad for NO fault of theirs; being mentally-ill is NOT a choice they made
- Feeling harshly judged and living in shame
- Monetary and social losses owing to fear of stigma

MAY



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JULY 2020

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 July 1 - Doctors' Day						

AUGUST 2020

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30	31	 Aug 3 - WOW 14th Anniversary Aug 6 - Friendship Day Aug 8 - Happiness Day				

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What a Person Receiving Treatment can do to Handle STIGMA

- Educate themselves about the repercussions of stigma and how it impedes recovery
- Share their thoughts on stigma with a confidant or a mental health provider and take steps to make sure it doesn't affect their progress
- Share their experiences via digital and traditional platforms on how they overcame stigma thereby helping others facing similar issues






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SEPTEMBER 2020

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 Sep 10 - Suicide Prevention Day Sep 21 - World Alzheimer's Day						

OCTOBER 2020

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 Oct 06 - World Smile Day Oct 10 - World Mental Health Day Oct 27 - World Occupational Therapy Day						

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What a Lay Person can do to Remove **STIGMA**

Each and every one of us can and should take measures to eliminate stigma. Here are few steps to be taken:

- Actively participate in SAA's (Schizophrenia Awareness Association) STI+CH (STIGma+watCH) program for stigma removal
- Share your experiences with de-stigmatization which would not only be evidence of your efforts but also motivation for many others who may be hesitant, whatever be the reason
- Read more about stigma--experiences, consequences, narratives and research, to grasp and get inspired by the slow yet certain progress made in de-stigmatization, over the decades
- Talk about it when you come across stigmatizing words and behavior, and educate others that it is WRONG. Responding at the moment of stigmatization does wonders not only for the victims but also others, as it helps them gain perspectives on this social malaise
- Arrange stigma-free zones, lectures, debates or discussion circles in colleges and educational institutions of various kinds.

SEPTEMBER

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NOVEMBER 2020

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 Nov 17 - World Epilepsy Day						

DECEMBER 2020

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 Dec 3 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities						

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Schizophrenia Awareness Association ~ SAA



Kamalini Kruti Bhavan, Ganesh Nagar Lane No. B30/31, Dhayari. Pune - 411 041, Phone No: 020-24391202 & 98348 99383



SAA is proactively working towards de-stigmatization via its initiative called STI+CH.

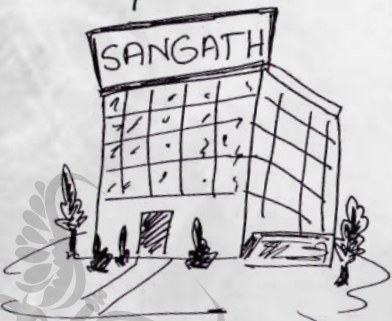
STI+CH promotes reuniting our own friends who are alienated within the community at large.

Some of the activities undertaken include:

- Documenting derogatory words, proverbs, expressions, gestures, jokes, and images
- Collecting experiences of patients, family members and others across problematic circumstances they have faced



Using the above as a resource to showcase the nature and consequences of Stigma, SAA is approaching different groups, and educating them to help identify, understand, and remove stigmatizing practices. SAA is also implementing innovative ideas like Stigma-Free Zones in colleges and Anti-Stigma Circles, to educate and guide patients and their family members.



NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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THE PROMISING JOURNEY OF WOW IN THE FIELD OF MENTAL HEALTH

When asked about the reason behind establishing this organization, Founder and CEO, T. Dilli Babu says, "Everyone wants to do something extraordinary in their lives. While this desire is especially strong in one's youth, one has to face many mental challenges to accomplish this. Some get tired, stressed or disappointed in this journey. It's actually possible to face these challenges head-on, but the lack of proper guidance makes people give up and they lose out on many important opportunities in life. This made me uncomfortable and I wanted them to receive the appropriate guidance and encouragement. This resulted in the formation of WOW in 2007, with the help of a few associates."

Our mind is a very powerful weapon. We can harness it to accomplish almost anything, but oftentimes, we are unaware of its immense potential. The name 'WOW' has its own significance. We use it when we see something exclusive, special or appreciable. Apart from this, WOW stands for 'Win or Win'. 'Win or Win' is a lifestyle choice. When faced with difficulties in life, we believe that the outcome will be either a win or a loss. The end result of any act may be multifarious, but we don't seem to realize this. Being aware of these various options and choosing the best one from them is one of the greatest accomplishments of human life. WOW focuses on making people aware of this very fact.

The 13-year-old organization has been making rapid progress over the course of time. What started with only 3 extremely focused volunteers and a few programs has now blossomed into an organization with more than 50 experienced psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health volunteers. Today, WOW is involved in several activities like school programs and counselling, to dealing with the mental issues of the elderly. WOW has always been focused on providing easily accessible, affordable and holistic mental healthcare to all.

CREDITS



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