

Challenge stigma



A WELLWAYS INITIATIVE

Challenge stigma



People who experience mental health challenges often experience stigma and discrimination. This can reduce people's opportunity to participate fully in life. Putting an end to stigma and discrimination begins with challenging beliefs that may come from fear, ignorance or misinformation.

To challenge stigma and discrimination, we can:

- Notice when our beliefs about others stop us from giving them a chance. Is this fair?
- Make an effort to meet people or listen to stories from people who may experience discrimination. Having positive contact changes things!
- Speak up when we see discrimination. Take the opportunity to have a conversation.

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**Build
connections**



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Build connections



Having connections with friends, colleagues, family or people in the community is how we know we are valued and can provide us with essential ingredients for wellbeing. Research shows when we are connected to others in our community the likelihood of becoming unwell is decreased. If we become unwell, having strong connections to others means we are more likely to seek and receive support.

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To build connections we can:

- Say hello to each other, smile and use people's names.
- Get to know each other; personalise your workspace with things that are meaningful to you, find out about people's interests, ask about family, partners, pets.
- Organise and encourage shared activities, like walks at lunch, morning teas, footy tipping or book clubs.
- Take time in meetings to let people know their contributions are valued.

**Welcome
diversity**



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Welcome diversity



Our different life experiences mean we all have different skills, talents and abilities. When we feel safe, empowered and able to share these skills and talents with others in our community, everyone benefits. Welcoming diversity strengthens our community; we become more accepting, understanding and likely to make space for those who may feel left out.

To welcome diversity we can:

- Make an effort to listen to experiences, ideas and views that are different from our own.
- Ensure our physical space is accessible and hospitable for people with diverse abilities, backgrounds, ages, genders and sexual identities.
- When making decisions, ask “have we heard from people with differing world views and life experiences?”

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**Seek
understanding**



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Seek understanding



We acknowledge everyone experiences the world differently and there is always more to learn. By putting aside our own assumptions, needs and judgments and becoming curious, we are more likely to understand why people feel and act as they do and, perhaps, how we might be able to offer support.

To seek understanding we can:

- Ask people what they need, rather than assume we already know.
- Check if you've understood what you've heard; "I think you've said... is that what you mean?"
- Ask for people's guidance, advice and mentorship where they have knowledge or experience you don't.
- Invite people to learn about you; share your thoughts, preferences and opinions.

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