

MATTERS OF THE MIND

Addressing the Stigma of Mental Health

With all the uncertainties and changes we have experienced in the past year, it's hard to get a hold of what it feels like to be your usual self. Your mental health ignites the spark to a healthy mind and body.

Many of us struggle with finding ways to express what and how we are feeling, which can lead to keeping quiet and not asking for help. When we have mental and emotional challenges, we may worry about what others think of us or fear that we will be judged. That is one of the stigmas attached to mental health.

Here are a few tips to help you push through the negative thoughts and cope with of stigma of mental health.



Sources (mayoclinic.org, psychology today.com, nami.org)

DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF

If you are struggling with a mental illness, you may be reluctant to tell anyone about it. Reach out to people you trust for the compassion, support, and understanding you need.

MENTAL ILLNESS IS NOT A CHOICE

It would be silly to tell someone to "buckle down" and "get over" cancer. The same applies to mental illness. Choose the right words when speaking about mental illness. Instead of saying "I am depressed," say "I suffer from depression." Many times depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses can often be hidden, but the person can still be in considerable internal distress. Remember this: the condition doesn't define you.

SPEAK OUT AGAINST STIGMA

Consider expressing your opinions and knowledge about mental health. Talk about it on social media or join a support group. You can help others by speaking out and educating the public about mental illness. Judgments almost always stem from a lack of understanding and information rather than facts.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO GET HELP

Don't let the fear of being labeled with a mental illness prevent you from seeking help. Make sure you seek the treatment that you need even if you are reluctant to admit that you need it.

We are Here for You 24/7

You are not alone! Get 24/7 confidential support through the Employee Assistance Program provider, Magellan Healthcare: 1-800-327-5048.

National Alliance of Mental Illness, NAMI.org

If you're not sure where to start, you can try the FREE NAMI Chicago Helpline at 833-626-4244. Live mental health counselors are available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.