

July 2014

BHS Wellness Update



Artwork by: Sarah Price Hancock

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

# Stigma Reduction

## What is Stigma?

The lives of people with mental health conditions are often plagued by stigma as well as discrimination. **Stigma is a negative stereotype.**

Stigma is a reality for many people with a mental illness, and they report that how others judge them is one of their greatest barriers to a complete and satisfying life.

**Mental illness is a brain disease, not a character flaw.** But because of stigma, many people who need help don't seek it. They are afraid of being negatively labeled.



Negative effects of stigma include:

- ◆ Reluctance to seek help or treatment
- ◆ Lack of understanding by family, friends, co-workers or others
- ◆ Fewer opportunities for work, school or social activities
- ◆ Trouble finding housing
- ◆ Bullying, physical violence or harassment
- ◆ Health insurance that doesn't adequately cover treatment needs
- ◆ Low self-esteem and the belief that you won't succeed or that you can't improve your situation

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health/art-20046477>

Learn what you can do to promote good mental health and help end stigma.

Find all the tools you need by visiting the County's [Up to Us](http://Up2Us.org) website.



[Up2SD.org](http://Up2SD.org)

