

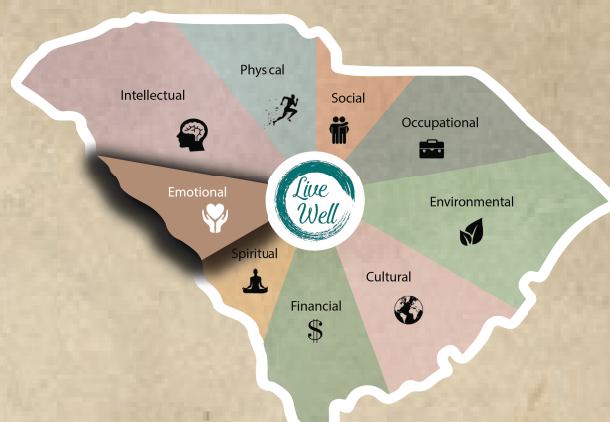
LiveWell Newsletter

Mental Health: Overcoming Stigma

Stigma is when someone views you in a negative way because you have a distinguishing characteristic or personal trait that's thought to be a disadvantage (a negative stereotype).

Unfortunately, negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition are common.

Stigma can lead to discrimination. Discrimination may be obvious and direct, such as someone making a negative remark. Or it may be unintentional or subtle, such as someone avoiding you because the person assumes you could be unstable. You may even judge yourself.



Some of the harmful effects of stigma can include:

- Reluctance to seek help or treatment
- Lack of understanding by family, friends, co-workers or others
- Bullying, physical violence or harassment
- The belief that you'll never succeed at certain challenges or that you can't improve your situation

Steps to cope with stigma

- **Get help.** Treatment can provide relief by identifying what's wrong and reducing symptoms that interfere with your work and personal life.
- **Don't let stigma create self-doubt and shame.** Stigma doesn't just come from others. You may mistakenly believe that your condition is a sign of personal weakness or that you should be able to control it without help.
- **Don't isolate yourself.** Your family, friends, clergy or members of your community can offer you support. Reach out to people you trust for the compassion, support and understanding you need
- **Speak out against stigma.** Consider expressing your opinions at events, in letters to the editor or on the internet. It can help instill courage in others facing similar challenges and educate the public about mental health.

Stigma in BIPOC Communities

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, or BIPOC groups, face barriers to mental health including structural inequities that impact individual's and family's ability to access quality health care, food security, and equal education. In colleges and universities, BIPOC students report that perceptions of peers other than family and friends are a barrier for seeking help with mental health issues at a higher rate than White students do. Also, perceived discrimination can lead to self-stigma, increasing the barriers to seek help for mental health issues*. Trained culturally competent mental health providers can improve mental health outcomes for BIPOC students. Counseling Services at CCU provides intercultural therapy in individual and group settings.

CCU DEI Resources: <https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/GetUrlReputation>

Timely Care Telehealth for Students Diversity in Providers:

<https://timely.md/blog/diversity-in-healthcare-providers-for-college-students/?highlight=diversity%20equity%20>

More Resources

CCU Counseling Services: <https://www.coastal.edu/counseling/>

CCU Timely Care: <https://timely.md/schools/index.html?school=coastalcarolina&>

*Riba, M. B. College Psychiatry: Strategies to Improve Access to Mental Health. Springer Nature.

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