MONMOUTH COUNTY

PROUD TO BE

STIGMA-FREE

Stigma-Free Initiative Municipality Toolkit

A Collaborative Campaign Against the Stigma of Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorder in Monmouth County

Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners
Thomas A. Arnone, *Director*; Susan M. Kiley, *Deputy Director*;
Dominick "Nick" DiRocco; Ross F. Licitra; Erik Anderson

Monmouth County Department of Health and Human Services
3000 Kozloski Rd.
Freehold, NJ 07728

Lynn Seaward
Director, Division of Behavioral Health
(732) 431-7200

For further information or an electronic version of this toolkit, please visit:
www.monmouth-stigma-free.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction....3

Prevalence of Mental Illness....4

Prevalence of Substance Use Disorder....5

The Stigma-Free Initiative....6

Stigma-Free Toolkit....7-16

- Sample Stigma-Free Resolution....8
- Mental Health First Aid Training....9
- Municipal Task Force....10
- Stigma-Free Action Plan....11
- Stigma-Free Talking Points....12
- Stigma-Free Language....13
- Sample Press Materials....15
- Monmouth County Resource List....16
- Stigma-Free Promotional Material Order Form....17

Introduction

The Monmouth County **Stigma-Free Initiative** is a county-wide program that aims to reduce the negative beliefs associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. We are dedicated to raising awareness of the disease of mental illness and substance use disorders to create a culture wherein residents feel supported by their community and neighbors and feel free to seek treatment for the diseases without fear of being outcast.

Stigma is a mark of disgrace which results from the judgment by others. When an individual is labelled by their illness they experience judgment and prejudice. It brings experiences and feelings of shame, embarrassment, distress, hopelessness and reluctance to seek or accept help. As a result, it is one of the primary reasons individuals do not seek help when they experience symptoms of mental illness.

What is a mental illness?

Mental illnesses refer to disorders generally characterized by dysregulation of mood, thought, and/or behavior. Mental illness encompasses a variety of disorders ranging from depression and anxiety to substance and alcohol use disorder and bipolar disorder. Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, gender, sexual identity, religion or income.

What is a co-occurring disorder?

The term co-occurring disorder replaces the terms dual disorder and dual diagnosis when referring to an individual who has a co-existing mental illness and a substance use disorder. While commonly used to refer to the combination of substance use and mental disorders, the term also refers to other combinations of disorders (such a mental disorder and and intellectual disability).

Prevalence of Mental Illness

The World Health Organization ranks mental health disorders as the leading cause of disability in the United States and Canada. Mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety or alcohol and substance use disorders, are extremely common in America. 1 in 4 adults experience a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year [approximately 61.5 million Americans] and 1 in 17 adults live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Yet more than half will not seek treatment. *Why?*

Despite its prevalence in our society, mental health still has stigma attached to it.

The primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need is due to the stigma associated with the disease of mental illness. Main reasons cited are shame and fear of judgment from friends, family and co-workers. Such judgment is often rooted in a lack of knowledge or training. It is our goal to disseminate information and foster a stigma-free environment where people are free from judgment and can get the help they need to recover from disease.

What is substance use disorder?

The DSM 5 recognizes substance-related disorders resulting from the use of 10 separate classes of drugs: alcohol; caffeine; cannabis; hallucinogens (phencyclidine or similarly acting arylcyclohexylamines, and other hallucinogens, such as LSD); inhalants; opioids; sedatives, hypnotics, or anxiolytics; stimulants (including amphetamine-type substances, cocaine, and other stimulants); tobacco; and other or unknown substances. Therefore, while some major groupings of psychoactive substances are specifically identified, the use of other or unknown substances can also form the basis of a substance-related or addictive disorder.Fill in definition of substance use disorder.

Prevalence of Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration reported that in 2014

- Approximately 20.2 million adults aged 18 or older had an SUD.
- 16.3 million (of the 20.2 million) had an alcohol use disorder
- 6.2 million had an illicit drug use disorder.
- 2.3 million adults had both an alcohol use disorder and an illicit drug use disorder in the past year. Of the adults with a past year SUD,
- 4 out of 5 adults also had an alcohol use disorder
- Nearly 3 out of 10 had an illicit drug use disorder
- 1 out of 9 had both an alcohol use disorder and an illicit drug use disorder.
- 2014- 3.5 million adults aged 18 or older had a past year SUD related to their use of marijuana.
- 1.8 million Adults had a past year SUD related to their nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers.
- 2014- Smaller numbers of adults had past year SUDs related to their use of cocaine (about 900,000) or heroin (about 600,000).

It is our goal to disseminate information and foster a stigma-free environment where people are free from judgment and can get the help they need to recover from disease.

The Stigma-Free Initiative

Stigma-Free Zones aim to inspire public interest and open dialogues about stigma. This initiative intends to engage community members to be inclusive and judgment free and educate al to use appropriate language choices. The County of Monmouth and several Monmouth County towns have already passed Stigma-Free resolutions.

Establishing a Stigma-Free Zone in your municipality will raise awareness of the local mental health and substance use resources available, so no resident feels hopeless or alone. Stigma-Free Zones will encourage residents to break down barriers, be mindful of their mental health and ask for help when needed. The diseases of mental illness and substance use disorder have the potential to worsen if left untreated, and complications arise when individuals do not seek help. It is essential that residents seek care and support as soon as the need is identified so recovery can begin, hope is inspired, and tragedies are avoided.

Who is involved? Everyone is involved. This county-wide initiative includes all Monmouth County residents, from youth to senior populations. From bus drivers to school administrators, every community member is a key stakeholder. We want to link all stakeholders to training opportunities and awareness events aimed at increasing public knowledge of the diseases of mental illness and substance use disorder, the proper language to use to avoid stigmas and exclusion, and knowledge of local resources available to Monmouth County residents.

The following pages include a Stigma-Free toolkit for Monmouth County towns interested in joining the Stigma-Free Initiative. By passing a Stigma-Free resolution your town will be joining a rapidly growing network of municipalities dedicated to improving the mental health of our Monmouth County community. It is encouraged for each municipality to further engage its numerous stakeholders to join the initiative and pledge to be stigma free. Additional information is available at www.monmouth-stigma-free.com for government organizations, schools, businesses, non-profits, healthcare facilities, first responders, houses of worship.

Stigma-Free Toolkit

Joining the Stigma-Free Initiative will:

- Educate residents that mental illness and substance use disorder are diseases and must be treated as such
- Raise awareness of the prevalence of mental illness and substance use in our community
- Provoke public interest in learning what is "Stigma-Free"
- Provide residents an opportunity to become involved in their community
- Allow people living with the disease to feel supported by their community and thus decrease feelings of isolation and shame
- Link people in need to local mental health and substance use resources
- Use inclusive, accepting and judgement-free language and choices
- Raise awareness that care is accessible regardless of income

Steps to Becoming a Stigma-Free Zone

I. Adopt a local Stigma-Free Initiative resolution- PG 8
II. Participate in Mental Health First Aid training or attend Community Education presentation/forum- PG 9
III. Form a municipal task force dedicated to propagating Stigma-Free throughout the town- PG 10
IV. Stigma-Free action plan- PG 11
V. Stigma-Free talking points- PG 12
VI. Respectful language help reduce Stigma – PG 13
VII. Sample press materials- PG 15
VIII. Local Resources –PG 16
IX. Place Stigma-Free promotional materials throughout the town, declaring it a Stigma-Free zone- PG 17

Sample Stigma-Free Initiative Resolution

***WHEREAS**, the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders, along with the Monmouth County Department of Human Services, supports the designation of **Stigma-Free Communities** in every municipality, and;*

***WHEREAS**, at their June 26, 2018 meeting the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders unanimously passed a resolution supporting the designation of Monmouth County as a Stigma-Free Community, and;*

***WHEREAS**, Monmouth County recognizes that one in four Americans has experienced mental illness, including substance use disorders, in a given year according to the National Institute of Mental Health, and;*

***WHEREAS**, mental health problems are more common than cancer and heart disease combined, affecting children and adults, including more than half of our Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans treated at Veteran's Administration hospitals, and;*

***WHEREAS,** given the serious nature of this public health problem, we must continue to reach the millions who need help;*

***WHEREAS**, the stigma associated with the disease of mental illness is identified as the primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need to recover from the disease, and;*

***WHEREAS**, **Stigma-Free Communities** aim to inspire public interest and open dialogues about stigma, raise awareness of the disease of mental illness and substance use disorder and create a culture wherein residents who have the disease of mental illness and/or substance use feel supported by their community and neighbors and feel free to seek treatment for the disease without fear of stigma and;*

***WHEREAS**, promoting awareness that there can be no "health" without mental health will break down barriers and encourage residents of all ages to be mindful of their mental health and ask for help when needed, and;*

***WHEREAS**, local resources are available to treat the diseases of mental illness and substance use disorder so no one resident needs to suffer alone or feel hopeless, and;*

***WHEREAS**, establishing **Stigma-Free Communities** will raise awareness of resources, inclusive language, and encourage residents to engage in care as soon as the need is identified so recovery can begin, hope is inspired and tragedies are avoided, and;*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that [TOWN] recognizes the community needs and supports the efforts of the County of Monmouth in designating [TOWN] as a **Stigma-Free Community.

Mental Health First Aid Training

Many Monmouth County agencies have Mental Health First Aid certified trainers and offer Mental Health First Aid training sessions for their employees and residents.

What is Mental Health First Aid?

- **Evidence-based interactive course that spans one 8-hour or two 4-hour sessions**
- **Teaches students the signs of mental illness and substance abuse**
- **Introduces a five-step action plan to initiate referral to mental health resources**

Why is Mental Health First Aid important?

- **Just like CPR, it is a vital skill that improves the well-being of our community**
- **Helps to eliminate stigma associated with mental illness and substance abuse**
- **Promotes recovery and resiliency**

All Monmouth County residents need Mental Health First Aid because

Mental illness impacts *everyone*.

If you are interested in attending a training or having us provide a training course for your organization or would like more information:

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

Stigma-Free Task Force

Identify an ambassador

- A Stigma-Free ambassador is any community member who embraces Stigma-Free and will help bring your Stigma-Free initiative to life.

- This ambassador is an involved community member who is connected to the community and understands the specific strengths and weaknesses of your municipality.

Your choice does not have to be a mental health professional; they can be anyone who is passionate, interested, and energetic. Any proactive community member can become a Stigma-Free ambassador: your ambassador could be a local football coach, board of education member, church leader or simply your next door neighbor.

Form a Stigma-Free task force

Gather a team of dedicated residents who can help enhance the culture of caring in your community.

Host a town-hall information meeting to introduce residents to your Campaign and form a local task force.

- Rally local government and business leaders to support the cause.
  - Municipal Alliance Leader
  - Mayor
  - Local Business Owners
  - Directors for the Board of Education, Board of Health
  - Superintendent of Schools
  - Police Chief

- Encourage local community service groups to embrace the Campaign.
  - VFW/American Legions
  - Faith Communities
  - Rotary Clubs/Lions Clubs
  - School Service Groups
  - Senior Citizen Centers
  - Libraries

- Remember the value that our young people can bring.
  - Work with students to promote Stigma-Free
  - Consider forming a youth task force
  - Reach out to local Boys and Girls Scouts troops

Stigma-Free Action Plan

Below are some ideas to bring your local Stigma-Free campaign to life. Feel free to follow these suggestions and tasks you think will benefit your municipality in particular.

- ☐ Run a town-hall meeting/ public Stigma-Free forum about your local Stigma-Free resolution, goals, campaign events and efforts.
- ☐ Promote *Mental Health First Aid Training* for municipal employees, residents and community groups (see page 8).
- ☐ Promote community education presentations delivered by certified mental health professionals or prevention organizations that follow best-practices and evidence-based, and adhere to safe messaging guidelines.
- ☐ Include the "We Support Stigma-Free" tagline/image on marketing material, website, social media, etc.
- ☐ Host a Stigma-Free or mental health charity walk. Host a Stigma-Free/mental illness awareness town concert.
- ☐ Set up a Stigma-Free booth at town-wide events and community days.
- ☐ Host a Stigma-Free poster contest within local middle schools. Have educational events for pre-school and elementary students. Encourage student Stigma-Free afterschool clubs.
- ☐ Develop a website (or extension of your municipality website) with Stigma-Free information, inclusive language guidelines, and local mental health resources; at a minimum include a link to the Monmouth-stigma-free.com site.
- ☐ Collaborate with local community service groups and your local Municipal Alliance Leaders to host a town-wide Stigma-Free celebration.
- ☐ Distribute Stigma-Free promotional materials to community members to place on their private lawns and vehicles, window decals, magnets, stickers, pins and t-shirts.

Remember that Stigma-Free is a *community effort*; think about the strengths of your individual municipality and encourage local residents to take initiative in your Stigma-Free Campaign.

Stigma-Free Initiative Talking Points

Language can create stigma. It is important that all residents understand and endorse the appropriate way to speak about mental illness and substance use disorder.

- Mental illness and substance use disorders are a worldwide leading cause of disability impacting the entire community-socially, emotionally, behaviorally and economically.
- Stigma often prevents people from seeking help/treatment.
- This movement transcends any religious/spiritual affiliation, economic strata, race/ethnicity or gender; it does not discriminate.
- We will promote programs that neutralize/eliminate fears.
- We will identify and update available resources for education, treatment, recovery and support.
- We will encourage community well-being encouraging help seeking behavior as well as raise awareness of actors/events that may negatively impact mental health and substance use disorders and well-being.
- We will hold events, rallies, town halls, etc. to bring light to this topic.
- We will encourage the use of mental health and substance use disorder recovery education.
- We will encourage a culture where it is considered wise to take care of your own mental health and seek treatment and sober living activities.
- We will utilize neutral, sensitive and empowering language and provide access to current recommendations for inclusive language choices.
- We will remove stigmatizing labels surrounding mental illness or mental health conditions and substance use disorders.
- We will encourage universal acceptance.
- We encourage everyone to play a part in this movement-from youth to senior populations.

Stigma-Free Language

Language matters. Language is powerful – especially when talking about mental illness and substance use disorder. Stigmatizing language perpetuates negative perceptions.

"Person first" language focuses on the person, not the disease.

When Discussing Mental Illness

Preferred language:	Instead of:
She is a person who receives help/treatment for mental health or substance use problem or a psychiatric disability	She is a patient
He is a person with a disability	He is disabled/handicapped
She is a child without disabilities	She is normal
He has a diagnosis of bipolar disorder	He is (a) bipolar
He is living with bipolar disorder	
She has a mental health problem or challenge	She is mentally ill/ emotionally disturbed/ psycho/ insane/lunatic
She is a person with lived experience of a mental health condition	
He has a brain injury	He is brain damaged
He experiences symptoms of psychosis/ He hears voices	He is psychotic
She has an intellectual disability	She is mentally retarded
He has autism	He is autistic
Is receiving mental health services	Mental health patient/case
Attempted suicide	Unsuccessful suicide
Died by suicide	Committed suicide
A student receiving special education services	Special education student
Person with substance use disorder	Addict, abuser, junkie
Person experiencing alcohol/drug problem	
Experiencing, or being treated for, or has a diagnosis of, or a history of, mental illness	Suffering with, or a victim of, a mental illness

Source: American Psychiatric Association

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Please note-as we find more appropriate, empowering and kind language we will update/change terms.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mental-illness-vocabulary_n_7078984

Stigma-Free Language

When Discussing Substance Use Disorder

v

https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/topics/addictions/#foobox-1/0/do_dont.jpg

Sample Press Materials

Sample Press Release:

[TOWN] DECLARES MUNICIPALITY A STIGMA-FREE ZONE

One in four adults experiences a diagnosable mental illness every year. One in seven adults experience a diagnosable substance use disorder every year. Many of these individuals do not seek help because of fear of shame or judgment from friends, family and co-workers. On [DATE] [TOWN] made the first steps towards eliminating the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorder. The elimination of mental health stigma will allow residents to get the resources they need without judgment.

[TOWN] representatives passed a resolution designating the municipality a Stigma-Free Zone in order to create an environment in which residents will feel free to seek treatment for the diseases of mental illness and/or substance use disorder without the fear of being stigmatized. [TOWN] joins the County of Monmouth in declaring a Stigma-Free Zone.

[TOWN] hopes to raise awareness of the diseases of mental illness and substance use disorder, provide an effective way to reduce the stigma associated with the diseases, promote the use of inclusive language and encourage those who are affected to seek services and feel supported. The establishment of this Stigma-Free Zone will raise awareness of local [TOWN] mental health resources so no one resident needs to feel hopeless or alone. The elimination of stigma will enable residents to ask for help when needed so recovery can begin, hope is inspired and tragedies are avoided.

[TOWN] urges anyone who would like more information on the Stigma-Free Initiative to contact_____and to help us to eliminate stigma and promote wellness amongst all [TOWN] and Monmouth County residents.

Sample Public Service Announcement

1 in 4 adults has a diagnosable mental illness

1 in 7 adults has a diagnosable substance use disorder