STOP THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS

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According to Make It OK, mental illnesses are treatable medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feelings, moods, ability to relate to others, and ability to function daily.

Mental illness is much more common than most people know. In fact, Mental Health America states, "1 in 5 U.S. adults will experience a mental illness each year, and 46% of Americans will meet criteria for a mental illness diagnosis sometime in their lives."

A stigma means to see someone in a negative way causing you to think less of them. It is stereotyping a person based on their mental illness. Stigmas can show up in both the words we use and the images we see. It can lead to misconceptions about mental illness.

These stigmas can cause people with mental illness to feel ashamed. It can stop them from getting the care they need. It can lead to discrimination and feelings of isolation. In fact, the feelings that arise due to these stigmas can contribute to suicide.

But, we have the power to stop the stigma by seeing mental illness as a treatable disease and not a sign of weakness or a character flaw. See the person and not just their diagnosis. Learn the facts about mental illness and use these facts when you hear misconceptions. Know that it's okay to talk about mental illness and to do so in a respectful way. In fact, sharing accurate information with others helps break down the stigmas associated with mental illness.

When we stop the stigma, it allows those with mental illness to receive better care, to feel supported in their communities, and can lead to a better quality of life.

If you are struggling with mental illness and need immediate help, call:

Suicide and Crisis Helpline - 988

SOURCES:
- https://makeitok.org/mental-health-stigma/
- https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/addressing-stigma
- https://mhanational.org/mentalhealthfacts