

“NAMI needs the help of students, faculties and administrators to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health conditions, based on demeaning stereotypes and misinformation. Stigma discourages people from seeking help when they need it and when it is internalized jeopardizes recovery.”

Mary Giliberti, NAMI Executive Director

Let others know there is hope and understanding.  
You can change the way the world see mental illness!  
Join thousands of people across the country who are joining the movement!

**Do you have Stigma? Take the quiz at:**

<https://www.nami.org/stigmafree>

**Take the Pledge at:** <https://www.nami.org/stigmafree>

**For more information on the StigmaFree Movement,** visit

NAMI Flagstaff at [www.namiflagstaff.org](http://www.namiflagstaff.org)

NAMI Arizona at [www.namiarizona.org](http://www.namiarizona.org)

NAMI National at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

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## StigmaFree

**What is Stigma?** It is when someone, or even you yourself, view a person in a negative way just because they have a mental health condition. Some people describe stigma as a feeling of shame or judgment from someone else. Stigma can even come from an internal place, confusing *feeling* bad with *being* bad. Navigating life with a mental health condition can be tough, and the isolation, blame and secrecy that are often encouraged by stigma can create huge challenges to reaching out, getting needed support and living well.

### Stigma's effects:

- People experiencing mental health conditions often face rejection, bullying and discrimination. This can make their journey to recovery longer and more difficult.
- Mental health conditions are the leading cause of disability across the United States.
- Even though most people can be successfully treated, less than half of the adults in the U.S. who need services and treatment get the help they need.
- The average delay between the onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death of youth ages 15-24 and the tenth leading cause of death for all Americans.

## **NAMI's Three Steps for Being StigmaFree:**

### **Step 1 Educate yourself and others**

Everyone knows a little about mental health issues but knowing *the facts* can help you educate others and reject stigmatizing stereotypes. They are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Understanding mental health isn't only about being able to identify symptoms and having a name for conditions, but dispelling false ideas about mental health conditions as well.

### **Step 2 See the Person, Not the Condition**

1 in 5 Americans live with a mental health condition and each of them has their own story, path and journey that says more about them than their diagnosis does. Whether you are a friend, family member, caregiver or medical professional, getting to know a person and treating them with kindness and empathy means *far more* than just knowing what they are going through.

### **Step 3 Take Action**

Our mental health care system has been in crisis for far too long; often keeping treatment and recovery out of the hands of many who need it. We can take action now as we push for better legislation and policies to improve lives for everyone. By lending your support, you can show that this cause is important to you.

## **#CureStigma**

**The StigmaFree campaign** is NAMI's effort to end stigma and create hope for those affected by mental illness. Through powerful words and actions, we can shift the social and systemic barriers for those living with mental health conditions.

**Campaign manifesto:** There's a virus spreading across America. It harms the 1 in 5 Americans affected by mental health conditions. It shames them into silence. It prevents them from seeking help. And in some cases, it takes lives. What virus are we talking about? It's stigma. Stigma against people with mental health conditions. But there's good news. Stigma is 100% curable. Compassion, empathy and understanding are the antidote. Your voice can spread the cure.

### **StigmaFree on Campus**

The age of many college students is a crucial time when it comes to mental health. Most people who live with mental illness are diagnosed by the time they turn 24, over half of all students living with mental illness will drop out of school and suicide is the second-leading cause of death for college students.

As part of our StigmaFree campaign, we are trying to encourage college campuses around the country to help us build our movement and change lives for the better.