



Stigma Free  
Lanarkshire

# Challenging Stigmatising Behaviour

**We hope that these  
tips will help you  
challenge stigma at  
the time it is heard or  
experienced.**



# 1.

## **Focus on the behaviour**

Challenge the behaviour, not the person. Keep in mind that most people do not realise their behaviour or language is stigmatising, and do not intend to cause any offence.



# 2.

## **Be calm and assertive**

Speak calmly and assertively when challenging stigmatising behaviour. People are more likely to listen and take on board what you are saying when you do it in a non-confrontational manner. Otherwise, they may become defensive and refuse to listen.



# 3.

## Explain

Explain to the person why their behaviour is stigmatising, and say what you'd like them to do differently.

For example,

*"I would like you to stop describing people as being 'a bit' OCD, it is a serious anxiety disorder and it is unfair to compare someone being tidy and organised to a debilitating mental illness."*

# 4.

## Share your knowledge

Use facts to challenge what someone has said if it a myth or stigmatising view. For example if someone says that people with depression are lazy you can tell them that laziness is not a symptom of depression but people may lose interest in the things that they used to enjoy or have physical symptoms such as fatigue. For more facts on mental health myths, check out our Myth Busting Chatterbox tool.

# 5.

## Share your experiences

Share facts about your own or someone you know's experience with mental health problems.

For example, *"I have schizophrenia and I'm not violent, a person can be aggressive and not have schizophrenia"* or *"I have depression and it is an illness that people can't 'snap out of'".*



# 6.

## **Don't be afraid to speak out**

If you have a mental health problem or are close to someone who does, then hearing people using stigmatising language or expressing stigmatising views can be hurtful.

Don't be afraid to speak out against this. It's OK to say 'I have a mental health problem and hearing that has a negative impact on me'.

# 7.

## **Compare mental health to physical health**

Make comparisons with physical health to help people understand that mental health is just as important.

Remind people that mental health should have the same priority as physical health. This applies to maintaining good mental health as well as treating mental illness.

There is no health without mental health.

# 8.

## **Remember that people make mistakes**

We are all learning, and we don't want people being scared to talk about mental health.

If someone says something that isn't appropriate, then providing them with the opportunity to learn can have a huge impact.

# For mental health support and info, check out...

## **Samaritans**

Offer a 24 hour confidential support service

**Call: 116 123**

## **NHS 24**

Provides urgent health advice

## **Call: 111**

Mon – Thurs 6pm – 8am  
Fri 6pm – Mon 8am  
(24hr at weekends)

## **Breathing Space**

Offer advice and support if you need someone to talk to

## **Call: 0800 83 85 87**

Mon – Thurs 6pm – 2am  
Fri 6pm – Mon 6am  
(24hr at weekends)

## **Wellbeingmatterslanarkshire**

Lanarkshire's first stop for online mental health and wellbeing

[www.wellbeingmatterslanarkshire.co.uk](http://www.wellbeingmatterslanarkshire.co.uk)