

DISCLOSURE:
who and how

What is Stigma?

- Public stigma: prejudice and discrimination that steals rightful life opportunities
- Self-stigma: internalized prejudiced that leads to shame and “why try.”

Fixing Stigma?

- Public Stigma
 - Contact with people sharing their recovery stories
 - Health care professionals
- Self-stigma
 - Disclose one's experiences with mental illness/recovery

COMING OUT PROUD

to erase the stigma of mental illness

www.COPprogram.org

**COMING OUT PROUD
TO ERASE THE STIGMA
OF MENTAL ILLNESS:**

**STORIES AND ESSAYS OF
SOLIDARITY**



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People with Lived Experience: Pros of Coming Out

1. To Tell the Secret

“I just wanted someone else to know that I get hospitalized for manic-depression.”

“I don’t want to have to feel like I’m sneaking around with a secret.”

“I felt bad for having to keep private. I don’t want to feel bad anymore.”

2. Understanding

“I’m hoping others will understand not only my mental illness, but the difficulty of trying to keep it a secret.”

“I’d like someone to say to me, ‘I’ve had problems too.’”

3. Support and Assistance

“Sometimes I get sad. I’m looking for friends who can be supportive.”

“Can you give me a ride to the doctor?”

“Sometimes, I just need someone to talk to.”

4. Reasonable Accommodations

“It’s the law. When I ask for sensible help at work, you need to give it to me.”

“Can I come in a half hour late this week? I’m feeling a little down. I’ll make it up next week.”

Pros and Cons: Consumer of Mental Health Services

Table 1.2: Some Costs and Benefits of Coming Out with Mental Illness

Benefits	Costs

Pros and Cons: **PROVIDER** of Mental Health Services

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Benefits	Costs

Story Contents?

Consumer of Mental Health Services

- My name is...
- I have a disorder called...
- My childhood was...
- My mental illness started when...
- Unfortunately, it did not go away.
- My path to recovery was...
- Along the way, there was stigma.
- Despite this, I have achieved...

Story Contents?

PROVIDER of Mental Health Services

- My name is...
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Learn More about It

- **Coming Out Proud**
 - to Erase the Stigma of Mental Illness
 - Manual
 - Workbook
 - Training plan
 - Network
- www.COPprogram.org



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