

EACH MIND MATTERS

California's Mental Health Movement

The 7th International “Together Against Stigma” Conference Fact Sheet

About the Conference

- The [7th International Together Against Stigma Conference](#) is one of the largest mental health gatherings in the world, and the only one solely focused on the topic of stigma.
- The conference is a forum for people with lived experience, researchers, practitioners, advocates, members of the media and policymakers to discuss effective interventions to combat stigma and discrimination on an individual, community and societal level.
- This is the first time the International Together Against Stigma Conference will be in the U.S. since it began in 2001.
- It has previously been held in England, Germany, Japan, Turkey and twice in Canada.
- The conference is being held at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco from February 18-20.
- It is hosted collaboratively by the [California Mental Health Services Authority](#), World Psychiatric Association, California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions and the County Behavioral Health Directors Association.
- More than 500 delegates from across the nation and at least a dozen countries are expected to attend the conference.

About the Program

- The three-day agenda is structured around the theme of “[Each Mind Matters](#): Empowering Community Mental Health through Research, Practice, Policy and Advocacy.”
- The program includes more than 30 different options for educational symposiums, workshops and oral presentations to share research, programs, best practices and personal stories.
- Topics range from reducing social injustices to promoting cross-cultural collaboration to advocating for improved quality of services through research, policy, and practice.
- In particular the conference will be discussing and hearing from diverse youth and young adults with the aim of empowering the next generation as partners in eradicating stigma, preventing mental illness and supporting mental health promotion.

About the Speakers

Keynote speakers include:

- [Julio Abroleda-Florez](#), MD, PhD., forensic psychiatrist epidemiologist and professor emeritus at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada
- [Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola](#), MD, PhD., professor of clinical internal medicine, School of Medicine, University of California, Davis
- [Patrick Corrigan](#), PsyD., professor of psychology at the Illinois Institute of technology
- [Alison K. Malmou](#), founder and executive director of Active Minds, Inc.
- [Bernice A. Pescosolido](#), PhD., professor of sociology at Indiana University and director of the Indiana Consortium for Mental Health Services Research



- [Norman Sartorius](#), MD, MA, DPM, PhD, FRC Psych., first director of the division of Mental Health of the World Health Organization and the president of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) and of the Association of European Psychiatrists (EAP).
- [Gordon H. Smith](#), president and CEO of National Association of Broadcasters
- [Former Senator Darrell Steinberg](#), former California Senate president pro tempore
- [Heather Stuart](#), PhD., co-founder and current chair of the scientific section on Stigma and Mental Disorders for the World Psychiatric Association
- [Graham Thornicroft](#), professor of community psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry
- [Roger Wolfson](#), professional television and film writer and an attorney with a background in law, politics, news, and international diplomacy

About Stigma

- Stigma—the negative attitudes toward people with a mental health challenges, and the negative behaviors that result—is a major barrier preventing individuals from asking for support and, often, preventing support from being readily available.
- For many people living with a mental health challenge, the stigma they face is often worse than the illness itself.
- The stigma and discrimination they experience in their families, communities and places of work actually pose a greater challenge to their quality of life.
- And those with mental health challenges often internalize stigma. They come to self-stigmatize, which can be an obstacle to accessing care and to their quality of life.
- Stigma and the resulting discrimination keep many from seeking support when it’s needed. In fact, one study showed that people experiencing mental health challenges wait an average of 11 years from onset of symptoms before they get help.¹
- Stigma is not exclusive to any one country or culture: it is pervasive, encountered at all levels of society, institutions, among families and within the healthcare profession itself.
- According to the World Health Organization, there is a long history of stigma around mental illness in both low- and high-income countries, including stereotyping, fear, embarrassment, anger, and rejection or avoidance, which can lead to discrimination and the denial of even the most basic human rights.
- Reducing stigma requires a change in behavior and attitudes—toward acceptance, respect and equitable treatment of people living with mental illnesses.

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¹ Wang PS, Berglund PA, Olfson M, et al. Delays in initial treatment contact after first onset of a mental disorder. *Health Serv Res.* 2004;39:393–415. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1361014/>