Unity

Stigma of COVID — respecting others

Stigma is a bad feeling based on a belief about a group of people. A belief isn't always a fact.

In fact, many beliefs are simply myths. During COVID-19, fear and anxiety are creating stigmas. First responders, travelers and people of Asian descent are among groups that may suffer from stigma — due to fear, not fact.

Effect of stigma

COVID-19 is new and many people fear the unknown. When someone gets the virus, we may single out and mistreat those people.

Fear of stigma may also cause people to hide symptoms and avoid seeking treatment. That could even help cause the virus to spread. Finally, stigma can lead to violence, rejection and isolation. Imagine worrying about the virus and also worrying that no one will help you. Remember, we're all at risk and all need each other's support.
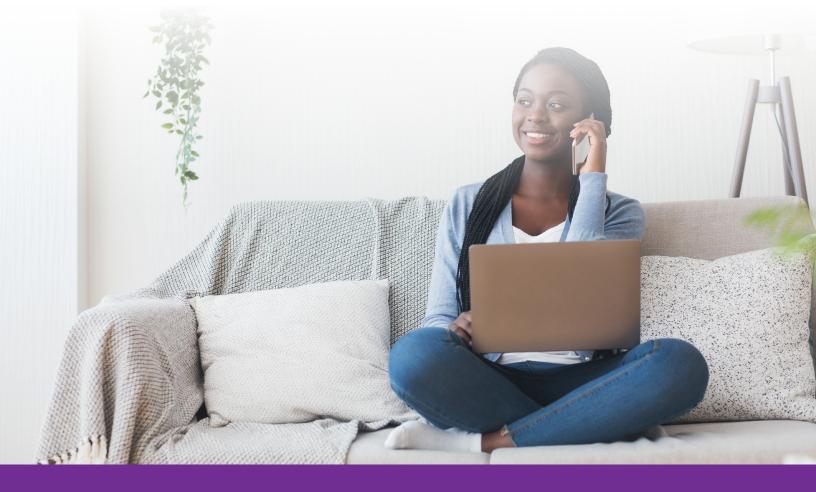
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How to take the stigma out of COVID-19

Speak up when you see or hear stigma. Here are some things you can do to help:

- **Address the myths.** It's not true that only certain races and ethnic groups get the virus. Believing this causes fear and that hurts everyone.

- **Share accurate information.** The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** are trustworthy sources for COVID-19 information.

- **Promote safety.** Wearing a mask and staying six feet away are measures that help lower the chance of getting the virus. It's better to be safe.

- **Be supportive.** Express your thanks to first responders you come across. Remember they're working hard to treat those who are sick.

We can help share the responsibility of good practices. Let us help you during this time. We're here for you 24/7.

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