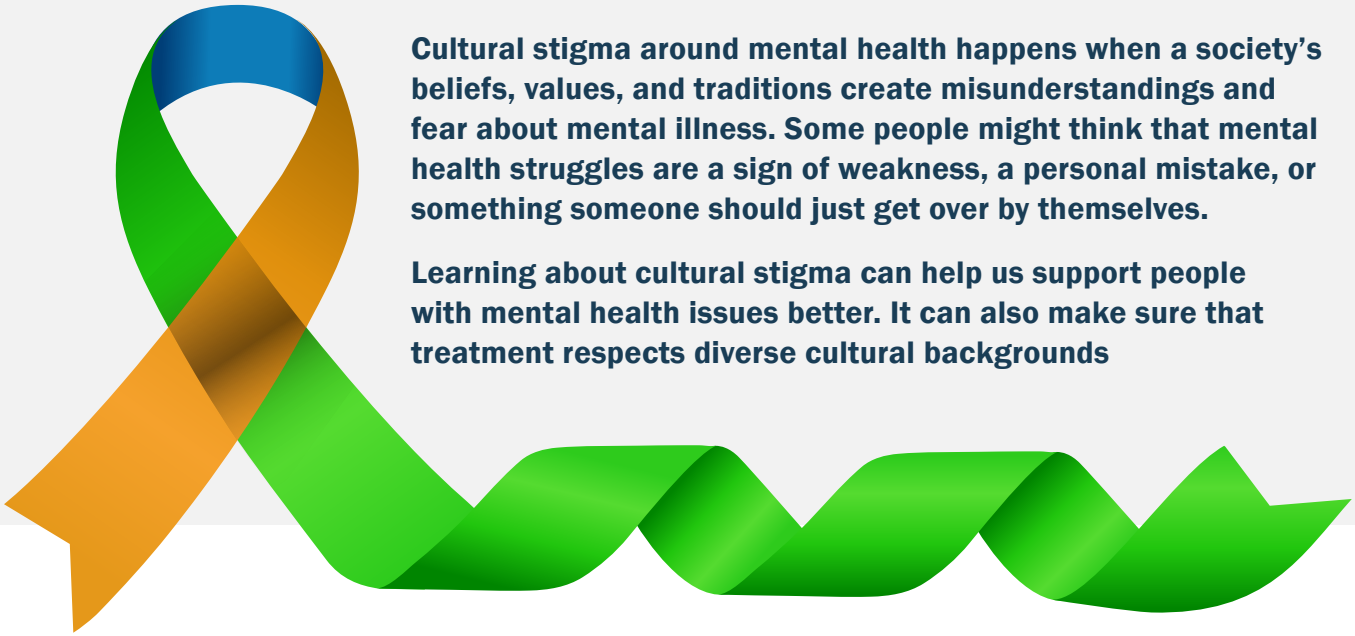
Cultural Stigma and Mental Health



Cultural stigma around mental health happens when a society's beliefs, values, and traditions create misunderstandings and fear about mental illness. Some people might think that mental health struggles are a sign of weakness, a personal mistake, or something someone should just get over by themselves.

Learning about cultural stigma can help us support people with mental health issues better. It can also make sure that treatment respects diverse cultural backgrounds

African

In some African cultures, people see mental illness as a spiritual problem, not a medical one. They believe it may be caused by a curse or evil spirits. This belief affects how it is treated. Some doctors may skip treatments that are proven by science and choose spiritual healing instead.

African American

Like other Western cultures, many African American communities believe in "pushing through" tough times. Mental illness is seen as a challenge to overcome through willpower, not through medical help. Also, African Americans may avoid getting professional treatment for mental illness because of a deep mistrust of the medical system.

Arabic

In Arab societies, where women often have less power and fewer roles outside the home, mental health struggles in women are seen as a weakness. Because of both their gender and the stigma around mental health, women are less likely to ask for help.

At the same time, older Arab men are also unlikely to seek help for their mental health. This is because their culture values strength and courage. Since men are usually the main earners in the family, the fear of being seen as weak — or even losing their job — can stop them from getting treatment.

Lastly, some people see mental illness as a punishment from God. Because of this belief, they may turn to a spiritual leader for help instead of going to a doctor or therapist.



Asian

In Asian and Eastern cultures, mental illness is sometimes seen as a personal weakness or a lack of self-control. These beliefs often stop people from getting treatment. Because family is so important in these cultures, seeking help for mental health can feel like it reflects badly on how someone was raised or their home life. To avoid bringing shame or embarrassment to their family, many people choose not to get treatment.

In Chinese culture, mental illness is often seen as an imbalance between the forces of Yin and Yang. Instead of seeing a doctor or therapist, some people may try other methods like acupuncture or traditional Chinese medicine.

Indian

Traditional Indian health practices, like Ayurveda, sometimes connect mental illness to the idea of karma. Karma is the belief that what you do in this life — or what you did in a past life — shapes what happens to you. So, some people may see mental illness as a "punishment" for something they did in a previous life. Because of this belief, people may not get help.

Latinx/Hispanic

In Latinx and Hispanic cultures, mental illness is often seen as a weakness or a lack of willpower. It can be considered shameful and taboo. Many people do not want to bring unwanted attention to their family because of their mental health struggles. They may also feel like they are not good enough. Because of these stigmas, people often avoid getting medical help.

Western

In Western cultures, there are still many misunderstandings about mental illness. A lot of people believe that mental disorders are linked to violence or crime. People who are diagnosed with a mental illness are often seen as unpredictable or even dangerous.

Even though Western cultures do recognize mental illness as a real health condition and are more open to talking about it, stigma still exists. This stigma can lead to people feeling lonely and facing discrimination.