

Destigmatizing Language

CDC Guidelines for the Healthcare Workforce

1

TALK ABOUT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & WELLNESS IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD WAY

Directly discussing the topic rather than tiptoeing around it builds a comfort level & makes it easier to seek support

2

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Demonstrate behavior & language in your own interaction and communication about wellness. Normalize conversations about behavioral health.

3

USE RESPECTFUL & PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

Always choose words and phrases that are neutral, respectful, and non-stigmatizing. Avoid labels or stereotypes.

4

HIGHLIGHT PERSONAL STORIES

Invite your staff to share stories of experiencing behavioral health challenges or challenges to seeking care. Avoid inadvertently pressuring anyone to share their story.

5

AVOID REINFORCING THE IDEA THAT A STIGMA EXISTS

The more we talk about stigma in the healthcare space the more we put its existence on their radar, even if the message is that we want to reduce it.

AVOID JARGON & USE STRAIGHTFORWARD, EASY TO UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE