

What is Stigma?

Stigma is a mark of disgrace which results from judgment by others. When an individual is labeled by their disorder they experience judgment and prejudice. Stigma brings experiences and feelings of shame, embarrassment, distress, hopelessness and reluctance to seek or accept help.

Why is it important to reduce Stigma?

The primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need is due to the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. Main reasons cited are shame and fear of judgment from friends, family and co-workers. Such judgment is often rooted in a lack of knowledge or training.

It is our goal to disseminate information and foster a stigma-free environment where people are free from judgment and can get the help they need to recover from disease.

Montville Township Stigma-Free Task Force

Aimee Puluso, Montville Health Officer

Pastor Tom Henion, Montville Reformed Church

Scott McGowan, Montville Police Department

John Michaud, New Pathway Counseling

Lauren Muriello, Well Being Therapy Center

Wendy Sefcik, Montville Resident

Veronica Tullo, Montville H.S. Student



For more information about the Montville Township Stigma-Free Initiative:

Website and Facebook links here

or call the Montville Township Health Department at 973-331-3316.

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP PROUD TO BE STIGMA-FREE

The **Montville Township Stigma-Free Communities Initiative** is part of a county-wide program which aims to eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. We are dedicated to raising awareness of these illnesses by creating an environment where affected individuals are supported and encouraged in their efforts to achieve wellness and recovery.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Website and facebook links here

“Stigma is the primary barrier to the achievement of wellness and recovery and full social integration.

It appears as discrimination, fear, distrust, and stereotyping. Stigma results in people avoiding working alongside, socializing with and/or living in close proximity to people with a mental illness.

Stigma deters people from seeking help for fear that their confidentiality will be breached. It gives insurers, public and private, tacit permission to restrict coverage for mental illnesses in ways that would not be tolerated for other illnesses.

Historically stigma has allowed mental health to be separated from mainstream health.

Mental health must be seen for what it is: a public health issue, no different than other medical disorders.

For New Jersey to reduce the burden of mental illness, to improve housing, to improve access to care and to achieve urgently needed public education about mental illnesses and mental health, stigma must no longer be tolerated.”

-- Governor Codey Task Force on Mental Health Final Report



The Montville Township Stigma-Free Task Force was formed in 2017 to help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders, thus promoting wellness and recovery in our community. The goals of the Task Force are to:

- Raise awareness of stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders.
- Raise awareness of the importance of reducing stigma to encourage those afflicted to seek treatment.
- Raise awareness of the many local mental health and recovery resources available so that no resident needs to feel hopeless or alone.
- Encourage residents to break down barriers and be mindful of their mental health and ask for help when needed.

What can I do to help?

- Don't use disrespectful terms to describe people with mental illness or substance use disorders.
- Don't blame people with mental illness or substance use disorders for their afflictions.
- Don't be afraid of people with mental illness or substance use disorders.
- Be a role model. Always treat people with mental illness and substance use disorders with respect, and encourage others around you to do the same.
- Declare your home or business to be a Stigma-Free Zone. Display Stigma-Free decals and ribbons, and encourage others to participate.
- Declare your public events to be Stigma-Free and distribute Stigma-Free pamphlets and promotional items at them. Your event will be promoted on our website event calendar and social media sites.
- Volunteer at one of the many Stigma-Free events here in Montville Township. A calendar of events can be found on our website.