

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and stigmata: Learning about prejudice and discrimination against people with mental illness



Stigma has a historical origin and, despite the advances made in different social environments. Stigma is defined as a negative belief that a group holds about a topic, place, or group of people. In the case of children, one of the conditions that generates the most prejudice is ADHD.

The stigma towards certain mental illnesses can occur consciously and unconsciously, and its consequences can affect both the physical and mental health of those who suffer from it. Addressing this situation is very important to improve the quality of life of people living with these conditions and other mental illnesses, as well as promoting a fairer society.

Consequences associated with prejudice and discrimination:

- Low self-esteem.
- Social isolation.
- Mental health problems, such as stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Delay in seeking professional help to receive the appropriate treatment.
- Difficulty complying with physical and mental health treatments.
- Lack of support from family and friends.
- Scarce employment and education opportunities.
- Risk of suffering physical and mental violence.
- Deterioration of mental health.
- Distrust in the health system.

Myths and realities that people with ADHD may face:

- **Myth:** Kids with ADHD can't focus on anything for long.
Fact: Kids can focus and pay attention if the content is stimulating and engaging.

- **Myth:** If a child isn't hyperactive, they can't have attention deficit.



Fact: Not all children with attention deficit disorder have hyperactivity.

- **Myth:** Only boys have ADHD.

Fact: Although diagnosis is more common in boys, girls can also have ADHD and often have difficulty with attention.

- **Myth:** ADHD is a problem that only occurs in childhood and then goes away.

Fact: This condition can persist in children, youth, and adults. The way it presents itself may change over time, but that doesn't mean it goes away.



How to reduce and eliminate prejudice and discrimination?

- Have an open dialogue about mental health.
- Inform yourself and others about misperceptions and misconceptions.
- Use simple, sensitive language when interacting with people.
- Promote equality across the board.
- Be compassionate to people suffering from mental illness.
- Consider mental health treatment as seriously as physical health treatment.
- Surround yourself with positive people who foster a supportive environment.



If you are going through a situation where you feel prejudiced against or discriminated against, seek help from a mental health professional.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your treatment, please visit your primary care physician or call the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health

787-641-9133

References:

<https://www.psychiatry.org/Patients-Families/La-Salud-Mental/Estigma/Que-es-estigma-prejuicio-discriminacion>
<https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/que-es-la-salud-mental/mitos-realidades>

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