



StandAgainstStigma@shastacounty.gov
(530) 229-8484



Sponsored by the Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency in conjunction with the Stand Against Stigma Committee, and many community partners and advisory boards. Funding is provided through the Mental Health Services Act.

6/2024

**LET'S TALK
ABOUT STIGMA**

**Understanding mental health
and substance use recovery.**

standagainststigma.com

What is stigma?

Stigma is a negative, often unfair, set of beliefs about a group of people. It leads people to assume things about others, instead of taking time to get to know them. It creates fear, shame and can lead to discrimination.

People living with mental illness and/or addiction experience stigma. It can prevent them from getting the help they need. It can also rob them of hope and their ability and desire to be a part of their community.

According to 2022 research:

- **About half of us** will have a diagnosable mental health condition within our lifetime.
- In the United States, 48.7 million people aged 12 or older had a substance use disorder in the past year.
- 1 in 20 adults aged 18 or older experienced serious thoughts of suicide.

This means it is very likely you have contact with someone facing these challenges every day. The person could be a family member, neighbor, friend or coworker.

Mental Health America. (n.d.). *Quick Facts and Statistics About Mental Health*. Retrieved from Mental Health America: mhanational.org/mentalhealthfacts

Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2023). *Highlights for the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Retrieved from samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt42731/2022-nsduh-main-highlights.pdf



Where is stigma found?

Stigma is found throughout the community. It shows up in homes, workplaces, schools, the news, churches, health care settings and even in the mental health system itself.

Because stigma is present in these settings, some people feel the risk of discrimination and social isolation is too high. This can outweigh their desire to seek help. It can also cause a person to retreat from social situations, like work or school.

This is why it is important to learn and help others understand the stigmas attached to mental illness, suicide and addiction. With knowledge comes the ability to challenge these misconceptions.

And, when stigma is removed, hope sets in, people recover and make important contributions to the world.

What is self-stigma?

Stigma doesn't always come from others. Sometimes people living with mental illness or addiction agree with stigma and apply it to themselves. They take the negative or false beliefs and direct them inward. This causes shame and feelings of low self-worth.

It's important to learn how to challenge, cope and heal from self-stigma. Ways to overcome self-stigma include getting treatment, staying connected to others and speaking up when you can.



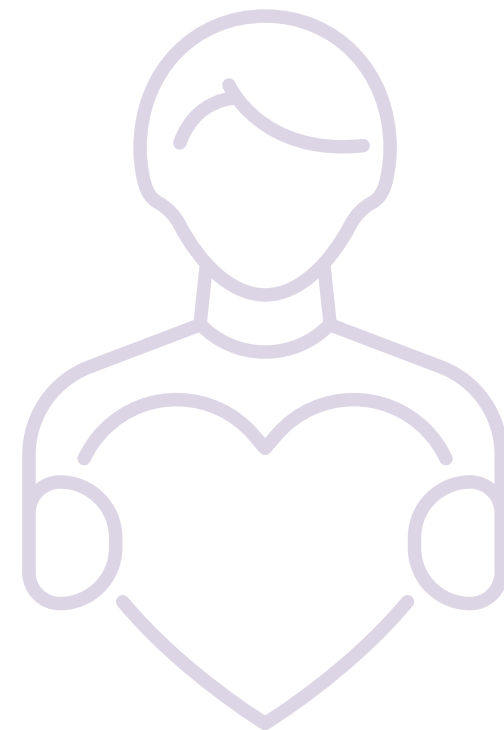
What can you do about stigma?

There are many things you can do to help yourself and others:

- **Learn** and share the facts about mental illness, suicide and addiction.
- **Listen** to people who have lived experience with recovery with an open mind.
- Language is personal. **Ask** people what words they find respectful in describing their experiences. Some people want to use “person first language.” Others might prefer different words and ways of using them.
- Listen with **care** as your loved ones share their challenges with you. Your support can make all the difference.
- Think of ways to **be inclusive**. Community and a sense of purpose are important parts of recovery.
- Landlords, employers and teachers can **pledge** to provide reasonable accommodations for people living with a behavioral health challenge.

What is Stand Against Stigma?

Stand Against Stigma is a program run by Shasta County Health and Human Services (HHSA) that aims to end stigma surrounding mental health and substance use challenges, suicide and suicide loss. The program offers a variety of activities that reduce stigma in the community, which are shared in the next few pages.



Brave Faces



Cree

Who are Brave Faces?

Brave Faces Advocates are Shasta County locals who share their recovery stories to fight stigma. Their stories break down myths and stereotypes. They highlight commonalities, breaking down the “otherness” that stigma creates.

Brave Faces come from diverse backgrounds—race/ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ+ and religious/spiritual beliefs. They may have experience with mental illness, substance use, homelessness, the justice system, or a combination of these.

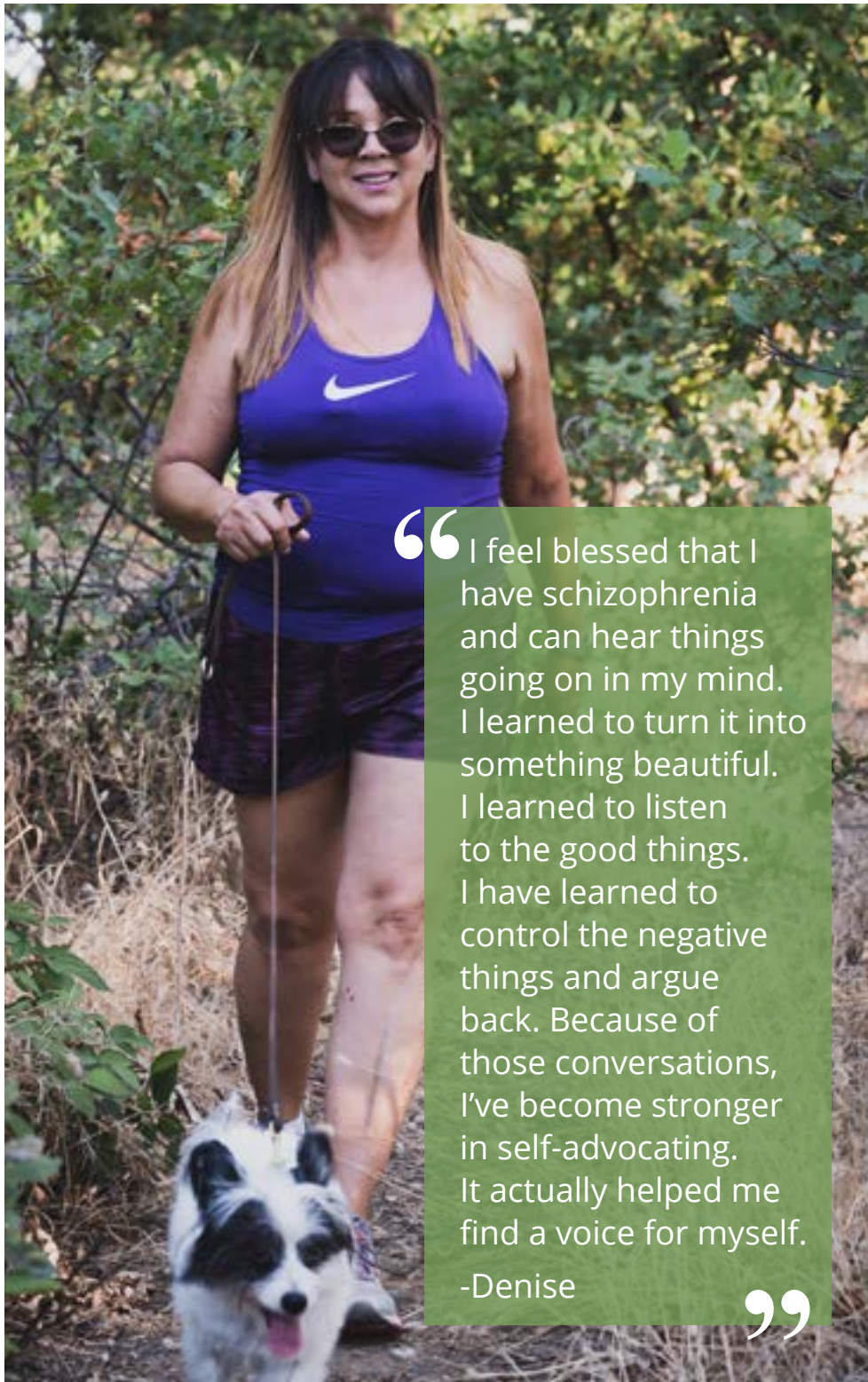
The Brave Faces Gallery & Speaker’s Bureau was started in 2012. Since then, Advocates have spoken to more than 100 different community groups.

Invite a Brave Faces Advocate to speak to your business, organization or school. Presentations are **free** for any audience within Shasta County. Email **StandAgainstStigma@shastacounty.gov** for more information.

If you’re interested in becoming a Brave Face, contact us.



“ One of the things that was imposed on me in my childhood was that if I showed emotion, I got beat for it. If I cried, I got beat for it. If I cried while I was getting beat, I got beat more. Through therapy and the trusting relationship I have with my wife, I've learned to be comfortable with vulnerability and expressing emotion. ”
-Keith



“ I feel blessed that I have schizophrenia and can hear things going on in my mind. I learned to turn it into something beautiful. I learned to listen to the good things. I have learned to control the negative things and argue back. Because of those conversations, I've become stronger in self-advocating. It actually helped me find a voice for myself. -Denise ”



“ Stigma to me is someone else's belief system that they put on others. People fear what they don't know. They're usually stereotypes. One of the things I've had to learn is that if I want others to accept me for who I am, that it is important for me to accept them for who they are and what they believe. We all have differences, we all believe different things. Loving each other is what is most important. ”
-David

“It’s been a challenging and rewarding journey. I’ve learned, with help, how to take care of myself and make choices that are best for me.”
-Cherish



“ Growing up, kids would make me play Cowboys and Indians, tie me up and ‘scalp me,’ cutting my hair. At 12, I discovered alcohol, and it helped me escape those feelings of not belonging. It began my addiction that would last 33 years until I found my way back to my tribal traditions. ”

-David



Interested in sharing your recovery story?

If you are a Shasta County resident living with mental health and/or substance use challenges, have sustained recovery and would like to share your story, please reach out.

Email StandAgainstStigma@shastacounty.gov or call (530) 229-8484 to find out more about the process of becoming a Brave Face.



Get involved

Join the movement to end stigma in Shasta County.



Stand Against Stigma Committee

Stand Against Stigma Committee has been working to end stigma in Shasta County since 2008. Its mission is to:

- Promote mental wellness.
- Increase community awareness of mental health.
- End the stigma surrounding mental illness, substance use, suicide and suicide loss.

The committee helps brainstorm, guide and promote Stand Against Stigma activities.

Meetings are open to everyone. They typically include a presentation from a Brave Faces Advocate or a local mental health resource.

Visit StandAgainstStigma.com/Committee for the meeting schedule, agendas and minutes.

Becoming Brave

Unsure whether to tell your boss about your mental health challenge?

Worried how friends or relatives might judge you if they knew about your diagnosis?

Take control of your mental health story with our **free**, peer led Becoming Brave training.

Based on a national curriculum, this one-day training has three primary goals:

1. Weighing the pros and cons of sharing personal experience with mental health.
2. Developing strategies for safer sharing.
3. Crafting one's story into a meaningful message.

Becoming Brave can also be the first step to becoming a Brave Faces Advocate. Visit StandAgainstStigma.com/Becoming-Brave to learn more.



Hope is Alive! Open Mic

Has creating music, rhymes or poetry given you light in dark times, or shed light on a hidden struggle? Come celebrate how art heals!

Spoken word artists, poets, rappers, country/western singers, dancers—all performers are welcome! First timers are encouraged to get on stage.

Hope Is Alive! Open Mic events are organized by the Stand Against Stigma Committee to raise awareness about mental health struggles, substance use challenges, suicide and suicide loss. Art and performance are used to fight stereotypes, promote healing and understanding.



Minds Matter Mental Health Resource Fair

May is Mental Health Month. To raise awareness, the Stand Against Stigma Committee organizes the annual Minds Matter Mental Health Resource Fair.

The event brings together treatment providers, artists and performers. It is a pop-up hub for people to get information about local mental health and substance use resources, feel a sense of community and have fun!



Recovery Happens

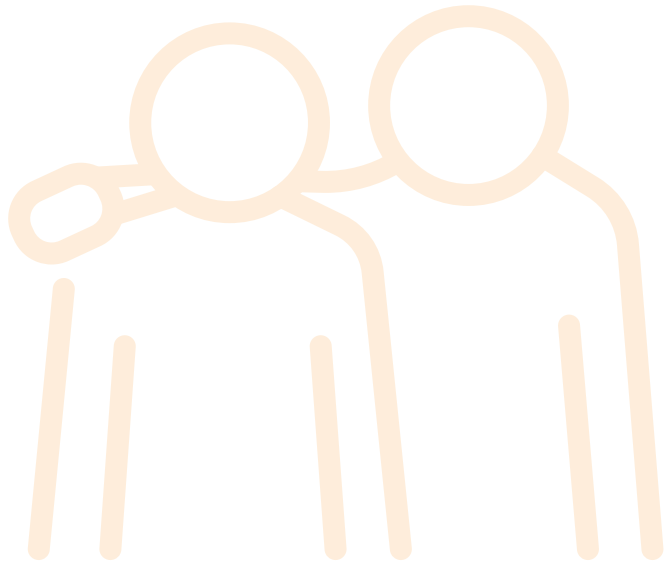
Recovery is better together!

This annual September event is organized in observance of Recovery Happens Month. It is a time when we celebrate the gains made by people in recovery and unite to break down stigma related to substance use challenges.

Peers, Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment providers, sober living homes, health clinics and government agencies all come together to plan the event. The planning committee is open to everyone in the community who supports recovery.



Shasta County Resources



Where to Start

If you're new to the world of mental health services, you may have many questions:

What are the signs of mental illness?

When should I ask for help?

Who do I contact?

What is therapy like?

What should I know about medication?

When will I start to feel better?

[StandAgainstStigma.com/Where-to-Start](https://standagainststigma.com/where-to-start) has helpful information for people who are starting a recovery journey. Get answers to the questions above, and more.

Community & Peer Support

Community plays a significant role in recovery. The hours spent with a mental health professional are relatively few compared to time outside of treatment. Being connected to a non-judgmental community can help fill that gap. It also gives a person a chance to work on their wellness with the support of others, reducing isolation and loneliness.

Shasta County is fortunate to have trained Peer Support Specialists and two wellness centers offering free support groups, workshops, trainings, and other activities that promote mental wellbeing. Services are free and anyone in the community can participate.



Scan the QR Code for Community Support Resources.



Quick Resource Guide

A few key behavioral health resources available to people living in Shasta County:

Emergency Mental Health Care: When someone is in danger of harming themselves or others, call 9-1-1 or go to the Emergency Room.

Urgent Mental Health Care: When someone is in distress and safety is not an issue.

Hill Country CARE Center | (530) 691-4446
1401 Gold St., Redding | Mon.–Fri., Noon–9 p.m.
Sat., Sun. & Holidays, 11 a.m.–9 p.m.

Shasta County Mental Health | (530) 225-5252
2640 Breslauer Way, Redding | Walk in Mon.–Fri.
8 a.m.–5 p.m., Toll free, 24-hr: (888) 385-5201

Substance Use Recovery:

People with Partnership HealthPlan or Medi-Cal insurance can call (855) 765-9703 to connect with the Wellness and Recovery Program.

People with private insurance can contact their insurance company or primary care provider.

Additional Resources:

Call 2-1-1 or visit 211Norcal.org/Shasta for more resources, including help with food, housing and other needs.