

PEOPLE MATTER,TM WORDS MATTER

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE **MENTAL HEALTH** CONDITIONS?

Language matters in compassionate care, including what you say behind closed doors with co-workers, friends or family. Understanding the prevalence of mental health conditions is an important step in how you perceive individuals and in destigmatizing mental illness. Consider the following scenarios to educate yourself and others on how to fight stigma with facts.

IF YOU HEAR THIS...

- ▶ I don't know many people with mental health disorders.
- ▶ Not that many people can have anxiety — even if they do, they should just get a grip.
- ▶ I don't want to work with them. They have some crazy disorder.
- ▶ Please don't invite them to the office party. They are so weird/sad and won't come anyway.
- ▶ We should focus more on physical ailments and not mental health.
- ▶ They don't act depressed.

[THESE WORDS PROPAGATE STIGMA AND DON'T RECOGNIZE A PERSON'S VALUE.]

CONSIDER RESPONDING WITH...

- Almost everyone knows someone who has or had a mental illness. Research shows 1 in 5 people have a mental health condition.
- An estimated 31% of Americans experience anxiety at some point in their lives. It can be difficult to control without the appropriate tools and resources.
- Great ideas come from all sorts of people. There are tons of examples of CEOs, celebrities and respected leaders with a mental health diagnosis.
- We should try to include her/him/them. Many people with behavioral diagnoses feel excluded at work and in social settings.
- Mental illness is a physical brain disorder. Consequences are dire if we don't treat the whole person. A person's lifespan can be diminished by up to 20 years compared to peers without mental illness.
- 19 million people are living with depression, and it affects each person differently.

[THESE WORDS SHOW COMPASSION AND COMBAT STIGMA.]

Sources include CDC and the National Institute of Mental Health.
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