

Day 6 – Mental Health Stigma & Awareness

“The more we can educate, support and normalize mental health concerns, the easier it becomes for an individual to reach out for help and not suffer alone,” - Jill Daino, LCSW, a Talkspace therapist

Mental health plays an important role in the way that we navigate life. [Mental Health](#) includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Meanwhile, pandemic-related stress is having a disproportionate reach on BIPOC communities with [71% reporting anxiety over getting coronavirus vs. white adults at 59%; as well as a 61% to 49% rate of reporting getting anxiety over access to basic needs, and 59% to 46% for access to health care](#). BIPOC communities also experience a broader range of racial trauma originating from chronic exposure to discriminatory and oppressive systems. There is less research focusing on the relationship between Latinxs and mental health stigma. A study conducted among Latinx college students demonstrated that those with higher levels of stigma were less open to seeking mental health treatment. There is some evidence that mental health stigma is significantly involved in creating shame and impacting treatment seeking among Latinx, which suggests that further examination is needed.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood and behavior could be affected. Research shows that about 20% of the population suffers from a mental illness each year. People with [mental health challenges](#) and their families may have to cope with symptoms as they seek healing and recovery. But, with treatment, people learn to function, make valuable contributions and lead fulfilling lives. If you are worried about your mental health, you can start by talking to friends, family members, a spiritual counselor or your physician about your concerns. Help is available.

Today’s Challenge:

OPTION 1: Watch Sangu Delle’s Ted talk episode, [There's No Shame in Taking Care of your Mental Health](#) on how he confronts his own deep prejudice about mental health and learning to handle anxiety in a society that’s uncomfortable with emotions. “Being honest about how we feel doesn’t make us weak – it makes us human.” (9 minutes)

OPTION 2: Go deeper and take the [Pledge to be Stigma Free](#), created by the National Association on Mental Illness. Let others know that there is hope and understanding. You can change the way the world sees mental health. (10 minutes)

TIP: Proceed as a guest to access their library of additional research and information on mental health, providing support, seeking treatment and other topics.

OPTION 3: Review this [Changing the Way We Think About Mental Health infographic](#) produced by Mental Health America. (5 minutes)

OPTION 4: [Watch this video](#) about barriers that make it harder for people of color to access mental health care. (4 minutes)