

# Transforming Stigma into Strength

During the next year, one in five people will experience a mental health challenge, and 1.5 million people will attempt to die by suicide. *The stigma surrounding mental health is an enormous barrier to people seeking treatment and getting the help they need.*

**Objective:** Simple and practical tools you can use to transform stigma in your life in the next 24 hours.

## Key Takeaways

Some reasons that stigma exists:

- **The Law of Inclusion & Exclusion:** Everyone wants to be part of groups—even those people who say they hate people. We all know who is in a group and who isn't. No one wants to feel like the weird one.
- **The Law of Confusion & Frustration:** Mental health challenges are confusing and frustrating. Unlike other medical issues, mental health challenges don't often reveal themselves immediately. They are eventually uncovered through behavior patterns and a crisis.

These laws affect people who are struggling with mental health challenges and their loved ones through the Stigma Cycle™:

1. Stigma starts with shame.
2. Shame leads to silence.
3. Silence leads to sabotage, social injustice, self-destructive behavior and suicide.
4. The cycle goes back to shame and keeps repeating itself.

## How to Transform Stigma

### Transforming Shame through CARE (Self-Care)

- Do a brain dump when you feel overwhelmed.
- Set boundaries around your mobile device, social media and news.
- Ask yourself these questions throughout the day:
  1. What am I feeling?
  2. Where is it located?
  3. What do I need right now?

### Transform Silence through CONVERSATION

- There are secrets that you've never shared with anyone and they may be holding you hostage (mentally).
- Therapy and counseling are for self-discovery and growth.
- Talk about mental health in everyday conversations.

### Transform Sabotage, Social Injustice, Self-Destructive Behavior & Suicide Through CONNECTION

- Identify if someone is struggling through the 3 Outs™:
  1. Out of Character
  2. Out of Nowhere
  3. Out of the Group
- Don't give advice. Instead:
  1. Say, "Help me understand."
  2. Ask, "How can I support you?"
  3. Ask, "What kind of flexibility do you need from me?"
- See others and be seen

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