



WPA Section on Stigma and Mental Illness

Action Plan (2014 – 2017)

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SECTION DESCRIPTION

Stigma creates a vicious cycle of discrimination and social exclusion for those who suffer from a mental disorder and all of those who are associated with them. Stigma is the single most important barrier to quality of life of mental health consumers and family members—more so than the illness itself—and a major impediment to mental health reform and development. As the majority of people with a mental illness are now treated in community settings, negative public opinions can have potent consequences for them and their families. Consequences of stigma such as unemployment, lack of housing, diminished self-esteem, and weak social support can be major obstacles to recovery, influence long term prognosis, and promote disability. Stigma and the expectation of stigma can also produce serious disruptions in family relationships and reduce normal social interactions because of a desire for secrecy.

Goals:

The Stigma Section of the World Psychiatric Association—through its network of international members--engages in scholarly, scientific, and public health activities designed to reduce stigma and discrimination because of mental disorders and improve social inclusion for people with mental illness and their families. More specifically the Stigma Section's goals are to:

- **GOAL 1:** Disseminate information about stigma and discrimination because of mental disorders through academic and technical publications, and through symposia and courses offered at WPA regional meetings and congresses.
- **GOAL 2:** Advance scientific knowledge about stigma through collaborative research and evaluation.
- **GOAL 3:** Provide training opportunities to support the development of effective programs to fight stigma and discrimination because of mental disorders.

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GOAL 1: Disseminate information:

- Develop a position paper describing the best practices in stigma reduction.
- Disseminate an updated publication directory outlining member's contributions to the scientific literature.
- Contribute to the WPA web site.

GOAL 2: Advance scientific knowledge:

- Members will continue to conduct cutting edge research on stigma and stigma reduction and contribute to the scientific literature.
- Co-sponsor the 7th Together Against Stigma Conference to be held in San Francisco, February 2015.
- Contribute to the scientific program of World Congresses and other WPA-sponsored meetings.
- Recruit next Together Against Stigma Conference site.
- Examine the feasibility of setting up an on-line journal.

GOAL 3: Provide training opportunities:

- Continue to provide workshops on “How to Set Up and Anti-stigma Program”
- Examine the feasibility of creating an on-line course to set up and evaluate an anti-stigma program.
- Members will continue to participate in WPA meetings and congresses by presenting scientific symposia, courses, and workshops.