



Flash Report Webinar on stigma related to mental health 10 October 2024

To mark World Mental Health Day, the European Commission organised a joint webinar with Mental Health Europe (MHE) and the World Health Organisation - Regional Office for Europe (WHO) on mental health stigma and discrimination. The webinar included contributions of experts with lived experience. More than 150 participants representing Member States, stakeholders and citizens attended the event.

Views of the stakeholders

After defining the concepts of stigma and discrimination, MHE shared their knowledge on how mental health stigma (self-stigma and external stigma) and discrimination manifest in various contexts, and the way forward to address them. MHE emphasised the importance of changing the narrative through the power of language, fostering a mentally healthy community, as well as promoting co-creation among key stakeholders for positive mental health outcomes.

A young expert with lived experience representing Euro Youth Mental Health shared his experience of the impact of stigma and discrimination.

EU support package against stigma

The European Commission presented the [EU support package on stigma](#), which is a flagship initiative under the Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health. The work was developed in cooperation with Member States and stakeholders, and consists of:

- An [EU spotlight section](#) in the WHO toolkit on stigma and discrimination;
- A awareness campaign ([#InthisTogether](#));
- A selection of [best and promising practices](#) that are available in the EU repository on mental health at the EU Best Practice Portal;
- A background paper on addressing stigma and discrimination.

The co-chair of the Member States group on stigma under the Public Health Expert Group, presented the discussion paper on stigma developed with input from national experts, MHE and WHO.

The European Commission presented the [#InthisTogether](#) campaign to raise awareness on stigma around anxiety and depression, which was launched on 10 October. The campaign focuses on teenagers and young adults, and media and influencers. An update had been provided on the [webinar](#) held on 9 October for journalists on how to talk about mental health in the media.

The practice ‘One of Us’

The Danish Health Authority presented ‘One of Us’, the national anti-stigma initiative at the workplace. Key elements for a successful implementation were cultural adaptation, the need

for flexibility and communication training of ambassadors. The [‘One of Us’](#) initiative has been identified as a best practice under the [EU Best Practice Portal](#).

A toolkit to support work against stigma

The WHO presented their [Mosaic Toolkit](#), which was launched on 10 October. It pursues the goal of lowering entry barriers for individuals and organisations who have yet not been conducting anti-stigma activities. The presentation also included references to the steps to reduce stigma and discrimination as well as international case-studies, demonstrating how stigma can appear in any socio-economic and geographical context.

The presentation was followed by an intervention from an expert with lived experience, representing the National Institute of Mental Health in Czechia.

Discussion

During an interactive session with the participants, two polls were carried out. The first one asked the participants’ opinion on the main barriers to reducing mental health stigma, to which most pointed to a lack of policies and political will. The second poll asked what kind of actions are needed to reduce stigma at societal level, with the majority of replies referring to the need for co-creating actions with experts by experience.

Finally, a representative of the Member State-led joint actions PreventNCD and MENTOR, explained the importance of taking forward the principles and recommendations raised in the presentations and discussion on how to address stigma and discrimination in these joint actions.

Conclusion

The Chair thanked speakers and participants for the interesting discussions and closed the meeting.