



Pacific Southwest

RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE REGIONAL CENTER

Preventing and Reducing Stigma: Challenging our thinking, creating connections, and changing systems

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Presenter Disclaimer

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Within the first weeks of life¹

Our brains learn to sort, group, and generalize.



We learn to sort by¹...



By Shape



By Size



By Color

We learn to sort by¹...



By Texture



By Taste



By Sound

Sorting is *Inherent* and *Adaptive*

By 6 months¹

We typically begin to sort and derive *meaning* from facial expressions.

“Is this face familiar?”

“Is this face safe?”

“Is this face a threat to me?”



Angry



Angry Open



Happy



Happy Open



Disgusted



Disgusted Open



Fearful



Fearful Open



Neutral



Neutral Open



Sad



Sad Open



Surprised

Our culture trains us to sort and distinguish^{1,2}



Stigma as Sorting Gone Wrong¹



Implicit Bias

Is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors.

National Institute of Health, 2020

Types Of Implicit Bias¹



Affinity Bias

Feeling a
connection to
those similar
to us



Halo Effect

Projecting positive
qualities onto
people without
actually knowing
them

Types Of Implicit Bias¹



Confirmation Bias

Looking to confirm our own opinions and pre-existing ideas.



Perception Bias

Stereotypes and assumptions about different groups

Stigma and lack of Social Connection³

Over four decades of research has produced robust evidence that lacking social connection—and in particular, scoring high on measures of social isolation—is associated with a significantly increased risk for early death from all causes.

2020 Consensus Study Report, National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine

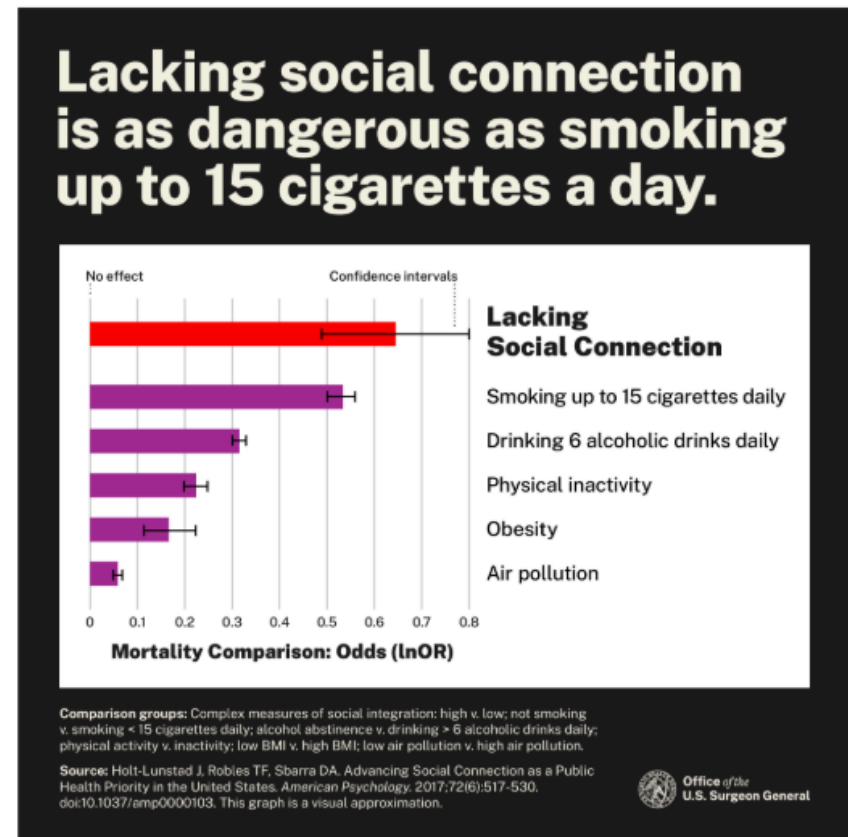


FIGURE 4: Lacking social connection is as dangerous as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.

A Look at the Components of Stigma⁴



Stereotypes
Ideas



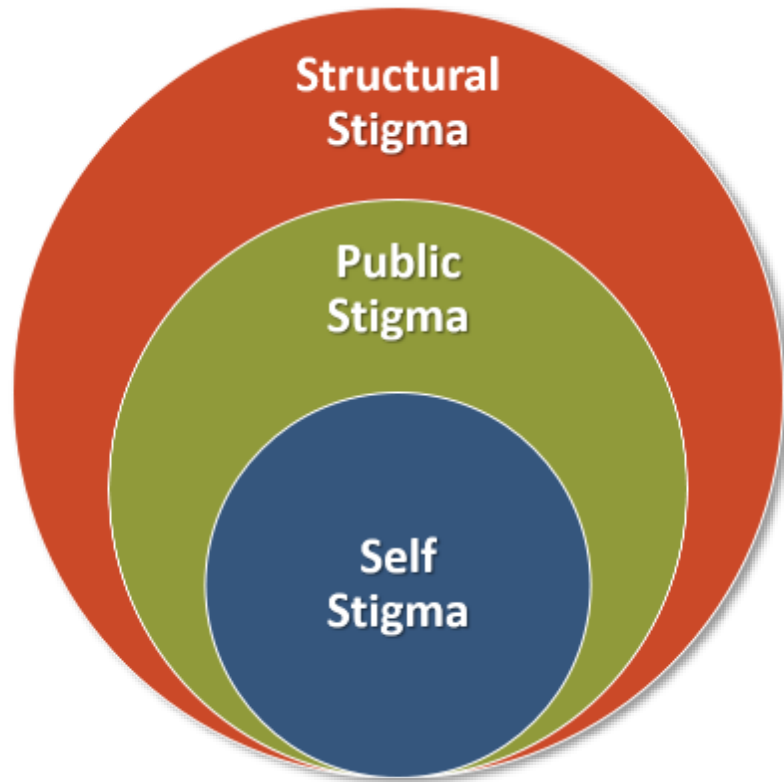
Prejudice
Beliefs



Discrimination
Actions



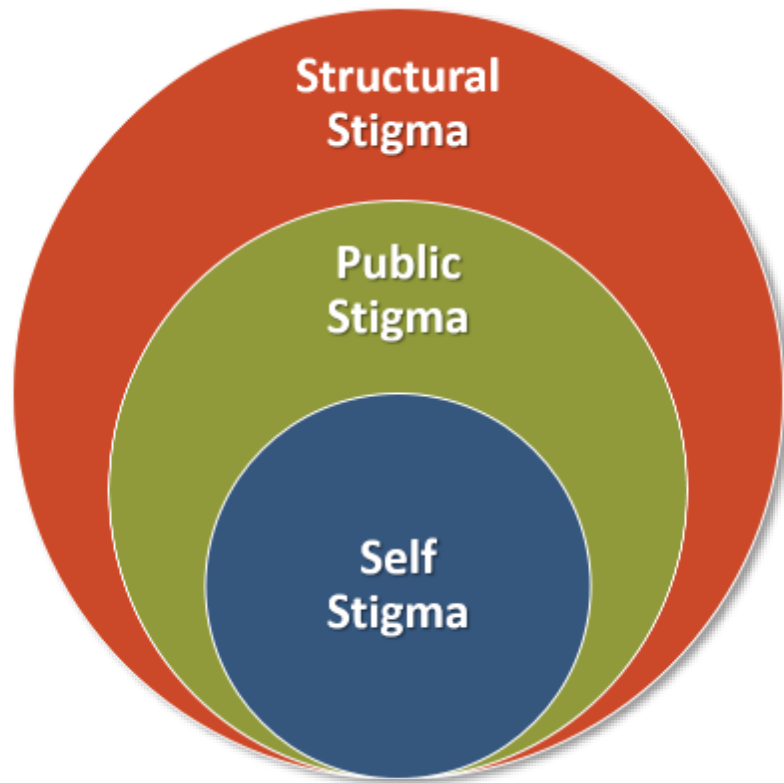
Stigma on Three Levels⁴



Stigma is a dynamic multidimensional, multilevel phenomenon that occurs at three levels of society—**structural** (laws, regulations, policies), **public** (attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals and groups), and **self-stigma** (internalized negative stereotypes).

(National Academies Press, 2016)

Stigma on Three Levels⁴



Examples:

State health agency boards who make decisions, with no representation of individuals with lived experience

Neighborhood perspectives regarding the presence of drug activity

Believing that you're not worth treatment

(National Academies Press, 2016)

What Works

*Structural Stigma*⁴

Professional Education

Advocacy

Legal

Policy



National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2016).
Ending Discrimination Against People With Mental and Substance Use
Disorders: The Evidence for Stigma Change.

What Works *Public Stigma*⁴

Mass Media Messaging

Education

Community Programming

Contact Strategies



National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2016).
Ending Discrimination Against People With Mental and Substance Use
Disorders: The Evidence for Stigma Change.

What Works *Self-Stigma*⁴

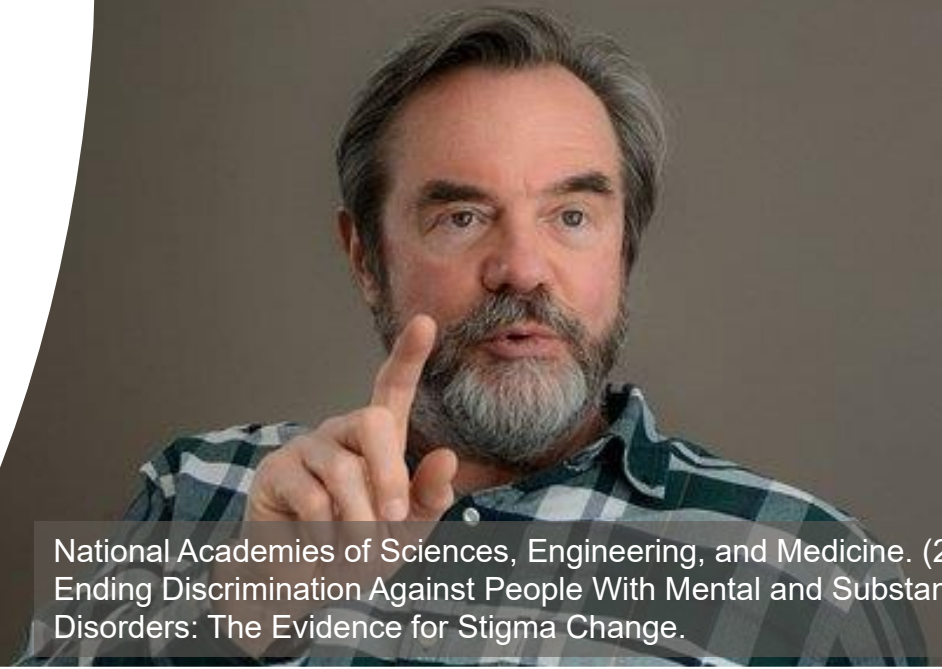
Education

Empowerment

Peer Support

Interventions Promote:

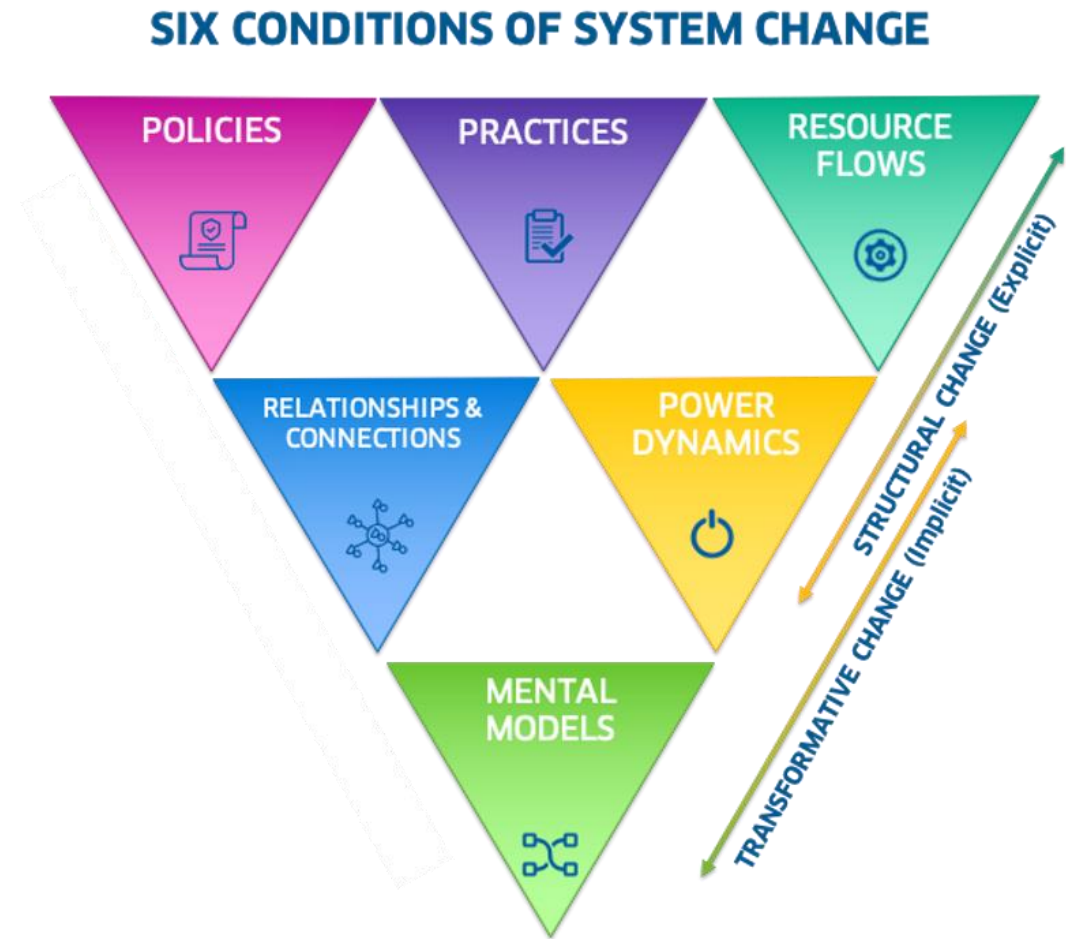
- The inherent dignity of the individual
- Coping Skills
- Social Connection
- Resilience



National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2016).
Ending Discrimination Against People With Mental and Substance Use
Disorders: The Evidence for Stigma Change.

The Conditions of System Change⁵

Addressing Stigma through systems change



A Role for Every Sector & Everyone⁴



One Example: Cross Region 10 Technology Transfer Center Collaborative

[Coming Together to Rethink Behavioral Health: Integrating Practice, Reducing Stigma, and Achieving Outcomes. A Skagit County Leadership Learning Collaborative](#)

July 11&12, 2023



Resources for further exploration

- [What is Stigma?](#) Addiction Policy Forum
- [Preventing and Reducing Stigma](#), The Great Lakes PTTC
- [Intersection of Prevention and Recovery: Making the Connection](#), Pacific Southwest PTTC
- [Are We in A Connection Crisis?](#), Episode #8 The Mankind Podcast
- [Systems Thinking Toolkit](#), FSG

References

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2. Intersect, Well-being and Identity. (n.d.). *Culture*. Retrieved June 4, 2024, from <http://www.lgbtiqintersect.org.au/learning-modules/culture/>
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5. Kania, J., Kramer, M., & Senge, P. (2018, June). *The water of systems change*. Retrieved June 1, 2024, from https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/



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