Stigma and Resilience

Source: CDC- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html>

**Knowing and sharing Facts can help stop stigma**

Public health emergencies, such as the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), are stressful times for people and communities. Fear and anxiety about a disease can lead to social ***stigma*** toward people, places, or things. For example, stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate a disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease. Stigma can also occur after a person has been released from COVID-19 quarantine even though they are not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others.

It is important to remember that people – including those of Asian descent – who do not live in or have not recently been in an area of ongoing spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, or have not been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 are not at greater risk of spreading COVID-19 than other Americans.

Some groups of people who may be experiencing stigma because of COVID-19 include:

* Persons of Asian descent
* People who have traveled
* Emergency responders or healthcare professionals

Stigma hurts everyone by creating fear or anger towards other people.

Stigmatized groups may be subjected to:

* Social avoidance or rejection
* Denials of healthcare, education, housing or employment
* Physical violence.

Stigma affects the emotional or ***mental health*** of stigmatized groups and the communities they live in. Stopping stigma is important to making communities and community members ***resilient***.

Everyone can help stop stigma related to COVID-19 by [knowing the facts](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts.html) and sharing them with others in your community.

Communicators and public health officials can help counter stigma during the COVID-19 response.

* Maintain privacy and confidentiality of those seeking healthcare and those who may be part of any contact investigation.
* Quickly communicate the risk or lack of risk from associations with products, people, and places.
* Raise awareness about COVID-19 without increasing fear.
* Share accurate information about how the virus spreads.
* Speak out against negative behaviors, including negative statements on social media about groups of people, or exclusion of people who pose no risk from regular activities.
* Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes.
* Engage with stigmatized groups in person and through media channels including news media and social media.
* Thank healthcare workers and responders. People who have traveled to areas where the COVID-19 outbreak is happening to help have performed a valuable service to everyone by helping make sure this disease does not spread further.
* Share the need for social support for people who have returned from China or are worried about friends or relatives in the affected region.