

CALIFORNIA MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION REDUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

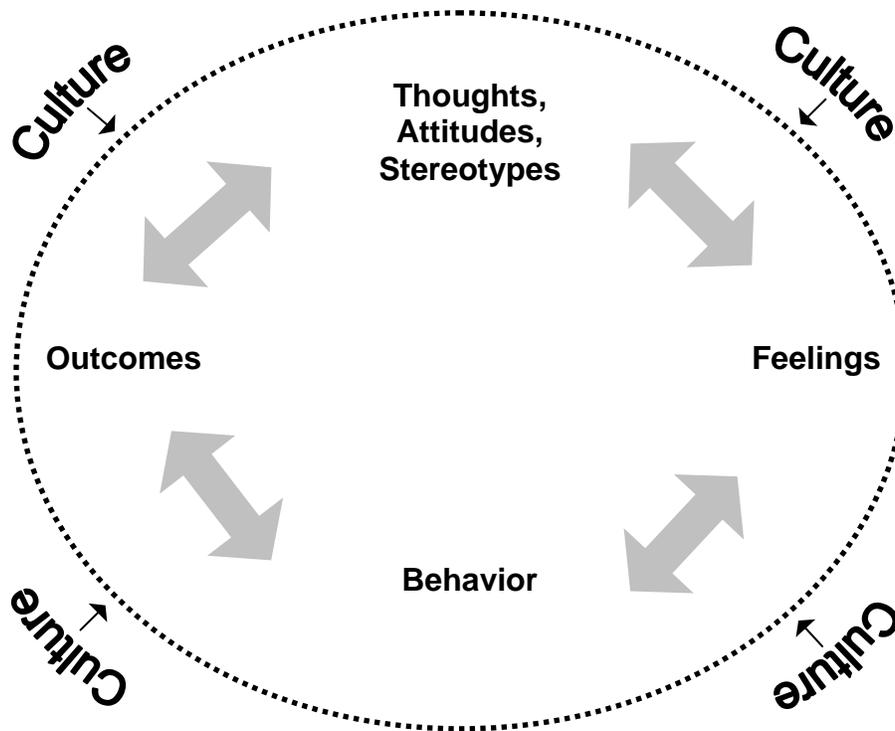
The Developmental Cycle of Stigma and Discrimination toward Mental Illness

Stigma is based on negative thoughts, attitudes, and stereotypes about a person or group. The resulting negative feelings can produce a variety of behaviors toward the stigmatized person or group.

Mental illness is universally stigmatized,¹ but varies locally, culturally, and across time.

The following two figures describe the developmental cycle of stigma and discrimination toward mental illness.²

Figure 1.



¹ The International Study of Discrimination & Stigma Outcomes (INDIGO) conducted 736 interviews of people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia across 27 countries and found discrimination to be a universal experience. Source: "Discrimination and Mental Health: Evidence for Effective Interventions." Presentation by Graham Thornicroft. Retrieved at <http://cchps.columbia.edu/documents/thornicroft%20GR%20presentation%20041207.pdf> on November 26, 2008.

² This information was developed by Kirsten Deichert, California Department of Mental Health, based upon a review of existing literature on stigma, discrimination, and mental illness.

Figure 2.

Thoughts, Attitudes, Stereotypes	Feelings	Behaviors	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond help • Burdensome • Childlike, require authority figures to make their decisions • Violent • Unpredictable • Weak in character • Responsible for their illness • Stupid • Deserve to suffer • Lack insight about their illness • Have a problem that will go away • Contagious 	<p><u>Others:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear • Pity • Disgust • Anger • Threat • Sympathy <p><u>Person and family:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shame • Embarrassment • Low self-esteem • Angry • Hopeless • Despair • Damaged • Defective • Unwanted • Depressed • Denial 	<p><u>Others:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminate • Withhold help • Avoid • Reject • Exclude • Exploit • Abuse • Reject • Segregate • Isolate • Ridicule • Bully • Overly protect • Coerce • Scorn • Discredit • Label • Diagnose <p><u>Person and family:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not seek support, services, or treatment. 	<p><u>Person and family:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underemployment, Unemployment • School drop-out or lower educational attainment, opportunity • Substandard, unstable housing • Homelessness • Poverty • Poor mental and physical health • Poor quality or inappropriate services, supports, and treatment • Without needed services, supports, and treatment • Low social status • Social isolation • Arrest • Incarceration • Suicide • Family friction • Victim of assault, brutality • Victim of homicide • Institutionalization • Involuntary treatment • Being portrayed negatively in news, entertainment