

WA State Employee Assistance Program

May 2017

Mental Health Awareness

May is Mental Health Month. Each year millions face the reality of living with a mental health condition. These can sometimes be debilitating disorders that take a toll on many aspects of a person's life. Even though help is available, less than half of children and adults with mental health problems seek treatment. These may include conditions like depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder.



People with mental health disorders often experience stigma when someone views them in a negative way because of their condition. This can come from society, coworkers, family, and even from oneself in the form of feeling shame. In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, you can take action to help others as we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for equal care.

According to [Psychology Today](#) there are 5 levels of stigma that can affect you if you live with a mental illness.

1. **Self stigma** is the self-blame attached to your identity such as labeling yourself negatively as a person with anxiety or depression.
2. **Public stigma** is where misinformation and myths about mental illness has the public afraid.
3. **Professional stigma** happens when the negative views go beyond the general public and extends to educated healthcare professionals.
4. **Label stigma** occurs with diagnostic labeling. Having a diagnosis is a way to identify mental illness but stating one is depressed is more negatively describing someone.
5. **Stigma by Association** is being categorized because you know someone who has a mental illness such as a family or friend.

If you are concerned whether you or someone you know may have a mental health condition and would like to talk to a counselor, contact your EAP for a confidential, no cost appointment.

Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP) helps employees and their family members resolve personal or work-related problems. www.eap.wa.gov Toll-free 1-877-313-4455