



Reduce stigma of mental health

We need to think more broadly about health. The World Health Organization uses a wide-angle lens, defining health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Many of our friends and neighbors struggle with emotional or mental health concerns each day, ranging from depression to substance abuse. According to the 2017 Community Health Status Survey, 1 in 5 adults in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky said that a doctor or health care provider told them they had depression—and that's just one of many mental health conditions.

Our minds and our bodies must function together to achieve health, which is why our health promotion efforts at Interact for Health incorporate projects around social and emotional health, including substance abuse.

But to truly move forward in this area, we need to address stigma. If people feel ashamed, they are less likely to seek the mental health care and services that they need. Some strategies, based on recommendations from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):

- **Educate yourself and others.** Mental health conditions are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing.
- **See the person, not the condition.** Get to know people and treat them with kindness and empathy.
- **Take action.** Help ensure that policies and systems in our region allow people who need treatment and recovery services to access the care they need.

For information about local resources for people living with mental illness and their families, please visit NAMI's website at www.nami.org/Find-Support and to learn more about reducing the stigma around mental illness visit www.nami.org/stigmafree.

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