

A Guide for All Stakeholders to Prevent and Address Social Stigma during COVID-19



Social stigma is the negative association between a person/ group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. Stigma leads to discrimination and social isolation.

The current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus.



Stigma can drive people to hide the illness to avoid discrimination, prevent people from seeking health care immediately and discourage them from adopting healthy behaviours. They also experience increased sense of emotional isolation, feeling of guilt and anxiety.



There is high stigma associated with COVID-19 because,

- 1) it is a disease that's new and for which there are still many unknowns;
- 2) we are often afraid of the unknown; and
- 3) it is easy to associate that fear with 'others'.



We must work together to prevent and address social stigma which will also help us to fight COVID-19. Some 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' that we should observe are:

Dos



Allay anxiety through FACTS and POSITIVE MESSAGES based on accurate information citing reliable sources Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India or the World Health Organization



Speak out against false information and double check facts before sharing to stop rumours



Share positive stories of those who have recovered from COVID-19



Appreciate efforts of health workers and people providing essential services and support them and their families



Support and help those in distress or affected by the disease



Promote kindness, solidarity, compassion

Don'ts



Do not indulge in spreading rumours, myths and misinformation



Do not reveal names or identity of those affected or under quarantine or their locality on the social media



Do not attach locations or ethnicity to the disease and do not label any community or area for spread of COVID-19



Do not talk about people "transmitting COVID-19" "infecting others" or "spreading the virus" as it implies intentional transmission and assigns blame



Avoid addressing those under treatment as COVID victims, address them as "people recovering from COVID"



Do not target healthcare and sanitary workers or police as they are there to help you



Do not fuel fear and panic

#TogetherAgainstCOVID19