

AVOIDING ASSUMPTION-MAKING & BIAS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHAT IS SOCIAL STIGMA?

- ◆ Social stigma is the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics, or currently a specific disease
- ◆ During an outbreak, this may mean people are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, and experience loss of status due to a perceived link with a disease
- ◆ The pandemic has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviors against people of certain ethnic backgrounds
- ◆ Confusion, anxiety, and fear among the public has fueled harmful stereotypes

DO YOUR PART AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- ◆ Rely on and share trusted sources of information
- ◆ Speak up if you hear, see, or read stigmatizing or harassing comments or misinformation
- ◆ Show compassion and support for individuals and communities more closely impacted
- ◆ Do not make assumptions about someone's infectiousness based on their ethnicity, race, or national origin
- ◆ Spread the facts by acquiring sufficient knowledge about how COVID-19 is transmitted, treated, and prevent infection
- ◆ Link up with initiatives that address stereotyping and stigma to create a movement and positive environment that shows empathy for all

WORDS MATTER

- ◆ When talking about coronavirus disease, certain words and language may have a negative meaning for people and fuel stigmatizing attitudes
- ◆ Use a "people-first" language that empowers and respects people in all communication channels, including the media

DO'S & DON'TS FOR LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT COVID-19

- ◆ Do talk about the new coronavirus (COVID-19)
- ◆ Don't attach location or ethnicity such as saying "Wuhan Virus," "Chinese Virus," or "Asian Virus"
- ◆ Do talk about people "acquiring" or "contracting" COVID-19
- ◆ Don't talk about people "transmitting COVID-19", "infecting others", or "spreading the virus," assigns blame

COMMUNICATION TIPS & MESSAGES

- ◆ Misinformation and rumors are spreading more rapidly than the current outbreak which contributes to stigmatization and discrimination of people
- ◆ We must have collective solidarity and actionable information that supports communities and people affected
- ◆ Correct misconception while also acknowledging people's feelings and behaviors as being very real
- ◆ Facts, not fear will stop the spread of the novel coronavirus
- ◆ Challenge myths and stereotypes
- ◆ Choose words carefully and the way you communicate



COPING AS A VICTIM OF RACISM

- ◆ Recognize that experiences of racism are real issues that take a toll and you are not being oversensitive
- ◆ Recognize the strength of your communities and reject attacks on your cultural values
- ◆ Hold together in solidarity, supporting one another can help utilize the strengths of your communities in the face of racism
- ◆ Connect to resources in your community

WHERE TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION

- ◆ Washington State Human Rights Commission
<https://www.hum.wa.gov/file-complaint>
- ◆ King County Office of Civil Rights
<https://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/civil-rights.aspx>
- ◆ Seattle Office for Civil Rights
<http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/civil-rights/outreach-and-engagement/report-bias>

SUPPORT THOSE FACING DISCRIMINATION BY...

- ◆ Call out racist comments and acts when you see them
- ◆ Interrupt racism by creating distance between the person making racist comments or actions and the victim
- ◆ Notice when you have engaged in actions that maintain discrimination and prejudice
- ◆ Offer support to individuals facing discrimination and ask permission to act on their behalf
- ◆ During COVID-19 Support Asian communities economically and socially, as well as other colored communities
- ◆ Everyone has a right to protect themselves and others with a face covering without being subject to discriminatory stereotypes and assumptions

WHAT WE CAN DO AS PROFESSIONALS

- ◆ Stay updated and informed on COVID-19 to avoid miscommunication or inaccurate information
- ◆ Talk openly about the harm of stigma
- ◆ View people directly impacted by stigma as people first
- ◆ Be conscious of your language
- ◆ Acknowledge access and language barriers
- ◆ Check your own stigmas and biases
- ◆ Support community with access to credible information
- ◆ Spread the facts

