

Healthcare Stigma- Care Connections Comments

1-27-15

(40 people with lived experience and family/friends were in attendance)

What it would look like to have a stigma-free environment in all areas of health care:

1. More acceptance of me as a full human, less judgment
2. Labels would be less important
3. Open communication – trust confidentiality will be kept and yet less need for confidentiality
4. No fear in my gut when encountering health care professionals about how they will treat me
5. My physical concerns would be taken seriously and treated no differently than if I did not have a history of mental health challenges
6. Health care professionals would be more approachable
7. The staff would be more educated about mental illness and recovery- they would know what they are doing
8. There would be no disparity in insurance coverage
9. Disclosure would not be seen as only my decision- professionals would also make strategic decisions to disclose or not rather than simply not to in all circumstances
10. There would be respect and use of peers- peer support and peer advocates would have a strong voice within the organization and medical institutions
11. Parent and family input would be welcomed, sought and respected
12. Regular collaboration between primary care, psychiatrists, therapist
13. Being a less exact science at times and at times, not knowing the exact science that does exist, care providers would readily admit to not knowing and seek advice from someone who does

Reasons for the stigma:

1. Less frequency of encounters by primary care and other doctors and nurses so they do not have comfort, knowledge and experiences of recovery
2. Burnout of professionals- # of patients, stuck in one way of treatment, close minded
3. They need more time for reflection, peer learning and support, self-care and encounters with people living in recovery who are not in crisis
4. Lack knowledge of my condition and feel uncomfortable not knowing

We all could learn from those currently doing a good job:

Some examples from individuals included the VA in Milwaukee and the substance abuse recovery arena