



Replacing Stigmatizing Language

Stigmatizing language is infused in much of our culture, and individuals often use it without recognizing its impact. The stigma of mental illness is embedded in our lives and comes in many forms, from emotional responses to self-stigma.

While some things we say or hear are obviously stigmatizing, others are more subtle. It's possible that you've never realized how some of these statements could stereotype someone living with mental illness, but this knowledge can help you reduce and prevent stigmatizing situations in your classroom.

As an educator, choose your words carefully and intentionally and correct yourself if you use stigmatizing language. Importantly, help students to do the same. Try your best to avoid stigmatizing language and embrace teachable moments when potentially hurtful language is used in the classroom.



Using words like "crazy" or "insane" can make people feel ashamed or hurt and even prevent them from receiving the help that they may need due to the stigma that has been created around mental illness.

When you hear stigmatizing language

1. Identify it publicly.
2. Educate about the harm.
3. Replace the language.

Replacing stigmatizing language can make *all* students feel safe and welcome in your space.

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