



Take a step to be **Stigma Free OC**

Stigma Free OC-Full Narrative/Background

The Orange County Mental Health Board is excited to announce the launching of a new social marketing campaign in Orange County called **Stigma Free OC**. This social marketing campaign will focus on reducing and eliminating the stigma associated with behavioral health conditions by raising awareness and encouraging an environment where affected individuals and their families are supported in their efforts to achieve wellness and recovery. The ultimate goal of this effort is to create stigma free communities across Orange County so everyone gets the help they need.

Mental illness impacts us all in some way. One-in-four adults experience a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year, and one-in-twenty-five adults lives with a serious mental illness. Yet many do not get the help that they need or delay accessing services until a crisis occurs. A primary reason individuals do not seek help is due to the stigma associated with behavioral health conditions. People struggling with these conditions often experience shame and fear of judgment from friends, family and co-workers, resulting in suffering in silence. Many of them internalize this stigma and develop a strong self-stigma which is a further barrier to seeking help. There is much misinformation about mental illness that is contributing to this fear, and there are steps that we can all take to educate ourselves and others and show support to someone who is struggling. This effort involves everyone including any concerned individual; any organization, including businesses, schools, churches, etc.; and cities.

We are in the process of developing a Stigma Free OC website that is anticipated to go-live this summer. This website will provide information about stigma; resources for Orange County; a toolkit for taking action; and an opportunity to make a pledge to be Stigma Free and to be identified along other committed community members, organizations and cities. This website will be a great resource for communities to take action. Until then, we are starting to take pledges from individuals, organizations and cities in conjunction with Mental Health Awareness Month in May.

You are invited to participate in this effort in Orange County. Here is a pledge card that encourages individuals, organizations and cities to show their support and agree to be Stigma Free by taking personal action and/or taking coordinated action as a group to reduce the impact of stigma in Orange County. This card has a link for you to make an individual pledge or a pledge on behalf of an organization/city. Please make sure that you have the authority or the permission to make a pledge for an organization or a city. By providing some basic information, including name, email address, city and zip code, you will be making a pledge to be Stigma Free. When the website goes live this summer, you or your organization/city will be identified as committed to being Stigma Free on the website and will have access to resources for taking action in your communities. You will be notified by email when the website goes live, and the Health Care Agency will share information with you periodically in supporting your effort to be Stigma Free. We assure you that your email will not be distributed or used in any other way. Our hope is to obtain a large number of pledges across Orange County before the launch of the website, to create momentum leading up to the go-live date.



See the person not the condition.



Take a step to be **Stigma Free OC**

Pledge to be stigma free at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StigmaFreeOC>

To request pledge cards, please contact Karla Perez at: (714) 834-5481 or Kperez@ochca.com

Talking Bullet Points:

- The Orange County Mental Health Board is excited to announce the launching of a new social marketing campaign in Orange County called **Stigma Free OC** which will focus on reducing and eliminating the stigma associated with behavioral health conditions.
- A primary reason individuals do not seek help is because of shame and fear of judgment and there is much misinformation about mental illness that is contributing to this fear.
- There are steps that we can all take to educate ourselves and others and show support to someone who is struggling. This effort involves everyone, including any concerned individual; any organization, including businesses, schools, churches, etc.; and cities.
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