



## Stigma

### Video Summary

- Misconceptions about dementia and people who are experiencing it can lead to stigma.
- Stigma can contribute to prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination.
- People who experience stigma may also experience “internalized stigma.”
- Caregivers or family members may also be impacted by stigma.
- Exposure to stigma may negatively impact a person’s self-esteem, cause shame, and contribute to social exclusion or isolation.
- Exposure to stigma may reduce help-seeking behaviors, impacting individuals ability to receive a dementia diagnosis.

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## Activities

### Activity One: True or False Quiz

- Administer a true or false quick with participants based on the content of the videos.
  - If you are using video conferencing, you can use the build in polling or quiz feature to administer the quiz.
  - If in person, ask the questions aloud and ask that participants track their own responses.
- After asking all the questions, the answers should be revealed and the explanations read aloud.
- Recommended quiz questions:
  1. Stigma only affects those living with Dementia and not their family or caregivers.  
FALSE.
    - Many aspects of dementia not only impact the person experiencing it but those closest to them, the same is true for the stigma experienced by those living with dementia.

2. Shame around Dementia may reduce a person's ability to receive a dementia diagnosis. TRUE.
  - If a person feels shame about their dementia symptoms they are less likely to seek out or want a formal diagnosis. A diagnosis can be an important step to getting proper dementia care.
3. People who experience “internalized stigma” are less likely to engage in help seeking behavior. TRUE.
  - Negative perceptions of people living with dementia can also be felt by the person experiencing dementia. They are therefore less likely to seek out help and cover up their symptoms, potentially causing them to go uncared for.
4. Stigma only affects a person's mental wellbeing. FALSE.
  - Though mental health is a prime source of suffering for those experiencing stigma, it can also lead to behaviors like not seeking care which can have an impact on the physical wellbeing of a person.
5. Education is one of the main ways we can combat the stigma surrounding dementia. TRUE.
  - Misinformation or lack of understanding fuel negative perceptions of those living with dementia. Understanding the disease as separate from the individual can help us have more empathy.
6. Dementia only affects a person's short term memory. FALSE.
  - Dementia can be highly impactful on one's ability to access their short term memory and though most people living with dementia can still access their long term memory, severe cases can also impact long term memory.
7. Dementia is just a symptom of Alzheimer's. FALSE.
  - While dementia is a general term, Alzheimer's is a specific brain disease, which is marked by symptoms of dementia that gradually get worse over time.
  - Dementia is not a disease in itself; it is a term that describes a group of symptoms such as:
    - Difficulty following television shows or books
    - Losing the skills to do daily tasks
    - Withdrawal from others
    - Changes in behavior
    - Trouble concentrating
    - Getting confused more often
    - Forgetting recent events

## Activity Two: Stigma Word Cloud

- Using a virtual white board, IRL white board or piece of paper, create a word cloud with words related to stigma.
- Focus in particular on stigmas that tend to be faced by people who are aging or who are experiencing symptoms of dementia.
  - This does not have to be a word bubble filled with stigmatizing words or language but can also include the feelings or experiences that stigma might induce.
    - Ex. loneliness, shame, withdrawal, etc.

## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever hidden your hearing loss, poor memory, etc. out of embarrassment or fear?
2. As an older adult have you ever experienced words like dementia, senile or other memory loss related terms being applied in a derogatory way towards you or your loved ones?