As an individual, what can we do to address stigma?

Words Matter

Using factual, non-stigmatising words can encourage people who suspect that they may have a mental condition to seek professional help or affirm persons in recovery from mental health conditions in their recovery journey. We can do our part to regard every person with mental health condition with respect and dignity through our words and actions.
Consider Saying

- “Person with a mental health condition”
- “Person with [mental health condition]”  
  e.g. schizophrenia, depression
- “Person in recovery from a mental health condition”
- “Would you like to talk? I’m here to listen.”
- “I may not understand how you feel but I care for you and I want to help.”
- “I would like to encourage you to seek help. Recovery is possible.”
Avoid Saying

× “A schizo, the afflicted person”
× “Mentally sick, mental patient”
× “Stop being so negative. Can you snap out of it?”
× “Stop seeking attention.”
× “You wouldn’t be in this state if you had [done or not done something].”
Supporting a Person with Mental Health Condition

Being there for someone with a mental health condition doesn’t have to be frightening or awkward.

Here are 8 tips to consider:

💡 Be present
💡 Establish trust
💡 Listen attentively and without judgement
💡 Do not be dismissive of the person’s sharing or actions. Allow the person time and space to explain how they are feeling and what he/she is going through
💡 Don’t be quick to offer solutions. Instead offer care and support
💡 Read up about different mental health conditions to better understand what the person is going through
💡 Encourage the person to seek help. Try saying “I appreciate you sharing the struggles you are going through. I was wondering if you have considered seeking help from a counsellor or a doctor.”
💡 Give persons with mental health conditions the same level of respect and dignity you would to anyone else

Source: National Council of Social Service, What we can do to address mental health stigma: https://www.ncss.gov.sg/Our-Initiatives/Beyond-The-Label/What-we-can-do-to-address-stigma

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