

# Mental Health Stigma

**Stigma:** *A mental or physical mark that is characteristic of a defect.*

Stigma is a commonly reported barrier to treatment seeking by parents of youth with mental health needs and by the youths themselves.

**Materials/People:**

- Three or more students
- A staff member to serve as a discussion facilitator

**Instructions:**

1. Sit in a circle facing one another.
2. Set up ground rules for the discussion (e.g., one person talks at a time, speak respectfully, stay in your seat)
3. Discuss the following questions:
  - a. What examples of stigma have you seen or experienced?
  - b. How do you think we increase or contribute to stigma when we are with our friends?
  - c. How do you think we increase or contribute to stigma when we are with our families?

If you are interested in taking notes on ideas you or your group develop, you can do so on the paper below:

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The Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign is a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Maryland Behavioral Health Administration. The Campaign goal, with over 300 community and school champions across the state, is to raise public awareness of the importance of children's mental health. For more information, please visit [www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org](http://www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org)



*Special thanks to the Center for School Mental Health for their help in compiling these resources.*