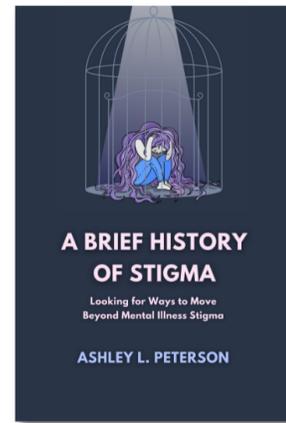




# Raise Your Voice and Tell Your Mental Illness Story

[mentalhealthathome.org](http://mentalhealthathome.org)



## A Brief History of Stigma: Stigma Reduction Toolkit Raise Your Voice

In order to stop the stigma around mental illness, we need to speak up and show that we are not the stereotypes that people try to force onto us. Coming out as having a mental illness, and sharing both the challenges and obstacles overcome, is a powerful way of demonstrating to the world what mental illness actually looks like without the stereotypes.

You don't have to be an influencer to do this; you just need to be a regular person who's willing to share your truth.

### Tips & Tools:

When sharing your story specifically for the purpose of challenging stigma, there are ways of presenting it that can be most helpful in furthering that particular goal. This doesn't mean you need to self-censor; your story is yours to tell. It's just that for the specific goal of stigma reduction in the target audience, telling your story in a certain way can increase the likelihood of success.

Some things to consider:

- Include both the challenges faced and the recovery journey. Struggles involve both getting knocked down and getting back up; when you share your struggles, try to focus more on the getting back up part rather than the getting knocked down part. This isn't a matter of minimizing your struggles, but rather showing what you've been able to get through and overcome.
- Share how you've been affected by stigma and what you were able to do to overcome it.
- Convey that you're a whole person, not just an illness, by talking about who you are, what you're interested in, and what's meaningful to you.

You may also want to talk about when you first started becoming ill, when you realized you needed treatment, and what treatment was like for you, as well as what's helped you to feel better and some of the coping strategies that you use.

These sites have more tips:

- [Centre for Innovation in Peer Support toolkit](#) for sharing your story effectively
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
  - Headstrong: [Sharing Your Personal Story Speaker Toolkit](#)
  - [Sharing Your Story Safely](#)
- [NAMI Connect](#): Best Practices for Presentations by Suicide Loss and Suicide Attempt Survivors

[Honest Open Proud](#) is a group-based intervention that aims to support people with mental illness in making decisions around disclosure, like who to disclose to and how. Their site includes a manual and workbook that you may find helpful to go through on your own.

## Speaking

Public speaking isn't everyone's cup of tea, but it can be a powerful way of sharing your story. Check with your local mental health charities to find out about speaking opportunities in your area.

These national charities offer speaking opportunities:

- [Beyond Blue](#) (Australia) has a speaker series, although they're not always recruiting
- [Jack.org](#) (Canada) has speaking opportunities for young adults 18-26
- [NAMI](#) (US) has a few different speaker series; check with your local NAMI organization
  - [In Our Own Voice](#) training
  - [Sharing Your Story with Law Enforcement](#) training – NAMI is involved in police Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training



## Writing

Sometimes, people are reluctant to share their own story as they feel others' stories matter more. However, there are multiple benefits to as many people as possible sharing their stories. One is that the more we talk about mental illness, and the more people who are talking about it, the less mental illness will have to live in the shadows of stigma. Another key reason is that mental health stories are highly personal and unique, and someone who is going through something similar to your experiences could really benefit from knowing that they're not alone.

## Stigma Reduction Toolkit

There are a lot of different ways to share your story in writing, above and beyond sharing on your own channels. Here are a few that I've come across.

- [A Lust for Life](#): Irish charity targeting ages 15-24; share your personal story
- [Ability Magazine](#): focused on disabilities
- [Active Minds](#): Send Silence Packing suicide prevention campaign
- [ADAA](#) (Anxiety and Depression Association of America): 500-750 word story of experiences with anxiety or depression
- [Ailment](#): chronic illness narratives; submission in the fall for yearly prompt-based issue each March
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#): publishes posts that educate people about suicide and convey hope/healing/resilience
- [bphope magazine](#): pitch an article about bipolar disorder, or apply to be an unpaid [guest blogger](#)
- [Bring Change to Mind](#): share your personal story in writing or on video
- [Capable Magazine](#): publishes poetry and prose focused on disability/illness
- [Counselling Directory](#): this UK-based site is looking for stories from people who've received support from a counsellor/therapist
- [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#) Life Unlimited feature: you can submit a request to be featured; submissions should focus on what the early indications were of your illness, what you've had to overcome, or what you've learned about yourself
- [Each of Us](#): anti-stigma campaign from Mental Health Europe
- [esperanza](#) magazine Hope Essays: publishes personal stories of anxiety or depression, and pays a "modest honorarium"
- [GoodTherapy](#): personal experience, story must be 500+ words and original work
- [Happiful](#) magazine: pitch a mental health article—feature articles are paid, but True Stories are not
- [Heads Up Guys](#): share your recovery story as a man with depression
- [How Are You Really?](#): share your personal experiences
- [Like One Another](#): share your story with a picture or video for Instagram campaign
- [MakeItOK](#): share your experience of stigma and how you overcame it
- [Mental Health Stories](#): more than 250 people have shared their stories on founder Kay's site
- [Mental Health Talk](#): share your story and become one of their Superhero bloggers
- [Mind](#): This UK-based mental health charity gives you the opportunity to share your story on their site in blog or vlog format, and offers lots of guidance on how to go about it and what to write about.
- [Monstaring Magazine](#): publishes writing, art, and audio-visual work from female/non-binary people with disabilities
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#): share personal stories
- [NoStigmas](#): share your voice in the fight against stigma

## Stigma Reduction Toolkit

- [OC87 Recovery Diaries](#): share your mental health recovery story
- [Open Minds Quarterly](#): share the experience of life with mental illness, in various forms including non-fiction, fiction, or poetry
- [Outrun the Stigma](#): looking for personal stories; provides prompts to guide you
  
- [SANE](#): this UK-based mental health charity has monthly blogging themes
- [Scribe Your Story](#): share your bipolar story as part of this project by the author of [Braving Bipolar](#)
- [#SickNotWeak](#): tell your story
- [See Me Scotland](#): share your experience of mental health problems, stigma, and discrimination
- [Serotonin](#): poetry and short prose on mental illness, neurodivergence, and suicide prevention
- [Stigma Fighters](#): share your personal story of mental illness in 1000 words
  
- [The Breakdown](#): as UK-based online mental health magazine that pays for stories
- [The Mighty](#): The Mighty is a very popular site with some amazing content
- [This Is My Brave](#): accepts essays, poems, and songs about personal experiences with mental illness
  
- [Unsinkable](#): participate in their Storyteller Program
- [URevolution](#): prints stories about the awkwardness of living with chronic illness, including chronic mental illness

## A Brief History of Stigma

A Brief History of Stigma has more information on what mental illness stigma is and what to do about it. You can learn more about the book on [Mental Health @ Home](#).

It's available on [Amazon](#) and [Google Play](#).

