

VISION STATEMENT

We envision physical and mental wellness for all Californians and a future where mental health labeling, stereotyping and discrimination belongs to the past.

We envision a future where people impacted by mental health challenges are supported in their education, housing, employment and recovery.

This vision of mental wellness will emerge through raising awareness, education, and action at all levels.

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CORE PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Core Principles

The following Core Principles will be embedded in all levels of planning, programs, service delivery, and evaluation of the Strategic Directions and Recommended Actions within the California Strategic Plan on Reducing Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination:

- Implement culturally and linguistically competent strategies and programs that reduce disparities and reflect the values and beliefs of diverse populations.
- Involve a broad spectrum of the public, including mental health consumers, family members, friends, caregivers and other community members.
- Employ a life span approach.
- Address both personal, internalized experiences of stigma as well as institutional and public stigma and discrimination.
- Use promising practices and proven models.
- Recognize that treatment for those experiencing mental health challenges work, and that the best results come from those treatments which offer choice and options.

Strategic Directions

Reduce mental health stigma and discrimination by:

1. *Creating a supportive environment for all consumers, family members, and the community at large by establishing social norms that recognize mental health is integral to everyone's wellbeing.*
2. *Promoting awareness, accountability, and changes in attitudes, beliefs, practices and policies across systems, and organizations.*
3. *Upholding and advancing federal and state laws to eliminate discriminatory practices.*
4. *Increasing the knowledge base of effective programs and models that reduce stigma and discrimination using methods that include community-driven strategies and practices.*

Strategic Direction 1:

Creating a supportive environment for all consumers, family members, and the community at large by establishing social norms that recognize mental health is integral to everyone's wellbeing.

- 1.1 Reduce the internalized self-stigma of individuals and families living with mental health challenges and prevent the development of self-stigma in future generations.
- 1.2 Change societal norms to be supportive of greater social inclusion and respect toward individuals living with mental health challenges, which will create opportunities to choose early and continued services without fear of stigma.
- 1.3 Provide increased support, education, training and guidance to communities, families, care-givers and others closely involved with the lives of individuals facing mental health challenges.
- 1.4 Recognize the importance of peer to peer programs as a means for reducing self stigma.
- 1.5 Provide mental health services at familiar, non-stigmatizing community sites.
- 1.6 Establish age-appropriate prevention, recovery and wellness programs, services, and systems of care.
- 1.7 Provide dignity and safety for mental health consumers and their families by:
 - Educating the broader community about community alternatives available to assist with mental health-related crises;
 - Ensuring the adequate preparation of law enforcement in responding to the needs of individuals in mental health-related crisis; and
 - Preventing the need for the use of force and forced compliancy.
- 1.8 Meet the housing needs of mental health consumers by:
 - Providing a variety of housing options to meet the full range of needs;
 - Ensuring that the housing is well integrated into neighborhoods and dispersed geographically throughout the community; and
 - Focusing first on the provision of housing necessities and basic services for homeless individuals and those being released from institutional settings.
- 1.9 Expand opportunities for employment, professional development, retention, and success of mental health consumers in public, non-profit and private sector workplaces by enforcing current laws and challenging hiring biases.
- 1.10 Address the multiple stigmas of persons living with mental health challenges who are also faced with discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other societal biases.
- 1.11 Create opportunities and forums for strengthening relationships and understanding between consumers, families, and the greater community.

Strategic Direction 2:

Promoting awareness, accountability, and changes in attitudes, beliefs, and practices across systems and organizations.

- 2.1 Create widespread understanding and recognition within the public and across all systems that:
 - Everyone at different points in their lives may experience some degree of mental health impact from wellness to crisis;
 - Persons living with mental health challenges have the capacities for recovery, resilience and wellness; and
 - Respect for and recognition of the whole person are key to successful mental health treatment models.
- 2.2 Recognize that equitable access to mental health services requires resources to be appropriately distributed.
- 2.3 Provide training and education for communities, organizations and systems to reduce stigmatizing attitudes and discriminating behavior.
- 2.4 Initiate systemic reviews to identify and address stigmatizing and discriminatory behaviors, policies, practices and language.
- 2.5 Establish coordination, communication and integration among the various systems that serve individuals and families with mental health challenges.
- 2.6 Create a more holistic approach to physical and mental health by:
 - Promoting integrative models for the delivery of mental health and primary health care services;
 - Achieving parity between medical and mental health services in terms of coverage and financing; and
 - Recognizing that faith and spirituality can play a role in the recovery process.
- 2.7 Educate employers on the importance of mental health and wellness for all employees.
- 2.8 Engage and educate the mainstream, ethnic, and interactive media as well as entertainment industries on:
 - Standards and guidelines to promote balanced and informed portrayals of people living with mental health challenges; and
 - How to serve as a resource for communicating accurate and non-stigmatizing information to the public on mental health issues and community resources.
- 2.9 Support community and social networks, peer-to-peer efforts, and the use of technology to reduce the isolation and social exclusion faced by persons living with mental health challenges throughout different geographic regions of California, including rural areas.

Strategic Direction 3:

Upholding and advancing federal and state laws to eliminate discriminatory practices.

- 3.1 Increase awareness and understanding of existing laws and regulations designed to protect individuals and families living with mental health challenges against discrimination.
- 3.2 Promote the compliance and enforcement of current applicable laws and regulations.
- 3.3 Advance changes to statutes and regulations to further protect individuals and families from discrimination and to promote inclusion and equality.
- 3.4 Develop mechanisms and policies within the criminal justice system to more appropriately meet the needs of individuals with mental health challenges.

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Strategic Direction 4:

Increasing the knowledge base of effective programs and models that reduce stigma and discrimination using methods that include community-driven strategies and practices.

- 4.1 Increase the community's capacities to actively participate in efforts to enhance the knowledge base.
- 4.2 Ensure research and evaluation projects are responsive to the community needs.
- 4.3 Employ asset-based community development strategies and community defined approaches.
- 4.4 Develop and implement a plan to address gaps in data strategies and other pertinent information.
- 4.5 Promote the dissemination of promising practices and other findings.

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