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Contact: **Suzanne Weinert**  
**248-758-1991**

[weinerts@oaklandchn.org](mailto:weinerts@oaklandchn.org)

**Caitlin Toth**  
**248-277-5416**

[tothc@oaklandchn.org](mailto:tothc@oaklandchn.org)

## OCHN Provides Ways to Combat Behavioral Health Stigma

**OAKLAND COUNTY, MI (July 23, 2024)** – Stigma is defined as a set of negative or unfair beliefs that society or a group of people have about something. Left unaddressed, stigma can lead to discrimination against and isolation of a community.

Related to behavioral health, stigma is often seen at a public level, self-level, and structuralized level. Public stigma encompasses the attitudes society has toward something, such as mental illness. Self-stigma entails the beliefs one holds regarding themselves. Structuralized stigma refers to the policies in place in both private and public entities that limit the opportunities for people and communities.

Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) recognizes the damage that stigmas can do. To help remove Behavioral Health stigmas in society, OCHN is providing ways to combat them at a public, self and structuralized level.

1. **Public level:** Practice using [person-first language](#) to reduce stereotypes associated with various illnesses and disabilities. Person-first language emphasizes the person first, not the disability or illness. In addition, if you know someone who is struggling, provide support when appropriate.
2. **Self-level:** Be kind to yourself and practice self-care and positive self-talk.
3. **Structuralized level:** Review company policies frequently to ensure no group is being isolated. Advocate for yourself and others at a local, state, and national level.

OCHN actively participates in promoting a stigma-free culture through the BEST (Begin Ending Stigma Today) workgroup. BEST aims to promote a stigma-free culture within OCHN and its provider network. The workgroup includes representatives from OCHN, Easterseals MORC, Oakland Family Services, Training and Treatment Innovations, Inc, Community Living Services, CNS Healthcare, Community Housing Network, and the community. To learn more about the BEST workgroup, visit [Workgroup Engagement | Oakland CHN, MI](#).

“Don't be a Hope Stealer by enforcing stigma, be a Hope Giver by believing in people,” said OCHN Education Specialist and BEST Workgroup member, Sherri Rushman.

Do your part to begin ending stigma today!

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For non-emergency Access to services, call (248) 464-6363. If you or someone you know needs immediate assistance, call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988. For more information on OCHN, visit [www.oaklandchn.org](http://www.oaklandchn.org).

### **About OCHN**

OCHN is contracted by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to lead a provider service network and manage care for approximately 29,000 Oakland County residents at more than 400 service sites across the county. People who receive public behavioral health services through OCHN's provider network include those who have an intellectual or developmental disability, mental health concerns, or substance use disorder. Most of these individuals have Medicaid insurance coverage.

OCHN's goal is to ensure these individuals are aware of and have access to services and supports that will improve their health and quality of life, as well as ensure their engagement in full community participation. Its mission to "inspire hope, empower people, and strengthen communities" reflects an unyielding belief in a "Valuable System for Valued People." Programs and supports provided by OCHN's service network are available at [www.oaklandchn.org](http://www.oaklandchn.org).

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