EASE-ing Self Stigma

Developed by:

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Goals

- Build on your current understanding of public and internalized stigma and their effects.
- Learn 4 principles that can "EASE" the effects of self-stigma for Veterans you work with.
- Become familiar with several ways each principle can be put into practice.
Public Stigma =

- Negative stereotypes and biases that others believe about people with mental illness
- And the discrimination and disrespect this leads them to direct towards people they know or think have a mental illness
So stereotypes are unfair, incorrect overgeneralizations.

But people with mental illness are exposed to them frequently as if they are true.

What effects does this have?

Experiences:
- rejection or distancing
- discrimination

Emotions:
- sad, angry, frustrated, dejected, demoralization

Behaviors:
- isolate or withdraw, rebel, give up goals
**Internalized Stigma =**

When a person comes to believe that negative stereotypes about people with mental health problems are true of him or herself.

One type of psychological harm caused by experiencing stigma from others.
Impacts of Self-Stigma

- Associated with more severe symptoms (Ersoy, 2007, Lysaker et al., 2007)

- Lower self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-agency (Ritsher & Phelan, 2004, Lysaker et al., 2008)

- Greater social avoidance, avoidant coping and fewer social contacts (Yanos et al., 2008)

- Less recovery oriented attitudes (self-direction, empowerment, hope, etc.) more demoralization (Ritsher et al., 2003)
We can “EASE” Self-Stigma:

- **Education**
- **Awareness**
- **Shift perspective**
- **Empower**
Education
Awareness
### ISMI\(^1\) Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alienation</th>
<th>“I am embarrassed or ashamed that I have a mental illness.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stereotype Endorsement</td>
<td>“Mentally ill people tend to be violent.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Discrimination</td>
<td>“People discriminate against me because I have a mental illness.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Withdrawal</td>
<td>“I avoid getting close to people who don’t have a mental illness to avoid rejection.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigma Resistance</td>
<td>“Living with mental illness has made me a tough survivor.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Ritsher et al. (2003)
### Shifting Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Catch it</th>
<th>Check it</th>
<th>Change it</th>
<th>New feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On my way to therapy</td>
<td>I feel shame.</td>
<td>All I am is a mental patient.</td>
<td>This thought makes me feel bad and is not true. Its not a useful thought</td>
<td>I am more than my diagnosis. Therapy helps me reach my goals</td>
<td>Hopeful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Empowerment
Facets of Myself

What are some positive personal qualities that you like most about yourself?

What are some things you are proud of yourself for?

What are some things you enjoy doing? now or as a child, alone or with others

What are some values you try to live by?

What are some additional positive ways you could finish these sentences:

I am ......
I am ......
I am ......
Additional Questions?

_ Education
_ Awareness
_ Shift perspective
_ Empower