

Stomp Out Stigma: Make School Safe for Everyone!

School is where we spend a majority of our childhood. The time we spend with our friends, the fun time during recess, learning about the world around us, are all the memories that makes school a special place. When every child has an equal opportunity to excel in school with a safe and carefree atmosphere they too can create those precious memories. That includes not being discriminated by gender, if you are physically handicapped or have a certain type of illness. I've yet to come across a person who is mean to someone who is struggling with food allergy or illnesses such as Diabetes. In fact we go out of our way to make sure that they are safe, by being mindful about their allergies and making them feel included. Sadly when it comes to mental illness we do not show the same kind of understanding and helpfulness. In fact we use words like "weird", "odd", and "crazy", to describe them. There is a stigma attached to mental illness. Stigma is a mark of shame, and social unacceptability. They usually get harassed, bullied, avoided or feared. Don't forget that our brain, like any other organ of our body can get a disease. To stomp out the stigma we have to educate ourselves, and change our negative attitude towards mental illness. Like our former President Bill Clinton said, "Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of, but stigma and bias shame us all." By stomping out the stigma, they no longer will have to suffer alone, but get the help they need and a chance to create the same special memories that we all hope to make of our childhood.