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# Shatter the Stigma

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Service Improvement

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Deliver

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## Summary

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS) implemented the Shatter the Stigma (STS) program to address widespread misunderstanding about mental illness. We embedded within the Wide Bay HHS a sustainable movement to shatter mental health stigma. The HHS aligned the program with our existing mental health governance model and implemented an STS steering committee to oversee

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the program. Shatter the Stigma raises awareness of the negative impact that the stigma relating to mental illness has on individuals, their families and their recovery. It also recognises that, by feeling stigmatised or ashamed, people may be less inclined to seek support or access services when they're experiencing challenges. The initiative is focused on key target areas: raising awareness through promotion activities; ongoing meaningful education; and supporting our staff. One of the key strategies of success has been the STS champion program, that has enabled the program to be led and promoted by our staff on the ground, and provide genuine education and support to all the teams across the HHS.

### Key dates

Oct 2020

### Implementation sites

Bundaberg Hospital, Hervey Bay Hospital, Maryborough Hospital and several rural sites.

### Partnerships

Wide Bay Mental Health and Special Services recognise the work from Deb Lattimore of Mackay HHS who initially started the STS service and laid the foundation and willingness to share her work.

## Key Contacts

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## **Aim**

To embed the Shatter the Stigma mental health campaign across our HHS, raising awareness, changing culture, supporting staff and embedding positive workplace behaviours.

## **Benefits**

Elimination of stigma associated with mental health to positively enhance consumer, staff and community experience.

## **Background**

Feedback from consumers and staff was emerging that they had experienced or witnessed stigma when accessing mental health care from our HHS, and feeling they were being treated differently if presenting for mental health challenges or physical health challenges. Knowing that one of the biggest reasons people don't seek help when they need it is due to stigma, and hearing that some of our own staff held negative attitudes about people experiencing mental health challenges, we felt that we needed to embark on a sustainable program across all areas of our HHS, not just mental health.

## **Solutions Implemented**

Marketing and communications activities:

- provision of applied suicide intervention skills training (ASIST) and MH First aid training to champions
- purchased an STS shirt for all members of the Mental Health and Specialised Services (MHSS) team and encouraged them to wear on Mondays
- production of STS materials to support the campaign, e.g. computer screen backgrounds, email signatures and promotional materials
- promoted it during Mental Health week 2020
- launched a media campaign, including website development with online pledge capability

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- invited Expression of Interest nominations for STS champion in all work areas
  - regular STS champion meetings
  - education presentations for orientation and community reference groups
  - educational materials displayed and provided against key themes each month – known as Stigma Bites Fact Sheets
  - created STS champion boards in all work areas
  - created STS champions leading events
  - embedded STS in team meeting agendas
  - MHSS provided five converge sessions on staff wellbeing topics with great attendance at each session.

## **Evaluation and Results**

- over 2,000 staff pledge to join us to shatter mental health stigma
- anecdotally reported cultural change in workareas where champions are situated.
- winner of the HHS excellence award 2021 for collaboration

## **Lessons Learnt**

Continued work is required on development of an all-staff online education program. Access is needed to train and resource staff for the development of education materials to further enhance the program. Currently it is provided in-kind by our Mental Health and Special Services team.

## **References**

Mackay HHS, STS initiative. Stigma Bites information sought from selected mental health leading organisations, such as BeyondBlue