



Stigma Against Individuals with Mental Illness

The Henry J. Kaiser Foundation website (<http://kff.org/>) contains a wealth of interesting and valuable information on many health related issues, including very concrete information such as estimates of subsidies available as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

One of its interesting activities is the publication of a monthly tracking poll on relevant health issues. In February 2013, partially related to several violent incidents, the poll included items focusing on stigma against individuals with mental health problems (<http://kff.org/disparities-policy/poll-finding/kaiser-health-tracking-poll-february-2013/>). The results clearly indicated that stigma continues to be a major issue for people with mental health issues. Two figures, presented exactly as they appeared in the article, are in this Data Short.

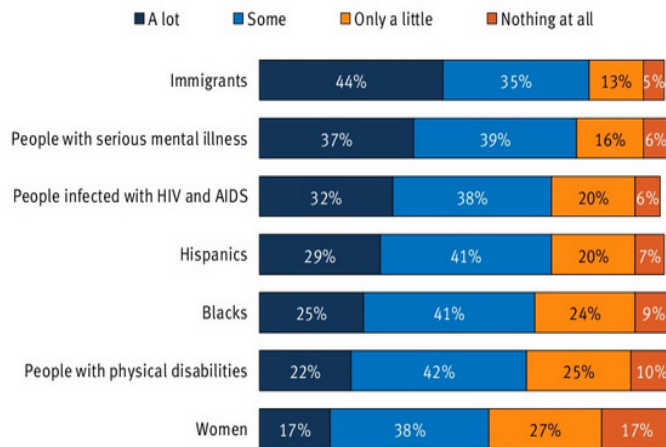
The first figure displays the responses to “How much prejudice and discrimination do you think there is against each of the following groups in the U.S. today?”. For the group of people with serious mental illness, 37% of respondents said “A lot”, and another 39%, “Some”. Immigrants were the only group perceived as targets of greater prejudice and discrimination; groups that were perceived less negatively included people infected with HIV/AIDS, Hispanics, Blacks, people with physical disabilities, and women. The second figure shows that 66% of respondents would be uncomfortable if a person with a serious mental illness worked in their child’s school, 47% would be uncomfortable living next door, and 41% would be uncomfortable working with someone with a serious mental illness.

In 1999, then Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher published “Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General” (<http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/retrieve/ResourceMetadata/NNBBHS>). One major section of the report highlighted the role of stigma in discouraging people from seeking treatment and in preventing people with serious mental illness from actively and fully participating in community life. It seems clear that much work in this area still needs to be done.

On Our Own of Maryland, Inc. (OOO) sponsors an Anti-Stigma project offering a series of workshops, publications, and training tools addressing the issue of stigma in behavioral health, including strategies for identifying and overcoming stigmatizing language and attitudes. More information is available at <http://www.onourownmd.org/projects/the-anti-stigma-project>.

Immigrants, Those With Serious Mental Illness Are Groups Most Likely to Be Seen as Experiencing Discrimination

How much prejudice and discrimination do you think there is against each of the following groups in the U.S. today?

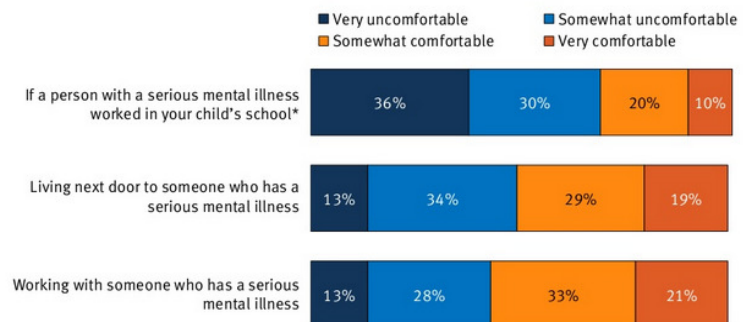


NOTE: Don't know/Refused answers not shown.
 SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted February 14-19, 2013)



Substantial Share Say They Are Somewhat Uncomfortable Around Those With A Serious Mental Illness

In general, how comfortable would you be, personally, with each of the following?



*Among those who have children younger than 20 years old.
 NOTE: Don't know/Refused answers not shown.
 SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted February 14-19, 2013)

