



# FAITH AND FEAR: STIGMA IN THE FAITH BASED COMMUNITY

Presenter:

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# FAITH

allegiance to duty or a person : **LOYALTY**

belief and trust in and loyalty to God

something that is believed especially with strong conviction

# FEAR

an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger

profound reverence and awe especially toward God

reason for alarm : **DANGER**

anxious concern : **SOLICITUDE**



**CARE**

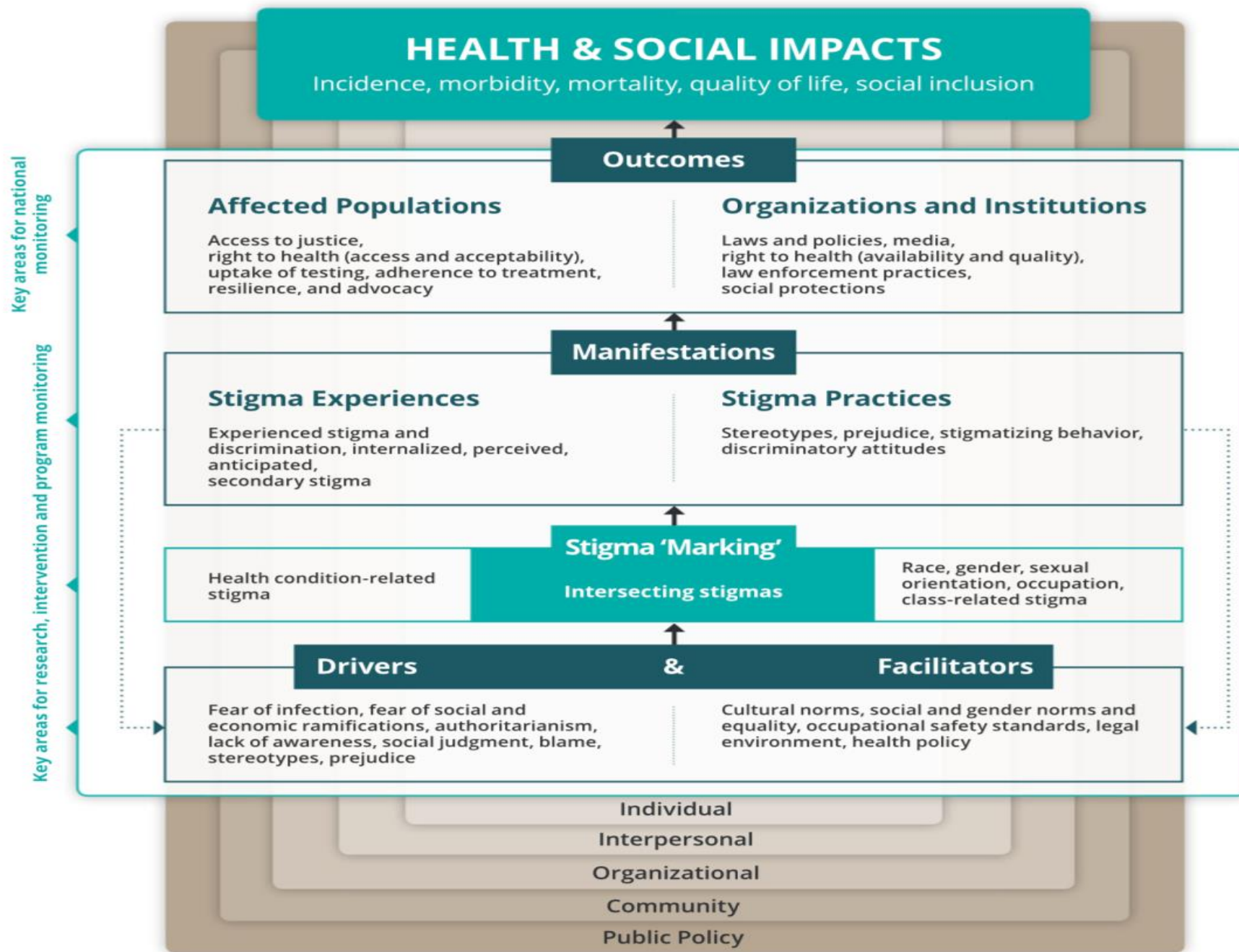
**ATTENTIVENESS**

**EARNEST  
CONCERN**

**ATTENTION**

# WHAT IS THE STIGMATIC APPROACH


A social process that involves distinguishing people based on their social statuses, such as their attributes, illnesses, and identities, and then devaluing, discrediting, or excluding them.



**Fig. 1** Health Stigma and Discrimination Framework

# LET'S BE SPECIFIC...

Prejudice is about unfair beliefs, discrimination is about unfair treatment, and stigma is like carrying a mark of shame created from sweeping unfair judgments, criticisms or even hatred. Stigma is the societal disapproval and judgment of a person or group of people because they do not fit their community's social norms.



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
STIGMA HAS  
BEEN  
ATTRIBUTED  
TO A NUMBER  
OF  
DIFFERENT  
FACTORS...





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## STEREOTYPES

Generalized and discriminatory stereotypes about people with mental illnesses often play a major role in stigma. For example, people with mental illness are often stereotyped as violent or unpredictable. While this stereotype is common, the reality is that people with mental illness are much more likely to be the victims of violence than to perpetrate it.

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## LACK OF AWARENESS


Many people simply lack awareness of symptoms, causes, prevalence, and treatments for mental illness. This lack of understanding contributes to poor perceptions about different mental illnesses and the people who experience these conditions.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one in five American adults, or around 52.9 million people, live with a mental illness.



## MEDIA PORTRAYALS

Media depictions of people with mental illness also play a part in perpetuating stigma. Mental health conditions are often depicted negatively, and media reports often attempt to link criminal activity and violence to mental health problems.



# WHAT DOES STIGMA MEAN?

**Research has shown that stigma is one of the leading risk factors contributing to poor mental health outcomes. Stigma leads to delays in treatment. It also reduces the chances that a person with mental illness will receive appropriate and adequate care.**



# DID YOU KNOW?

A 2013 review of studies on the public stigma of mental illness showed that stigma is still widespread, even as the public has become more aware of the nature of different mental health conditions. While the public may accept the medical or genetic nature of psychiatric illness and the need for treatment, many people still have a negative view of those with mental health conditions.

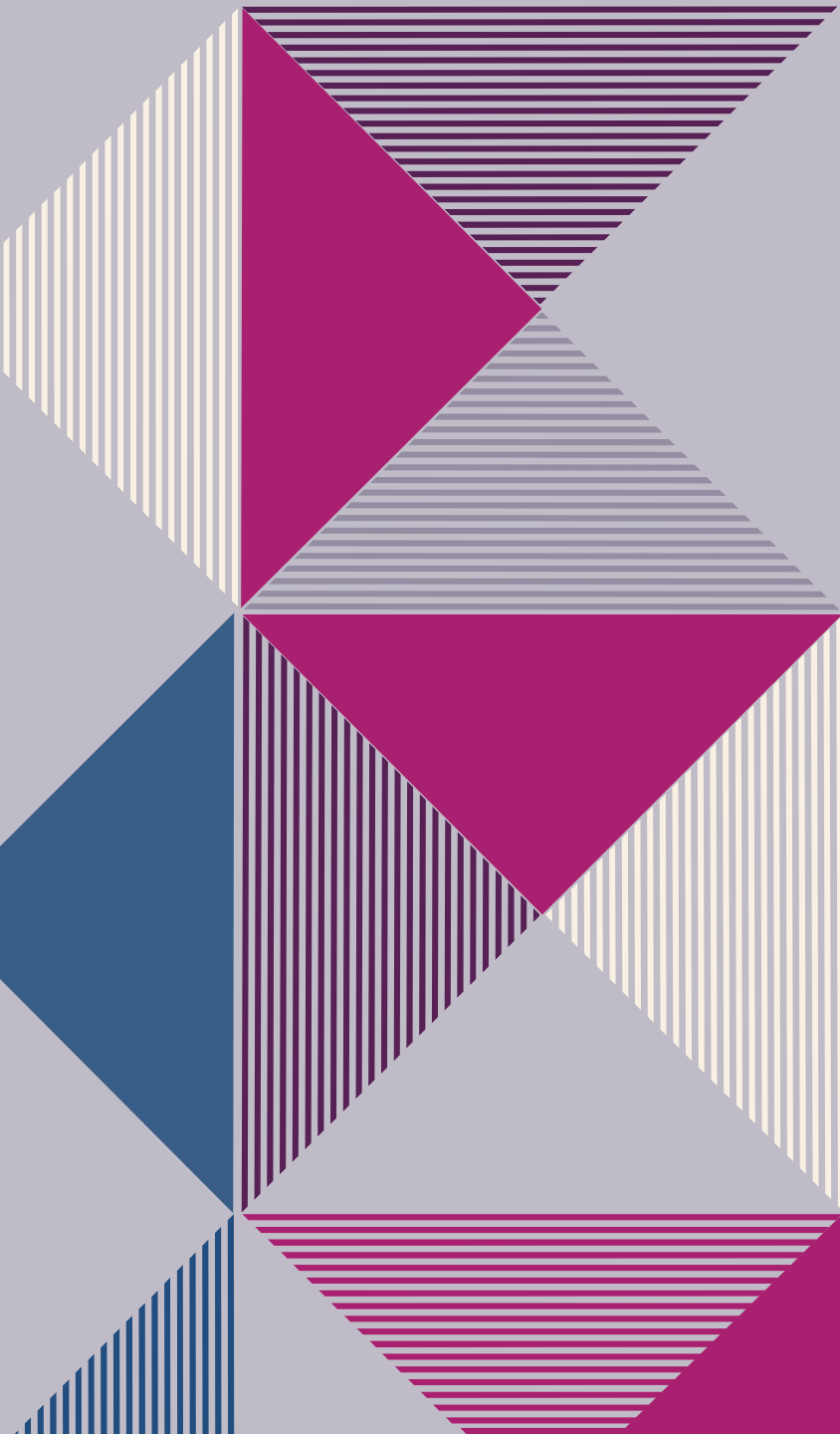
# SIGNS OF STIGMA

- Treating mental health issues as if they are something people can overcome if they just "try harder" or "snap out of it"
- Using phrases like "she's crazy" or "he's nuts" to describe other people or their behavior
- Halloween costumes that depict people with mental illness as violent and dangerous



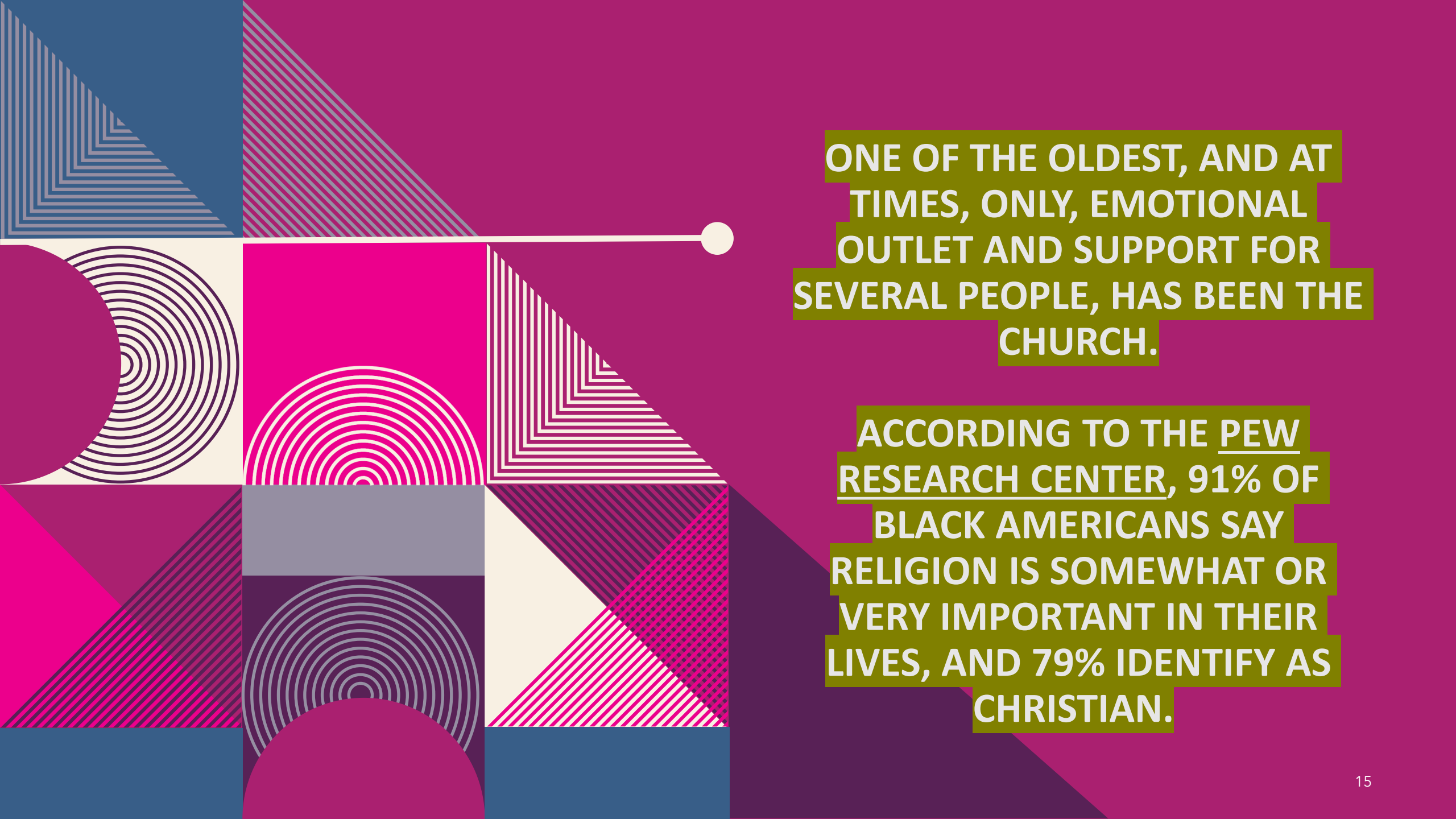
# IMPACT OF STIGMA

- Reluctance to seek out treatment
- Delayed treatment, which increases morbidity and
- Social rejection, avoidance, and isolation
- Worse psychological well-being
- Poor understanding among friends and family
- Harassment, violence, or bullying
- Poor quality of life, disability, and increased socioeconomic burden
- Increased feelings of shame and self-doubt



## DID YOU KNOW?

Historically, mental health issues were deemed “a vice of the Devil,” and the solution was prayer and stronger faith.



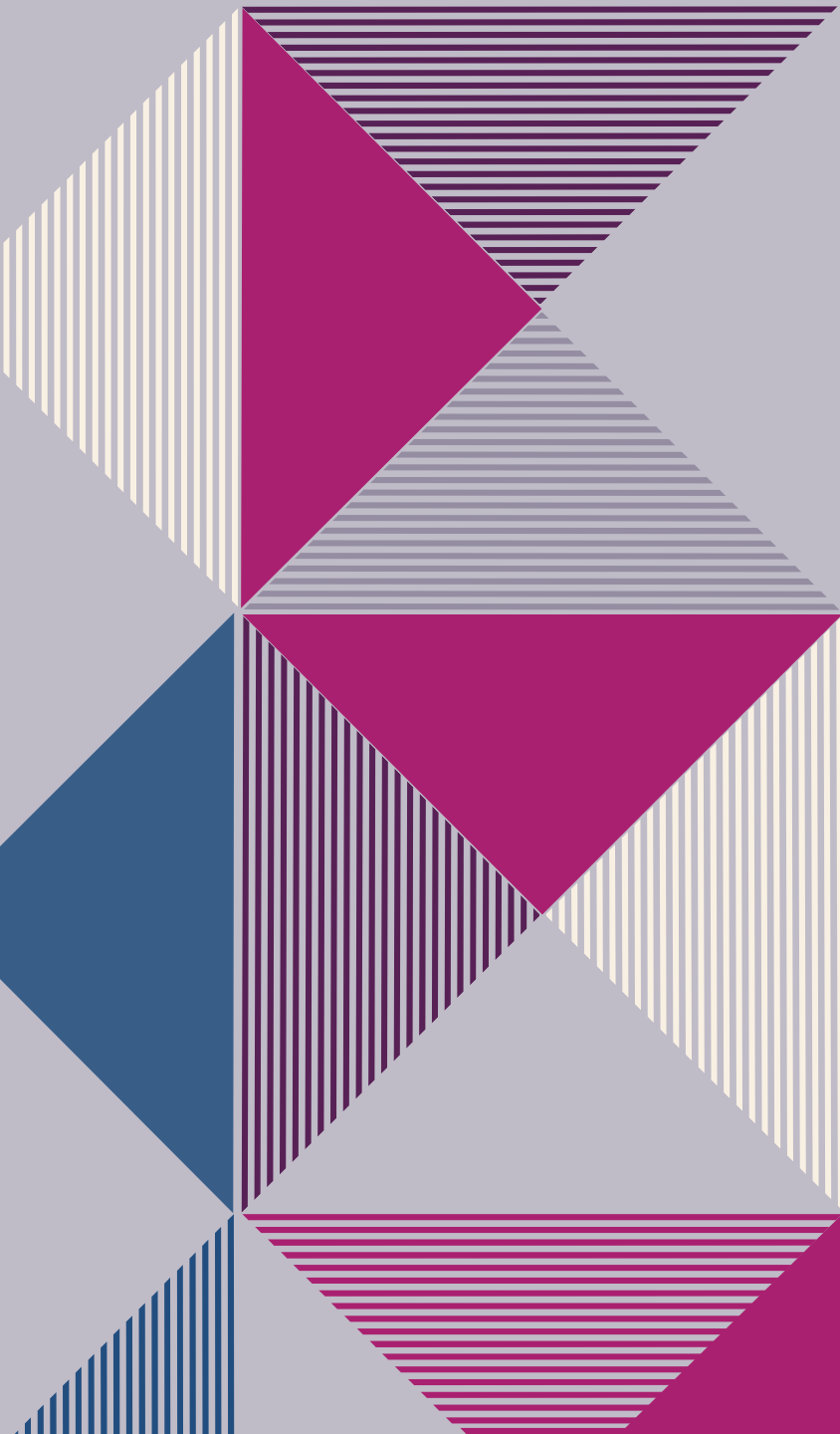
ONE OF THE OLDEST, AND AT TIMES, ONLY, EMOTIONAL OUTLET AND SUPPORT FOR SEVERAL PEOPLE, HAS BEEN THE CHURCH.

ACCORDING TO THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 91% OF BLACK AMERICANS SAY RELIGION IS SOMEWHAT OR VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR LIVES, AND 79% IDENTIFY AS CHRISTIAN.

# Recognize

**HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS  
OR EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH  
CRISIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU LACK  
FAITH.**





WHILE CALLING ON SOMEONE TO "HOLD FAST TO THEIR FAITH" IS NOT AN ISSUE, WHEN IT'S PRESENTED AS THE *ONLY* ANSWER, IT SILENCES A LOT OF QUESTIONS.

Questions like...

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN PRAYER AND FAITH DON'T SEEM LIKE ENOUGH?

WHAT IF I HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT "FAITH" AND/OR RELIGION?

IS THIS WHEN FEAR BECOMES ADVANTAGEOUS?

# ADVANTAGES OF FEAR

- 1. Heightened awareness:** Fear guides our fight or flight responses and helps keep us safe.
- 2. Acknowledgement and enlightenment:** Fear can help us understand our driving forces.
- 3. Focus and concentration:** Fear can help us set goals and achieve them.
- 4. Preparation and planning:** Fear prompts us to be ready for challenges.
- 5. Choices, analysis, and evaluation:** Fear helps us make informed decisions.



**HOW CAN I  
HELP?**

# CHANGE THE CONVERSATION



## STEREOTYPES

Mental health issues are as common as physical ones and should be treated in the same manner



## LACK OF AWARENESS

Faith is not a substitute for care.



## MEDIA PORTRAYALS

Ensure that the church is a valuable resource

-posting flyers, pamphlets, business cards

-opening the church doors for mental health awareness events



# TIPS TO COMBAT STIGMA

## REMEMBER THAT MANY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE MENTAL ILLNESS

If you have a mental illness, know that you are not alone. One in four Americans has a mental illness of some kind.

## JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Consider joining a support group where you can talk to others who have had similar experiences. These groups can be a great place to find support, comradery, encouragement, and tips.

## FIND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Whatever you do, stay connected to others and get support. Organizations such as the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) offer educational and supportive resources for people and families affected by mental illness.



# TIPS TO COMBAT STIGMA

## GET TREATMENT

While stigma can make it less likely that people will seek treatment, getting the help you need can help with symptoms and contribute to a better quality of life. [Psychotherapy](#) can help people learn to identify and change the negative thoughts that play a role in stigma.

## SEEK SOCIAL SUPPORT

Isolation can make mental illness and stigma more difficult to cope with. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for people experiencing mental health problems to avoid spending time with others.

## SPEAK OUT

Educate people around you about the realities of mental illness, including how common it is, and actively speak out against stigma. Debunk myths about mental illness, such as the idea that people with schizophrenia are usually violent. If a family member or friend makes a disparaging remark about someone with a mental illness, educate them and have a no-tolerance policy.

# WORKS CITED

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PSYCHOTHERAPY  
WIKIPEDIA**



# THANK YOU

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