



Stand Up/Sit Down Exercise

This exercise is designed to be an icebreaker revealing the depth of stigma surrounding depression and mental illness. You can also have participants raise hands or another inclusive approach.

1 Inform participants they'll be playing a little game to get people engaged.

2 Tell participants you are going to read several statements and that they should:

- Stand up if they agree with the statement.
- Sit down if they disagree with the statement.

3 Read the suggested statements (in order):

- I like shopping.
- I like to exercise.
- I like to listen to music to relax.
- I think that everyone deserves to have good mental health.
- When I was in middle or high school I learned about teen depression.
- Imagine you were diagnosed with diabetes. I would feel comfortable talking about my diabetes to someone other than a close friend or family member (i.e. a classmate, a neighbor, etc.).
- My life has in some way been touched by depression (myself, a friend or a family member).
- Imagine that they have all been diagnosed with depression. I would feel comfortable talking about my depression to someone other than a close friend or family member (i.e. a classmate, a neighbor, etc.).

Questions can be customized based on your school, community group, or population. But benign, easy questions should be first to ease the group into participating.

4 Encourage a discussion in your group with these questions;

- Those who didn't stand, why not?
- Why is it different to talk about depression and mental health from diabetes?
- Introduce the word **stigma**: A mark of shame associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.
- Imagine in 20 years when teens that learned about depression and mental health in school are in your seats? Will their responses look different than yours?

5 Bring the conversation back to why you are training:

- This is why we are having this conversation. If you are uncomfortable, so are teens and others.
- We need to create an inclusive atmosphere for students to learn and seek help.

If you need to speak with someone immediately, please text LISTEN to 741-741 or call 1-800-273-8255.
If this is an emergency, please call 911.