

# PEOPLE MATTER,<sup>TM</sup> WORDS MATTER

## ARE YOU USING **CULTURALLY/RACIALLY AWARE** LANGUAGE?

Language matters in compassionate care, and that is not limited to what you say in front of a patient. What you say behind closed doors to coworkers, friends and family can be the seed for stigma.

Stigma, along with structural racism and societal and economic factors, can prevent people from reaching out for help or getting the care they seek. Using culturally/racially aware language can help remove negative and stereotypical labels and improve patient-provider encounters.

### CONSIDER RESPONDING WITH...

- ▶ Talk therapy, or psychotherapy, is proven to work for all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, race, sexual orientation or gender identity. It's more than just talking.
- ▶ People often feel more comfortable seeking treatment from someone who identifies with or can relate to their ethnicity and culture. Cultural awareness training is essential to render care with cultural humility.
- ▶ Individuals can't always express themselves fully in a non-native language. Let's identify a [language]-speaking provider.
- ▶ Mental health stigma is pervasive in all communities, but even more so in many historically marginalized communities.
- ▶ Many people have difficulty accessing mental health treatment, and the obstacles are even greater for people of color.
- ▶ There is a justifiable, longstanding distrust of health care institutions in many communities. We must continue addressing and calling out instances of institutional racism.

[ THESE WORDS RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO PROVIDE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE CARE AND HELP ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY. ]

### IF YOU HEAR THIS

- What good does talking about your feelings do anyway?
- Psychiatrists and therapists don't need cultural competency training. Any provider should suffice when someone seeks treatment.
- I couldn't understand their accent/language.
- White people face stigma, too.
- Everyone has access to mental health treatment.
- They keep refusing treatment and act like I'm trying to twist their arm into getting help.

[ THESE WORDS PROPAGATE STIGMA AND DON'T RECOGNIZE THE PERSON'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY. ]