

Challenging Stigma

KS4/KS5

15mins

An activity to develop empathy for young people experiencing stigma and develop strategies for creating a more supportive environment

What you need

- PowerPoint Presentation of BaNES young people's experiences of stigma
- Pdf of BaNES young people's suggestions for dealing with stigma

Method

- Ask young people what they understand by the term **stigma**. Stigma is defined as, **'The perception that certain attributes make a person unacceptably different from others, leading to prejudice and discrimination against them'**.
Mental illness is unfortunately surrounded by stigma.
- Show the compilation of quotes from young people in BaNES, taken from the Youth Forum Survey. The survey received responses from more than 800 students and their quotes describe the impact of stigma for them.
- Discuss as a class asking:
 - **What impact does stigma appear to have on young people in school in B&NES?**
- Distribute pdf copies of young people's suggestions for dealing with stigma.
- Ask students to work in pairs or small groups.
- Based on the feedback and their own ideas and suggestions ask them to identify ten key action points that they would like to include in a plan for their school which will tackle mental health stigma and create a school environment in which students feel fully supported in relation to their mental health.
- Groups can work on action points across the whole range of feedback or groups can work on key areas of the feedback which fell into the following categories:
 - **Education and Awareness raising**
 - **Meet people who are living with mental ill health and develop empathy**
 - **Don't tolerate bullying or discrimination**
 - **Identify what people do for themselves**
 - **Encourage people to speak Up**
 - **Create an environment where people can speak up and feel supported**
 - **Training for school staff**
 - **Challenge media**
- Groups to feedback their plans and discuss how they can ensure the best of their ideas are given serious consideration by their school

