

**“You are not the brightest
of my four sons”**

**How Using Humor Eliminates The
Stigma and Reframes What Is
Depressing Us**

The Shuchart Foundation
for Mental Health Awareness



The Number One Fear CEOs Say They Possess



For \$250...

Be GOOD!



For \$250...

Be GOOD!

Be FUNNY!



For \$250...

Be GOOD!

Be FUNNY!

Be BRIEF!



For \$250...

So...in conclusion...



Today

*We have **four** items on our agenda...*



Today

1. Review and discuss the history of stigmas.



Today

1. Review and discuss the history of stigmas.
2. Depression, specifically **mine!**



Today

1. Review and discuss the history of stigmas.
2. Depression, specifically **mine!**
3. Trauma (since it equals depression) and compassion fatigue.



Today

1. Review and discuss the history of stigmas.
2. Depression, specifically **mine!**
3. Trauma (since it equals depression!) and compassion fatigue.
4. Finding and using your own sense of humor to ease the burden of living with a mental illness.



I'm a Cancer Survivor!

(Applaud **Loudly!**)



I'm a Cancer Survivor!

- And I'm PROUD to say it!



I'm a Cancer Survivor!

- I'm PROUD to say I'm a survivor!
- I'm NOT ashamed to talk about it!



I'm Also a *Mental Illness* Survivor!

(Applaud *REALLY* LOUDLY!)



I'm Also a *Mental Illness* Survivor!

- And I'm PROUD to say it!



I'm Also a Mental Illness Survivor!

- I'm PROUD to say I'm a survivor!
- I'm not ashamed to talk about it, but *why are so many others ashamed and embarrassed?*



It's the *Stigma!*

Plain and *Simple*



It's the *Stigma!*

STIGMA:

*A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person: the stigma of a mental disorder.**

**Webster's Dictionary*



It's the *Stigma!*

We've ended the
Cancer Stigma.



It's the *Stigma!*

My Aunt Sarah
had
Breast Cancer...



It's the *Stigma!*

My Mother told me,

“Shhhhhh!”

“Don't tell anyone!”



It's the *Stigma!*

The “C” word...

Was the *WORST* word
in the world!



It's the *Stigma!*

SO...

How did we *finally*
end the stigma?



It's the *Stigma!*

By

SPEAKING

out about it!



It's the *Stigma!*

And by

EDUCATING

ourselves about cancer!



It's the *Stigma!*

We have *reduced* the
HIV/AIDS Stigma.



It's the *Stigma!*

NBA Basketball Star

Ervin “Magic” Johnson

stood up and spoke out!



It's the *Stigma!*

And people began to

EDUCATE

themselves about the disease!



Fig. 1. A matrix describing the stigma of mental illness.

		TYPES			
		Public	Self	Label Avoidance	Structural
social cognitive S T R U C T U R E S	Stereotypes and Prejudice	<i>People with mental illness are dangerous, incompetent, to blame for their disorder, unpredictable.</i>	<i>I am dangerous, incompetent, to blame. [Leads to lowered self-esteem and self-efficacy]</i>	<i>I perceive that the public disrespects and discriminates against people with mental illness.</i>	Stereotypes are embodied in laws and other institutions.
	Discrimination	<i>Therefore, employers will not hire them, landlords will not rent to them, primary care providers will offer a worse standard of care.</i>	<i>Why try: Someone like me is not worthy or unable to work, live independently, have good health.</i>	<i>I do not want this. I will avoid the label by not seeking out treatment.</i>	Leads to intended and unintended loss of opportunity.

Patrick W. Corrigan et al. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 2014;15:37-70

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Screening Can Reduce Stigma

Physicians currently screen for:

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes and some Cancers



Screening for *Mental Illness*

Why *not* screen for mental illness?

- Not enough time?
- Not comfortable with the subject?
- Patients aren't comfortable, don't trust PCP?



Screening for Mental Illness

Screenings would provide:

- Opportunity to start the discussion for people with undiagnosed mental illness.
- Integration of Mental and Physical Health Care



Screening for Mental Illness

Screenings would provide:

- Chance to reduce the stigma by broadening the conversation.
- Opportunity to enable PCP to become a trusted advisor in one's mental health.



Screening for *Mental Illness*

Before you screen,
know the right words to use.





Your Language Matters

The words you use matter. You can better reach youth, break down negative stereotypes and give teens hope by choosing words that are more relatable and promote understanding.

This simple but caring approach may help youth feel more comfortable and willing to talk openly about mental health and to reach out for support early.

Your presentation will resonate more effectively and honestly by choosing the best words for your audience. Included here are suggested words and phrases to help teens be more open and receptive to your message.

It only takes one person to make a difference. Lead by example. Be that person.

A person is not their mental health condition. You wouldn't say someone "is cancer," so we wouldn't say someone "is bipolar." Use words like "has," "lives with" or "experiences" instead. Talk about mental health in a way that encourages hope and empowers youth. Words like "brain disorder/disease," "mentally ill" and "suffers from" can be intimidating to teens and give the illness the power.

Tips for Talking to Youth

Consider saying

Instead of

Mental health condition

Brain disorder or brain disease

Mental health

Mental illness

My daughter has bipolar disorder

My daughter is bipolar

Person with a mental health condition

Consumer, client or patient

Lives with, has or experiences

Suffers from, afflicted with or mentally ill

Tips for Talking About Suicide

Consider saying

Instead of

Suicide attempt/ attempted suicide

Failed suicide or unsuccessful attempt

Died by suicide/ suicide death

Successful or completed suicide

Took their own life

Committed suicide

Died as the result of self-inflicted injury

Chose to kill him/herself

Disclosed

Threatened

When talking about suicide, consider other meanings your words may have. For example, "committed suicide" implies that suicide is a crime. You can help eliminate the misunderstanding and stigma that prevent people from speaking up and getting support by choosing words that are more clear and neutral.



What's the Big Deal, Anyway?

Why concern ourselves about
mental illness?



Mental Health Conditions: *The Facts About Adults*

- **One in four adults** experiences mental illness in any given year.



Mental Health Conditions: *The Facts About Adults*

- **One in four adults** experiences mental illness in any given year.
- Mental illness costs in U.S. \$193 billion in lost earnings.



Mental Health Conditions: *The Facts About Adults*

- **One in four adults** experiences mental illness in any given year.
- Mental illness cost in U.S. is \$193 billion in lost earnings per year.
- 60% of sufferers do not receive treatment, many because of the *stigma* attached to mental illness.



Mental Health Conditions: *The Facts About Teens*

- *One in five teens* lives with a mental health condition.



Mental Health Conditions: *The Facts About Teens*

- *One in five teens* lives with a mental health condition.
- 50% of mental health conditions emerge by age 14 and 75% by age 24.



Mental Health Conditions: *The Facts About Teens*

- *One in five teens* lives with a mental health condition.
- 50% of mental health conditions emerge by age 14 and 75% by age 24.
- *Suicide* is the 2nd or 3rd leading cause of death among teens depending upon the source.



What Causes Depression?

Everyone gets sad...



What Caused My Depression?

Everyone gets Sad...

Sadness

is caused by
events, or situations.



What Caused My Depression?

Not Everyone gets depressed

Depression

lasts longer than bouts of sadness.

Typically, two weeks or longer.



What Caused My Depression?

In my case, *EVENTS* **can** trigger a depressive episode...but my depression is mostly *biological*, caused by chemical imbalances in my brain.



What Caused *My* Depression?

How do I know that my depression is *biological*?

I don't know for sure, but...



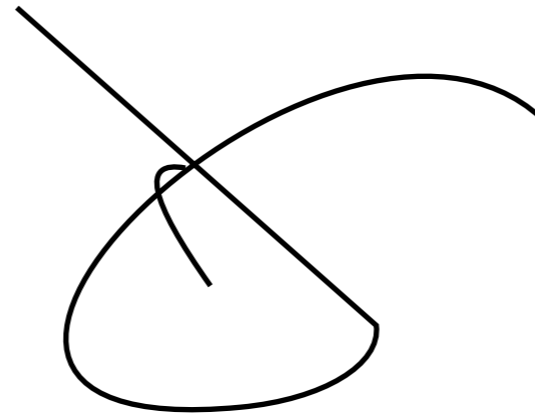
What Caused *My* Depression?

My *positive* reaction to antidepressants is a good indication



What Caused *My* Depression?

My mind is wired like this:



What Caused *My* Depression?

Your mind is wired like this:



What Caused *My* Depression?

I look at things differently than you do!
It's the way my mind is wired!

I can't help it!
*It's **NOT** my fault!*



What Caused My Depression?

Example 1

The '15 *KC Royals* won 7 straight...
then lost 2 in a row...(they went on to
win the World Series!) I almost
ripped up my season tickets!
(What would you have done?)



What Caused My Depression?

Example 2

Things my parents said to me...

They stuck to my head, causing great
traumatic stress!



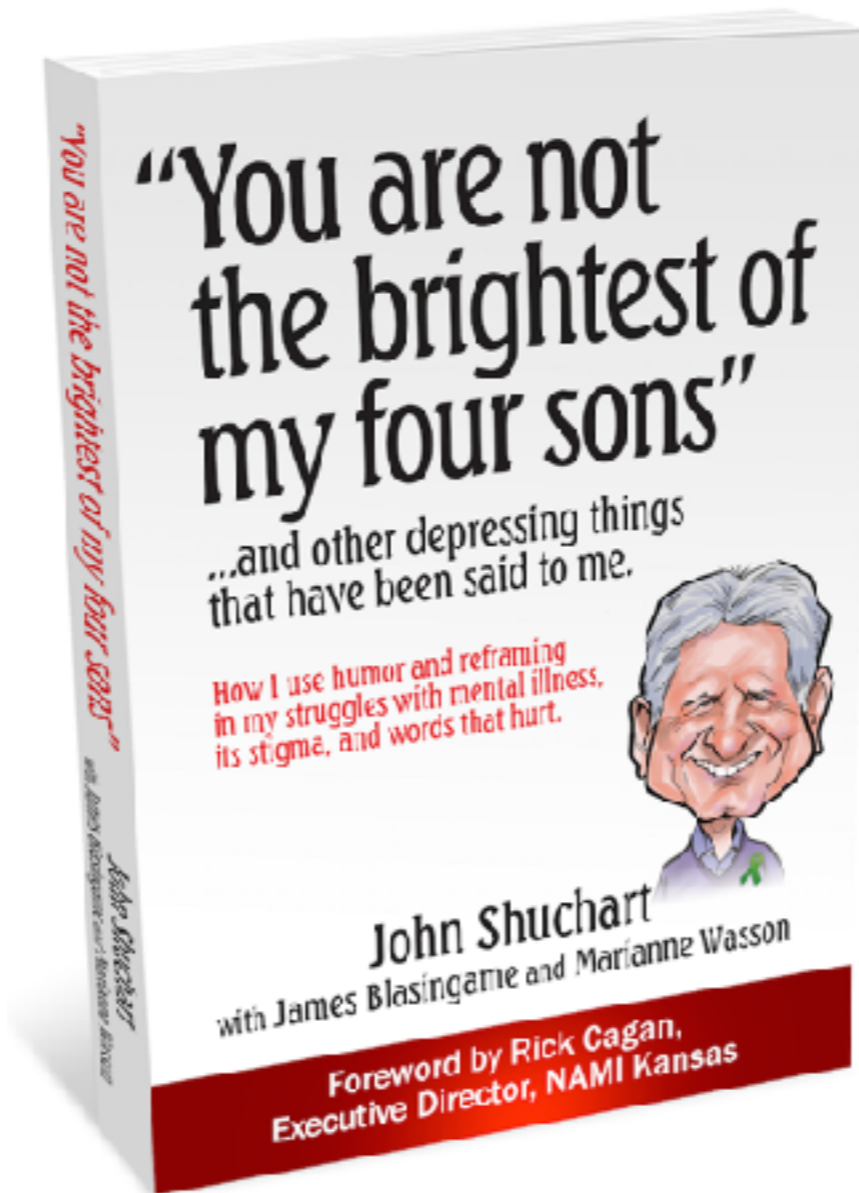
What Caused My Depression?

“You are not the brightest of my four sons!”

(How did she know when two of my three brothers were under 6 years old?!)



I Even Wrote a Book About It!



What Caused My Depression?

(My Mother and Father might have known something!)

“Oh boys... is that you?”



When We Were Seven



What Triggered My Depression?

“Johnny, pass me the salt!”



What Triggered *My* Depression?

My Near Fatal Car Accident and
the trauma which followed.



Trauma

Trauma: “A very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes someone to have mental or emotional problems usually for a long time.”

**Merriam-Webster Dictionary*



Trauma

Trauma is *subjective*.

It isn't the *event* that is traumatic...it is your subjective emotional *experience* that determines trauma.



Trauma

The more *frightened* and *helpless* an event makes you feel, the more you will experience the event as traumatic.



Causes of Trauma

ONE-TIME EVENTS

- An accident
- Injury
- Violent attack
- Natural Disaster



Causes of Trauma

CONTINUOUS, STRESSFUL EVENTS

- Dealing with illness
- Living in violent, unstable area
- Marriage (only kidding!)



Causes of Trauma

OTHER CAUSES

- Sudden death of loved one
- Humiliating or disappointing experience
- Breakup of close relationship



Causes of Trauma

An event can lead to trauma if:

- It occurred unexpectedly
- You were unprepared and felt powerless
- It happened repeatedly
- It happened in childhood



Emotional/Psychological Symptoms of Trauma

1. Shock, denial or disbelief
2. Anxiety and Anger
3. Feeling sad or hopeless
4. Difficulty concentrating
5. Withdrawal from others/disconnected/
disassociated



Emotional/Psychological Symptoms of Trauma

DISASSOCIATION

Bessel Van Der Kolk, author of *The Body Keeps The Score*, and the founder of **The Trauma Center** places a strong emphasis on DISASSOCIATION. He claims it is the *essence* of trauma.



Emotional/Psychological Symptoms of Trauma

Under *disassociation* emotions, sounds, images, thoughts, and physical sensations related to the trauma take on a life of their own.* (flashbacks)

* The Body Keeps The Score



Emotional/Psychological Symptoms of Trauma

Symptoms of Disassociation

1. Depersonalization: When reliving the trauma, feeling nothing, being removed.
2. Numbing: Affecting one's entire life.
3. Totally "not there": If not living in the present, trauma survivors tend to go places (mentally) where they did feel alive *even if those places are filled with horror.*



Emotional/Psychological Symptoms of Trauma

The result:

FLASHBACKS and *FREQUENT RELIVING*



Emotional/Psychological Symptoms of Trauma

Trauma has a **beginning** and an **end**...my auto accident.

But a flashback to the event can happen at any time...**whenever I return to the scene of my accident.**

Sensing...and identifying what is going on inside the person is the first step to recovery.



Emotional/Psychological Symptoms of Trauma

Our minds are flexible and can be modified to fit the circumstances...however;

With trauma, events are frozen in time, and are always unchanging, lonely, humiliating and for sure, *unchanging*.



Physical Symptoms of Trauma

1. Nightmares
2. Aches and Pains
3. Fatigue
4. Edginess and agitation
5. Startled easily
6. Loss of appetite



Treating Trauma

Treating trauma requires facing the experiences causing it. Doing so requires:

- Processing traumatic memories and feelings
- Regulation of strong emotions
- Building strong relationships of trust
- **Re-framing** disturbing events and memories



We Can Reframe Our Traumatic Events

- Traumatic events get stuck in the brain.



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- *Reframing* helps to release them, changes the “picture”, but not the actual events.



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We Can Reframe Our Traumatic Events

- Traumatic events get stuck in the brain.
- *Reframing* helps to release them, changes the “picture”, but not the actual events.
- *Sharing* with trusted friends adds the element of support.
- *Humor* helps. We want to laugh. We want to feel good!



Will Rogers

“Everything is funny...”



Will Rogers

*As long as it is happening to
somebody else!”*



The Southwest Approach

- *Nothing* is more serious than taking 140 people 35,000 feet into the air. Yet...
- Southwest hires employees based upon, among other traits, *their sense of humor!*



Humor Works!

- Studies have proven that people *retain* information better when it's attached to humor!
- *Laughing* feels good! Endorphins are released (those feel-good morphine-like chemicals).



Humor Works!

If you ever wondered whether or not you possess a sense of humor, ask yourself one question:

Have you *ever* laughed?



Humor Works!

If the answer is *YES...*

You've got one!



Humor Works!

Let's bring out that sense of humor right now by doing a simple exercise!



The Workshop

We've already learned how to end the horrific stigma associated with mental illness...



The Workshop

People with the disease need to talk about their disease, remind others that they can manage it and stop being ashamed and embarrassed.



The Workshop

Those on the other side of the table need to want to *educate* themselves about mental illness, to learn that the disease isn't someone's fault.



How To Deal With *Your* Mental Illness

1. Admit that you have a problem.
2. Share your thoughts with a trusted friend.
3. Everyone gets sad: understand that mental illness lasts longer (2 weeks minimum).
4. Fight the personal stigma.



How To Deal With *Your* Mental Illness

5. Seek professional help.
6. Learn to reframe your traumas. Use humor if possible. Endorphins work miracles!
7. Remember *1 in 4 adults* suffers a mental illness. You are not alone. Mental illness affects doctors, lawyers, nurses and clergy as often as bricklayers, computer programmers and gardeners.



There Are Special People In This Room

Special because they care...

They care for others night and day...

But...do they care for themselves?



First, Let's Help Ourselves

- We need to pay more attention to those who give care to those living with mental illness.
- To often we forget that caregivers can't perform at their maximum if they ignore their own issues.



Laws Governing Healthy Caregiving

*Sustain Your Compassion
Retain Healthy Skepticism.*

Learn to Let Go.

Remain Optimistic.



Laws Governing Healthy Caregiving

Be the Solution

Practice Sustainable Self Care

Acknowledge Your Successes

2003 Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project



Laws Governing Self Care

1. By validating ourselves, we promote acceptance.
2. By validating others, we elevate ourselves.
3. *By meeting our own mental, physical and emotional needs, we give care from a place of abundance, not scarcity.*



Laws Governing Self Care

4. By practicing self-goodwill, we manifest it throughout our lives.
5. By honoring past traumas and hurts we allow ourselves freedom from the pain that controls us.
6. By “doing the work”, we reclaim the personal power that is rightfully ours.



Laws Governing Self Care

7. By naming and taking ownership of the core issues that limit our growth, we create authenticity.

8. By managing our self-care, we welcome happiness into our lives.

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Laws Governing Healthy Change

1. Take frequent breaks from what you are doing.



Laws Governing Healthy Change

1. Take frequent breaks from what you are doing.
2. Learn the word **“NO!”**. Use it whenever necessary!



Laws Governing Healthy Change

1. Take frequent breaks from what you are doing.
2. Learn the word “**NO!**”. Use it whenever necessary!
3. Share the load with others.



Laws Governing Healthy Change

1. Take frequent breaks from what you are doing.
2. Learn the word “**NO!**”. Use it whenever necessary!
3. Share the load with others.
4. *There is humor in every situation. Find it – and laugh!*

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Types Of Fatigue Symptoms

Spiritual

Emotional

Behavioral



Spiritual Fatigue Symptoms

1. Questioning the meaning of life.
2. Loss of purpose.
3. Anger at God.
4. Questioning prior religious beliefs.
5. Loss of faith in a higher power.



Emotional Fatigue Symptoms

1. Anxiety.
2. Guilt, anger, rage.
3. Survivor guilt.
4. Helplessness.
5. Sadness, Depression, Depleted.



Behavioral Fatigue Symptoms

1. Inpatient, irritable.
2. Withdrawn, moody.
3. Sleep disturbances.
4. Appetite change, accident proneness.
5. Losing things.



Work Performance Fatigue Symptoms

1. Low morale, motivation, apathy
2. Lack of appreciation.
3. Negativity, absenteeism.
4. Exhaustion, irritability, withdrawal.



Compassion Fatigue And *Your* Mental Health

*How compassion fatigue affects
your mental health...*

1. *Exhaustion* can lead to negative thoughts which can lead to rumination. You might begin to use words such as “never, hopeless, and always.”



Compassion Fatigue And *Your* Mental Health

1. *Exhaustion* can lead to negative thoughts which can lead to rumination. You might begin to use words such as “never, hopeless, and always.”
2. *Burnout* is itself a downer. You start questioning why you do what you do, the value, and the outcome. This leads to confusion, doubts, and sadness.



Compassion Fatigue And *Your* Mental Health

Let's score your level of compassion satisfaction and fatigue:

Complete the Professional Quality of Life
Scale Questionnaire



**“You are not the brightest
of my four sons”**

**Thank you for allowing me to
share my stories and to do my
part to end the stigma!**

The Shuchart Foundation
for Mental Health Awareness

Donate online

www.theshuchartfoundation.org

