

# Stigma and Borderline Personality

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# What is stigma?

*the situation of the individual who is **disqualified** from **full social acceptance**.  
undesired differentness.*

(Goffman, 1963)

## An example: Depp v. Heard

# I have Borderline Personality Disorder – it shouldn't be weaponised against Amber Heard

Johnny Depp's legal team has claimed Amber Heard has two personality disorders, but **Mina Hadi** argues that this is a concerning approach to mental health

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## Pillars of stigma

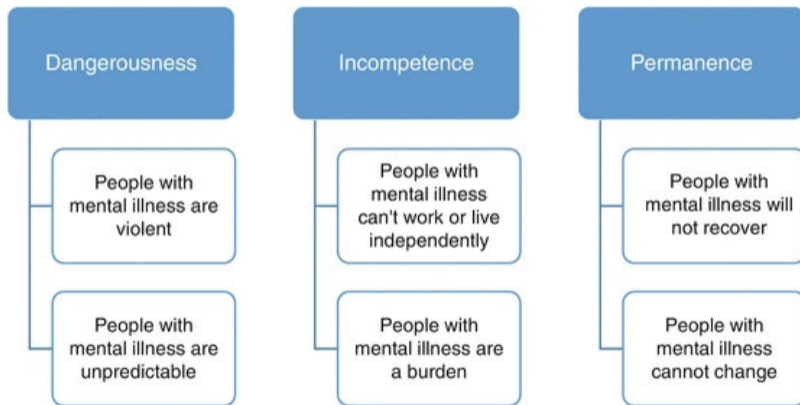
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Pillar	Definition/Type
Stereotype	knowledge structures that are learned by most members of a social group.
Prejudice	a general attitude toward a group.
Discrimination	direct or structural

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(Corrigan & Watson, 2002; Link et al., 2004)

# Some common stereotypes about individuals with mental health issues



(Sheehan et al., 2017)

## A matrix for understanding stigma

	Public stigma	Self-stigma	Label avoidance	Structural stigma
Stereotype (cognitive)	People with mental illness are violent	People with mental illness are incompetent	People with mental illness are “psycho”	People with mental illness are lazy
Prejudice (affective)	Landlord feels scared of Bob because he has a mental illness	I am a person with mental illness and therefore incompetent. Who would want to date me?	I have a mental illness and am ashamed to be seen as “psycho”	I feel disgusted by Joann; if she really wanted a job, she could try harder
Discrimination (behavior)	Landlord won't rent apartment to Bob	I think “why try” and stop looking for a relationship	I don't tell my boss I need time off to see a therapist for	Funding cuts for employment programs in mental health

# Stigma and Health Care Professionals

- BPD is the “**stepchildren of psychiatry**” (Lewis & Appleby, 1988).
- “In North America, there may be no other psychiatric diagnosis **more laden with stereotypes and stigma** than borderline personality disorder” (Nehls, 1998).
- “trainees closer to qualifying as psychiatrists have **increased stigma** towards patients with BPD” (Lindell-Innes et al., 2023).

## Consequences of Stigma

- the diagnosis is the entry door to treatment.
- missed opportunity to receive evidence-based treatment.
- inappropriate treatments (eg. when diagnosing a Bipolar Disorder 2 instead).
- no diagnosis = less visibility = less public health measures.
- stigma and life chances/stress (Link et al., 2004).
- Patient's autonomy?

## Fighting Stigma: 3 Agendas

Agenda	Objective
Services	Decrease <u>label avoidance</u> so people engage in evidence-based services.
Rights	Decrease public stigma so people enjoy rightful life opportunities.
Self-worth	Decrease self-stigma to replace shame with dignity.

(Corrigan, 2019)

## Some work to do, for example:

- there is room for improvement in health care settings.
- Advocacy work from organizations like ON-BPD.
- Should it be up to the people who are stigmatized to take the burden of changing the society's perception?

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