Understanding the Stigma of Mental Illness: Theory and Interventions

This book briefly describes programs that aim to reduce such stigma then looks at ways to evaluate their effectiveness.

Many mentally ill people are the victims of stigma, which leads to additional suffering and humiliation. Negative stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes against them are often reinforced by their media representation as unpredictable, violent and dangerous. Hence the importance of the study of stigma as an explanatory construct of much that transpires in the management of the mentally ill in our societies.

This book describes the experience of stigmatization at the level of the individual, and seeks to measure stigma and discrimination from the following perspectives: Self imposed stigma due to shame, guilt and low self esteem; Socially imposed stigma due to social stereotyping and prejudice; and Structurally imposed stigma, caused by policies, practices, and laws that discriminate against the mentally ill. It is the first book to focus on evaluation and research methodologies in stigma and mental health.

Understanding the Stigma of Mental Illness is essential reading for clinicians and researchers who wish to apply or develop stigma reduction programmes. It is also a valuable addition to the libraries of political analysts, policy makers, clinicians, researchers, and all those interested in how to approach and measure this distressing social phenomenon.