

Substance-Use Stigma Assessment & Response

Mecosta County

Substance-use Stigma Assessment & Response (SSAR) is a grant-funded project within Mecosta County, Michigan. Its aim is to reduce the impact of stigma and improve outcomes for individuals experiencing a substance use disorder (SUD). In the first phase of this project, the SSAR Action Team made of community stakeholders developed a survey for the general public that would capture their internalized stigma.

The Public Survey Overview



8 in 10

Stated they have had a family member or close friend who currently or had previously had a problem with a SUD.



6 in 10

Stated their family member or close friend has faced stigma or discrimination due to a SUD.

Most People vs Individual Stigma



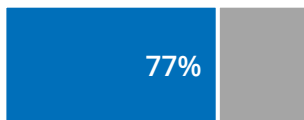
When asked "Most people in my community believe that individuals are to blame for their own SUD problems", 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Whereas only 23% of individuals held that belief themselves.

This demonstrates that individuals are aware of stigmatized beliefs in their community, even if they do not hold the beliefs themselves. From previous research it is found that these stigmatizing beliefs in the community will reduce the likelihood that individuals experiencing SUD will seek care or feel comfortable discussing their SUD with others.

Differences between Individual's Contact

Individuals that know someone who has experienced a SUD were more likely to support overdose prevention and aid an individual having an overdose than someone who do not know a family or friend with a SUD.

I SUPPORT EVERYONE AT-RISK OF WITNESSING AN OVERDOSE CARRYING NALOXONE



I WOULD ASSIST SOMEONE WHO IS HAVING AN OVERDOSE



Treatment of a Substance-use Disorder



9 in 10

Stated they agree or strongly agree that individuals experiencing a SUD can, with treatment, get well and return to productive lives.



2 in 10

Stated most people would believe that someone who has been treated for SUD is trustworthy.

In the next steps, our action team plans to begin work on planning strategies within Mecosta County to reduce the impact of stigma. Some of the strategies include education for community members and trainings for healthcare staff and law enforcement/ first responders.