



THE MENTAL HEALTH MEASURE

- 2022 -



Presented by

WayAhead

“Mental illness or mental health stigma is when a person or group of people are discredited or otherwise looked down upon due to their mental health. This includes reducing a person to a collection of symptoms or diagnosis, or assuming that they are unable to participate fully in society, or somehow “lesser” than others. Stigma can lead to discrimination which can exacerbate symptoms of mental ill-health.”



Executive Summary.

The Mental Health Measure 2022 looked at stigma and mental health. The responses clearly show the ongoing need for mental health stigma to be addressed. Stigma has a negative impact not only on those living with mental ill-health, but also people who may be experiencing distress who do not seek help. The survey demonstrates that the impacts of stigma are far-reaching, having an impact on many aspects of people’s lives.

Methods.

The researched surveyed 2000 respondents across Australia, half with lived experience of mental health and half without.

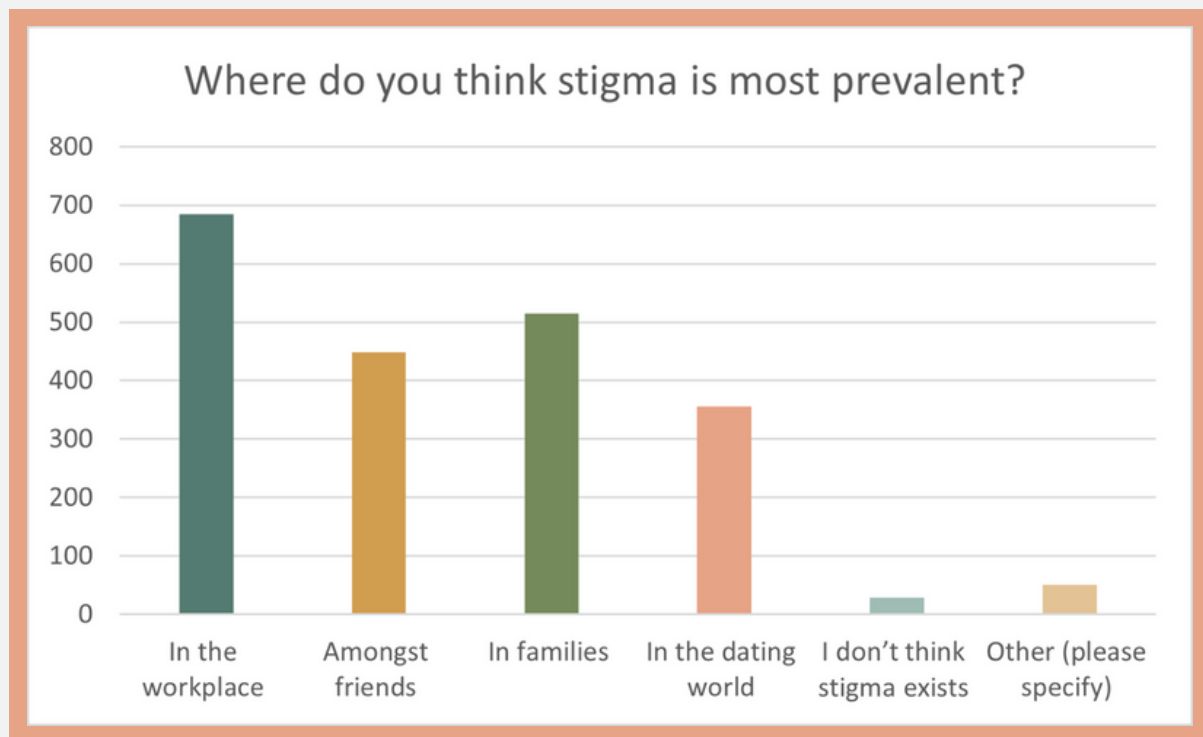
The cohort with lived experience were asked 17 questions (appendix 1), and those without were asked 13 (appendix 2).

Findings.

Stigma.

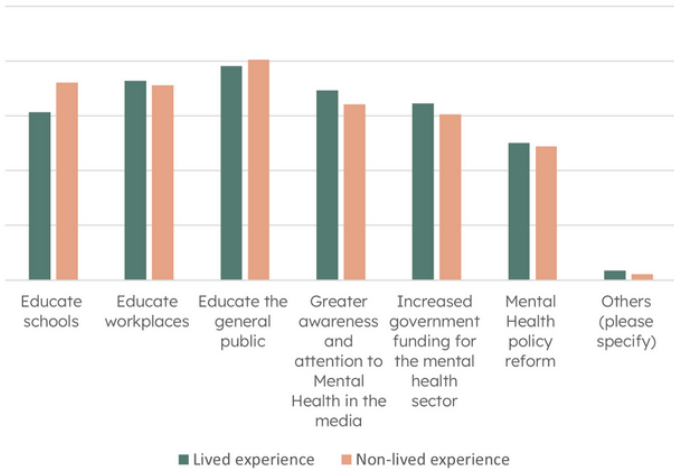
The survey found that 94.4% of respondents with lived experience think there is still stigma around mental health, and 91.2% of respondents without lived experience agreed.

Respondents with Lived experience were asked where they felt stigma was most prevalent, with 68.5% responding “In the workplace”.



Both lived experience respondents and on-lived experience respondents answered that “Educating the general public” most frequently when asked “What do you think can be done to eliminate this stigma?” (71.9% and 81.9% respectively), however the groups differed for the next most frequent response, with lived experience respondents answering “in the workplace” next most frequently (66%), and non-lived experience respondents answering “educate schools” (73.3%).

What do you think can be done to eliminate this stigma?

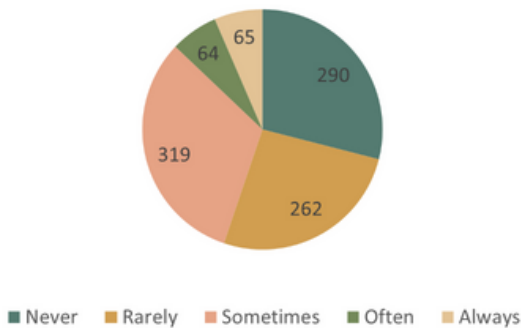


Whilst 84.3% of respondents with lived experience stated that they knew where to get help, only 9% sought help immediately, with 29.8% taking a year or longer to seek help.

Of respondents without lived experience, 69.7% said that how they saw or treated someone would be impacted if they disclosed that they had mental health issues. 50.8% stated that they had experienced conscious or unconscious bias against someone with a mental health issue.

Workplace.

When it comes to work did you, or, would you be willing to speak openly about your mental health to your employer?



Both cohorts indicated that there needs to be more safety around mental health issues in the workplace.

Respondents without lived experience said that workplaces rarely or never provide a safe environment for people experiencing mental health issues to feel open and safe about asking for help (83.7%), even though 22.3% indicated that their workplace always offered a supportive environment for people with mental health issues?

Of respondents with lived experience, 51.9% indicated that they felt their job had been jeopardised or impacted for the worse by stigma related to mental health from colleagues and/or managers. 43.1% said that they had experienced judgement or criticism about their mental health from their workplace.

When asked if they would be willing to speak openly to their employer about their mental health, 12.9% respondent “often” or “always” with 55.2% responding “rarely” or “never”.



Discussion.

This research supports the ongoing need for mental health promotion programs that address stigma around mental health and mental illness, such as those run by WayAhead.

WayAhead's programs address stigma through education, connection, and support. WayAhead's programs are informed by lived experience, which ensures that they can respond to the ongoing needs of people with lived experience.



WayAhead's programs also directly address a number of the identified areas that will decrease stigma. The Small Steps program addresses understanding of mental ill health in the education sector, and the Mental Health Month School's pack provides comprehensive lesson plans designed to help teachers incorporate mental health into their teaching.

The WayAhead Workplaces program addresses stigma and understanding of mental health in the workplace. The Mental Health Month campaign helps raise general public awareness, as well as provides lived-experience led information and guides to addressing stigma. The WayAhead Public Forums provide accessible mental health information to communities throughout New South Wales.

Additionally, the WayAhead Anxiety Support Groups, and WayAhead Directory support people through connection and access to services.

