

Class 5: Stigma and Labeling

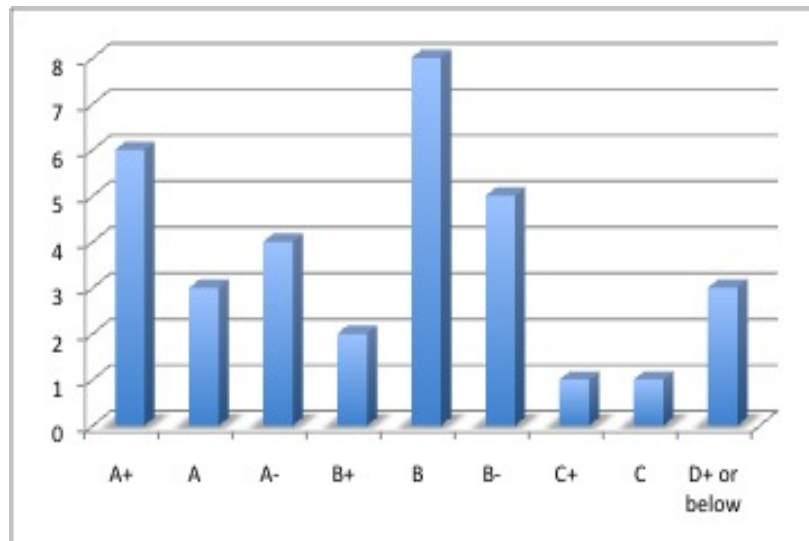
Sociology of Mental Illness

Did you remember to print out the
lecture sheet for class?

The Plan

- Quiz
- Test Results
- Extra Credit
- Lecture - Stigma

Average Grade: 86.3%



Extra Credit

Anyone bring any?

From the syllabus:

"You can earn up to five points in extra credit for the final course grade if you bring in examples from the news, television entertainment, or movies that relate to the main themes in the class or specific readings or lectures we have discussed (one point per submission). To do this, bring in a copy (or some documentation of your example - like a TV schedule guide) and be prepared to share with the class what you heard, read, or saw and how it relates to something we've read or discussed in class. We will take time at the beginning of class and right after the mid-class break for you to share."

MAKE SURE TO PUT YOUR NAME ON YOUR ITEM.

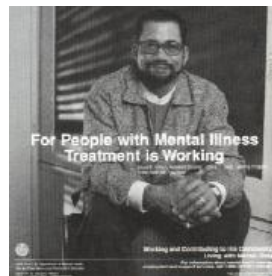
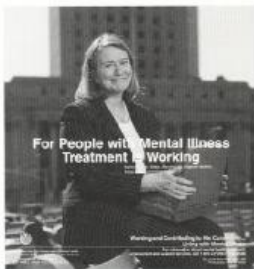
Stigma



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIZ9FmD0o9k>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUaXFIANojQ>

<http://www.stampoutstigma.org/famous.html>



Stigma: Erving Goffman

Prominent symbolic interactionist and sociologist Erving Goffman wrote about stigma and personal identity and how it is something created in relationships.

"While a stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind--in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak. He is *thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one*. Such an attribute is a **stigma**, especially when its discrediting effect is very extensive." (From Stigma, 1963)

Stigma: Definitions

Stigma in this context is an **"attribute that is deeply discrediting,"** but it is important to note that it must happen **in the context of relationships**. It is also dependent on the social context it is in - what is stigmatizing in one group or culture may not be in another.

- You can't be stigmatized if no one knows about the issue
 - This leads to two possibilities:
 - **discredited** (already exposed)
 - **discreditable** (potential, not necessarily exposed)

Please remember: the "normal" and the stigmatized are not people, but perspectives.

Stigma: Goffman's Types

- **Abominations of the body**
 - the various physical deformities
- **Blemishes of individual character**
 - perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty
- **Tribal stigma**
 - of race, nation, and religion, these being stigma that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family.

What's key is that the characteristic can make an individual with it stand out from the "normals" and break our expectation of him or her.

- From Goffman's Stigma, 1963

Stigma: Reactions by "Normals"

- Normals believe the stigmatized person is **not quite human**
- Normals enact a variety of **discriminatory practices** such as exclusion or avoidance (such as "**careful disattention**")
- Normals **construct theories** to explain why the person is inferior and to account for the danger they represent
- Normals use words that refer to that "kind" of person as a **metaphor to insult others** without much thought to where they came from
- Normals **impute a wide range of imperfections** to the stigmatized person beyond the original characteristic
- Extend "**courtesy stigma**" to normals associated with a stigmatized person
- Some normals **become the "wise"** and are sympathetic and supportive
- From Goffman's Stigma, 1963

Stigma: Reactions by the Stigmatized

- To **avoid contact with normals** who don't already know him or her - social contact with mixed groups becomes anxiety-provoking
- Attempt to **correct the problem directly**
- Attempt to "correct" indirectly by **overcompensating** in other areas
- Using stigma for "secondary gains"- getting something positive from his or her position
- Seeing his or her problems as a "**blessing in disguise**"
- Reassess the **limitations** of normals
- Share the company with a people who share the stigma - the **circle of lament**
- Find normals who are the "**wise**" - who know and are sympathetic
- Actively fight the stigma or "**own**" the stigma - by joining groups or advocating
- Try to **pass** as someone without the characteristic

Stigma: Exercise

1. Pick four stigmatizing conditions. Make a list
2. Is is discredited? Discreditable?
3. What of the three kinds of stigma would you say this is?
(Blemishes of character, abominations of the body, or tribal)
4. How do "normals" typically respond to this? How do people with this condition typically respond?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. believe the stigmatized person is not quite human 2. discriminatory practices such as exclusion or avoidance (such as "careful disattention") 3. construct theories to explain why the person is inferior and to account for the danger they represent 4. use words that refer to that "kind" of person as a metaphor to insult others 5. impute a wide range of imperfections to the stigmatized person beyond the original characteristic 6. "courtesy stigma" to normals 7. Some become the "wise" | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To avoid contact with normals who don't already know him or her - social contact with mixed groups becomes anxiety-provoking 2. Attempt to correct the problem directly 3. Attempt to "correct" indirectly by overcompensating in other areas 4. Using stigma for "secondary gains"- getting something positive from his or her position 5. Seeing his or her problems as a "blessing in disguise" 6. Reassess the limitations of normals 7. Share the company with a people who share the stigma - the circle of lament 8. Find normals who are the "wise" - who know and are sympathetic 9. Actively fight the stigma or "own" the stigma - by joining groups or advocating 10. Try to pass as someone without the characteristic |
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| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
|----------|---|------|--|------|-----|-----|
| June 20 | 1: Intro | | 2: Perspectives | | | |
| June 27 | 3: Social Epidemiology Paper assignments out | | 4: Medicalization Review for first exam | | | |
| July 4 | CANCELED - IUB holiday | | ONLINE EXAM 1 | | | |
| July 11 | 5: Stigma | | 6: Social Roles | | | |
| July 18 | 7: Stress | | 8: Social Problems | | | |
| July 25 | 9: Treatment | | 10: Consumers/Users/ Survivors | | | |
| August 1 | 11: PAPER DUE OPEN TOPIC LECTURE | | 12: Family | | | |
| August 8 | 13: Recovery | | IN CLASS FINAL EXAM | | | |

For Wednesday

Wed, July 14: Social Roles, Social Statuses and Mental Health
Before this class: **Read 3 of the following 9 chapters.** *It's your choice which to read, but bring your reading notes to class and be prepared to talk about them, we will be discussing them all.*

- **Sex Differences in Distress: Real or Artifact?, Mirowsky and Ross, pg 233**
- **Revisiting the Relationships among Gender, Marital Status, and Mental Health, Simon, pg 249**
- **Clarifying the Relationship between Parenthood and Depression, Evenson and Simon, pg 273**
- **Low Socioeconomic Status and Mental Disorders: A Longitudinal Study of Selection and Causation during Young Adulthood, Miech et al., pg 294**
- **Recession and Well-Being, Tausig and Fenwick, pg 316**
- **Racial Differences in Physical and Mental Health: Socioeconomic Status, Stress, and Discrimination, Williams et al., pg 336**
- **Childhood Parental Loss and Adult Depression, McLeod, pg 357**
- **Status, Role, and Resource Explanations for Age Patterns in Psychological Distress, Schieman, van Gundy, and Taylor, pg 375**
- **The Struggle to Gauge a War's Psychological Cost, Carey, pg 398**