

StigmaFreeOC

ACTION PLANS
FOR FAITH-BASED
ORGANIZATIONS

IDENTIFY STIGMA FREE OC AMBASSADORS:

- A Stigma Free OC Ambassador is any faith-based organization member who embraces Stigma Free OC efforts and will help bring your Stigma Free OC congregation to life.
- Ambassadors are involved congregation members who are willing to take a leadership role in getting the word out about reducing stigma.

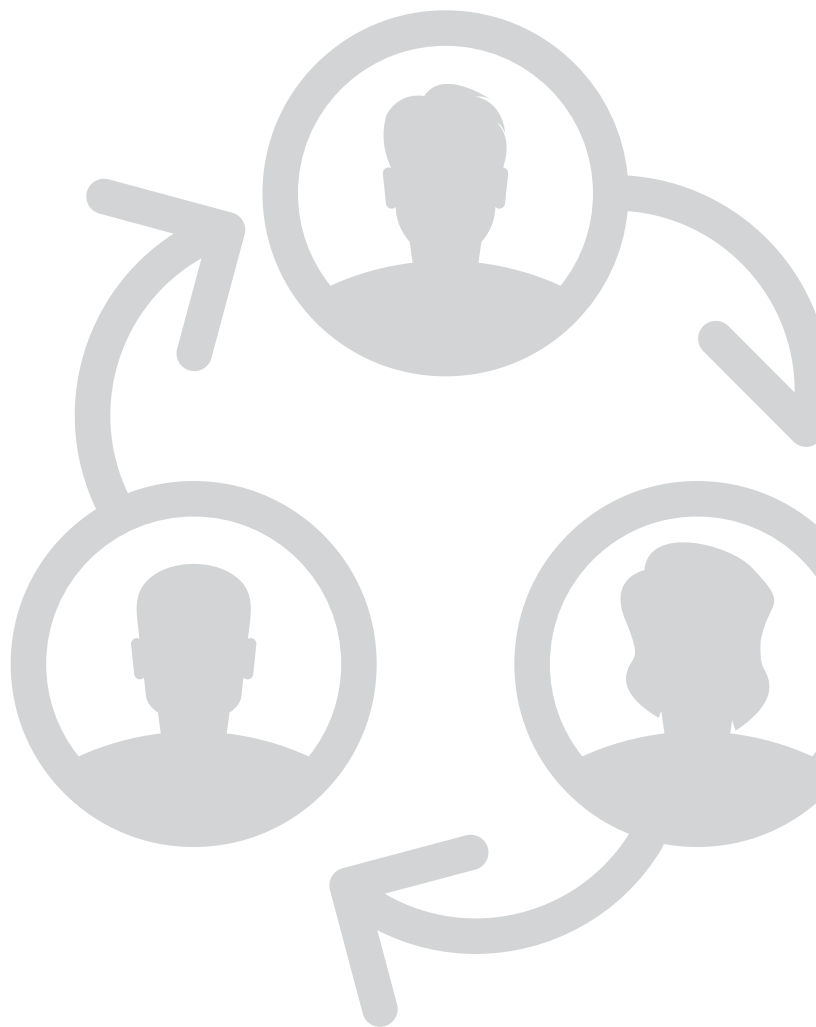
Ambassadors do not have to be mental health professionals; they can be individuals who are passionate, interested and energetic. An ambassador could be an individual congregant, office support staff, music director, youth director, camp counselor, teacher, faith organization leader or a parent. Oftentimes it is an individual who has personally been affected by a mental illness or substance use problem, either directly or through a family member.

FORM A STIGMA FREE OC TASK FORCE:

Gather a team of dedicated Stigma Free OC Ambassadors who can help enhance the culture of caring within your faith community, this will be your Stigma Free OC Task Force. You can have many Ambassadors or just one. Invite task force members directly, or begin by holding an interest meeting to inform your congregation about Stigma Free OC, provide education, promote awareness, and gather interest.

WHO TO INVITE TO JOIN YOUR STIGMA FREE OC TASK FORCE:

- A designated faith or associate/assistant faith leader
- Board members
- Organization staff
- Members of the congregation
- Volunteer leadership/head of ministries
- Members from Youth groups / Women's groups / Men's groups
- Committee, or other governing body chairs/co-chairs
- Other stakeholders



Below are some ideas to bring your stigma free congregation to life. Feel free to follow these suggestions and add your own that you think will benefit your congregation. Also, keep in mind that you do not have to do all of these tasks. Any steps you take to decrease stigma are steps in the right direction.

If you are already hosting congregation health events or fairs, you can promote Stigma Free OC efforts by simply cobranding the event as “[Event name]: A Stigma Free OC Event” and including the welcome message (detailed information below) or simply add an activity that educates on stigma and ways to reduce it.

ACTION PLAN SUGGESTIONS:

- Have your Stigma Free Ambassadors participate in leadership meetings (i.e. Council, Committee, internal governance).
- Host a Stigma Free OC event – live or virtual - (i.e. Prayer Event, De-stress Fest, Wellness Forum, Stigma Free OC Walk, Recovery Concert).
- Set up a Stigma Free OC information booth at other events.
- Promote personal stories of wellness and recovery (i.e. guest speakers during in-person or virtual services, publications in bulletins).
- Collaborate with local non-profits and recovery groups to support their efforts.
- Offer mental health related training for staff and/or congregants.
- Advocate for inclusion of mental health or substance use information/ activity in groups or at events.
- Add the [Stigma Free OC link](#) to your existing website.
- Promote Stigma Free OC through your organization’s news bulletin or other mailing.

EXAMPLE STIGMA FREE OC EVENT WELCOME MESSAGE:

“Hello, and welcome to the [insert event name]. In line with our Stigma Free OC commitment, the goal of this event is to reduce stigma related to those living with mental illness or an alcohol or drug problem. Stigma is a mark of disgrace which results from judgment by others. Stigma brings experiences and feelings of shame, embarrassment, distress, hopelessness and reluctance to seek or accept help. As part of a county-wide initiative, [insert name here] is acting to disseminate information and foster a stigma free environment where people are free from judgment and can get the help they need to recover from a mental health condition or a substance use addiction. We’d like to open this event by reminding you that everyone has the power to break through stigma. Everyone has the power to reduce stigma. We encourage you to support one another, seek the services you need, and not judge. Together we can reduce stigma and increase our culture of caring in our congregation and in our community. Please contact [insert Stigma Free OC Task Force contact person] for more information.”



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