



Moving beyond Labels

Newsletter

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The Latest from Loretta...

We've all got something that sets us apart from others. Sometimes it relates to us, and sometimes to those we are very close to. Mental illness has gripped my life repeatedly: first when I was a child, and now as an adult as other family members are afflicted. The past few months have been especially hard. I'm a caregiver for a loved one who is fighting the debilitating effects of depression and anxiety and stigma permeates our family struggle.

Since I am not the one who is personally affected, I am bound by my loved one's wishes. Their fear and shame keep the illness a secret. It is hard, because I am confident that having the courage to openly share what is happening would ease the pain and support recovery. Instead, absence from previous activities and social circles is met with silence. What are others to think? How can they be supportive if they don't know what the problem is? Surely this compounds the effects of the illness.

I am fortunate. I have a strong support network and am well connected with my community. Others aren't so lucky. Oftentimes caregivers experience stigma too, resulting in isolation, depression and a lower quality of life. It's another aspect of how stigma permeates our society. We'll delve deeper in September when we spotlight how caregivers are affected by stigma.

Highlights

- So nice to be invited to guest blog for [Each Mind Matters](#), our new partner and California's Mental Health Movement. Check out [the article here!](#)
- Loretta had the pleasure to chat with Dawn Shaw for her [Facing Up To It](#) webinar spot in January. Dawn's focus is on overcoming differences, one story at a time. She is inspirational and we are honored to be included in her undertaking. We are delighted that Dawn will also contribute a guest blog for B Stigma-Free in July, when we Spotlight facial differences.
- Catch our recent blogs articles? Dr. Melanie Brewster wrote about the fear of atheists in [Atheophobia](#); [Stigma, STEM and SES: Stigmatizing the Pursuit of Happiness](#) by Dr. Jocelyn Turner-Musa; [Color-Blind Attitudes](#), about privilege by Jacob Sawyer; and Claire Mysko, of the National Eating Disorder Association [exposed misconceptions that eating disorders are diseases about vanity](#).

Spotlight

We are excited to announce our [new storytelling campaign!](#) Through our stories we help others better understand our experiences and how they affect us. This is a critical step in building relatedness, and overcoming stigma.



[Tell us your story](#), and please share this link with your friends, family and colleagues too, so they can also participate.

On the Horizon

We all want to do the right thing, but it is easy to be scared of what we don't understand. Our partnerships are the key to helping people overcome their fears by creating a culture of understanding and helping us all relate better with each other.

We're continuing to build upon our relationships with stakeholders and looking for new ways to collaborate to make social change happen. Our strength is in our diversity. We're on a mission to make the world a more courageous place where our differences are valued.



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