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*The Latest from Loretta...*

Along with the rest of the country, my heart aches. Sunday's massacre at Pulse in Orlando was fueled by hatred. All of our work at B Stigma-Free is intended to overcome the sort of fear and bias that led to this horrifying terror and carnage. I find myself unable to shake the sadness and anger. It intensifies my resolve to make *real* change happen.

As we grieve and consider what we can do to make a difference, let us remember that people are attacked every day because of stigma. I urge each of us to **b brave**. To speak up when we see injustice. To let others know that we don't think it is okay to judge others because they have a difference. This won't be easy - but it is necessary.

I can't help but wonder about the mean-spirited rhetoric plaguing our country, and how it contributes to the country's social climate. Legislating fairness only goes so far, whether it is same-sex marriage or equal access to bathrooms; racial equality or freedom of religion. Our mission remains clear: we need to influence individuals' sentiments so all people are accepted, respected and included - and so we can all live our lives **b'ing** who we are, in peace.

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*Highlights*

- Welcome to our new partners. Please check out their websites and learn more about the important work that they do to combat stigma.
  - [National Eating Disorders Association](#)
  - [Village to Village Network](#) which supports older people aging in place
  - [Gender Rights Maryland](#)
- Did you catch our latest blog articles?
  - Lisa Smusz's [Breaking Mental Health Stigma with Music](#) shows how music helps one cope with mental illness, and she shared a link to download an album of catchy new tunes too - for free! The download is courtesy of Each Mind Matters' #MusicLikeMe
  - The [Deadly Impact of Substance Abuse Stigma](#) by Dr. David Fawcett suggests addiction can take hold of anyone - *Just saying no* doesn't cut it
  - Tara Jaye Frank's [Women as Business Leaders](#) exposes unconscious gender bias in the workplace
- In May we had great fun participating in a few Twitter Chats in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month.

These R dynamic convos 2 exchange #ideas w/others on topic - in less than140 characters!  
@Proud2Bme's #ProudChat even trended 4 a while!

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*Spotlight*

Each spring we invite a high school student to intern with us. Their youthful perspective brings energy and fresh vigor that enhances our operations, and they take away a worthwhile (we hope!) experience working in a vibrant non-profit organization. **Gillian Quinn** is a graduating senior from Fairfield Ludlowe High School in Connecticut, and a wonderful addition to our team! She took on several projects, including

work on our ageism spotlight (see her [Infographic](#) here) and [a terrific, must-see video](#) illustrating what stigma looks like.

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## *On the Horizon*

In response to the aggressive language against transgender people from some politicians and pending (and passed) discriminatory legislation from others, we're pursuing our first campaign. We ask our transgender friends for help. [Please share your story to help others better understand what it means to be trans.](#) Soon we'll be compiling video stories and engaging our partners to increase understanding about variations of gender identity. Because change has to happen *now*.

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