

Stigma Free Lanarkshire

People's Stigma Free Network

Join the
network



The People's Stigma Free Network (PSFN) is a collaboration between, individuals living in Lanarkshire, community groups in Lanarkshire and public sector organisations serving Lanarkshire. Stigma Free Lanarkshire (SFL) facilitates the Network meetings to take place however the content, purpose and actions of the PSFN belongs to the members.

Lived experience

The highlight of the event was Karen's testimony, in which she shared her deeply personal experience of the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide. Karen spoke about how she has transformed her profound grief into a powerful catalyst for change. During her address, Karen recounted the tragic loss of her partner, who died by suicide in 2017. She highlighted that, despite her family seeking professional support on eight separate occasions in the week preceding his death, adequate help was not forthcoming.

Karen also discussed the intersectional stigma her partner faced throughout his life and the impact this had on his ability to seek support and recover. Attendees were deeply moved by Karen's commitment to positive activism and her unwavering dedication to advocating for mental health reform.

Karen also reflected on the stigma she experienced following her bereavement. She observed that many people seemed unsure of how to respond to her loss, often choosing to avoid her altogether. She noted that this unconscious stigma shapes societal attitudes towards individuals who die by suicide, as well as the loved ones they leave behind.

Jenny Hutton

Jenny Hutton the Mental Health Improvement Manager, NHS Lanarkshire was the PSFN keynote speaker who provided clarity and understanding of what stigma is. Jenny's session was interactive and encouraged the attendee's participation to consider our perception of images and how that might reflect how our brains are all wired differently which resulted in her explaining that stigma is not something that we are born with, but something that we learn from society and experiences. Our brains are wired for empathy so that we can connect and understand others. Jenny noted that this is found within our brain cells called the Gandhi neurons which are there to help us to feel what other people are going through. These neurons can make us flinch when someone trips over and hurts themselves or feel moved when we hear about someone's personal story such as Karen's. Jenny explained that we are naturally built to connect with others and care about them.

So why then does stigma still exist? This can be through what we see in the media, what others teach us about mental illness which can 'block' our empathetic feelings.

During her talk Jenny shared the mental health and wellbeing strategy and the priorities for Lanarkshire in the future.

Peoples Stigma Free Network

Join a movement for change where we share and learn from each other to end mental health stigma and discrimination in Lanarkshire

Together we will...

Create a safe and inclusive space where individuals from all walks of life can share their experiences

Foster open conversations and share all learning, specifically good practice, and what is working in the communities of Lanarkshire

Provide a platform for the voices of Network members to offer ideas and inspiration

Encourage further action to create safe places while challenging mental health stigma and discrimination

Identify ways in which we can support members to achieve their own goals in creating stigma free environments

22nd January 2025 at 1.30 - 3.30pm
Forge Wood Community Centre
49 Dinmont Crescent
Motherwell
ML1 3TT



CONTACT US AT SFL@LANARKSHIRELINKS.ORG.UK
WWW.LANARKSHIRELINKS.ORG.UK/STIGMA-FREE-LANARKSHIRE

Stigma Free
Lanarkshire

Resource of the network

During the People's Stigma Free Network we showcased one of the Stigma Free Lanarkshire resources that is available on the website called Challenging Stigmatising Behaviour. This resource has been designed to help individuals and organisations address and reduce mental health stigma. This online resource allows the reader to understand why mental health stigma occurs and provide them with ideas on how to challenge stigmatising behaviour in a non confrontational manner.

It highlights common forms of stigma, including individuals use of language, stereotypes, and discriminatory actions and even gives specific examples that one might hear. This resource acknowledges that stigma often arises from misinformation and fear which can and does lead to the discrimination and exclusion of those with a mental illness.

For more please visit: www.lanarkshirelinks.org.uk/stigma-free-lanarkshire-resources/

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Lanarkshire

Challenging Stigmatising Behaviour

Action plan summary

The participation element of the network was to engage attendees in the core function of the network which is to ensure that mental health stigma is addressed by all of Lanarkshire and not just the business of Stigma Free Lanarkshire.

During the network attendees engaged in detailed and dynamic discussions about their individual or organisational action plans to tackle stigma and discrimination all of which resulted in several action plans being collated that demonstrated a strong commitment and enthusiasm to tackle stigma within their community; creating a collective drive to create meaningful change through individual and community-led actions.

Key actions (provided in full detail in the post network report) included individuals and organisations pledging to engage with awareness days such as time to talk day as a means of raising awareness of mental health which will reduce stigma. By championing small but meaningful actions we are reaching individuals to drive significant change in Lanarkshire. Individuals agreed to take proactive steps in using stigma free language and being mindful of others in their community that might need support.

Our SFL champions who attended the network agreed that they would continue to deliver the Understanding Stigma workshops within their localities and provide that practical support for individuals as they needed.

Lanarkshire's community organisations shared in their action plans that they would offer workshops, guidance and mental wellbeing resources, therefore making support more accessible and normalising those conversations around mental health; which reduce stigma.

Upcoming event

♥ Join us for the People's Stigma Free Network. ♥

👉 Let us tackle the stigma associated with poor mental health and mental illness in Lanarkshire. ✨ We will be supported by **Regen-fx GoTo** as we hear their service users share a powerful testimony of the action they have taken to address mental health stigma! 💬

Use the QR code to sign up ➡

📅 Wed 22nd of April 2025
🕒 10.30am to 12.30pm

GoTo
Positive Access for Youth

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22nd April 2025 at 10.30am - 12.30pm
Eastfield Community Centre
Duke's Road
Cambuslang
G72 7BA



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WWW.LANARKSHIRELINKS.ORG.UK/STIGMA-FREE-LANARKSHIRE

Stigma Free Lanarkshire

Stigma Free Lanarkshire

Become a Volunteer

Use your voice to help end mental health stigma & discrimination

We need help with:

- Promoting Stigma Free Lanarkshire within your community, workplace or educational establishment
- Work alongside the Stigma Free Lanarkshire team to develop new ideas and resources
- Share your lived experience story with others using various mediums

Sign Up



CONTACT SFL@LANARKSHIRELINKS.ORG.UK
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Support Details

If you are feeling suicidal, phone the **Samaritans** on **116123** (free 24-hour service) or visit www.Samaritans.org or **Breathing Space** on **0800 83 85 87** (free to call between 9 pm and 2 am) or visit www.breathingspace.scot. If you are a young person contact **Childline** on **0800 1111 24/7** or **Hopeline** 9 am to midnight on **0800 068 41 41**

Resource's available on the SFL website

Reaching Out to a Friend or Family Member Tip for opening up to a friend/family member about your mental health				
1. Look for subtle signs of someone who may be struggling. These could be changes in their behaviour, mood, or appearance.	2. Be honest and open about your own mental health. This can help to break down barriers and make it easier for them to talk about theirs.	3. Listen actively to what they have to say. Don't interrupt or try to solve their problems immediately.	4. Offer support in a way that is helpful and not overwhelming. This could be as simple as listening or as complex as helping them to access professional help.	5. Remember that you are not alone. There are many people who are struggling with mental health issues, and you can help them to feel less isolated.
6. Consider what might be causing their problems. This could be a range of factors, including stress, anxiety, or a mental health condition.	7. Let your friend/family member know that you are there for them. This can be a huge relief for them and can help them to feel less alone.	8. Try to help them to access professional help if they need it. This could be through their GP, a mental health service, or a crisis team.	9. Remember that sometimes people need more support than you can provide. It's important to know when to ask for help yourself.	10. Be proud of yourself for helping them. It can be a huge achievement to help someone who is struggling with their mental health.

Supporting a Friend or Family Member A few things to consider when it's time to talk				
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