



## LEADER GUIDE - WEEK ONE

### Required Listening before today's group:

Episode 1 of the Our Stigma Podcast

Make sure to communicate in advance of the first session that participants should listen to all of episode 1

### Group Conduct Agreement

Read the Group Conduct Agreement with the group. In the first session additions can be made to the agreement.

***Facilitator Tip:*** Ask if anyone would like to add anything to the group conduct agreement. There are extra lines on the second page of the PDF. Save these and revisit them briefly at the beginning of each session.

### Exercise 1: Introductions

Go around the group and have each person answer the following in one sentence: **Name one thing that you hope to get out of the group.**

## Exercise 2: Reflection

The group facilitator will lead the group in reflection. You can use the attached reflection or use an appropriate reflection of your choice. After the reflection is read, participants will pair off in groups of 2 and discuss one thing that jumped out at them.

### **Scripture:** Mark 5:24–34

"And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'' He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'"

## Reflection- By Seth Perry

*When I was struggling with my mental health I had no desire to ask for help. Psychologically, I have been in a state that posed a risk to my life on countless occasions, but I continued living life as if nothing was off kilter. I was once forced into the back of an ambulance after an intervention. The paramedic took my pulse, and I could sense the concern in the EMT's expression when he read my heart rate. He downplayed the situation and said, "Your pulse is little elevated for a 27-year-old."*

*I never wanted help until I myself decided I needed it. The following describes my life prior to recovery, how dire things were and for how long, yet I didn't seek assistance.*

*My thinking back then: People can be annoying. You share one vulnerable detail about yourself, and you get either silence or interrogation. What if I told you I did try getting help, but I walked into a clinic and froze? I never checked in. I drove to a 12-step meeting and parked across the street but never got out of the car. I left with such shame and regret I couldn't get out of bed the next day. There were times I almost reached out, but one or two bad experiences kept me from going further. I needed help, and I just didn't want it.*

*No one could talk me into it. No one could love me into it. Not even God could. And yet somehow I found my way here. That's the miracle. That's the mystery.*

## Exercise 3: Question of the Day

"On a scale of 1 to 10. 1 being bad and 10 being excellent: How easy is it to access mental health and addiction services in your area right now?"

**Facilitator Tip:** Ask people to answer quickly and go with their first feeling. No need to explain why just go with your intuition.

## Exercise 4: Large Group Exercise

*On a whiteboard or flip chart spend 4 minutes trying to list every mental health or addiction service that you know of in two columns:*

- Services that are accessible to your community.
- Services that are not accessible to your community.

**Facilitator Tip:** If participants are stuck, prompt them by naming services like: support groups, peer support, outpatient psychiatry, therapy, Intensive Outpatient, walk-in crisis, mobile crisis, telehealth, detox, residential treatment, group therapy, housing supports, and harm reduction facilities. **As a group facilitator make sure you do a little research in advance of the class.**

## **Exercise 5:**

### **Review and Commit to Research**

Review the lists created in exercise 4. Ask the class to identify three gaps in your community's . Find people in the class who will do a little online research to find out more about services in the area for next week.

#### **Facilitator Tip:**

*Encourage this to be a brief and decisive conversation.*

## **Exercise 6: Personal Stories**

This episode featured the following stories:

1. Geno - A man living in rural Scandia who drives great distances to connect to the recovery community.
2. Pat Johnson - An elder in the community that tells the long history of silence and shame in the community.
3. Marty - A man in early recovery that has been in and out of treatment and has had to go out of county and out of state to receive treatment.
4. Kirsten Libby - A woman who lost her daughter.

**Ask the group to split into partners, choose one person whose story spoke to you the most and share why it spoke to you. Return to the big group and share.**

## Exercise 7: Closing Brainstorm

**Ask this question:** What mental health and addiction education or service would you like to see in your community after today's discussion?

**Facilitator Tip:** *Designate a poster board or whiteboard space to collect answers to this question every week. Have participants continue adding ideas throughout the curriculum.*

## Exercise 8: Hope Check

**Prompt:** Everyone answers the question: "What did you hear today that gave you hope?"

**Facilitator Tip:** *Keep this brief—about two sentences per person. Invite everyone to answer. End on a note of encouragement and connection.*

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## Listening for next week's class:

*Listen to Episode 2 and 3*