



Poverty, Stigma & Mental Health

What does research say?

It has been found that poorer people face more mental health problems.

- Poverty is both a cause and consequence of mental health; mental health problems can lead to poverty due to loss of employment or inability to work. Poverty can lead to poor mental health due to social stresses and trauma.
- Feeling low or depressed may lead to people avoiding checking bills and avoiding thinking about money at all.
- If people experience mania or have a high, they may spend more money in a short amount of time.
- Action for Children states that children can be negatively affected by poverty as poverty affects parent's mental health which in turn impacts parenting behaviour's.
- According to The Children's Society children are 5 times more likely to experience sadness due to living around debt than those that aren't. Due to having a low income they may not be able to get access to the support they need.
- Poverty and mental health lead to an increased likelihood of experiencing stigma and discrimination.

Stigma is a negative attitude or belief about a mental, physical, or social feature that can lead to poor treatment and discrimination.

Stigma and discrimination can lead to a person's mental health worsening.

Almost 9 out of 10 people with mental health problems identify stigma and discrimination has negatively impacted them.

Our research shows that up to 90% of people with mental health problems experience some sort of stigma. This may be from friends and family, in education or at work or when they are receiving treatment



James' Story

James 39. I grew up in an inner-city area of Birmingham. When I was young, my parents struggled with money and debt. They often worried about how they would pay the rent that month, I would hear conversations about the possibility of us getting evicted and arguments about my parents owing money. Though my mom tried to hide it from us, it was obvious. I remember her sitting crying, trying to add up how much money was coming in and going out. She had to seek help for depression. It was hard to see her like that and I would have strong feelings of guilt that I could not help so I did not like to ask for money for things such as school trips or new trainers. This led to bullying, and I felt the stigma of "being poor" from the other children at school. This led to loneliness & isolation, followed closely by depression, and anxiety which I have struggled with throughout my life. I have struggled to maintain jobs leading to money problems.

“I felt the stigma of being poor from the other children at school. This led to loneliness & isolation”

It's a cycle, the more depressed I feel about not having money, the harder it is for me to work!

It's scary trying to get a job knowing you will have to let them know about your mental health problems. At one of my workplaces, I was told to leave my problems at home and to "be happy" while I was there. This discrimination led to me feeling sadder at work and eventually leaving. Currently, I am on medication for my depression which is helping. Now that I am feeling a little better in myself, I am doing some volunteering, and I am looking for part-time work. If I could give one piece of advice to someone who is in the position I have been in, it is don't suffer in silence, it is hard but there is help there.

Where to find Support for yourself or someone you have concerns about



**Birmingham Mind 24/7
Helpline**
0121 262 3555


Mind
Birmingham
Charity No.1003906 and
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 2024372



National Debt Line
**0808 808
4000**

Mon - Fri 9am - 8pm
Saturday 9:30am - 1pm



Citizens Advice
**0800 144
8848**



Samaritans
116 123


Birmingham Women's
and Children's
NHS Foundation Trust