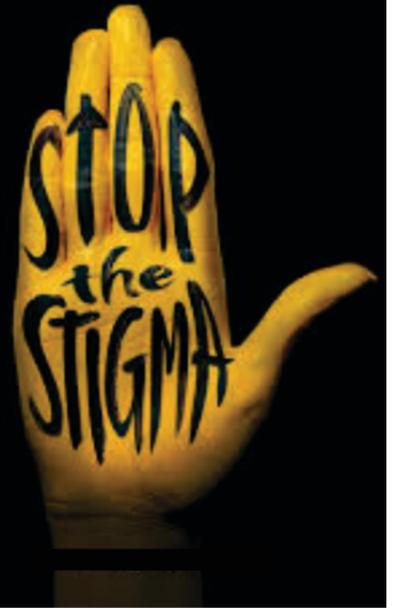


## EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME

# PLAY YOUR PART IN PREVENTING STIGMA DURING COVID-19



## Remember that stigma hurts...so let us all prevent it.

Everyone can help to stop stigma related to COVID-19 by knowing the facts and sharing them with others at work and at home. It is time to be responsible, assume shared responsibility, adopt positive thinking and maintain solidarity to make a difference in combatting the stigma associated with COVID-19.

### WHY IS COVID-19 CAUSING A STIGMA?

The unknown about the COVID-19 virus is creating fear, panic and uncertainty that leads to stigma. This lack of understanding and knowledge associated with COVID-19 heightens the need to blame someone and formulate irrational assumptions and fears about the disease. Stigma is also perpetuated by the lack of patience and tolerance during this extraordinary time.

### WHY IS ADDRESSING STIGMA CRITICAL?

- To avert stigmatised groups from becoming more vulnerable and thereby placing themselves at a higher risk.
- To stop individuals from projecting blame and responsibility onto others.
- To prevent individuals from hiding and masking their symptoms to be free from discrimination.
- To avoid damage to one's physical health and mental health.
- To prevent an environment of mistrust, anger and frustration.
- To eliminate psychological barriers which prevent individuals from practising healthy behaviours and seeking help timeously.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT STIGMA?

- Be a part of the solution rather than the problem.
- Know the facts about COVID-19 through reliable and credible sources.
- Address your concerns and fears and remain grounded.
- Words matter so mind your language and refrain from stigmatising terminology.
- Abstain from being judgemental and respect privacy and confidentiality.
- Do not reinforce labelling and discrimination but rather challenge biases.
- Share responsibility for good public health practice.
- Impart accurate, actionable information from reliable sources about COVID-19.
- Promote the importance of prevention, lifesaving actions, early screening and treatment.
- Embrace and value diverse people and communities.
- Replace bias, labelling, prejudice and discrimination with ideas of integrity, dignity and respect.
- Understand and encourage hope and the reality of recovery.
- Show empathy and support for those closely impacted, challenge myths and correct misinformation.
- Maintain regular social contact and engage in a positive and supportive manner with friends, colleagues and family who have tested positive.
- Sharing stories of positive recovery that will motivate affected individuals to mental and physical recovery.

## Viruses do not discriminate, so neither should you!

### EMPLOYEE WELLNES SUPPORT

Concerns regarding your mental health, comorbidities, stigma, your return to work or any other stress that you may be experiencing can be escalated to the Employee Wellness Office. Your queries will be attended to **CONFIDENTIALLY** and timeously. Counselling and support are readily available to you via WhatsApp, Skype, Microsoft Teams and telephonically. Kindly contact Mrs Samantha Rajcoomar via email at [rajcooms@dut.ac.za](mailto:rajcooms@dut.ac.za) for an appointment. Mrs Rajcoomar will then contact you according to your preference of digital communication for a confidential consultation. Referrals to external Health Care Providers will be made if deemed necessary.



## OTHER SUPPORT AND HELPLINES

SA DEPRESSION & ANXIETY GROUP :	0800212223
LIFELINE :	0861322322
CORONAVIRUS 24-HOTLINE :	0800029999
COVID WHATSAPP NO. :	0600123456
SUICIDE HELPLINE :	800567567
GBV COMMAND CENTRE :	0800428428
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE:	08600 10111