COVID-19: Preventing Stigma

What is STIGMA?

**Stigma** is the *negative* and *unfair* association between a group of people that share certain similarities (such as race/ethnicity, religion, job, etc.) and a certain disease, such as COVID-19.

- Stigma can cause people to be mislabeled, stereotyped, discriminated against, and treated poorly by others.
- *Mfangano* has struggled with stigma related to *HIV*, so let’s prevent stigma associated with COVID-19!

What causes STIGMA?

- **Unknown facts**
- **Myths and Rumors**
- **Wrong assumptions about people or groups**
- **Anxiety, stress, confusion and fear**
- **Harmful statements about people or groups**

What impact can STIGMA have?

*Stigma can lead to:*

- feelings of shame, hopelessness, and isolation,
- hiding illness and avoiding testing, which can lead to more disease in the community, and
- delayed care and treatment people need for their health conditions.

Who can get COVID-19? **EVERYONE**

- Around the world, athletes, celebrities, doctors, politicians, nurses, pastors, and scientists have all gotten COVID-19, so this disease does not just affect one type or group of people.

The DOs and DON’Ts of talking about COVID-19:

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<th>DOs</th>
<th>DON’Ts</th>
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<td>Do talk about thoughts, feelings and experiences.</td>
<td>Do not attach any race/ethnicity, location or profession to this disease.</td>
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<td>Do show empathy towards people with COVID-19.</td>
<td>Do not use terms like “victims” or “casualties” or “infecting others”.</td>
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Although we are not able to be together physically during this difficult time, we must be supportive, accepting, and encouraging of each other! *Wan Kanyakla!*