

# Children with Special Healthcare Needs

*Reducing the Stigma*

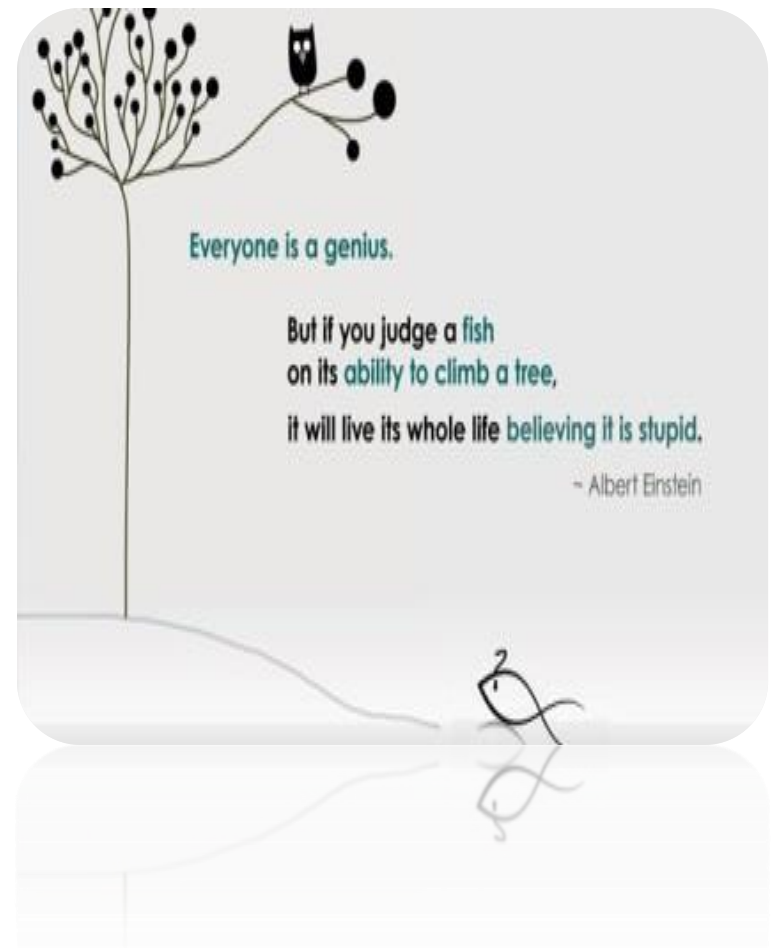


[WeArePublicHealth.org](http://WeArePublicHealth.org) [twitter.com/Maricopahealth](https://twitter.com/Maricopahealth) [facebook.com/MCDPH](https://facebook.com/MCDPH)

# What to expect



- Define Stigma
- Impact of Stigma
- Suggestions/programs designed to increase inclusion, empathy and tolerance
- Questions
- Resources

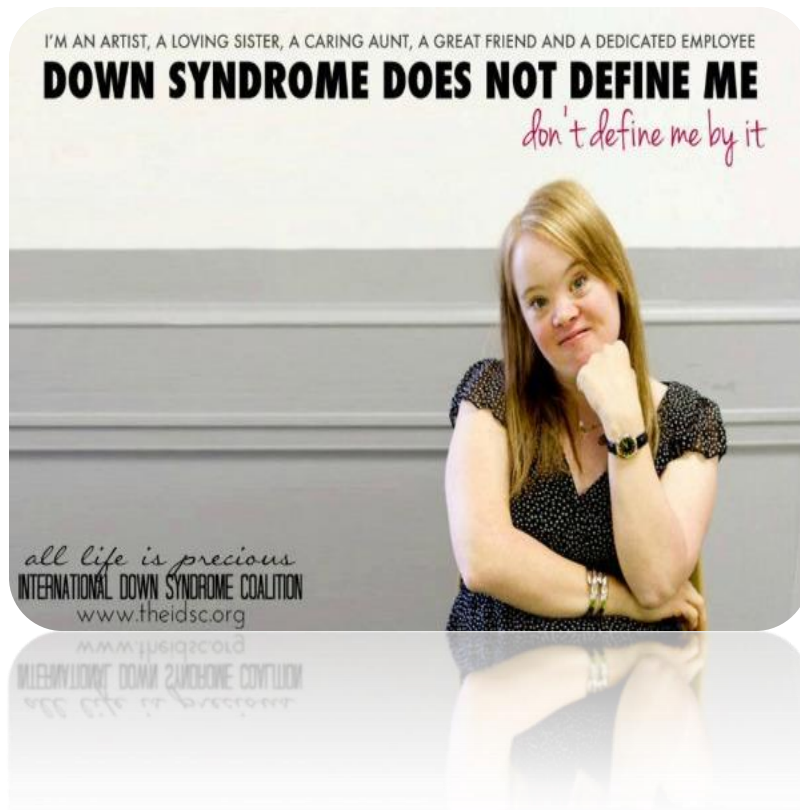


# What is Stigma?



- Stigma refers to being marked/branded, but also refers to groups of people being categorized as different from the 'norm'.
- Stigma is connected to people's cultural beliefs, knowledge of disabilities and special needs and the amount of contact they have had and the type of contact they have had with such.
- Schools play a vital role in addressing stigma.

# Impact of Stigma



- Exclusion from opportunities or interactions with others
- Isolation/loneliness
- Feelings of shame
- Feeling invisible
- Minimizing one's potential, skills or abilities

# Efforts to Reduce Stigma



*In 2013 Boston Schools focused on  
“Expanding inclusive practices and  
changing the culture of Boston  
Public Schools district...”*

*Boston Public Schools*

**Students with mild to  
moderate special needs.**

**Full inclusion (80% time in  
general classroom)**

**Partial Inclusion (60% of time  
outside of general classroom)**

# Reducing Stigma



*“Students with disabilities perform better academically and gain more social and functional skills when they are educated with their non-disabled peers”.*

*Boston Public Schools*

**Inclusiveness can be effective for with special needs but it also can expose children to:**

- **Bullying**
- **Isolation**
- **Shame**
- **Low self esteem**
- **Avoidance behaviors**

# What is needed to be successful



**According To Dr. Thomas Hehir:**

**“Number one, they (the schools and districts) look at their resources as in a sense all being devoted to improving the instructional program for all kids. They don't look at the special ed budget or the bilingual budget. There is a budget for the schools, and the schools use those resources effectively.”**

# What is needed to be successful



According To Dr. Thomas Hehir:

“There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more.”

-Robert M. Hensel

“Secondly, the principals of those schools and the teachers of those schools value disability, value the inclusion of children with disabilities, and they provide supports in classrooms for kids in those classrooms but also provide opportunities for teachers and school administrators to do problem-solving around the issues that these children have”.



# Last of all...



- *According To Dr. Thomas Hehir*

**“And I think that it's important for people to start understanding that kids who have disabilities have a right to be educated in inclusive settings to the degree that is appropriate, but people who run schools also have an obligation to make sure that the **teachers and the children** get the types of supports that they need.”**

# Essential elements



- **Commitment**
- **Involvement**
- **Support**
- **Willingness to evaluate**
- **Willingness to collaborate and problem solve**



# But what about...bullying...



## Bystander Training

- KiVa Program in Finland
  - <http://www.kivaprogram.net/>
  - University of Arizona's "Step Up" program
- <http://stepupprogram.org/about/>

Your beliefs become your thoughts,  
Your thoughts become your words,  
Your words become your actions,  
Your actions become your habits,  
Your habits become your values,  
Your values become your destiny

MK Gandhi

# Talk about it...



- <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/resources-youth-professionals>

# Empathy



**Empathy is the ability to look at a situation from another point of view. It is the basis of caring relationships and allows us to connect and understand those who may be different from ourselves.**

<http://empathyed.org/>



*Empathy is not approval*

# Tolerance



“Children, at very young ages, are often exceptionally aware and honest about differences they observe between themselves and others, but rarely attach judgments to those candid observations. We adults are the ones that do that.”

“These observations are often expressed in form of a question like, “Why does that man have such dark skin?” “Why does that lady wear that long robe?” “Why is that boy in a wheel chair?” These are perfect opportunities to teach the core social value of tolerance. What we do and say in these crucial moments can help to mend wounds and bridge chasms between *different* people that have been incurable in the past.”

<http://www.everydayfamily.com/6-ways-you-can-teach-your-child-tolerance/>



# Build Tolerance & Empathy...



**In schools and at home:**

**Listening and reflecting back  
what you hear**

**Understanding similarities as  
well as differences**

**Hearing the stories of others  
(relating to them)**

**Set guidelines about language  
and how to deal with  
emotions – anger, sadness,  
etc.**

**Be a role model...**

Not only must teachers have empathy for their students in order to best teach them, they must develop this skill in their students. 'Expressing care for another is not an innate ability present more naturally in some people than others, but rather a skill that can be taught and nurtured through a supportive educational environment' (McLennan, 2008, p. 454).

# Questions/Comments





# Resources



- <http://au.professionals.reachout.com/reducing-mental-health-stigma-in-schools> (in Australia -- deals with mental health)
- <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>  
(program in England - focus on mental health)
- <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib07/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/249/2013-06-20%20Inclusion%20plan%20FINAL.pdf>  
(increasing inclusiveness Practices in Boston Public Schools)
- <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470880147.html>  
(Dr. Thomas Hehir's book - *Effective Inclusive Schools: designing successful schoolwide programs* with in-depth case studies from many schools)
- <http://hepg.org/hep-home/books/how-did-you-get-here>  
(Students with Disabilities that made it to Harvard)
- [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/rubin/effective-bullying-prevention-program.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/rubin/effective-bullying-prevention-program.shtml) (Successful Science-Based Bullying Prevention Program in Finland)
- <http://stepupprogram.org/> (University of Arizona's Bystander program)
- <http://www.eyesonbullying.org/bystander.html> (provides information about how to be a "helpful" bystander)

# More Resources



<http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/developing-empathy> (many lessons and resources to help build empathy and tolerance in the classroom)

<http://highschool empathy.org/> (offers student-faculty workshops to middle & high schools free of charge )

[http://www.academia.edu/12720474/Transcending\\_tolerance\\_A\\_four-week\\_program\\_promoting\\_respect\\_and\\_empathy\\_for\\_LGBTQ\\_middle\\_school\\_students](http://www.academia.edu/12720474/Transcending_tolerance_A_four-week_program_promoting_respect_and_empathy_for_LGBTQ_middle_school_students) (a four-week program promoting respect & empathy for LGBTQ middle school students)

<http://www.everydayfamily.com/6-ways-you-can-teach-your-child-tolerance/?pg=2&internallink=6-ways-you-can-teach-your-child-tolerance#post-2098> (six ways parents can teach their children tolerance)

<https://antibullyingsoftware.com/> (software that can be purchased by schools which allows students to report bullying and other offenses anonymously 24/7 by mobile device or computer)