



# Activity: Brick Wall of Stigma & Ladder of Resiliency

## PART 1: THE BRICK WALL OF STIGMA

The first part of this activity is appropriate for people who work in community organizations, **women** with lived experience or combined groups. It is designed to provide a visual illustration of how people can face intersecting forms of stigma, and how stigma can create a “brick wall” preventing **women** from moving forward.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- ▶ **Step 1:** Work in small or large groups, depending on the setting.
- ▶ **Step 2:** Provide rectangular pieces of coloured paper cut out in the shape of bricks.
- ▶ **Step 3:** Have participants brainstorm stigmatizing labels they have heard people call others, or have been called themselves. Encourage participants to think about institutional stigma, social stigma, internalized stigma and stigma by association.
- ▶ **Step 4:** Encourage participants to write their stigmatizing labels on the brick cutouts. Consider using different colour paper to represent the different types of stigma.
- ▶ **Step 5:** Build a ‘brick wall’ by taping the completed labels onto a wall. This creates a powerful visual to help demonstrate the brick wall of stigma.
- ▶ **Note:** Use your brick wall in the ‘ladder of resiliency’ follow up activity on [page 50](#).

### TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT

Have participants share the ideas they came up with and reflect on what they see.

- Is anything missing?
- Have you experienced/worked with anyone who has faced many of these?
- How does it feel to look at a wall of these stigmatizing labels?
- What might the impact be of facing multiple labels?

## HERE'S HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN "BRICK WALL OF STIGMA."



### FACILITATOR NOTES

Encourage participants to take care of themselves when they do this activity. It can be difficult to think about all the layers of stigma & discrimination people face."

If you are **facilitating this activity in a virtual setting** (e.g., on Zoom), here's a tip to do this activity online. Open a blank PowerPoint slide and share your screen; on the home tab, you can select rectangular text boxes, and type in the stigmatizing labels that attendees suggest. Using the "Shape Fill" button, you can change the colours of the "bricks" (i.e., text boxes) to align with the different types of stigma, and use your mouse to arrange them into a brick wall.

Additionally, using a program like Miro, the flowchart option can be used to stack square text bubbles into "bricks".



**Step 1**  
Assemble a group.



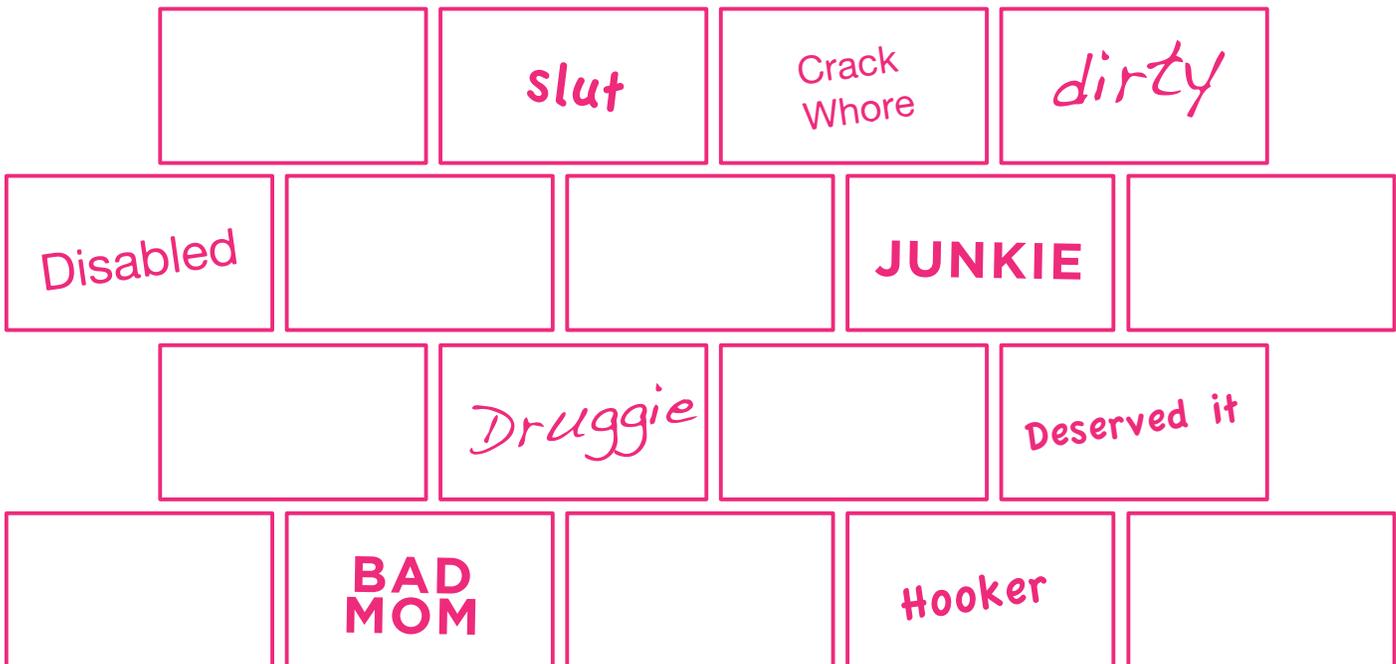
**Step 2**  
Create brick cutouts using coloured paper.



**Step 3**  
Brainstorm stigmatizing labels.



**Step 4**  
Write stigmatizing labels on bricks.



**Step 5**  
Build your brick wall by taping paper bricks onto a wall.



## PART 2: THE LADDER OF RESILIENCY

Building on the Brick Wall of Stigma part of this activity, this activity can be used to explore the many ways **women** overcome stigma and discrimination through resiliency, community and welcoming spaces. This activity involves the creation of a ladder to demonstrate symbolic attributes that help communities “climb over” or overcome experiences of stigma.

### INSTRUCTIONS

-  **Step 1:** Re-visit your group’s wall of stigma on [page 21](#).
-  **Step 2:** Cut out two long pieces of paper and enough shorter pieces of paper to represent ladder rungs.
-  **Step 3:** Hand out the ladder rungs to participants and ask them to brainstorm words that describe the resiliency needed to overcome stigma and discrimination.
-  **Step 4:** Once everyone has created their ladder rungs, build the ladder over the brick wall.
-  **Step 5:** Emphasize how people have many skills to overcome stigma.

### TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT

Ask the group to discuss ways they can build these examples into their work to foster a welcoming space.

<sup>1</sup> McClain, Z., Hawkins, L., & Yehia, B. (2016). Creating Welcoming Spaces for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) Patients: An Evaluation of the Health Care Environment. *Journal of Homosexuality*; 63(3).

<sup>2</sup> OAITH. (2005). *Creating Inclusive Spaces for Women: A practical guide for implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system.*

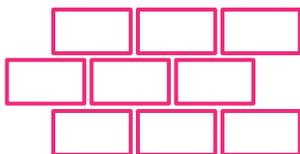
<sup>3</sup> Vulpe-Hixson, Jack. (2011). *Creating Authentic Spaces: A gender identity and gender expression toolkit to support the implementation of institutional and social change.* Retrieved from <http://www.the519.org/education-training/training-resources/trans-inclusion-matters/creating-authenticspaces>

## HERE'S HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN "LADDER OF RESILIENCY"



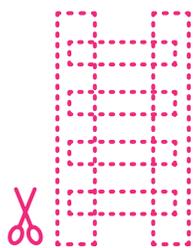
## FACILITATING ONLINE

If you are facilitating this activity online, return to the PowerPoint slide where you created your brick wall of Stigma and share your screen. Use the rectangular text boxes again but stretch them out so they are wider but shorter than the text boxes that made up the bricks. As participants suggest words, stack them to create a "ladder" on top of the brick wall.



### Step 1

Re-visit your wall of stigma.



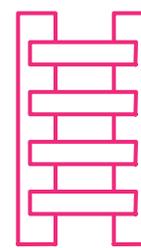
### Step 2

Cut out long and short pieces of paper to create a ladder.



### Step 3

Brainstorm words that describe the resiliency needed to overcome stigma and discrimination. Common words that women have used to describe welcoming spaces are displayed on the ladder below.<sup>1,2,3</sup>



### Step 4

Assemble your "Ladder of Resiliency."

