



We're ending stigma not by seeking acceptance but by owning our mental illness –

RAW,
EMOTIONAL
& SCRIPTLESS

Overview

Mental illness significantly impacts or even impairs the lives of one in five of us and yet we barely speak of it. Discussions of mental health are more palatable but still generally avoided. To change this, we cannot seek acceptance from the other 75% of the population, we need to own it. You don't develop pride without practice. The Speakers Bureau of Painted Brain is loud and proud about mental illness, and about the fact that people with mental illness can have great mental health. Mental health clearly includes a deep understanding of oneself, which means facing both our strengths and our weaknesses, and mental illness can kickstart the journey. It's not necessarily a pleasant experience, but can be incredibly fruitful.

Effectiveness

It is well-established in the literature that direct contact is the most effective way to open people's minds to people different from themselves. With mental health specifically, listening to a speaker, talk about internal and life experiences can help the audience accept, come to terms with, or even share aspects of themselves that remain hidden, denied or ignored. Mental illness does not discriminate, it affects people from every nationality, ethnicity, culture, and class, and one thing we all have in common is that none of us have a good way of talking about mental illness. Our talks have a real impact. Audiences of high school students, college students, graduate students, educators, and professionals reconsider their ideas about people with mental illness in three key areas: reduced stigmatizing attitudes, improved attitudes about ability and potential, and increased belief in the potential for recovery. More crucially, audience members reported an increased likelihood of seeking mental health treatment and support for themselves if needed. This was most recently demonstrated with a small grant from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Who We Are

Painted Brain speakers are mental health superstars who have turned psychiatric symptoms into superpowers. Living with mental illness in the truly crazy world we inhabit, it can be hard to know: 'Is it us or is it everybody else?' Our speakers talk from the heart, in raw, emotional, scriptless terms and represent the wide diversity that is Los Angeles. We have a mental illness but are also artists, software programmers, therapists, businesspeople, administrators, singers, and actors. We start the conversation and then keep it going by inviting the audience to ask anything they want. We have to talk about it!



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