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# Social Work Education and Mental Health Stigma

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Social Work Education and Mental Health Stigma

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Honors Thesis

University of New Hampshire

## Social Work Education and Mental Health Stigma

### **Abstract**

Mental illness is a stigmatized condition, manifested through negative stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against individuals with a mental illness. The current study surveyed undergraduate and graduate social work students to understand whether there was a correlation between education and stigma, and intimate relationships and stigma. Results demonstrated that taking a class with a mental illness focus reduces desire for social distance. Additionally, contact with people with MI is likely to reduce desire for social distance and stereotyped beliefs. Intimate, casual relationships (specifically family members) result in lower stigma. Results provide support for including education and contact in anti-stigma strategies, which should be used by mental health professionals such as social workers.