Catholic Intellectual Tradition
Human Journey Colloquium on OCD
Learning Outcome
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What does it mean to form a more just society for the common good?

- *Recognize the dignity of all persons, irrespective of individual characteristics – age, gender, race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc.*
- *Promote fairness, equity, and inclusiveness in the distribution of resources.*
- *These values support working to reduce the stigmatization of mental illness and discrimination toward those suffering with mental disorders; treating them with empathy and compassion.*

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Stigma of Mental Illness

Stigma is a deeply discrediting attribute that causes an individual to be viewed as a lesser person compared to others (Goffman, 1963).

Stigma causes harm to others because of:

- Prejudice and discrimination.
- Self-stigma – the internalization of prejudicial attitudes that harm a person's sense of self, causing shame and embarrassment that can interfere with seeking help and treatment.

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How to Reduce and Counteract Stigma

- Education
- Media Campaigns
- Critical Thinking about Media Portrayals
- Training Workshops
- Community Support Groups
- Individual Disclosure (*Coming Out)*
- Getting to Know Individuals – contact, especially with those of equal or higher status (Allport, 1954).

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Pope Leo's Month of October Intention - Pray for Those Who Suffer with Mental Illness

"God of life, you know, the innermost depths of our hearts, the light and shadows within us, the silent wounds that sometimes no one sees.

Today we bring before you, our brothers and sisters, who struggle with challenges to their mental health, who suffer in solitude with anxiety, depression, or any other mental illness. You call them by name with tenderness, and in you, they find dignity and hope.

Forgive us for the times we have looked the other way, feeding the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.

May your church be an open house, a safe space, where everyone has a place, a community that accompanies and never excludes, that listens without judging, and draws near without fear.

We pray to you, Lord, for those who care, professionals, family members, volunteers, men and women who, with patience and love, build bridges of understanding and comfort. Give them strength and compassion to sustain others.

Send your spirit upon us, that we may learn to welcome and integrate, care for mental health, into the life and ministry of our communities and of the whole church, and thus become a living sign of your mercy. Which never abandons and always restores.

Amen."

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