

## Talking About Stigma

*“Anything that’s human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary.”*

– Fred Rogers<sup>1</sup>

**F**red Rogers, of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*, might not have been a child psychiatrist, but he was deeply aware that children have feelings of fear, anger, and much more. Mister Rogers recognized that we need to build trust and comfort when talking about feelings with children instead of encouraging them to hide their emotions away. By stigmatizing mental health, it is more difficult for youth to feel comfortable about the worries, sadness, or anger they might be experiencing. This Winter 2020 issue of *JAACAP Connect* goes through many topics that have been negatively impacted by mental health stigma and discusses how child and adolescent psychiatrists can help to battle this stigma.

This issue will launch a new article type called *Connect* Corner, inviting all child and adolescent psychiatrists to review current forms of media, such as the latest video games, movies, TV shows, and books. Writers are encouraged to provide relevant education about the chosen media source and give guidance on how to talk to families about them. If you are interested in writing for *Connect* Corner or if there is something you would like to see reviewed, please feel free to reach out to [connect@jaacap.org](mailto:connect@jaacap.org) with your suggestions!

Stigma can exist in many forms and the level of impact on the child, adolescent, family, or system can vary. The authors in this issue deal with multiple areas of stigma in various topics. Lab to Smartphone authors Dr. Rettew

and Ms. Wolf address the growth of new technologies to provide behavioral health services to youth, and how we must combat our own stigma towards innovative practices. Wolf and Rettew’s article builds on the discussion of internet-based therapeutic modalities, as discussed in the Fall issue of *JAACAP Connect* and our most recent *JAACAP Connect* Chat, which can be found on Twitter by searching #JAACAPConnectChats. Kim *et al.* take a look at the impact of cultural perceptions on depression in Korea, and the importance of normalizing evaluation and support for depression to help reduce the negative impacts of stigma. In the article by Ahmad *et al.*, the stigmatization of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) has led to state laws that limit access. Ahmad and colleagues help to guide child and adolescent psychiatrists to strategies that advocate breaking down some of the barriers to treatment that stigma has built. The article by Ms. Kass and Dr. Kaliebe shed light on the impact of various environmental factors on the development of depression, moving away from the stigma and blame that people with depression sometimes receive for their diagnosis. Drs. Rosen and Glowinski introduce us to a review of sensory processing disorders, and in doing so help to highlight the importance of good recognition and treatment of these disorders, and not just for children with autism spectrum disorders. With their experience as former teachers, Drs. Durbin and Harmon introduce us to an area where mental health stigmatization can be most rampant: the school system. By using their education background, the authors teach child and adolescent psychiatrists to navigate and collaborate with schools in their neighborhood.

This issue will also represent the second edition of Current Literature in Pediatric Psychosomatics (CLiPPs) as part of *Connect*. There will be three new reviews of articles, including autoimmune encephalitis diagnosis and treatment, boarding of pediatric patients in emergency departments, and looking at inflammation and the impact of mental health. If you are interested in reviewing an article for the CLiPPS section of *JAACAP*

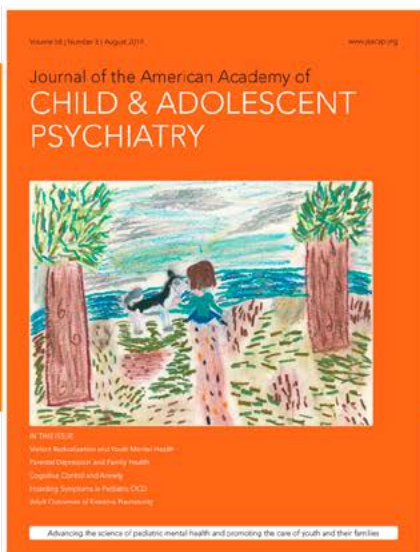
Connect, please reach out by sending an email to [connect@jaacap.org](mailto:connect@jaacap.org).

Hopefully, after reading this issue of *Connect*, you will take Mister Roger's advice and have more conversations with children and adolescents about feelings and mental health. The impact of stigma can impair our patients and restrict the way we practice medicine. Don't hesitate to utilize AACAP as a resource to start that conversation with law makers, school leaders, social media influencers, and families about stigma and the realities regarding mental health.

Justin Schreiber, DO, MPH  
Editor

### References

1. Fred Rogers. 2020. GoodReads. Accessed February 16, 2020. [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/32106.Fred\\_Rogers](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/32106.Fred_Rogers)



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