



Questions for Stigma

- 1.) How do things like energy levels, accessibility, or stigma increase isolation?
- 2.) What boundaries do you set with people who misunderstand your experience? How did you do it?
- 3.) Are there tools or techniques that are helpful when you have struggled with internalized stigma? (calling a friend, research, reframing, tapping, affirmations, breathwork, cool water plunge)
- 4.) What is something you have done recently that felt like an act of self-advocacy-even if it was small?
- 5.) Are there things you remind yourself of when faced with external stigma? Please share what helps you.
- 6.) How do you stay grounded in yourself beyond your diagnosis? (strengths, quirks, values, essence, creativity)
- 7.) How has community-like this group- helped challenge internalized or external stigma?
- 8.) What are practical ways you prepare for appts or meeting new people so you can effectively share your experience?
- 9.) What are ways you have been able to shine a light on the invisibility of chronic pain and various conditions?
- 10.) What has helped you dispute the stigma that you may have encountered? (having proof of conditions (mychart), infographics, research articles, getting involved in support groups)

- 11.) Who is your support system that is able to understand and support you and your pain experience?
- 12.) Have you ever used educational resources as a tool to reduce stigma? How did that go? (U.S. Pain Foundation has infographics on our website to download!)
- 13.) What role does comparison (to others or past self) play in internalized (self) stigma?
- 14.) What helps you reframe “asking for help” as strength instead of weakness?
- 15.) How does access to visible aids vs invisible symptoms impact who others treat you? (mobility/assisted devices)
- 16.) What mantras or affirmations help you to speak kinder to yourself on a high pain day?
- 17.) Have you found any allies who help you feel seen, heard and supported? What do they do that helps?
- 18.) What tips can you share for not feeling the guilt associated with needing rest or accommodations?
- 19.) How have you learned to manage the pressure to “perform” or “mask” for others?
- 20.) What has helped you rebuild your identity beyond your chronic pain and various conditions?
- 21.) What strategies have you used when someone judges or has a misconception about chronic pain?
- 22.) How do you celebrate what you can do, without minimizing what’s hard?
- 23.) What has helped you advocate for yourself in medical or professional settings? (following support group rules)
- 24.) In what spaces or relationships do you feel best being honest about your pain or illness?
- 25.) What coping tools or strategies do you reinforce when you have been impacted by stigma?

26.) How have you learned to change critical thinking from negative to positive?

27.) What helps you to show up fully and not hide your condition from others? (be your authentic self)

28.) How has practicing self-compassion helped you with internalized (self) stigma or feelings of self-criticism?

29.) In what ways have you redefined success for yourself, with love instead of pressure?

30.) How do you honor your story, your experience, even when it's been a struggle?