Use this guide as a starting point to voice your support in a more considerate and thoughtful way. What is listed below isn’t comprehensive, but shows you a few ways you can avoid every day instances of mental health stigma.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stigma</th>
<th>Try saying</th>
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| **Using a mental health condition as an adjective:**  
• “The weather is so bipolar.”  
• “You’re being so OCD.” | Using a condition as an adjective can minimize or stigmatize someone’s experience. Try saying what you mean without comparing it to a behavioral health condition.  
“Talk me through some of the thoughts you’re having.”  
“Can you tell me how you are feeling?”  
“You seem upset; is there anything I can help you with?” |
| “You sound like a lunatic.”  
“You’re acting psycho.” | “Have you thought about talking about this with someone who can help?”  
“Have you sought help?”  
“Are you comfortable seeking help?” |
| “You need therapy.” | “Mom is feeling a lot of emotions at once.”  
“Mom is dealing with a lot.”  
“Mom seems upset; how can I help?” |
| “Mom is so dysfunctional.” | “Get yourself together.”  
“You are not alone. How can I be there for you?” |
| “Of course you’re depressed.  
Everyone is these days.” | “Having depression is real and you are not alone in this experience.”  
“What do you need to feel better?”  
“It’s powerful to feel things fully.” |
| “You’ll be fine.” | “I’m proud of you for seeking the help you need.”  
“I’m so proud of you for taking care of yourself. You’re important to me.” |
| “Therapists aren’t real doctors.” | “I know what you’re going through.”  
“I may not know exactly what you are going through, but you are not alone.” |
| “Things could be worse.” | “What’s wrong with you?”  
“How are you feeling?”  
“I want you to feel safe with me. How can I be there for you?” |
| “It’s all in your head.” | “Everything happens for a reason.”  
“Let’s figure this out together.”  
“I may not know why this is happening, but we can get through it together.”  
“I’m here for you.” |
| “Have you tried acupuncture/  
yoga/ going for a walk?” | “Invalidating/dismissive” |
| “You need to figure this out.” | “What do you need to feel better?” |

If you don’t know what to say or you feel you have nothing to say, try responding with, “Can I support you in any way?”