

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AND STIGMA

**VIRUSES DON'T DISCRIMINATE AND NEITHER SHOULD WE**

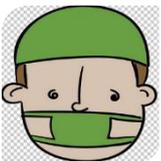
## WHAT IS SOCIAL STIGMA?

In the context of health, social stigma is the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. This means in an outbreak that people can be treated differently and experience discriminatory behaviours because of a perceived link with the disease.



### Coronavirus doesn't recognise race, nationality, or ethnicity.

2019 novel coronavirus started in Wuhan, China. That's just geography. Having Chinese ancestry – or any other ancestry – does not make a person more vulnerable to this illness.



### Wearing a mask does not mean a person is ill.

People wear masks for a variety of reasons, including to avoid pollen and air pollution and for cultural and social reasons. We should not judge someone for wearing a mask or assume they are sick.



### You can interrupt stigma. Start by sharing accurate information.

Avoid spreading misinformation. For the latest accurate and approved advice and factual information, please go to:

- Australian Government Health Alert website [here](#).
- World Health Organisation [here](#).

Follow their recommended Health Guidelines to support your health, reduce the risk of Infection and to inform you of what to do should you feel ill.



### Speak up if you hear, see, or read misinformation or harassment.

Gently correct the false information and remind the speaker: prejudiced language and actions make us all less safe. If a serious harassment occurs, consider reporting it. Find resources here: [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#)



### Showing compassion and support for those most closely impacted.

Listen to, acknowledge, and with permission, share the stories of people experiencing stigma, along with a message that bigotry is not acceptable in your community.

For more information about social stigma associated with COVID-19 the following guide produced by UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) can be found [here](#).