



# SUCCESS OVER STIGMA



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact our **Success Over Stigma** Coordinator, at **831.800.7530**, or our Development Officer at **831.649.4522** to arrange a presentation for your organization. The Success Over Stigma Program is located at the Pajaro Street Wellness Center, 339 Pajaro Street, Salinas, CA, 93901.



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## ABOUT INTERIM

**Interim, Inc.** is a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide services and affordable housing, supporting members of our community with mental illness to build productive and satisfying lives. Interim offers a wide variety of programs that support more than 1,700 clients each year using a strength-based social rehabilitation model that provides an alternative to institutionalization and offers culturally sensitive services that encourage self-direction, hope, healing and recovery.



## DONATIONS

To make a donation to support Interim's programs, please visit our website, [www.interiminc.org](http://www.interiminc.org), or call our office at **831.649.4522**.



**P.O. BOX 3222 • MONTEREY, CA 93942**  
**831.649.4522 • WWW.INTERIMINC.ORG**  
**SUCCESS OVER STIGMA : 831.800.7530**



## COMMUNITY ADVOCACY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH



## SOS Combats Harmful Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness By Empowering Consumers to Tell Their Stories of Recovery

Success Over Stigma (SOS) is a consumer-driven, community advocacy and educational outreach program designed to combat the three most prevalent forms of stigma: community perception, internal stigma and external stigma. This is accomplished by recruiting and training mental health clients to share their successful stories of recovery with others.

**“A YEAR AND A HALF INTO MY SOBRIETY I CONNECTED WITH [SUCCESS OVER STIGMA] AS A WAY TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY THAT HAS SO FREELY GIVEN [ME] SUPPORT AND [HELPED] ME TO [RECOVER] FROM MY SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.”**

~ SUCCESS OVER STIGMA SPEAKER

# Changing Public Perception of Mental Illness

Due to advancements in medical science, we now know that mental illness is not a ‘personal weakness’ but a biological condition that can be treated, just like other biological conditions. With proper treatment and support, people with mental illness can be productive members of our community. Despite this knowledge, the prejudices and misinformation surrounding mental illness remain.

Over time, those with mental illness may internalize negative messages and stigmatize themselves. They may pretend that nothing is wrong and refuse to seek treatment.

### COMBATING STIGMA WITH EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

Media and news stories often depict those with mental illness as violent, dangerous, uneducated and unproductive. Because of the stigma associated with their disability, they are often denied employment, education and housing opportunities.

Using a model that was created by a consumer in San Mateo County to combat the stigma of mental illness, Success Over Stigma participants are trained in public speaking.

### RECOVERY THROUGH STORYTELLING

Participants say that public speaking has helped them to manage their illness. “Every time I speak about my illness, [it] becomes much smaller, less of a monster. I seem to have become a little more able to manage [it]. Speaking about these things makes my life a much better place.” And those who have heard them tell their stories say, “it puts the hardships of mental illness into perspective...It’s very inspirational for us to hear.... Repeatedly!”



### EMPOWERING CONSUMERS BY TEACHING LEADERSHIP

SOS speakers have told their stories to dozens of schools, businesses, civic groups and faith communities, helping to educate the public about the obstacles they have faced in their personal and professional lives—and their success in overcoming those obstacles. They also serve as speakers at inpatient psychiatric units, spreading the hopeful message that recovery is an attainable goal. Other activities include training to sit on local Behavioral Health Committees, where consumer representation is needed, as well as State committees focusing on peer leadership. Finally, SOS participants help plan and execute an annual peer-driven Embracing Wellness and Recovery Conference.

### SCHEDULE A PRESENTATION FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

Our SOS speakers are available for presentations to business groups, service clubs, community health groups, faith groups and to anyone who wants to learn more about recovery from mental illness. Success Over Stigma speakers can enhance your understanding of the challenges of mental illness and the opportunities for wellness and recovery. Our speakers are trained in both panel discussion and individual presentation skills.