

Dear UCSF community,

The Committee on Disability Inclusion would like your help in the effort to reduce stigma attached to mental health struggles among learners, faculty and staff.

You are all successful members at one of the top academic and medicine/health sciences institutions in the world and you may also have felt the stigma attached to mental health challenges.

Our values define how we work, learn, interact, and fulfill our mission. The UCSF PRIDE values are the cornerstone for everything we do and they unite our faculty, learners, caregivers, staff and community in building a culture of collaboration that inspires us to be our best today and in the future. The Committee's goal is to foster a shift from stigma towards a culture of openly discussing and seeking support and inclusion for those with mental health challenges. We invite you to join us!

We are seeking volunteers who would be willing to publicly share their stories about living with mental health challenges. We will provide a series of questions to answer and then each volunteer will participate in a short recording to share and discuss their experience of living with mental health challenges. We will also highlight a list of resources from UCSF and the SF community.

As you may remember, in July 2018, UCSF launched the "[\*Faces of Ability Project\*](#)"; which highlighted and showed people with a wide variety of unique challenges and abilities, with the purpose of destigmatizing and sharing the experience of living and working with a disability. In addition, it was designed to illustrate that the UCSF culture is fully inclusive and embraces people with disabilities. The overwhelming success and positive feedback of the Faces of Ability project is the impetus for this second Faces of Ability project, focusing on living and working with mental health challenges.

Disability, and specifically mental health challenges, touches and/or will touch many of us at some point in their lives. It is essential that we continue our work to educate and enlighten our community of current and future health care providers to be informed and compassionate in providing the best care for our community.

Here are some comments and observations made by members of the UCSF community:

*I've never heard a physician talking about going to therapy, dealing with depression or anxiety, or managing their worry about their patients and communities.*

*How can we thrive individually, as a community of health care providers, or as a society when we neglect and hide a part of ourselves that is undeniably linked to our ability to function and live healthily?*

*I've heard many of my peers express their concern that they will not be happy or successful in medicine because of their mental health challenges. Some have even talked about leaving the*

*field altogether. Therefore, seeing our mentors and role models be honest about also facing these challenges will show all of us that mental health does not need to impede our ability to pursue and thrive in a medical career.*

*I wish that our faculty was more vocal about mental health, more vulnerable, and honest; particularly in regards to how and when one might experience mental health lows. This would help normalize our emotions such as feeling stressed with a caseload or intensive coursework and not feeling inadequate when these feelings arise.*

*The more intentional UCSF is about raising awareness around mental health, the more likely we as students will be in asking for help, seeking advice, feeling equipped, and sit on platforms to help ourselves and each other.”*

Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns, or to express your interest in participating in this project. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
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