

What is stigma?¹

- Social process
- Supported by power
- Distinguishes people based on social statuses
- Results in devaluation

How is stigma experienced?

- General public
 - Stereotypes: thoughts
 - Prejudice: feelings
 - Discrimination: behaviors
- People with stigmatized statuses
 - Experienced stigma: experiences in past
 - Anticipated stigma: concern about future
 - Internalized stigma: feelings about self

¹Major et al (2018)





Prevention

- Stereotypes undermine prevention behaviors, testing, + vaccinations



Reducing Stigma in Monkeypox Communication and Community Engagement

How CDC is Framing Communication Around Monkeypox

Helping people make the best-informed decisions to protect their health and the health of their community from monkeypox requires providing key prevention information to the public and working with partners and trusted messengers to ensure information reaches affected communities.

Anyone can get monkeypox, and CDC is **carefully monitoring for monkeypox** in the United States. CDC is working to provide frontline healthcare providers and public health officials with information about what monkeypox looks like and how to manage the illness. Many—though not all—of the reported cases have been among gay and bisexual men. Given this, CDC is focusing on identifying and using specific channels that will directly reach gay and bisexual men across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds. In addition to this focused messaging, CDC is also providing information to a wider audience about symptoms and the behaviors that can lead to the spread of monkeypox.

How Partners can Help Message about Monkeypox

- Partners can help by providing monkeypox information to different communities and various channels. Be careful to avoid marginalizing groups who may be at increased risk for monkeypox. Keep messages fact-based to help prevent stigmatizing populations most affected.
- While developing resources and messages, use CDC's **Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication**.

For Messages to General Audiences:

- Promote messaging that provides information on what monkeypox is and how it can spread and encourages seeking health care if experiencing monkeypox-like symptoms.
- Emphasize that anyone can get monkeypox and promote it as a public health concern for all. Focusing on cases among gay and bisexual men may inadvertently stigmatize this population and create a false sense of safety among those who are not gay and bisexual men.
- When using images of the rash from patients with monkeypox, focus on how cases typically appear in the current outbreak and avoid showing extreme cases, unless necessary.
 - In some situations, such as healthcare provider education, it may be necessary to show extreme case presentations. Carefully consider the audience and whether only presenting images of how cases typically appear may accomplish the same goals.
- Include pictures of people from diverse backgrounds and racial/ethnic groups.

For Messages to Gay & Bisexual Men:

- It's important to reach any disproportionately affected community with non-alarmist, fact-based messaging about monkeypox that provides people with tools they can use to protect themselves and others.
- When focusing messages to gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, use targeted channels that directly reach these audiences, such as specific websites, dating apps, or media programs.
- To help make messages resonate, use relatable or personal stories that depict people "like me" from the intended audience.

Messaging and dissemination tactics may need to be adapted to reach the communities who need the information as we learn more about the current monkeypox outbreak.



For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov/monkeypox

CDC Recommendations

- Prevent distinguishing people based on social statuses: Keep messaging focused on behaviors and environments
- Bust stereotypes: Keep messaging fact based + scientifically accurate
- Stop prejudice: Feature personal stories

