



Stigma and fear of discrimination are serious obstacles for people seeking help for mental health challenges. The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSa) is working to reduce stigma associated with mental illnesses

by de-bunking myths and educating 9-13 year olds about mental wellness. The Walk In Our Shoes campaign utilizes real stories from teens and young adults to teach youth about mental health challenges and mental wellness.

The multifaceted campaign uses positive, authentic and appropriate stories as an educational tool for youth. These stories are told through an interactive website, school-based theatrical performance, and a statewide public education campaign, which are all designed to reduce stigma and promote a resilient and realistic perception of mental health challenges and the real people who experience them.

The campaign directs youth to the interactive website, [WalkInOurShoes.org](http://WalkInOurShoes.org), where visitors can explore and experience true stories of real people who have experienced hope, recovery and resilience in the face of mental health challenges.



The website includes definitions of key terms, a myth and facts page, and an interactive area where visitors can individualize their own shoes. The site contains information for teachers and parents, including suggestions and resources about how to talk to youth about mental health.

The Walk In Our Shoes campaign uses storytelling to convey information and nurture conversations about mental health challenges in an age appropriate manner. These stories and resources are designed to be used as tools by teachers, parents, professionals and youth, in hopes that together we can communicate, cooperate, and cultivate a culture free of mental health stigma.

