



on the table
Your voice matters.

BACKGROUND

Reducing Stigma Associated With Mental Health & Addiction

#BreakTheSilence #OnTheTable2016

Use this backgrounder to help with invitations and/or conversation context. It includes information and messaging about:

- The Kennedy Forum
- The purpose of the #BreakTheSilence/#OnTheTable2016 Initiative
- Conversation ideas and template agenda
- Facts and statistics about mental health and addiction in Illinois
 - “What happens next”
- Social media

About The Kennedy Forum

The Kennedy Forum Illinois is a united campaign to end stigma against mental health and substance use disorders. We are focused on changing both attitudes and practice. Our vision is a future where all persons are treated with dignity and receive the person-centered mental and physical care and support they need to thrive and achieve their goals.

The Kennedy Forum was launched by former Congressman Patrick Kennedy with a dinner and conference held in Boston in October 2013 to mark the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy’s signing of the Community Mental Health Act of 1963. Among the hundreds of attendees and supporters was a small but mighty contingent of Illinois civic leaders. Motivated by the personal impact of mental health challenges in their own families and inspired by the potential to unite diverse stakeholders to drive accelerated change, they returned home determined to bring this powerful organizing model to Illinois.

The Illinois project has emerged as a powerful platform for change. Supported by a strong, visible Leadership Council. Today we are focused on accelerating progress toward our goal of ending stigma, working toward lasting change in the way mental health and addictions are treated in our state. One key pillar of our work is elevating public engagement—the demand for change—among Illinoisans. Learn more about The Kennedy Forum Illinois work [here](#).

#BreakTheSilence/500 Conversations about Mental Health and *On The Table* **2016**

We need to talk about mental health—not just to each other, but *with* each other. Conversation is a critical part of the solution.

Mental illness and stigma affects all of us. The stigma against individuals with mental health and addiction challenges is alive. It is killing people and we need to fight back. Research shows that the best way to fight stigma is contact. Honest conversations among colleagues and friends can create a culture of understanding, breaking down barriers to care and support. Discussions across stakeholders can help identify pathways to solutions and create new partnerships to drive progress.

Toward this end, The Kennedy Forum Illinois is participating in the Chicago Community Trust's [On the Table](#) project, an initiative to engage tens of thousands of people in mealtime conversations with a purpose. Last May, more than 25,000 people participated in the *On the Table* conversations—generating new ideas, new partnerships and new solutions. The *On the Table* initiative is a valuable opportunity for us to gather in safe spaces with families, colleagues, friends, and community members to talk about issues of importance and identify opportunities to make a positive difference. At The Kennedy Forum, we believe this is a perfect platform to support and encourage more dialogue—and more solutions—on issues related to mental health.

Conversation Ideas, Themes, and Prompts

The focus of your conversation is up to you. Conversations can range from very personal discussions among families and friends, to community discussions at places of worship, schools and workplaces, to more professional discussions among health providers, payers, or policy-related groups. In whichever setting you choose, it may be helpful to set up the conversation around a specific topic under the theme of mental health with some identified purpose for the discussion. Kennedy Forum Illinois recently conducted a statewide survey on mental health, some of the findings may be interesting fodder for discussion. Here is a sample template agenda that might help:

- I. Welcome and introductions
- II. Why we are here, the topic of our discussion
 - A. Focus Question: (For example: How can we move the needle on some of the findings from the Illinois poll? What can we do to support young people? How does stigma impact our community and how can we address this? What can we do to ensure people understand their rights under the new parity law? What improvements can we make in our workplace to create a supportive culture? What new partnerships do we need to be more effective in our behavioral health work?)
 - B. Speaker: Alternatively, you may want to have a speaker share a very short story that illustrates the challenges or highlights the promise of recovery. Just be sure to allow enough time for dialogue after the presentation.
- III. Invite your guests to introduce themselves and share a bit about how this issue affects them and why they are interested
- IV. Share ideas about how to address the topic
- V. Invite guests to build on each other's ideas
- VI. Summarize the feedback, suggestions, and any next steps for guests
- VII. Encourage guests to provide their names and emails if they would like to stay connected to this issue, and receive a short follow up survey to collect their feedback

Mental Health Facts and Statistics

STATEWIDE POLL RESULTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

- <http://thekennedyforumillinois.org/poll-majority-support-radical-or-significant-changes-to-how-mental-health-issues-are-handled-in-illinois-9-out-of-10-say-stigma-exists/>
- <http://thekennedyforumillinois.org/statewide-survey-on-mental-health-and-addiction-resources/>

NAMI GREATER CHICAGO GENERAL FACT SHEET

- <http://www.namigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MentalIllnessFactSheet-July-2013.pdf>

ADDICTION FACTS

- <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=31787>

MENTAL HEALTH PARITY

- <https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/Publications-Reports/Public-Policy-Reports/A-Long-Road-Ahead>
- <http://www.workplacementalhealth.org/ParityGuide15>

SUICIDE

- <https://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide/facts-and-figures>

- <http://www.itonlytakesone.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/County-Level-Suicide-Attempt-Maps-Table-for-youth-and-young-adults.pdf>

WORKPLACE/BUSINESS CASE

- <http://www.workplacementalhealth.org/Business-Case.aspx>

STIGMA

- <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/06/25/stigma-of-mental-illness/9875351/>

What Happens Next

After May 10th, some easy follow-up:

1. The Kennedy Forum Illinois will contact you with a short survey to gather feedback on the conversations. We will ask about the focus of the conversation, if you have any ideas or planned action, and if your perspective changed because of the conversation. Feedback will be aggregated and reported back to participants. The email will be sent to everyone we have emails for who participated in the conversations. If you have not uploaded your guests' emails to the *On the Table* registration system, and you would like them to receive an email, please provide this list to [James Burns](#) no later than May 11th at noon.
2. The Chicago Community Trust will send out a thank you and a link to a civic engagement survey being conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) to administer a study following *On the Table* to assess the initiative's impact. Completing this survey will help us demonstrate that mental health is an issue that is important to Illinoisans.

Social Media and Press

If you welcome media coverage of your event, please let [James Burns](#) know before May 10th - we will include you in a list of highlights before and after.

We encourage you to post to social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) about your conversation. Please be respectful of your guests, and ask permission before posting any photos or names.

For Social Media, please use the following tags:

@kennedyforum

@chitrust

#BreakTheSilence

#OnTheTable2016

#mentalhealth