

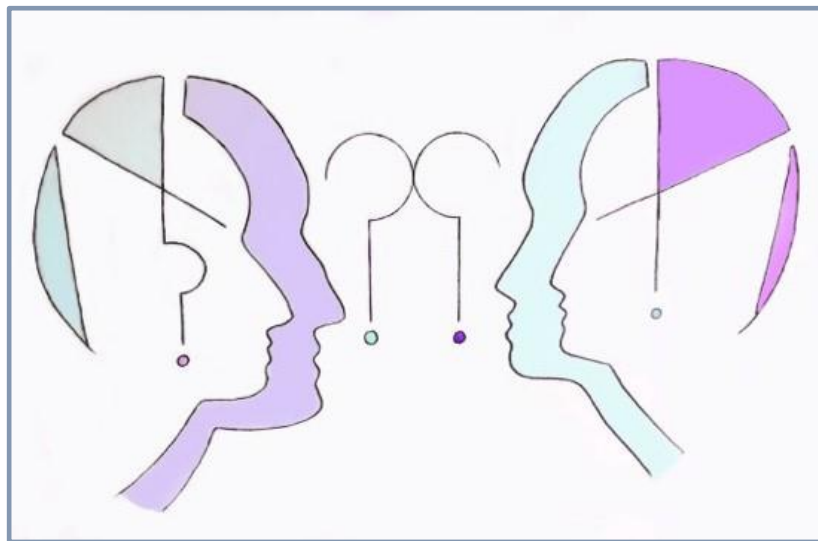


HONEST, OPEN, PROUD

To Eliminate the Stigma of Mental Health Problems

A Self-Help Guide for Mental Health Professionals

FOLLOW-UP



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This guide is to be used in conjunction with the HOP-MHP website:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/research/cehp/stigma-research/documents/hop-docs>

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INTRODUCTION

This follow-up to the HOP-MHP guide provides an opportunity to reflect on decisions reached and any actions taken. Although this follow-up is divided into three sections, it is designed as one session, i.e. we suggest you complete it in one sitting.

SECTION 1

The Decision to Disclose

Overview

Disclosure is the right decision for some people, but not for everyone. This section is designed to review your disclosure decisions since completing the HOP-MHP guide about one month ago. We approach this follow-up in two parts:

1. We review previous intentions to disclose your current or past mental health problems, including to whom, when, and where you decided to disclose (or not to disclose) as well as what you expected from the disclosure.
2. We discuss whether or not you disclosed and help you evaluate how the experience went and how it may affect future disclosures.

1. Did You Intend to Disclose?

Key points:

- Review your intentions to disclose after you completed the HOP-MHP self-help guide.

In the guide we identified people that might be suitable for disclosure. The three main types of relationships included: functional (e.g., manager or supervisor), supportive (e.g., someone who is trustworthy), and empathic (e.g., someone who is understanding). Use *Worksheet 1.1* to

review the intentions you had for disclosure after you completed the HOP-MHP guide.

Worksheet 1.1: Intention to Disclose- Who? When? Where? What?

After you completed the HOP-MHP guide, did you intend to disclose?

Yes No

If yes, please fill out this table.

Who did you decide to disclose to?	
When did you plan on disclosing?	
Where did you plan on disclosing?	
What did you expect from the disclosure?	

If no, please fill out this table.

Why did you decide against disclosing at this time?	
In the future , will you think about disclosing again?	
If yes, what could help you in this process?	

2. How Did Disclosure Go?

Key points:

- If you disclosed, describe how each disclosure went and rate the quality of the exchange.
- Explain how the experience changed your mind about disclosing.

When completing the guide, we asked you to evaluate a specific instance of disclosure. *Worksheet 1.2 below* is the same one you completed before in session 3. It lays out steps to assess whether interactions in which you disclosed to others were positive or negative. If you have disclosed, complete the worksheet to reflect on how it went. If you decided not to disclose or have not done so yet, it may still be helpful to complete the worksheet. Often people who decide against disclosure have imagined how telling their stories might have gone and this influences their decisions about disclosure, so it may be helpful still to complete Worksheet 1.2 based on your imagined experience.

First indicate to whom you disclosed (or considered disclosing), when the exchange took place, and the location, if appropriate. This will help track successful or unsuccessful elements of disclosure, and may help you to alter your strategy the next time you decide to disclose. Secondly, consider what your goals were for disclosing to this person and note what you said to the person (or considered saying); remember to be specific! Next, write down how the person reacted to your disclosure (or how you imagined they might react). It might also be important for you to note the tone of their voice and their body language, especially if it does not seem to match the content of what they said.

Worksheet 1.2: Did You Disclose? How Did it Go?

This worksheet provides a space for you to reflect on a specific instance of disclosure (or imagined disclosure) made during the past month.

Name of the person to whom you disclosed (or considered disclosing to):

Date of disclosure: _____ Place of disclosure: _____

Here are some questions you may wish to consider:

What was your goal in disclosing?

What did you say (or imagined saying)?

How did the person/people respond to what you said? (Or how did you imagine they would respond?)

How satisfied were you with this disclosure experience? What has changed as a result?

If you choose to disclose again:

What would you do or say in the same way?

What would you do or say differently?

Is it worth disclosing again?

Yes / No / Unsure

If yes, reasons why:

If no, reasons why not:

SECTION 2

Peer Support

Overview

Some people find it helpful to seek peer support to share experiences of and struggles with mental health problems and to gain advice and support. Peer support may make disclosure easier because a person is making connections with others who may share their experiences and concerns. This includes those who have already disclosed and those who are still thinking about disclosing. This section assesses your experiences of peer support since engaging in the HOP-MHP self-help guide, including the HOP-MHP peer forum.

1. Did You Pursue Any Peer Support?

Key points:

- Consider what peer support means to you.
- Identify pros and cons of engaging in peer support.
- Evaluate the quality of your peer support experiences and consider the future of peer support in your life.

In the guide you were asked to consider peer support options and other resources. Worksheet 2.1 below helps you to review your experiences of peer support.

Worksheet 2.1: Did You Pursue Any Peer Support?

Have you used the HOP-MHP peer forum?

Yes No

What pros and cons did you weigh in reaching this decision?

Pros	Cons

If you used the forum, please list below the helpful and unhelpful aspects of using the forum:

Helpful	Unhelpful

Have you engaged in any other kind of peer support programme since beginning the HOP-MHP self-help guide?

Yes No

Please provide details of this peer support and a brief description of what using each has meant to you:

--

Do you plan to access any peer support in the future?

Yes No

If yes, what peer support do you plan to access? Why do you plan to access it?

If no, why not?

SECTION 3

What Has Changed?

Overview

Experiences since completing the HOP-MHP guide may have reshaped your thoughts about disclosing. In this section we:

1. Reassess the costs and benefits for disclosure and compare them to what you brainstormed in session 1.
2. Evaluate what did and did not work when sharing your experiences more openly and help you decide how you might change how you disclose.

1. Revisiting the Costs and Benefits of Disclosure

Key points:

- List the costs and benefits of disclosure as you see them now.
- Compare them to the costs and benefits you brainstormed earlier.

Please complete *Worksheet 3.1* to list the short- and long-term costs and benefits to disclosing that you can think of now. Note that we do *not* want you to list only the new costs and benefits that you have in mind. Rather, we want you to include *everything* that you can think of, even if you included it before. As a reminder, benefits represent why you would disclose, or the positives you expect to happen as a result of disclosing to others. Costs are why you would not do it, or the negatives or harm that could result from disclosing.

Just like before, do not dismiss any costs or benefits no matter how silly they may seem. Put them on the list so that you can consider all advantages and disadvantages together. Sometimes the items that you want to censor are actually important; you may just be embarrassed about them. After listing all the costs and benefits, put a star (*) next to ones that are especially important for you. When you are finished, compare your worksheet to your old costs and benefits worksheet that you completed during Session 1 (Worksheet 1.5) and answer the follow-up questions.

Worksheet 3.1:

Revisiting the Costs and Benefits for Disclosing My Mental Health Problems

Setting: _____ To Whom: _____

Since completing the HOP-MHP self-help guide:

- I have decided **to disclose**
- I have decided **NOT to disclose**
- I have decided **to put off** my decision.

Please use the tables below to list the costs and benefits of disclosure that you perceive now, about one month after completing the HOP-MHP self-help guide.

Just like before, do not censor any ideas. Write them all down. Then put a star (*) next to costs and benefits that are especially important for you. Make sure to specify the setting and audience to which each cost and benefit applies (e.g. work, family, etc.), if more than one is included.

Short-Term Benefits	Short-Term Costs

Long-Term Benefits	Long-Term Costs

Now review your copy of *Worksheet 1.5* from the HOP-MHP guide - **The Costs and Benefits Worksheet for Disclosing My Mental Health Problems** - and put a circle around items that are the same in both worksheets. When you are finished, please answer the following questions:

Were there any differences in starred items on the two worksheets?

Why do you think you made these changes, if any?

2. How Will You Share Your Experiences in Future?

Key points:

- Describe what worked and what did not work when openly sharing your experiences. If you decided not to disclose, then think about how you imagined telling your story.
- Brainstorm elements to add to or eliminate from your written account of your experiences.
- Determine whether your goals in disclosing have changed.
- Rewrite your story and review how you felt telling it.

In the guide, you were provided with a template on how you might openly share your experiences with others. It included the following aspects:

1. Your name, profession and how you refer to your mental health problems;
2. Some events in your childhood that are typical of most people's lives and/or that might have contributed to you developing mental health problems;
3. When you first started to experience mental health problems and what you first noticed;
4. What sort of experiences you struggled with as a result of your mental health problems and how these continued or changed over time;
5. What you have achieved despite, or perhaps because of, these experiences;
6. Your fears of being stigmatised by colleagues and of what might happen if you disclosed your experiences at work, e.g. to your manager;
7. If you have previously disclosed your experiences, what actually happened;
8. What has helped you in managing your mental health problems and how you are doing now;
- 9.. What you would like to happen moving forward, including any key points you would like people you disclose to take away.

You may find it helpful to look back over the template (*Worksheet 3.1* in Session 3) that you completed for the self-help guide and use it to complete *Worksheet 3.2* below. In this worksheet, you are given the opportunity to reflect on what worked and what did not work when you shared your story. Of course, you may have decided not to share your experiences or to share only some of your experiences depending on the context. If you did not disclose anything then it may still be helpful to complete the worksheet based on your imagined experience.

Worksheet 3.2: How Has Your Account of Your Experiences Changed?

Please review your copy of *Worksheet 3.1* from the HOP-MHP guide - *A guide to sharing your experiences of mental health problems*. Pay attention to all of the elements that you included, even the ones that you may have crossed out.

Use the table below to list what worked or did not work when you were sharing your story or parts of your story (or complete this worksheet based on your imagined experience).

What Worked	What Did Not Work

Please now use the table below to list any items that you wish to add to your account (including items that you may have crossed out at some point). Also, write down anything you wish to take out of your account.

Things to Add	Things to Eliminate

Please use this space to reflect on how rewriting your story has or has not affected whether or not you will disclose, or how you would disclose. For example, has your goal in disclosing changed as a result of rewriting your story?

Once you have finished, it may be helpful to re-write your template for sharing your experiences using *Worksheet 3.3* below, taking these changes into consideration.

Worksheet 3.3: A Guide to Sharing your Experiences of Mental Health Problems

“Hello, my name is _____. I am a Mental Health Professional working as _____ and I am here today to talk to you about my own history of mental health problems.”

You may then want to include some of the following (depending on what you feel comfortable sharing):

- **Some details about your background, childhood e.g.:**
 - Events which are typical of most people’s lives
 - Or events which may have contributed to you developing mental health problems
 - Your journey into your chosen profession

 - **When you first started to experience mental health problems**
 - What did you first notice?

 - **What sort of experiences have you struggled with as a result of your mental health problems and how have these continued or changed over time**
 - You may want to highlight what you have achieved despite, or even because of, these experiences

 - **Your fears of being stigmatised by colleagues and of what might happen if you disclosed your experiences at work, e.g. to your manager**
 - How stigma can prevent someone from accessing support and thus pose an obstacle to their recovery
 - The lack of support for mental health professionals experiencing mental health problems

 - **What actually happened when you disclosed**
 - Any stigmatising responses you experienced
 - Positive responses by others
 - Support / lack of support you received

 - **What has helped you and how you are doing now**
 - Any support you accessed and resources you found helpful
 - Any goals you have accomplished or are working towards

 - **What you would like to happen moving forward**
 - Any key points you would like people to take away
-

Worksheet 3.4: My Experience of Disclosing

If you have disclosed some or all of your story, please reflect on your experience of disclosing using *Worksheet 3.4* below.

- **How empowered do you feel after sharing your experiences?**

- **Was the experience or aspects of it therapeutic or relieving?**

- **How nervous or worried did you feel while sharing your experiences?**

- **How positive was it to share your experiences?**

Not at all positive				moderately positive				very positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Note here anything else not already discussed about the quality of your experience. This might include observations you might want to come back to later or things you may want to discuss with others on the HOP-MHP peer forum.

Worksheet 3.5: My Decision Not to Disclose

You may have chosen not to disclose any of your story. If you have not disclosed any of your story, please reflect on your experience using *Worksheet 3.5* below:

- **How empowered do you feel after reaching this decision?**
- **Was the experience or aspects of it therapeutic or relieving?**
- **Has anything surprised you in the process of reaching this decision?**
- **Is there anything that concerns you about the decision?**
- **If you have any concerns, what steps might you take to address these concerns?**
- **How positive do you feel about your decision?**

Not at all
positive

1

2

3

moderately
positive

4

5

6

very
positive

7

Note here anything else not already discussed about the quality of your experience in deciding not to disclose. This might include observations you might want to come back to later or things you may want to discuss with others on the HOP-MHP peer forum.

WHAT NEXT?

Thank you for completing the HOP-MHP self-help guide. We hope that you have found the experience useful in thinking about whether or not to disclose. We are aware that users of this guide will have had different experiences and may have reached different conclusions: some may have decided to disclose and had a positive experience, some may have decided to disclose but found this experience challenging, and others may have decided not to disclose at this time. Whatever decision you have reached, we hope that completing the HOP-MHP guide inspired you to continue thinking about disclosure and mental health stigma in future. We are aware that for most people, decisions and actions around disclosure are not a one off, but rather a continuous process of negotiation. This section of the guide helps you to think about next steps in your journey.

Thinking more broadly about disclosure and mental health stigma

Regardless of decisions you reached about your own personal disclosure at this time, you may want to consider some of the following options as ways of tackling stigma among mental health professionals and supporting wellbeing in the workplace:

- Writing a blog contribution which can be anonymous if you want to keep your experiences private, e.g. for the Time to Change website (see <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-us/about-our-campaign/professionals/stories>)
- Raising awareness or offering training in the workplace, e.g. with regards to levels of stress, burn-out and mental health problems, to help create a culture where people feel more able to speak out
- Liaising with management in your workplace to promote space for staff wellbeing in the workplace as part of your role, e.g. a mindfulness group for staff

Actions like these do not necessarily involve you needing to disclose your own lived experience. You can think carefully about what feels right to you.

Thinking about what to do next if your disclosure experience went badly

If you had a negative experience of disclosing, you may wish to discuss this with others either by using the HOP-MHP peer forum or other avenues for peer support. You may want to think about whether you gained any useful information from this disclosure experience, what factors may have contributed to making this a negative experience (e.g. an unsympathetic manager), and whether you could benefit from disclosing to a different person or in a different context in the future. You may want to keep this guide for future reference.

Thinking about what to do next if you decided not to disclose

Although during this intervention the right decision for you was not to disclose, this might be a decision you want to revisit in the future. It might be helpful to keep the guide for future reference. You may wish to reflect on your disclosure decision, for example asking yourself:

- “How do you feel after deciding not to disclose your experiences?”
- “Was the experiences of thinking through this decision and evaluating pros and cons helpful?”

Other resources

For information about other resources you may wish to look at, please visit our website on: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/research/cehp/stigma-research/documents/hop-docs>