

Breaking Stigma

stigma:

a negative attitude towards an individual or group of people based on their characteristics.

For example: mental health, social status, health condition, or disability

Adam Richards, CEO of The Cridge Centre for the Family

There are many ways to break stigma. At The Cridge Centre we believe the best way to do so is to work to restore dignity and self-value for the clients and residents in our care. In every corner of The Cridge Centre, we work to bring value and acceptance in the individual struggle, such as with survivors of brain injury, partnering with them towards restoring dignity and identity. In our seniors' village, residents have autonomy over their lives, and we work to remove elder stigma by treating people with the utmost respect. There is enormous stigma for women dealing with intimate partner violence, and it is our mission to stand beside these women as they rediscover their self-value, and navigate through so many barriers. Our actions will always be the focus of our work to address stigma, and our words will only be a reflection of that work. That is the legacy of the work of The Cridge Centre, and it is the privi-

lege of working with such an amazing team of managers and staff, who serve tirelessly to counter stigma with authentic care, support, and love!

The root of this is born in our faith, that all are created in the image of God, and every person has intrinsic and God ordained value: regardless of brokenness, addiction, wounds, mistakes, financial status, or life struggle. All are loved and valuable children of God.

As you read the articles in this edition of our Messenger, know that behind each word, are years of work to break stigma, to restore dignity, and to bring hope for those overcoming the challenges before them.

The founders of The Cridge Centre, Edward and Mary Cridge, began this work in the orphanage they opened almost 150 years ago. They believed that a child was not less just because they were parent-less or abandoned, but rather every child, every person, was worthy of love, care, and value. It is in that legacy that we continue this work to counter stigma.

Stigma: Why Didn't She Leave?

*Marlene Goley,
Manager of The Cridge
Transition House for Women
and Outreach Services*

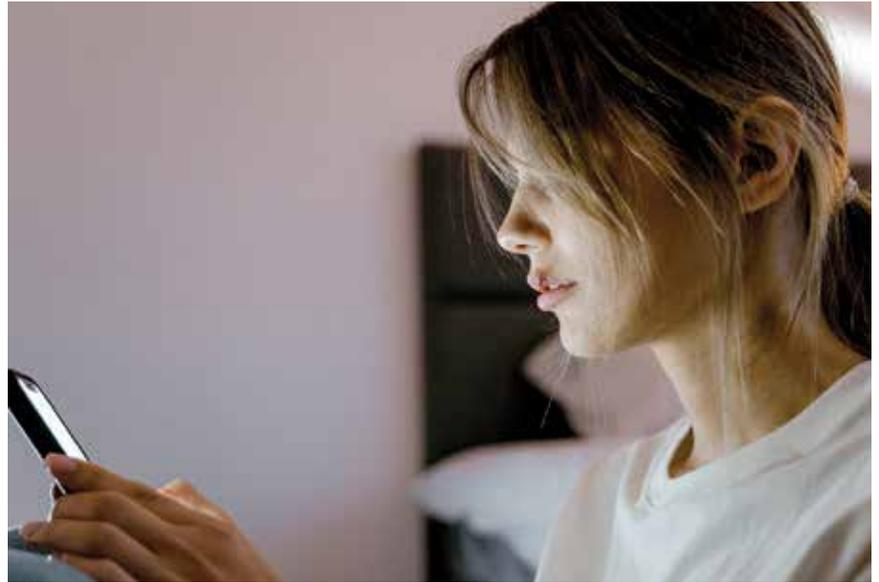


PHOTO BY MART PRODUCTION. PEXELS

We all know about stigmas – those negative judgements and attitudes about someone or a group that become so pervasive that they become stereotypes. Then those stereotypes become traps of shame, hopelessness, and isolation. Is being a battered woman a stigma? Is being a single mother a stigma? Ask a woman escaping a violent partner. She can tell you all about it.

She can tell you that after police showed up when she was brutally beaten by her husband, her neighbours' first reaction was disbelief. They said things like, "He is always so nice." "He is so quiet." "She must have done something to provoke him." Another comment she will tell you about hearing over and over is, "If it was getting so bad, why didn't you just leave?" Not only are her neighbours saying this, but she is also hearing the same things from her family, her friends, and she is not even daring to tell her co-workers. She will tell you that her friends comment that children need their father no matter what, and nothing could be worse than being a single mother. When she tells you about her experience with police, child protection workers, or the legal system, you will hear about her not being believed and how she is held responsible for her partner's behaviour – expected to manage his anger. She is asked,



*Stigmas create
hopelessness. They isolate.
They perpetuate violence
against women.*

"Why don't you just cooperate?" She is told, "I have interviewed him and he is not violent." She knows her partner's put-downs, his threats, and her bruises by his hands are very real. She doesn't know why she is not believed. The stigmas of being abused, leaving a marriage, or being a single parent, keep her as trapped as the fear of what her partner will do next if she makes a move to stop his violence. If she does escape, she faces landlords who will not rent

to her because they do not want her "bringing trouble" to their building.

Stigmas create hopelessness. They isolate. They perpetuate violence against women. But you can make a difference. Educate yourself about the dynamics of violence. If you suspect

someone you know is a victim of violence, let her know you are ready to listen to her and believe her. Let her know there is help available. Let her know her safety is the priority. A good place to start to learn more about how to be part of the solution is to check out our Cridge website: cridge.org. Take a look at the Resources links on The Cridge Transition House for Women page, The Cridge Supportive Transitional Housing page, and The Intimate Partner Violence and Brain Injury page. Thank you in advance for helping with the heavy lifting of the stigmas too many women live with every day. Women's safety depends on it.



PHOTO BY SHINE PHOTOS. UNSPLASH

Candace Stretch, Manager of The Cridge Supportive Housing

The Cridge Supportive Transitional Housing Program provides services to immigrant and refugee individuals and families. Lida is a newcomer woman who, along with her 13-year-old daughter, escaped political violence in her home country. Lida came to Canada two years ago as a government-sponsored refugee and found herself living in a hotel. As grateful as she was to be in Victoria, Lida was totally overwhelmed by the task of finding housing and support for herself and her child.

Lida was connected to a settlement worker from a local newcomer support agency. She quickly learned that Victoria is a very expensive city to live in and that housing is difficult to find. She discovered that most affordable housing options were not available to her until she had been in British Columbia for at least a year. With her limited English, she had a very difficult time completing the applications, but she did the best she could. Lida learned that she was on a waitlist for affordable housing options, and when she asked how long it would be, no one seemed to have a clear answer.

As the days grew into months, Lida began to wonder if she and her child would ever leave the hotel and find a real home. She looked online

Finding Home: Lida's Story

for rentals but could only afford a bachelor suite on her limited income. When she went to view these suites, there were so many other potential tenants viewing apartments that she was not considered a potential applicant. As a single mother, with limited funds and only basic English skills, Lida was feeling hopeless.

Eventually, Lida was able to find a landlord who was willing to rent to her and her daughter. They squeezed into a bachelor suite. It was just as small as the hotel room, but at least it was her own: a place for her and her child to call home for now. Lida kept in touch with The Cridge Supportive Housing Program and, after a year in the little bachelor suite, was able to move into a two-bedroom unit. It felt wonderful to be able to offer her daughter a home where she would have her own

room, something that she had never had, even in their home country!

Lida is now pursuing her goal of learning English so that she can go to school to become a dental assistant, the job she held before she moved to Canada. It has been a long road for Lida, with many barriers and chal-

lenges, but she can see a future in Victoria... she has finally found her home.

Lida's story reflects the incredible challenges newcomers face as they seek to make Victoria their home. Overcoming the cultural and language barriers, navigating the very complex social housing system, dealing with the lack of affordable housing, experiencing racism and discrimination, and doing all these things in a new and unfamiliar environment are just some of the challenges that Lida had to overcome in the past two years. We are so glad that she has found her home at The Cridge Centre!

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ARTIST: MARY ETHEL AUDLEY

Stigma: Women with Brain Injury Caused by Intimate Partner Violence

Tori Dach, The Cridge Intimate Partner Violence and Brain Injury Program Coordinator

Women receiving services at The Cridge Intimate Partner Violence and Brain Injury program have sustained unimaginable violence, often including but not limited to, strangulation and blows to the head and face. They have repeatedly been told by their abuser that they are stupid, leaving them feeling powerless and vulnerable. The inexcusable assaults cause brain trauma, affecting a woman's life in a variety of ways including the inability to focus, process information and manage daily living. Women often report the experience of 'brain fog' in the days, weeks, months, and even years following brain injury. This trauma requires a woman to navigate a new brain: something she never asked for, doesn't understand, and which often affirms what her abuser has told her.

The stigma of brain injury assumes that brain injury equates to a lack of capacity. However, women who have experienced intimate partner violence and are living with a brain injury are not simply lacking capacity – they are dealing with a physical and emotional injury that requires intensive support, care, and patience. Recognizing and acknowledging a brain injury can validate the reality of real cognitive impairment, as opposed to affirming the messaging they may have internalized.

Direct support services are designed to focus on walking alongside women in redesigning their new life in a variety of ways:

- Patient and compassionate support during difficult transition times.
- Methods to learn how to do things differently.
- Reminders for appointments and priorities.
- Support to complete applications and forms.
- Acknowledgement that they may only be able to schedule one activity or appointment a day.

Women who have experienced intimate partner violence and are living with a brain injury are NOT lacking capacity – they are learning a completely new way of living as they heal and rebuild their lives. The very last thing they need is to be stigmatized on their journey.

Our Intimate Partner Violence and Brain Injury Direct Services celebrates alternative or rehabilitative ways of living. Women impacted by Intimate Partner Violence and living with a brain injury can thrive in the community when provided time and patience, compassion, adaptation and accommodation in tasks and routines. Let's break the stigma of brain injury and intimate partner violence and show support and compassion for women who face this life-changing challenge.

Stigma-Free Support for Parents

Heather Stevens, *The Cridge Respite & Respite Services*

Have you ever seen an adult in a retail or grocery store with a child who is on the floor screaming? Or, perhaps, a child who is wandering away or running around the store? Maybe a child pleading to leave using verbal, nonverbal, or physical communication? Or an adult with a child clearly rushing around to get out as quickly as possible? Have you ever noticed anyone around them judging with their looks, eye rolls, head shakes, or even speaking negatively directly to that adult or child? Maybe you have also noticed a kind and helpful response to a family clearly having challenges at that moment.

The Cridge Respite & Respite Services supports over 650 families who have a child, or children, with complex needs, whether it's a diagnosed disability, mental health challenges, or both. Over 90% of the families in our program have a child with autism, now referred to as ASD or Autism Spectrum Disorder. For many of these families, their child might not "look" like they have a disability or are differently abled. Autism Spectrum disorder is just that, a spectrum. Our goal is to support these families without judgement and with compassion and understanding. We also look for opportunities to educate the community around us on what 'differently-abled' can look like; to recognize that you never truly know what a child, parent, guardian, or family is going through or the challenges they may or may not be facing. Always choose support and



PHOTO BY SHOTPOT. PEXELS

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Always choose support and compassion over judgement.

compassion over judgement.

The Cridge Respite program is funded by donations from our partners and community. We provide parents or guardians of a child or children with a diagnosed disability, complex needs, or mental health challenges a break from the stressors of day-to-day life that allows them to do something special for themselves. It could be a night away from home free of charge (thanks to the donation of hotel rooms from our hotel partners), a dinner out, a movie, or a spa experience.

Offering parents and caregivers services that are free of judgement and stigma is at the heart of The Cridge Respite & Respite Services. It is our privilege to come alongside them and to, meet an important need in their lives.



SHELLEY MORRIS, COLIN MOORMAN, PATRICIA BAILEY

Blessings to Patricia on her Retirement

Colin Moorman, Retired CEO

When Pat first arrived, The Cridge Centre was a rather unsophisticated, loosely organized agency with a somewhat unclear sense of purpose. I was the relatively new CEO and wasn't able to provide this new assistant of mine with much direction: I was still trying to make sense of things. I was at the sharp end of it all, and Pat was the solid, unshakeable foundation making sure I didn't fall off the shelf and shatter into a thousand pieces.

I've heard people describe a colleague by saying "I couldn't have done it without them" which can sound hollow. However, in the case of Pat and me, it is the absolute truth. I was fond of saying that Pat made it appear that I knew what I was doing!

Pat and I soon found ourselves riding a roller coaster of new growth, new concepts, and new systems. It became an amazing learning opportunity for us both and we each found an aspect of The Cridge Centre's work where we could make a meaningful contribution. Pat immersed herself, with characteristic enthusiasm and determination, in discovering the systems that would serve us best.

I treasure many memories of working with Pat, as together we pursued new paths forward for The Cridge Centre: all underpinned by our shared discussions and visions of God's hand at the helm. On behalf of everyone at The Cridge Centre, thank you, Pat, for being the most loyal, hard-working, honest, discreet, and caring Executive Assistant that any boss – or organization -- could ever hope for!

Leave a Legacy

Stigmas can take decades and generations to spread their malignancy into cultures and communities. Likewise, it can take decades and generations to break them down and eliminate them. This is long-term and essential work!

The Cridge Centre has a legacy of breaking stigmas in how we serve and support vulnerable families. You can be a part of this legacy by leaving a gift to The Cridge Centre in your will – your legacy will continue to break stigmas for decades and generations to come.

To get more info about how to leave a legacy in your will, call Joanne at 250 995 6419 or email jlinka@cridge.org



Chef's Corner: Sweetgrass Cherry Cake

The Cridge Centre is home to many cultures and ethnicities with many opportunities to try different flavours. This recipe is recommended by Matt Jack and comes from Chatelaine magazine.

More Indigenous recipes can be found here:
foodnetwork.ca/article/canadian-first-nations-recipes/



CHATELAINE' BLOG. PHOTO BY KIRSTEN BUCK

Prep time 15 min • total time 2 hrs 15 min • Oven 350°

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 2 cups | fresh or frozen pitted sweet cherries, such as Okanagan cherries |
| 1-1/4 cups | granulated sugar, divided |
| 11-inch | piece dried sweetgrass braid, placed in empty tea filter bag |
| 1-1/2 cups | all-purpose flour |
| 1 tsp | baking soda |
| 1/4 tsp | salt |
| 1 large | egg |
| 1/2 cup | packed brown sugar |
| 1/2 cup | walnuts |

Method: Grease and flour an 8x8-in. baking pan. Combine cherries, ¼ cup granulated sugar and dried sweetgrass in a medium saucepan. Add enough water to just cover cherries. Bring to a boil over high. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 1 hr. Place a sieve over a medium bowl. Drain cherries, reserving the cherry syrup for cake batter. Remove and discard dried sweetgrass. Cool cherry syrup slightly, about 20 min. Combine flour, baking soda, salt and remaining 1 cup granulated sugar in a large bowl. Whisk egg into cherry syrup. Add to flour mixture and stir until combined. Fold in cherries. Scrape batter into prepared pan. Combine ½ cup brown sugar and walnuts in a medium bowl. Sprinkle over batter. Bake until a cake tester inserted in centre comes out clean, 40 to 45 min. Transfer cake to a rack to cool slightly. Serve warm with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Donation Form

2022 – 07

Single gift amount: \$ _____

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Void cheque enclosed or Please charge my credit card

Gift End Date: _____ or until further notice

Please use my gift as follows:

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First Name _____ Middle Initial _____

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With credit card and identity fraud on the rise, we have measures in place to keep your information safe. Please choose from one of the following options:

- **Donate online at cridge.org/donate/**
- **Call 250-995-6427 to speak with our Donor Specialist**

Sign also to authorise bank withdrawals.

All monthly payments will be scheduled the first day of each month.

Receipts for your charitable giving tax credit will be issued annually.

Charitable Registration # 108079419RR0001

The Cridge Centre for the Family collects personal information on this form for reasonable and obvious purposes that meet with regulatory requirements. This information will never be shared, and will never be used for purposes outside of the obvious without your permission.

Please detach and mail this form to:

The Cridge Centre for the Family
1307 Hillside Ave. Victoria, BC V8T 0A2

Contact: Joanne Linka, Manager of Communication & Fund Development 250.995.6419 Email: jlinka@cridge.org

Spending of funds is confined to Board approved programs and purchases. Each gift designated toward an approved program will be used as designated with the understanding that when a given need has been met, designated gifts will be used where needed most. Gifts will be acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

The Cridge Centre for the Family is certified by the Canadian Council of Christian Charities and is accredited by the Imagine Canada Standards program.



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If you don't have email, don't worry, we will continue to send it in the mail.

If you would like to receive it by email, please let Sharon know at scrozier@cridge.org

NOTE: Please double check the accuracy of your name and address and notify Sharon Crozier of any changes via email to scrozier@cridge.org or by phone at 250-995-6427.

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