

How do we move from awareness to action on diabetes stigma? A Canadian Perspective on Gaps and Strategies to Inform Global Action

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The Challenge

Diabetes stigma stems from narratives of blame, fear, and individual responsibility rather than empathy and inclusion. Research on the Social Experiences of Living with Diabetes in Canada (2024) show that:

86% T1D

People have experienced **blame or shame** for having diabetes.

46% T1D

People have experienced **diabetes distress**.

69% T2D

31% T2D

54% T1D

People with diabetes have been **treated differently** because of their diabetes.

40% T1D

People never or rarely **ask for support** to help manage their diabetes when they need it.

31% T2D

56% T2D

Diabetes stigma is structurally produced, systemically perpetuated, culturally reinforced, and poorly measured.

While stigma is increasingly recognized as a barrier, responses remain fragmented.

Sustained action to address stigma requires translating insights from research and lived experience into system-level change.

A Promising Solution

Diabetes Canada's **Change the Conversation** is transforming over time how Canadians communicate and act on diabetes by mobilizing knowledge and innovative programs that **shift language, values, and beliefs** — so people with diabetes feel more **seen, valued, and supported**.

We Are Driving Change Across:



Narratives
(how diabetes is talked about and understood)



Practices
(how people and institutions behave)



Systems
(how environments and policies are designed)

How Might We Enable Change?



People living with diabetes

Healthcare, workplace, and community settings

Partners, media, and governments

Elevate diverse lived experiences

Support stigma-free language, practice, and policy adoption

Mobilize learnings, align metrics, and inform collective action

Dispel myths, improve dignity and quality of life

Strengthen daily interactions and supports

Shift public discourse and accelerate system level impact



Join the social movement to *Change the Conversation* at diabetes.ca/changetheconversation

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