

# Stigma-Reducing Practices for the **Community Health and Hunger Program**

---

Stigma arises from placing blame on an individual for their situation, which may dissuade patients from accessing the services they need.

Decreasing provider and patient stigma will encourage patients to accept help and take control of their health.

## Be Discrete



Tell patients that their status is confidential and that everyone is being screened for food insecurity. If there are no literacy issues, using a paper screening method is the best practice.

## Practice Empathetic Inquiry

Using an empathetic, casual tone when discussing sensitive topics help build trust between the provider and patients.

## Educate Staff



Make sure providers understand the importance of screening for hunger in a healthcare setting, and give them a chance to practice so they are comfortable screening patients.

## Be Mindful of Language Used

Use person-first language to avoid placing blame on patients (ex: "person suffering from food insecurity" vs. "food insecure individual").

## Follow up with Patients

Navigating referrals can be complex. If possible, follow up with patients to ensure they have accessed the programs available to them after their clinical visit.

