

EDITORIAL

Back Into the Shadows

Patrick W. Corrigan
Illinois Institute of Technology

My career has evolved over the past 20 years to understanding how disclosure helps people overcome harmful effects of stigma. Being in the closet, with the shame and secrets it entails, is destructive to a person's health and sense of well-being. People who consider the pros and cons of coming out, and perhaps take some steps to do so, enjoy a better quality of life. Even those who consider and do not come out have an improved sense of empowerment.

Donald Trump was elected president in November. If the president-elect makes good on his campaign rhetoric, he will repeal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), sending hundreds of thousands of young adults back into the shadows. DACA was a prominent part of Barack Obama's Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, meant to integrate our Latino neighbors into American society, not ostracize them. One of these is an awesome young lady I hired about a year ago as a research assistant on a project on ethnic health disparities. She came to the United States with her parents from Mexico when she was a year old. If DACA is repealed, I will have to let her go.

I marvel at some of the Dreamers who have decided to stand tall saying they will not hide. But my heart breaks for those who are compelled to return to an underground world of off-the-table income and over-the-shoulder vigilance.

The goal of articles published in *Stigma and Health* is to better understand the egregious effects of prejudice and discrimination. The journal publishes scholarly articles meant to inform efforts to erase stigma. Our work is worthy when findings inform real-world efforts to right social injustice. Few of us ever rise to the level of Dr. King, Mahatma Gandhi, Susan B. Anthony, or Justin Dart. But we are inspired by them. Personal experiences like those with my young colleague make this inspiration a reality.

Received December 5, 2016

Accepted December 5, 2016 ■

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Patrick W. Corrigan, Lewis College of Human Sciences, 10 West 35th Street, 14th Floor, 3424 S. State, Chicago, IL 60616. E-mail: corrigan@iit.edu