

Above the Bias:

Misconceptions Can Impact Diabetes Care

A quick judgment. An uninformed opinion. The punchline of a joke.
These words don't just hurt – they have real and unintended health consequences.¹

Nearly 7 in 10

people with diabetes **believe there's stigma** associated with the condition.

More than 60%

have had a **family member blame them** for having diabetes.

40%

feel like diabetes is often used as the **punchline of a joke**.



Impact on Health

Hurtful misconceptions can lead to avoiding care:

Nearly 1 in 4

have **avoided sharing their diagnosis** with family or friends due to **embarrassment or concern**.

40% of people with diabetes

have **skipped or missed a doctor's appointment** due to **shame and stigma**.



The Harmful Reality of Words

People with diabetes experienced physiological and emotional responses to stigmatizing statements:

39%

experienced **elevated body temperature, perspiration or heart rate** when exposed to stigmatizing phrases.

76%

have heard or experienced comments:

- "Should you really be eating that?"
- "Have you tried to lose weight to help with your diabetes?"
- "Should you be exercising more?"

"Should you really be eating that?"

caused the **strongest physiological body response**, similar to being on a job interview or a first date.



Mental Health Burden

The stigma surrounding diabetes takes a serious toll on mental well-being:

77% of people

with diabetes feel their **mental health** has been **negatively impacted by living with diabetes**.

Nearly 3 in 4

wish people **better understood** the negative impact their words can have on mental health.

Hurtful statements left people with feelings of **disbelief (62%), embarrassment (59%) and anger (57%)**.



Support Leads to Progress

While words can hurt, they also can help:

Nearly 7 in 10 people

with diabetes **believe supportive comments** from others can **significantly boost their motivation** to manage their condition.

Abbott has launched Above the Bias, a multi-year global initiative to support people living with diabetes.

People living with diabetes face many barriers to receiving care. Misconceptions and stereotypes around the condition can weigh heavily on the minds of those living with diabetes, creating one more barrier and potentially preventing them from managing their health.

Learn more at WWW.ABOVEBIAS.COM.

REFERENCES

1. Data on file. Abbott Diabetes Care, Inc. Survey. The research was commissioned by Abbott and conducted by Savanta between May and August 2024 among 2,680 people living with diabetes.

