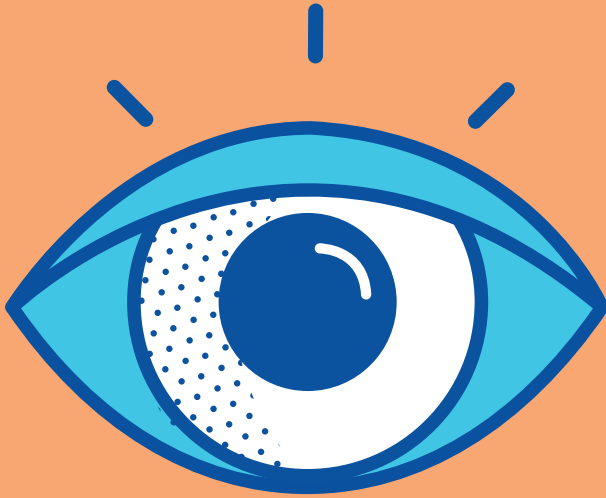


**WORLD  
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**CHALLENGE  
PERCEPTIONS**

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# WE CAN CHALLENGE PERCEPTIONS



In many cultures and societies today, cancer remains a taboo subject. People living with cancer are often subject to stigma and discrimination that may stop them admitting they have cancer and from seeking care and support. Even within communities where cancer is discussed openly, people affected by cancer can sometimes be discriminated against and feel isolated from friends and peers<sup>1</sup>.

Specific efforts are required to improve knowledge of cancer, counter misinformation and reduce stigma among all communities<sup>2,3</sup>. Supporting awareness campaigns such as World Cancer Day can be a powerful platform to challenge negative beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate myths about cancer<sup>4</sup>. Workplaces, community groups, healthcare providers and schools can all take actions to improve communication about cancer, shifting perceptions and strengthening support for people affected by cancer. In schools, for example, theatre can provide a platform for children, parents, and teachers to work together to improve communication and remove stigma around the disease. Such education programmes have been shown to be successful in supporting the inclusion of children with cancer into everyday life at school<sup>5</sup>.

Governments can also play a critical role in providing accurate information to communities around effective cancer interventions. For instance, extensive social mobilisation has been identified as critical to the implementation of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programmes in low- and middle- income countries as part of comprehensive cervical cancer prevention strategies. Providing appropriate and adequate information to communities, especially to avoid rumours and myths is a key factor to achieving high vaccine coverage<sup>6</sup>.

The media also have a particular role to play around public education campaigns by disseminating information and raising population-level awareness of cancer control to change attitudes and dispel common myths.

**Governments, communities, schools, employers and media can challenge perceptions about cancer and dispel damaging myths and misconceptions so that all people are empowered to access accurate cancer information and quality cancer prevention and care.**

This factsheet is aimed at



Healthcare professionals



Workplaces



Schools



Cities



Sport & leisure groups

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