



It's Up To Us[®]

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans.



Edition Thirteen | Fall 2013

About the Campaign

The "It's Up to Us" campaign is designed to empower San Diegans to talk openly about mental illness, recognize symptoms, utilize local resources and seek help. By raising awareness and providing access to local resources, we aim to inspire wellness, reduce stigma and prevent suicide.

Recovery is possible and help is available. It's Up to Us to make a difference in the lives of San Diegans experiencing mental health challenges by offering support and providing opportunities.

This campaign is developed through the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, and supports the County's "Live Well, San Diego!" plan to promote a community that is healthy, safe and thriving.

Up2SD.org[®]
LINK UP FOR INFORMATION AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Access & Crisis Line
(888) 724-7240

COMMUNITY RESOURCES
2-1-1

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
 **HHSA**
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Funded by the Mental Health Services Act

Read Up: Know the Signs, Find the Words and Reach Out!

Even when surrounded by friends and family, someone experiencing emotional pain or suicidal thoughts can often feel isolated. Recognizing the warning signs is the first step in reaching out to someone you are concerned about. If you sense something is wrong, trust your instincts and respond. By knowing what to look for you can find the words to offer support and reach out to available resources.



Know the Signs

The warning signs for suicide—withdrawal, depression and hopelessness—are there, but not always obvious. It's up to us to learn the warning signs and offer support to someone we care about.



Find the Words

"Are you thinking of ending your life?"

Few phrases are as difficult to say to a loved one. But when it comes to suicide prevention, none are more important. The website suicideispreventable.org provides suggestions on how to find the words to start the conversation with someone you are concerned about.



Reach Out

There are many resources in our community available to assess, treat and intervene:

San Diego Access and Crisis Line:
(888) 724-7240

Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program (for youth):
(760) 635-5904
www.YellowRibbonSD.org

Survivors of Suicide Loss:
(619) 482-0297
www.soslsd.org

A new report provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a significant rise in suicide rates among middle-aged adults ages 50 to 64. The suicide rate in this age group increased 45% between 1999 and 2010, with significantly higher increases for men in their 50s (a 48% rise) and women 60 to 64 (a 60% rise).
Source: www.cdc.gov

Did You Know? Suicide is the leading cause of non-natural death for all ages in San Diego County. Pain isn't always obvious. Know the signs. Find the words to offer help. Reach out to local resources.

Listen Up: Amanda's Story

Struggling with hardships such as abuse, stigma and discrimination, homelessness, or traumatic memories can be difficult. But life can get better. Connecting with the right people, finding inner strength and tapping into local programs can make all the difference. Visit Up2SD.org to view personal story movies created by San Diegans to inspire, offer hope and challenge stereotypes.



The day before our first wedding anniversary my husband ended his life. My life was shattered. My son was what kept me going; being a mother kept me alive. But I suffered from a deep

depression and spent many years struggling to provide the very best I could for my son.

By the time my son turned 20 I had been depressed, sad and angry for a long time. Feeling resentful and lonely with feelings of abandonment, I was starting to lose hope for life and it was a struggle to live. I had thought about ending my life for a long time but this time I made a plan to do it. But I had made a promise to a counselor that I would let him know if I wanted to end my life. I had already taken the pills but I remembered this promise and I called him and he connected me to help.

Unfortunately I continued to be in denial and didn't trust psychiatric help offered to me. I had a nervous breakdown, ended up losing my job and eventually became homeless.

And that is when I called the San Diego County Access and Crisis Line and really accepted that I needed help and that I couldn't do it alone. With the incredible mental health services I received from the County of San Diego I got better, and to this day I continue to work on my recovery on a daily basis. I am now dedicated to helping others. If I had not gone through any of these experiences, I couldn't share this with others who are hopeless, and to share that there is hope and help.

– Amanda

For information about suicide prevention and local resources, visit: Up2SD.org.

Shine a Light On... Panic Disorder



Our brains are wired to recognize fear and experience anxiety when we are frightened. But for some people a feeling of intense fear and anxiety appears suddenly, without warning or provocation, and this feeling can last a few minutes or longer than

half an hour. Such an experience is known as a panic attack. People who experience panic attacks become overwhelmed by sudden fear and panic for their lives. Experiencing two or more panic attacks in a month with constant worry about future attacks is known as panic disorder. Panic disorder has affected over 2.4 million Americans and can have a debilitating effect on one's emotional and psychological health. Panic disorder is, however, treatable and certain signs and symptoms can help individuals recognize and distinguish a panic attack from a heart attack or other sudden events. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIH) lists the following common signs and symptoms of panic disorder:

- Intense anxiety between panic attacks
- A feeling of being out of control
- An intense worry about when the next attack will happen
- A fear or avoidance of places where panic attacks have occurred in the past
- Physical symptoms during an attack, such as pounding or racing heart, sweating, breathing problems, weakness or dizziness, feeling hot or a cold chill, tingly or numb hands, chest pain or stomach pain

For more information about symptoms, treatment options and local resources visit www.nami.org.

Check on an Older Adult in Your Life!

“I’m fine” and “Nothing I can’t take care of myself.” Do these sound like familiar responses when you ask an older person how he or she is doing? Often we associate certain behaviors with the normal process of aging, but increased irritability, isolation or resistance to help may be signs of deeper problems.

Warning signs of suicidal thinking among older adults include:

- Depression
- Hopelessness
- Failure to take care of oneself
- Preoccupied with death
- Withdrawal
- Neglecting medical advice
- Looking for means of self-harm
- Parting with friends or belongings
- Changes in sleep

If you are concerned about an older adult in your life, take the time to check in to ensure that person is emotionally well. Local resources in the San Diego area include:

Aging and Independence Services (AIS) Senior Mental Health Team:

(800) 510-2020. The Senior Mental Health team includes mental health clinicians who provide crisis assessments and assistance for persons age 60 and older with mental health issues. Operators are also available to talk to a concerned adult and provide information and/or referrals.



Growing Up: Helping Children Make Sense of a Parent’s Mental Illness

Explaining mental illness to a child can be a challenging task for any parent living with mental illness. But it’s important to talk openly with children so they can make better sense of what the parent is going through and interpret certain behaviors they observe. Studies suggest that children who do not understand their parent’s mental illness will often internalize feelings of anger, guilt, anxiety and isolation as a way of coping with their daily experiences. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) suggests it may be helpful to approach the subject of mental illness by comparing it to physical illnesses so children can relate and make sense of the information.

The AACAP reminds parents to:

- Provide information about mental illness and how the parent is going to get better.
- Assure the child that he or she is not to blame.
- Engage help and support from family members.
- Consider family therapy to strengthen the positive elements in the home and help the child cope.
- Encourage the child to foster a strong relationship with a healthy adult.

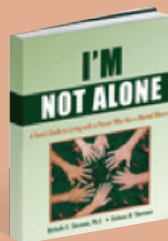
Visit www.psychcentral.com and search *Parenting* for additional tips, suggestions and facts on discussing parental mental illness.



Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry

By: Bebe Moore Campbell & E. B. Lewis
Check your local library.

This children’s book illustrates the experience of a young girl whose mother lives with bipolar disorder and uses simple language to describe the child’s coping skills as she makes sense of her environment.



I'm Not Alone: A Teen's Guide to Living with a Parent Who Has a Mental Illness

By: Michelle D. Sherman, PhD and DeAnne M. Sherman

This book offers teens essential information regarding mental illness, encourages open communication between teens and parents, offers tips on coping strategies and other words of comfort and support.

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE

Risk Factors

- ▶ Previous suicide attempt
- ▶ Mental illness and/or substance abuse
- ▶ Recent losses (e.g., job or loved one)
- ▶ Access to lethal means
- ▶ Barriers to care

Warning Signs

Call 9-1-1 or seek immediate help from a mental health provider when you hear or see any of these behaviors:

- ▶ Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
- ▶ Someone looking for ways to kill themselves: seeking access to pills, weapons or other means

If you are concerned about someone because their behavior has changed and they are exhibiting any of the warning signs of suicide listed below, seek help by calling the Access & Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240.

- ▶ Withdrawing from family and friends
- ▶ Acting reckless, feeling hopeless, angry or anxious
- ▶ Increasing their use of alcohol or drugs

What to Do

If someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

- ▶ Do not leave the person alone
- ▶ Remove any firearms, drugs, alcohol or sharp objects that could be used in an attempt
- ▶ For life threatening emergencies or immediate response, call 9-1-1
- ▶ Contact the Access & Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240

Stand Up and Participate: Learn QPR to Prevent Suicide!

QPR, which stands for Question, Persuade and Refer, is an emergency intervention to help a person who is considering suicide. Anyone who is in a position to recognize the signs that someone may be considering suicide is encouraged to sign up for a QPR training. In a one-hour workshop, individuals learn to recognize warning signs, what questions to ask and how to offer hope and help. The workshop is designed for parents, friends, neighbors, teachers, ministers, doctors, nurses, office supervisors, caseworkers, firefighters and many others.

QPR trainings are offered at no cost in San Diego. To sign up or to schedule a group workshop, contact **Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP)** at: (858) 609-7971 or evaughan@sdchip.org.

Liven Up Your Health: Tunes for Your Wellbeing

Want to unwind from a stressful day at work or can't go to sleep? Enjoy some music. Listening, singing and dancing along to our favorite songs taps into our emotional as well as physical wellbeing when feel-good hormones such as dopamine and serotonin are released into our brains. Dopamine lightens up our mood, helps us be more positive, excited and eager to pursue our goals, while serotonin promotes a healthier sleep pattern.



Tune in...

- Around the house to perk up your senses while accomplishing chores
- During work to boost creativity
- While driving, to reduce anxiety during rush hour
- At nighttime to relax and unwind



Need help immediately?
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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

2-1-1