



It's Up To Us[®]

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans.

Edition Eleven | Spring 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: Creating Caring Congregations

An Interview with Reverend Susan Gregg-Schroeder

A supportive faith community can provide hope, support and the feeling of being connected to something bigger: a place where people are accepted for who they are. But unfortunately not all congregations offer this refuge to individuals who are dealing with mental illness or to their family members.

Reverend Susan Gregg-Schroeder shared her personal journey with depression, which first began in 1991 during her third year as a pastor at San Diego First United Methodist Church. *"I didn't understand what was happening to me. I couldn't eat or sleep, nothing brought me pleasure and I isolated myself from others. I felt so hopeless that I wanted to end my life. My family and I kept my depression and hospitalizations from the congregation for two years. We suffered in silence."*



Reverend Susan Gregg-Schroeder
Founder of Mental Health Ministries

Weighed down by the burden of silence and encouraged by her senior pastor, she decided to share her struggles with her congregation. Inspired by her example, many others shared their experiences and reached out for help. Susan said:

"I began to see the great need to address mental illness in our faith communities. Mental illness is sometimes referred to as a 'no-casserole illness.' People struggling with mental illness are far less likely to receive the same level of care as persons dealing with physical issues. Too often mental illness is greeted with silence, not compassion."

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Does Your Pastor Know?

- One in four persons sitting in the pews has a family member struggling with mental health issues.
- Many seminaries do not cover the topic of mental illness. Because of this, some clergy may not be able to provide appropriate support and referral information.
- 60% of individuals with a mental health issue go first to their spiritual leader for help.
- Faith communities can be caring congregations for persons living with a mental illness and for those who love and care for them.

Resources

- Mental Health Ministries provides free print and media resources for faith communities: www.mentalhealthministries.net/index.html
- Sabbaths of Hope: Faith communities responding to depression: www.mhah.org/Programs/MHPSOHO.html
- San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council Faith Organization Outreach provides resources and education to local faith organizations interested in suicide prevention awareness. Contact Yeni Palomino at yopalomino@sdchip.org for more information

Did You Know: Depression is not a normal part of aging. It can get better with help.

Growing Up: 5 Tips to Promote Social-Emotional Health Among Young Children

- 1. Praise.** Catch your child being good! Praise your child often for even small accomplishments such as playing nicely with brothers or sisters, helping to pick up toys, waiting her turn or being a good sport.
- 2. Play.** Talk with your child, tell stories, sing and make rhymes together. It is especially important to try and reconnect for a few minutes after separations. Include some type of regular physical activity such as a walk or bike ride around the neighborhood.
- 3. Connect.** Make time for a routine that includes regular family meals, when parents and children can sit and talk about their day together. Play the “high-low” game by taking turns sharing the best and not-so-good parts of the day.
- 4. Don't give in, but forgive quickly.** Be consistent with limits for your child and enforce a rule with supportive understanding. Encourage learning from mistakes so that they do not happen again. Try giving choices when your child is oppositional (e.g., Would you like me to carry you upstairs to bed or would you like to walk?).
- 5. Work through feelings.** Everyone experiences anger and stress! Help your child to find acceptable ways of working through these feelings. It is okay to be mad but never okay to hit anyone or destroy property.



Information courtesy of the American Academy for Pediatrics www.aap.org

Read Up: Creating Caring Congregations An Interview with Reverend Susan Gregg-Schroeder

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Determined to make a difference, Susan started Mental Health Ministries in 2001. This interfaith, web-based ministry provides print and media educational resources on a variety of topics to help faith leaders create more caring congregations. “*Education is really the key to erasing the stigma that is so strong in our congregations. Faith communities address homelessness, addiction, prison ministry and other social issues without understanding that mental illness is often at the core of these issues. Many do not understand that mental illness is not a moral or spiritual failure but a treatable medical condition. If faith communities are educated they can provide support to their own members and can also collaborate with mental health providers in their community,*” explained Susan.

Once mental illness is talked about openly in a congregation, there are different ways to provide care, support and inclusion of all persons into the life of the congregations. Susan’s hope is that her organization can build bridges of understanding between our faith communities and mental health providers and that a person’s faith and spirituality can be a part of their treatment and recovery process.



Link Up: Man Therapy

Man Therapy reshapes the conversation around men and mental health by using humor to cut through stigma and tackle issues such as depression, divorce and suicidal thoughts head on, the way a man would do it.

Visit www.mantherapy.org

Listen Up: Craig'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.



“To the world I appeared successful: Financial advisor and life coach, winning 5Ks and 10Ks in my age class, hero to my family and always the first called for financial and emotional support. But in reality I was overextended and eventually just couldn't keep up with the obligations I had taken on.

Almost as far back as I can remember I had become a master at shutting off emotions I didn't like. If it didn't feel good, I didn't allow myself to feel it. But now I was frightened and I felt incompetent at facing my clients. I was embarrassed over my own financial failures which would soon become obvious. Overwhelming, paralyzing anxiety would wake me up in a cold sweat at 2 a.m., stomach in knots, sleep deprived. I remember one day putting on my suit and tie in the morning but sitting on the couch all day, not able to go into the office. There was no hope. I didn't see any possible way out. 'I need to peacefully go away' became a constant thought. I had life insurance policies and thought my family would be better off financially if I died.

Through the grace of God I survived an attempt to end my life. When I stripped away all the concerns about the exterior and just got down to the core of my essence, the will to survive emerged. What a relief it was to not have to try to hold up an image of something I wasn't anymore. If you are experiencing difficulties, talk to someone, anybody. I didn't and it almost cost me my life.”

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

– Craig

Liven Up Your Health: Take Care of Your Spirit

Mental Health America offers these tips on its “Live Your Life Well” campaign website

Eat your veggies. Get enough rest. Exercise. Those are clear suggestions. But how do we nurture our spirit? One way is to think of spirituality as connecting to whatever we consider meaningful and holy. Some may find it in God, others in themselves, other people, nature, art or kindness. Spirituality offers many possible benefits, including a better mood, less anxiety and depression, and even fewer aches and illnesses.

Why is this? It seems that spirituality cuts the stress that so often triggers disease. Of course, spirituality isn't like medicine —“just take one dose of prayer daily”— but there are some things you can do to boost your spirit:

- Try meditation. Research shows that meditation can help with anxiety and depression, chronic pain, asthma, heart disease and high blood pressure.

- Keep a journal to help you express your deepest thoughts and feelings.
- Read inspiring stories or essays to unearth insights and philosophies that can enrich your life.
- Nurture your spirit with nature, music, art or whatever sounds appealing. Take a walk at Torrey Pines or enjoy the gardens at Balboa Park!
- Look at what's good in yourself and others.
- Volunteer with a religious group or charity.
- Focus on your goals, values and beliefs. What brings you hope, joy and comfort? What do you care about most? How can you make a difference in the world?

Information courtesy of Mental Health America: www.liveyourlifewell.org

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 one 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 for Mental Health

There are several ways you can be involved in standing up for mental health.

1. Participate in the eighth annual Mental Health Month Resource Fair- Be Brave: Stomp Out Stigma on May 18, 2013 from 2pm-6pm. This event will focus on children and youth and family and will be held at Heritage Park in Old Town San Diego.

To learn more about this event, visit www.mentalhealthmonthsd.org

2. The San Diego chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness provides a variety of volunteer opportunities and activities throughout the year, and an annual 5K walk to draw attention to the concerns of mental illness.

Visit www.namisd.org

3. The Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign offers a range of different ways you can support Children's Mental Health.

Visit www.samhsa.gov/children



Need help immediately?
Access & Crisis Line
(888) 724-7240

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

2-1-1

