



It's Up To Us[®]

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans.



Edition Sixteen | Summer 2014

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: When It Comes to Matters of Mental Health, Culture Counts!

San Diego has long prided itself on its diverse population. Our community is truly a melting pot of cultures, ethnicities and heritages. Culture—our beliefs, norms, values, languages and traditions—influences how we perceive many aspects of life, including health and illness. Our attitudes toward mental illness, in particular, are shaped by our cultural beliefs and influence whether or not we seek help, what kind of help and from whom.

People from many cultural backgrounds experience physical symptoms as well as mental ones when they are depressed. Encouraging them to seek medical care can be helpful, especially if health providers ask about how they are feeling and coping.

Americans from European backgrounds are often more inclined to seek care from health professionals, while people from other backgrounds may turn first to religious leaders such as pastors, to natural helpers from their own communities or to family members. There is no single path to wellness. Anyone can help people recognize that mental health problems are not a result of personal weakness or character flaw. According to Christina Nip, NICOS Chinese Health Coalition, "There is a common Chinese saying that 'family shame should not be made public.' This belief causes a general reluctance to admit to mental illnesses and seeking help. On the flipside, the Chinese concept of family includes an extensive network of people that extends beyond the nuclear family. From the standpoint of mental health, this is a source of great support and helps alleviate economic and mental health stressors.

There is a sense that one's family is a wide safety net that one can fall back on during hard times."

Regardless of our cultural makeup, it's up to us to notice warnings signs that a family member or friend is unwell, physically



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Did You Know?

Promoting the social–emotional wellbeing of children and youth leads to higher overall productivity, better educational outcomes, lower crime rates, stronger economies, lower health care costs, improved quality of life, increased lifespan and improved family life. (Source: mentalhealth.gov/basics)

Read Up: When It Comes to Matters of Mental Health, Culture Counts!

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or emotionally, and encourage them to get help. Culturally competent providers can understand their patients' individual situations as well as the cultural context that shapes their symptoms and treatment preferences. In San Diego County there are many cultural agencies that can help, such as the Union of Pan Asian Communities, Operation Samahan, Kalusugan Community Services and La Maestra Community Health Centers. Visit Up2SD.org to find contact information for these agencies and more.

Interesting Fact!

Different cultures have varying ways of describing mental illness. For example, in the Punjab culture, *sinking heart* is a condition of distress that is experienced as a physical sensation in the heart or chest. It has some characteristics of depression but also resembles a cardiovascular disorder. It is thought to be caused by excessive heat, exhaustion, worry or social failure.

Growing Up: Siblings—Friend or Foe?

Our siblings are our first friends and also our first rivals. Often, the cause of sibling rivalry can be due to children not wanting to share toys, space or even a parent's attention. During these times of rivalry, children learn to develop lifelong skills such as how to compromise and negotiate and also learn how to regulate their anger and aggression. For parents it is important to use these disputes as opportunities to help children find a common ground by practicing problem-solving techniques on their own.

Here are some steps parents can take to promote a friendlier family environment:

- Try to resolve problems *with* your kids, not *for* them.
- Rather than focusing on which child is to blame, try to set up a “win-win” situation so that each child gains something.
- Create a list with ground rules and consequences and allow your children to offer input.
- Post a schedule showing which child “owns” items that are frequently in dispute at which times during the week. (And if they keep fighting about it, take the “prize” away altogether.)
- Allow each child to have his or her own space.
- Find family activities that allow everyone to have fun together.



Information courtesy of kidshealth.org

Liven Up Your Health: Pleasure, Play and Mental Health

Why is it important to enjoy the things we do and do the things we enjoy? When we engage in activities that we take pleasure in, we pause the stressful thoughts of our everyday lives and allow our minds to completely focus on the pleasure the fun activity creates. Pleasure is a response our brain produces after we combine our desire to do something with the satisfaction of doing it. Engaging in fun, safe and healthy activities, similar to play time we had as children, helps us activate the pleasure centers in our brains. In return, this keeps us alert, increases our creativity and ability to learn new things, and helps us to better cope with stressful events in the future.

Find time in your schedule to do at least one fun activity a day!

- **Good for our bodies:** dancing, biking, hiking
- **Good for our mind:** doing a crossword puzzle, reading, painting
- **Good for our mental health:** laughing, relaxing, socializing

Information courtesy of National Institutes of Health



Shine a Light On: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

People with OCD suffer from persistent and unwelcome anxious thoughts, and the result is feeling a strong need to perform rituals to maintain control. For instance, a person obsessed with germs or dirt may wash his hands constantly. Others may touch or count things or see repeated images that disturb them. These thoughts are called obsessions, and the rituals that are performed to try to prevent or get rid of them are called compulsions. Severe OCD can consume so much of a person's time and concentration that it interferes with daily life, but treatments including medications and psychotherapy are very effective. OCD affects about 3.3 million adult Americans, and usually begins in childhood.

Information courtesy of SAMHSA's Resource Center to Promote Acceptance, Dignity and Social Inclusion Associated with Mental Health (ADS Center)



Link Up: Wounded Warrior Project

Most veterans face challenges as they transition back into civilian life, including physical injuries as well as invisible ones, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) is a nonprofit organization that seeks to assist those men and women of our armed forces who have been severely injured by encouraging peer support and providing unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs.

To learn more about Wounded Warrior Project and its "Believe in Heroes" campaign visit the website or Facebook page!

- woundedwarriorproject.org
- facebook.com/wwpinc.fans

For support in San Diego, veterans and their loved ones in crisis can dial 2-1-1 to connect with Courage to Call, a veteran-staffed 24/7 helpline that provides free, confidential information, guidance and referrals. In addition, active duty service members and their families can get connected to 24/7 confidential peer-to-peer support worldwide at vets4warriors.com.

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE

These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss or change.

Warning Signs

- ▶ Talking about wanting to die
- ▶ Looking for a way to kill oneself
- ▶ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- ▶ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- ▶ Talking about being a burden to others
- ▶ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- ▶ Acting anxious, agitated or reckless
- ▶ Sleeping too little or too much
- ▶ Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- ▶ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- ▶ Displaying extreme mood swings

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
- ▶ For urgent and other concerns, contact the Access & Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240

Get Up & Participate: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) San Diego chapter hosts and participates in various outreach and awareness events throughout the year and encourages San Diegans to join and make a difference. To find out about upcoming events visit the website at afsp.org or Facebook page at facebook.com/afspSanDiego.

Some upcoming events include:

- AFSP-Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend
- Out of the Darkness Walk, San Diego on October 19
- 2014 International Survivors of Suicide Day on November 22 at University of San Diego. Visit afsp.org/survivorday



Need to Talk to Someone?

Unsure of where to go for help? Chat online or call a counselor today!

- Free confidential support
- Crisis intervention and suicide prevention
- Referrals for mental health and drug and alcohol needs



SAN DIEGO ACCESS & CRISIS LINE

- All languages
 - 7 days a week/24 hours a day
- (888) 724-7240

LIVE CHAT

- Chat with a counselor today!
- Available Mon–Fri 4pm–10pm

Visit: optumhealthsandiego.com or Up2SD.org

COMMUNITY RESOURCES
DIAL 2-1-1

