



It's Up To UsSM

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans.



Edition Six | Winter 2012

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.orgSM
LINK UP FOR INFORMATION AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

SD CRISIS HOTLINE

(800) 479-3339

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

2-1-1

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO



HHSA

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Funded by the Mental Health Services Act

Read Up: San Diego News Anchor Shares Her Story of Recovery from Mental Illness

Depression and anxiety can happen to anybody at any time and should not be taken lightly. One of the most difficult things about overcoming depression and anxiety can be the stigma associated with these types of mental illness.



Carol LeBeau, former San Diego news anchor

Carol LeBeau, former San Diego news anchor, has toured with the Pope, jogged with the president and interviewed Oprah, but one of her greatest accomplishments has been overcoming the stigma associated with mental illness and speaking up about her depression.

She now openly shares her story of overcoming the hardships of depression and anxiety through help from doctors, medicine and supportive family and friends.

LeBeau first began struggling with mental health challenges during her senior year of high school in 1971.

"Since mental illnesses, including depression and anxiety, were hardly ever talked about back then, I tried to keep a lot of it to myself. But my mom, who had suffered from similar symptoms, realized I had a problem and took me to a doctor," LeBeau said. "Because of the lack of knowledge about mental illnesses at the time, I was not diagnosed with proper

therapy and medicine and tried to brush my problems aside."

LeBeau's signs of depression returned in the midst of her career at ABC 10News in San Diego. At the time LeBeau's career was growing fast; she was assigned a high-profile segment on health and fitness and spoke at many community events. She had also recently fallen in love and got married.

"After marrying my husband, my life for the next three years became a blur. On the surface, everything looked great. But, during the summer of '87 I started feeling sad, anxious and exhausted for no apparent reason," LeBeau said. "I would cry at the drop of a hat. I had the symptoms that mimicked a heart attack. The heart pounding, throat constricting, hand sweating feeling that you have whenever you are anxious and I felt that way all the time."

LeBeau then began fearing the stigma of having a mental illness.

"I didn't even want to tell my husband. I didn't even want him to know about what happened in high school. I didn't want anyone to know about that," LeBeau said. "That was embarrassing. Mental illness is that guy talking to the street lamp downtown. It's not that nice Carol, who comes from a nice family, who lives on a nice street. You could have anything else, but you couldn't have a mental problem."

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Link Up: Connections and Support for Veterans

The "Make the Connection" campaign, launched by the Department of Veterans Affairs, seeks to make it easy for veterans to "make the connection" between what they are experiencing and the kinds of resources and services that can help them get on a better track.



For more information visit www.maketheconnection.net or find additional resources for veterans at Up2SD.org

Did You Know:

Fewer than one-third of adults and one-half of children with a mental health disorder receive mental health services in any given year. Stigma and the fear of what people might think is one reason why.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness

Growing Up: How to Take the Grrrr Out of Anger

According to the American Psychological Association, anger is a completely normal, healthy human emotion when it is expressed correctly. When anger is not expressed correctly it can become destructive and lead to behavioral problems. According to Mental Health America, it is important to encourage children to talk openly about their feelings and let them know that doing so is a healthy way of expressing anger.



How to Take the Grrrr Out of Anger by Elizabeth Verdick and Marjorie Lisovskis (Free Spirit Publishing) teaches children ages 8 and up how to recognize anger in themselves and others, how to handle situations and emotions (loneliness, guilt, frustration, fear) that lead to anger and how to deal with the anger they feel.

Check your local library. *How to Take the Grrrr Out of Anger* is also available at www.amazon.com

Shine a Light On...

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

About 5.2 million American adults suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) each year. PTSD can affect anyone who has experienced a traumatic and life-changing event. Causes of PTSD can range from **military combat, sexual assaults** and **physical attacks** to **natural disasters**.

Individuals with PTSD often relive their trauma through flashbacks and nightmares or disturbing thoughts, sometimes feeling detached, numb, irritable or aggressive. Signs of PTSD can also be identified with loss of interest in normal activities, detachment to friends and family, difficulty sleeping and concentrating and angry outbursts.

While some may recover from PTSD after a few months, others can develop chronic PTSD, in which symptoms will continue to occur for more than three months. People with PTSD can receive help through medication, therapy and alternative treatments such as meditation, yoga and aqua therapy such as surfing.

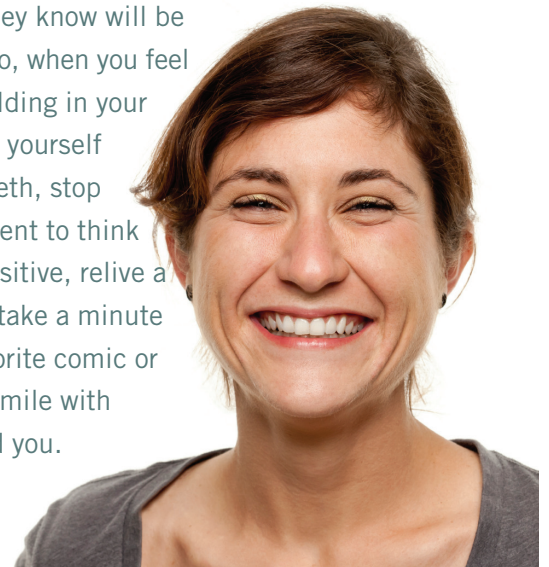
(Information courtesy of stopstigma.samhsa.gov and the National Alliance on Mental Illness, nami.org)

Liven Up Your Health:

Smiling Is Good for You

Positive thinking helps us stay emotionally well. Research found people who kept track of their gratitude once a week were more cheerful and had fewer physical complaints than others. Other studies have shown that making a facial expression, such as a smile, can produce effects on the body that are similar to those that result from the actual emotion, such as happiness. ***And did you know that smiling and happiness can be contagious?*** A study of more than 4,700 people who were followed over 20 years found that people who are happy or become happy boost the chances that someone they know will be happy as well. So, when you feel that tension building in your neck or you find yourself grinding your teeth, stop and take a moment to think of something positive, relive a happy memory, take a minute to read your favorite comic or simply share a smile with someone around you.

Source: *British Medical Journal*



Read Up: San Diego News Anchor Shares Her Story of Recovery from Mental Illness

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LeBeau's depression and anxiety reached a point where she could no longer survive without seeking professional help. She took short-term medical leave from work and took her first step toward recovery by visiting a local psychiatrist.

"Unlike when I was a teenager and nobody knew what to do, this doctor knew exactly what to do," LeBeau said. "I was diagnosed with a low-grade chronic depression, prescribed anti-depressant medications and began seeing a counselor."

After three weeks of taking her new medication, LeBeau returned to work with a new outlook on life.

"I remember walking out of my house, taking a deep breath and realizing how good it smelled outside," LeBeau said. "The air was fresh. The leaves of the trees looked so green and the sky looked so intensely blue. I was finally getting back my ability to feel again. Especially the ability to feel joy."

LeBeau credits much of her recovery to the continual support from her husband, boss and coworkers.

"My prayers were answered through my support system. I had a husband who advocated on my behalf and made sure that I got adequate medical treatment," LeBeau said. "I also had support from my boss and coworkers who made sure I had as much time as I needed to fully recover."

LeBeau continues to take medication, which helps her enjoy life to the fullest. After more than 30 years as a TV anchor she retired and is now a spokesperson for Palomar Pomerado Health and an advocate for erasing the stigma of mental illness.



Recovery is possible. If you or someone you know is suffering from a mental illness such as depression and/or anxiety, please don't ignore the signs and do seek the help you need.

For more information about local resources visit: www.Up2SD.org

Listen Up: Stories of Struggle, Perseverance and Hope

Facing stigma and discrimination, overcoming hardships such as abuse, homelessness and traumatic memories can be difficult, but it can get better. Finding inner strength and connecting with the right people or local programs can make all the difference. Visit www.Up2SD.org to view personal story movies created by San Diegans to inspire, offer hope and challenge stereotypes.

"I grew up in rural Michigan and you didn't discuss such things as depression. Many suicide attempts, in many forms, marked my twenties and thirties. In retrospect they were cries of desperation that went unheard and unnoticed. The more I drank, the more suicidal I was. The alcohol and drug problems clouded the issue, but eventually I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and chronic depression.

For years it was: I am Bruce, my diagnosis is... The label defined who I was. Now the diagnosis is secondary to whom I am as a person. I have been sober for 14 years; and I am proud of that! I still have bad days, but they are not quite as dark as before. I can show up for my life and take part in it!

Everybody knows someone that has a mental health problem, whether it's mentioned or not. Show them the same compassion as you would for someone with diabetes or a bad heart. And if you haven't found the help you need, there are new medicines, new treatments and new programs all the time. Don't give up hope.

– Bruce

Watch Bruce's story at: www.Up2SD.org



Risk Factors

- ▶ Previous suicide attempt
- ▶ Mental illness and/or substance abuse
- ▶ Recent losses, including of job, loved ones, role, status
- ▶ 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 (800) 479-3339.

- ▶ Withdrawing from family and friends
- ▶ Acting reckless, 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
- ▶ For urgent and all other concerns, contact the Access & Crisis Line at (800) 479-3339

Stand Up to Stigma in the Media



Mental illness is common. In fact, mental health challenges are experienced by one in four San Diegans. They have careers, families and hobbies; yet TV shows and news stories often present a distorted image and negative stereotypes. These images are a key element to the stigmas people with mental illnesses face every day. To help break this cycle, let the media know that you don't agree with or support hurtful portrayals.

Protest Stigmas

When you notice a news article, advertisement or TV show that is incorrect and demeans, humiliates or hurts a person with a mental illness, contact the publisher, editor, writer, station manager and/or sponsors by letter, telephone, fax and/or email informing them of the inaccurate and offensive portrayal.

Praise Accurate Presentations

When you see a news article, TV show or movie that contributes to accurate depiction of mental illness, send a message of appreciation and support to the publisher, editor, writer, station manager and/or sponsor. Let them know you agree with the positive representation and relate it to a personal story if possible.

One organization that does a great job at praising and protesting is the National Alliance on Mental Illness through its StigmaBusters campaign. To learn more about stigma fighting, sign up to receive StigmaBuster alerts and access additional resources at www.nami.org/stigma

Need help immediately?
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COMMUNITY RESOURCES
2-1-1



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