



# It's Up To Us<sup>®</sup>

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans.



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## 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<sup>®</sup>**  
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: Lights, Camera, Action: Media Can Help Shape a Positive Image for Mental Illness

Of course, we know that there is added drama in the dramas we watch, but they still shape us. We have ideas about how our first kiss should feel and how high school should not. We are amateur crime solvers and judge vicariously through the juries on our favorite trial court shows.



Why does this matter? According to a research study published by Wahl (2004) many people get their information about mental illness from the media. Unfortunately, the picture portrayed isn't always accurate. And the facts are important when we consider that mental illness is common and treatable, but that many people don't seek help because they are afraid of what others will think and how it will impact their social and work life.

The good news is that much change has already taken place. One example is the annual PRISM Awards Program, sponsored by the Entertainment Industries Council, which was created to recognize TV shows, movies and music delivering accurate images and storylines addressing mental health and substance use. Some recent nominations included Denzel Washington for his portrayal of a pilot with alcohol addiction in *Flight*; the documentary *Outside the Lines: McMahon's State of Mind* for its coverage of the harmful physical and mental results from concussions suffered by professional football players; and the Oscar-worthy performances of Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence in *Silver Linings Playbook* for their realistic portrayal of the challenges two people living with bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder face on a day-to-day basis.

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## Did You Know?

In 1949 May was officially recognized as National Mental Health Awareness Month. Raising awareness about mental illness can help break through the stigma that often prevents millions of Americans from seeking the treatment they need. (Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

# Read Up: Lights, Camera, Action: Media Can Help Shape a Positive Image for Mental Illness

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## Casting New Characters and Storylines

**Mental illness is more common and adaptable than we think.**

In fact, it impacts 1 in 4 adults in San Diego County and around the country. And people with mental illness are not just brilliant scientists and musicians (e.g., as portrayed by Russell Crowe in *A Beautiful Mind*, Jamie Foxx in *The Soloist* and Matt Damon in *Good Will Hunting*), but regular people, our neighbors and co-workers.

For example, NBC's *Parenthood* features a teenage boy, Max, diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. In a storyline in which he runs for class president, Max describes his peculiar behavior (a dislike for shaking hands and making direct eye contact) as some of the characteristics of the disorder, but also lets others know that what may seem like limitations are actually strengths that have helped him follow through with the plans he has set out for himself.

**Help is available and treatment is effective.**

People experiencing mental illness, whether they are experiencing depression, post-traumatic stress disorder or schizophrenia, need to get help to get better. Treatment is effective, and more so with support from friends and family.

In the series *Elementary* on CBS, Sherlock Holmes, the main character, is supported by a sober companion and an AA sponsor who encourage and support him in his recovery. In

*Homeland* (Showtime), a CIA agent diagnosed with bipolar disorder seeks treatment and returns home to be taken care of by her father and sister after being dismissed from her job. Though she is reluctant at first, her family convinces her to accept her diagnosis and comply with her treatment and eventually she is offered her job back.

**It is okay to talk about mental health.**

Shows and movies can inspire our curiosity in more ways than one. Showing us that it is OK to talk about mental illness by openly sharing it with millions of viewers is a great step in the right direction.

One example is the documentary *A New State of Mind: Ending the Stigma of Mental Illness*, narrated by Glenn Close. It aired on PBS stations throughout California and encouraged Californians to talk openly about mental illness.

**What can you do?**

Examine your own biases. When you watch depictions of mental illness, ask yourself: Why do you think people with a mental illness are portrayed like that? Does it mesh with your own views? Is it accurate? Do you know anyone with a mental illness who is like that? Read up and check the facts at [Up2SD.org](http://Up2SD.org) or [nami.org](http://nami.org).

For more information about the PRISM awards visit: [prismawards.com](http://prismawards.com).

## Liven Up Your Health: M is for Meditation and Mental Health!



Breathing is not only a physical action, but a mental one too. Mindful meditation is a way for individuals to focus on their present thoughts and emotions and use breathing techniques to sort their experiences and reflect on the ways they react to their present environment. Meditation can provide more than a relaxing state of mind: it can help reduce stress that can negatively affect both our mind and body. This connection between a physical (breathing) and a mental (thoughts and emotions) action can be a starting point to a healthy mental routine.

# Growing Up: Turn Off the Screen and Turn On Wellbeing



There is no denying the convenience we all enjoy from our apps and electronics, however, just like fat and sugar, screen time should be enjoyed in moderation by children as it can have negative impacts on their emotional and behavioral development, as well as their academic performance.

## The Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood offers these Screen Free Facts:

- Every day children (ages 8–18) spend, on average, more than 7 hours exposed to some type of screen media between TV, computers, tablets, video games and smartphones.
- On average, preschool children spend up to 32 hours a week with screen media.
- Children who spend less time watching television in early years tend to do better in school, have a healthier diet, stay more physically active and are better able to engage in schoolwork in later elementary school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children age 2 and older watch no more than 1 to 2 hours daily, and children under 2 watch no television at all.

- Watch with your younger child, ask questions and relate what's happening in the show to his or her own life.
- Carefully select the program based on what you want your child to learn (or not) from the TV he or she watches.
- Set a good example by being cautious of the adult content in the shows you watch while your child is in the same room or wanders in.
- As much as possible, take advantage of San Diego's mild climate and trade screen time for outside and creative play time.

Visit [screenfree.org](http://screenfree.org) and [empoweredbyplay.org](http://empoweredbyplay.org) for additional tips.

# Get Up & 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](mailto:evaughan@sdchip.org).



# 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

## Link Up: National Alliance on Mental Illness in San Diego.

You can take your own steps towards supporting fellow San Diegans who are experiencing a mental health challenge:

- Learn more about symptoms, treatments and how to be supportive by visiting [namisandiego.org](http://namisandiego.org).
- Register today for the next NAMI Walk on May 3, 2014 at Liberty Station. This year's event will feature various health exhibits, a resource fair, an art show and special fun for kids!

**Location:** NTC Park, Liberty Station, San Diego

**Date:** 5/3/14

**Distance:** 5K

**Check-in:** 7:30 AM

**Start time:** 9:00 AM

**To register, visit:**  
[namiwalks.org/SanDiegoCounty](http://namiwalks.org/SanDiegoCounty)

**For more information, email:**  
[walk@namisd.org](mailto:walk@namisd.org)



## 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](http://optumhealthsandiego.com) or [Up2SD.org](http://Up2SD.org)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES  
DIAL 2-1-1

