



# It's Up To Us<sup>®</sup>

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans.



Edition Ten | Winter 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<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:

### Eight Resolutions for the New Year and All Year Long

Whether to improve ourselves or the world around us, we can all partake in small changes that can create a big difference. Here are some ways you can make the best out of 2013:

#### 1. Support a friend or family member with mental illness.

If you are concerned that a friend or family member is struggling with depression, anxiety or another mental disorder, the best thing you can do is speak up. Dealing with mental illness can be lonely, isolating and frightening, so let the person know that they are not alone.

*"I have and will continue to support my friends, family or even strangers with mental illnesses," says Steven Gaug from North Park.*



#### 2. Get involved in community events.

Participating in community events is a fun way to connect with others while helping a good cause. The Save a Life San Diego, Out of the Darkness and NAMI walks are just a few of the great community events held annually here in San Diego.

*Montbleau & Associates, an architectural woodwork, corporate furniture and casework company in San Diego, sponsored the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention San Diego Chapter's Out of Darkness Community Walk in 2012 and its team members pledge to walk again in 2013.*

#### 3. Exercise and improve your mental health as a result.

Mental health is part of our overall health and well-being. Being mentally and physically fit allows us to handle life's inevitable challenges, build strong relationships and bounce back when life throws us a curve ball. When we take care of our bodies, we also experience greater mental and emotional well-being. For example, exercise not only strengthens our heart and lungs, but also releases endorphins, powerful chemicals that energize us and lift our mood.

*"As a jiu jitsu instructor I have trained people who have suffered with depression and other mental illnesses in the past and have seen it help people in many ways. I pledge to continue helping others in 2013," says Michael Cusi, co-owner of The Stronghold CrossFit & Brazilian Jiu Jitsu in Point Loma.*



**Did You Know:** One in five children and teens in the United States experiences emotional, social or behavioral disorders. This is more than those impacted by physical disorders such as asthma or diabetes.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

## Link Up: Know the Signs

Are you concerned about someone? Visit [www.suicideispreventable.org](http://www.suicideispreventable.org) to learn the warning signs of suicide, find the words to offer help to someone you are concerned about and reach out to local resources. The website is part of the statewide suicide prevention campaign “Know the Signs” funded by the Mental Health Services Act (formerly known as Prop 63).

Pain Isn't Always Obvious

**KNOW  
THE SIGNS**

[suicideispreventable.org](http://suicideispreventable.org)

## Test Your Mental Health IQ

**QUESTION:** People with a mental illness are more likely to be the victims, rather than the perpetrators of violence. True or False?

**ANSWER:** True. In fact, the vast majority of people who are violent do not suffer from mental illnesses. Researchers found that people with severe mental illnesses—schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or psychosis—were 2 ½ times more likely to be attacked or mugged than the general population.

Source: [promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov](http://promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov)

### 4. Volunteer.

Volunteering positively benefits the community and it also enables you to meet new people, gives you a sense of achievement and can help you develop new skills and career options. Visit [www.volunteersandiego.org](http://www.volunteersandiego.org) and under “Search Projects” type in “mental health”.

*“We founded Answers For Adam to help teens facing suicidal thoughts and get those at risk the help they need by offering benefit concerts to show them that the community cares,”* say Shiloh Cook, 21, and Samantha Zimlich, 22.



### 5. Participate in intergenerational activities.

Intergenerational activities bring young and old together to stay active, have fun and learn from each other. Aging and Independence Services offers a variety of programs to assist seniors with staying active, healthy and involved in their communities. For more information about intergenerational and other programs and services offered by Aging and Independence Services call (800) 510-2020.

*“I pledge to continue to help treat my depression with my medication, but also in other healthier ways such as continuing my art, writing, exercising, connecting with others and forcing myself not to be isolated,”* says Margaret Gordon-Espe, an older adult from Golden Hill.

### 6. Get trained in QPR.

QPR—which stands for Question, Persuade and Refer—is a one-hour training during which individuals learn to recognize warning signs, what questions to ask and how to offer hope and help. QPR trainings are offered at no cost in San Diego. Contact Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) at: (858) 609-7967.

### 7. Speak Up about mental illness.

Too often mental illness and suicide are taboo subjects. There is no shame in having a mental illness. Making a difference starts with having a conversation and talking about these topics.

*“We have allowed the It's Up to Us campaign to place Spanish suicide prevention materials in our market and will continue to support the campaign in 2013,”* says Rene Escamilla, a worker at Tony's Produce, a Hispanic market in Clairemont.



### 8. Read Up about symptoms of mental illness and treatment options, listen to personal stories and find local resources at [www.Up2SD.org](http://www.Up2SD.org).

*“I pledge to be a supportive friend and visit the [Up2SD.org](http://Up2SD.org) website to learn more about mental illness,”* says Beth Honrade from Mira Mesa.

## Growing Up: Autism

With more children being diagnosed with autism each year than juvenile diabetes, AIDS and cancer combined, chances are you know a family member, friend or co-worker who has a child with autism. Autism now affects 1 in 88 children, and is four to five times more common in boys than girls. Most parents of autistic children realize something isn't right by the time the child is 18 months old.

As a parent, it is important to learn the facts and early signs of autism. Autism Speaks, a national autism science and advocacy organization, lists the following red flags as indicators that a child may have an autism spectrum disorder:

- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles or other facial expressions by 9 months
- No babbling by 12 months
- No back-and-forth gestures such as pointing, showing, reaching or waving by 12 months
- No words by 16 months
- No meaningful, two-word phrases (not including imitating or repeating) by 24 months
- Any loss of speech, babbling or social skills at any age

If your child exhibits any of these signs contact your pediatrician or family doctor.



For additional information, visit the Autism Spectrum Disorder resource page at [www.Up2SD.org](http://www.Up2SD.org)

Additionally, you can visit the Autism Society of America's San Diego Chapter at [www.sd-autism.org](http://www.sd-autism.org). SDASA programs and outreach include parent support groups, special events, newsletters and a local resource guide.

Information courtesy of A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia and [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org).

## Listen Up: Stories of Struggle, Perseverance and Hope

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](http://Up2SD.org) to view personal story movies created by San Diegans to inspire, offer hope and challenge stereotypes.



*“9/11 changed my life forever. The days of simply playing football and being carefree no longer seemed to be an option. I walked away from being a kid and joined the Army.*

*Before deploying I was teaching bible study and thought I was secure in my values, who I was. But when I got home, to my wife and friends, I felt alone. I no longer believed in God. My innocence had been destroyed. Physically I was home. Mentally though, I never left Iraq.*

*I became a cop and denied these feelings and moved on, I thought. Adapt and overcome. But my behavior expressed how I felt on the inside. I couldn't sleep, had nightmares and I couldn't even hold my son when he cried. At work, I was trying to get myself killed by taking risks. I was afraid I would lose my job if I asked for help. But I ended up getting arrested and I had to accept that I needed to get help. My wife and our department chaplain stepped up and stayed by my side, as did other veterans. I started on a different journey, a different battle.*

*I left combat in 2005, but still struggle today. I now work for a nonprofit helping veterans get the resources and help they need and combating the stigma and barriers to their and my care.*

– Joseph

For information about suicide prevention and local resources, visit: [Up2SD.org](http://Up2SD.org).

Veterans Village of San Diego, a nationally-recognized nonprofit organization, specializes in prevention, intervention, treatment, aftercare and employment services for military veterans. Visit [www.vvvd.net](http://www.vvvd.net) to learn more. If you or someone you know is currently or has been previously in the military community and may need help, contact Courage to Call by calling 2-1-1.

## 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

## San Diegans Making a Difference

Citizens of San Diego County look to our law enforcement officers to protect us. But law enforcement agencies throughout the county remind us that their motto is to protect and serve. The San Diego Police Department, San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Border Patrol and other law enforcement agencies have been amazingly dedicated in their support of the community to prevent suicide.



San Diego Police Chief William Lansdowne honored as the NAMI San Diego Inspirational Person of the Year. Presenting the award is NAMI San Diego Executive Director Shannon Jaccard.

“The San Diego Police Department wants to play a larger role in suicide prevention. Special training was recently provided to our officers that included matching the right services to the specific crisis situation. The training, known as ‘Call before the Crisis,’ provides our police officers with resource information to be offered to clients, family members, loved ones and friends for use prior to requesting a police response. It is the goal of the San Diego Police Department to continue providing a high level of personal service to members of the public in crisis situations.”

– Boyd Long, Assistant Chief of Police

Need help immediately?  
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**(888) 724-7240**

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**COMMUNITY RESOURCES**  
**2-1-1**

