



It's Up to Us[®]

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans



Edition Twenty-Four

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* vision 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

When the External Becomes Internal: Community Stress and Our Mental Health

Many San Diegans find these to be challenging times. The political climate is charged, social media is full of rumors and disturbing events, and the news seems to reveal more trauma each day. Mentally raise your hand if you have experienced any of these: a harrowing commute, being stuck in a high demand/low control work situation, unaffordable housing, economic hardship, or concern of losing health care coverage. Now, in the spirit of walking in someone else’s shoes, add limited access to jobs, services, and community; intimidation; bullying; and fear of being arrested or deported to the list. Imagine the additional stress added for people who might be discriminated against for multiple reasons—their sexual orientation, skin color, religion, mental health status, and/or disability. And when a person must live in a state of prolonged adversity marked with fear and uncertainty it can deeply impact that person’s health, both mentally and physically.

There is no easy solution to these complex problems, but a starting point is to strengthen human connections. When the community is severely stressed, all of us are affected. In times of elevated stress, we often withdraw—just when we need more connection. Social capital is the bond that builds trust, connection, and participation throughout a community. It gives people emotional, mental, and physical substance to engage in growing through good and bad times. Without social connections—whether in the form of a game of hoops at the local community center, a coffee-break with a neighbor, after-school programs for kids, day programs for seniors, or volunteering efforts throughout one’s life—humans will isolate. If we reach out to our neighbors with a smile, it can be the first step in changing the course of someone’s life and your own. Empathy and compassion from others are what comfort our neighbors and bridge communities and cultures. As we help each other, we help lessen the stressors in our communities and help local neighborhoods and their residents.

Tips and resources:

- Visit **Up2SD.org** for information about mental health, volunteer opportunities, and other ways to get involved.
- Enroll in a free Mental Health First Aid training at <http://MHASD.org/First-Aid/Programs>.
- Foster an atmosphere of tolerance and respect with a yard sign or other public display.
- Seek out sites and organizations that foster tolerance and dialogue. Traditionally these include schools and universities, public libraries, bookstores, faith communities, and interfaith groups, and many of them offer activities open to the public.



Stress in the 21st Century:

The Good, the Bad and the Importance of Taking Care of Yourself

Stress is the natural response of the body when a demand is made on it. Changes, whether good or bad, and our desire to attempt to control every aspect of our life can be stressful. Dealing with conflict, having to make choices, facing uncertainty at work, and money or relationship problems are all part of our daily lives that cause stress. Stress in itself is not bad and can actually help us be alert and perform with more energy, but when it happens too often or lasts too long it takes a toll on our body, both physically and mentally. Stress can make us feel fatigued, moody, and impatient. Prolonged stress may cause serious health problems such as anxiety and depression, and if left untreated can result in high blood pressure, heart problems, and ulcers.



“Having facilitated trainings over the past 25 years in both the military and civilian communities, I have gained a perspective that not all stress is bad for you. Changes in our lives can be positive or negative and it’s how we deal with those changes that determine to a great extent our quality of life.”

– Sergio Rosas, Director of Programs at Mental Health America of San Diego County



Tips for reducing stress that take less than five minutes:

Laugh out loud. Every time you laugh, increased oxygen flows to your organs, blood flow increases, and stress evaporates. In fact, just thinking about having a good laugh is enough to lower your stress hormone levels. Another way to increase oxygen flow is to breathe deeply, exercise, or to take a short walk.

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Or just smell a lemon. The act of deep breathing sends oxygen surging through your blood, helping calm your body. Breathing is even more healing when combined with calming scents. Researchers found that linalool, a substance found in lemons, may reduce stress. You can also try basil, juniper, and lavender scents for relief.

Sing a song and listen to music. Music has been used for hundreds of years to treat illnesses and restore harmony between mind and body. Calming music can help slow the pulse and heart rate and help with relaxation. On the other hand, singing (or shouting) along can also be a great release of tension. To incorporate music into your life, sing in the shower, listen to music during moments that are particularly stressful, or put the stereo on instead of the TV.

For more information about stress and tips visit:
www.MentalHealthAmerica.net/Live-Your-Life-Well.

How to Explore Controversial Topics Respectfully

“In this environment of division and adversity it is most essential to continue to engage in conversations, healthy debates, and listening. Speaking out should not be about changing someone’s mind or proving them wrong, but about increasing understanding by offering a different perspective. The more we can listen and engage others to listen, the more we are able to chip away at the big gap dividing our communities right now. We have to remember that we can’t challenge someone else’s experience, but we can hope that by listening to each other we open our minds and become more tolerant and understanding.”

– **Jei Africa**, Office of Diversity and Equity, San Mateo County

- Instead of saying “That is not true,” try saying “I hear what you’re saying. There are parts I agree and don’t agree with, but here is my personal experience.” Then let it go.
- The Newseum offers an activity that teaches how to explore controversial topics respectfully: <https://NewseumEd.org/Activity/From-Provocative-To-Productive-Teaching-Controversial-Topics/>

Neighbor to Neighbor: Care and Connect



La vida no es la fiesta que habíamos imaginado, pero ya estamos aquí... ¡Bailemos!

"In English this means something in the spirit of: Life is not the party we imagined, but let's dance while we're here. Political uncertainty coupled with concerns about not having enough food, housing, jobs, and safety all deeply impact Latino communities and our mental health. Even people with legal status worry about being mistakenly arrested or discriminated against. One of the tips I share with families is to reduce the time they spend watching the news and to try to not worry about something in the news until it becomes a reality."

– Laura Hernandez Andrews, Breaking Down Barriers Program

Laura recommends the GRAPES approach to reduce stress:

- G** Be **gentle** with yourself. Avoid thinking like "I should have or could have" and instead remember that wherever you are, that's where you are.
- R** Spend time **relaxing**. When we are stressed, we are focused on what is going on around us, so try to bring your focus back on yourself and take a minute to breathe.
- A** **Accomplish** something small. For example, clean one room or part of a room, or reorganize a drawer. Pick something small and manageable.
- P** Try to find **purpose** in life.
- E** **Exercise!** Go for a walk or dancing!
- S** It is essential for our mental health to connect. **Socialize** and hang out with family and friends or volunteer.

Additional resources:

- San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium:
<http://ImmigrantSanDiego.org>
- Casa Familiar Immigration Services:
<http://www.CasaFamiliar.org/Social-Services/>
- Immigration Center for Women and Children:
<http://ICWCLaw.org>
- Catholic Charities: <https://www.CCDS.org>
- Immigrant Legal Resource Center:
www.ILRC.org/Family-Preparedness-Plan



Good Morning Superhero!

"More than anything, parents want to keep their children safe. Unfortunately, we can't shield our kids from everything that happens at home, school, and in our neighborhood or what they see on TV. What matters is talking about it and always having hope for your child's happy, safe, and peaceful future. The Teaching Tolerance website has many resources for responding to hurtful remarks and discussing differences: www.Tolerance.org."

– Shanti Bond-Martinez, Community Member

Try out one of the activities available through the Care, Cope, Connect Activity Guide available at <https://SesameStreetInCommunities.org>.

Belly Breathe as a Family: Put your hands on your bellies. Take three deep breaths in and out. Feel your bellies rise and fall. Put a stuffed animal on your child's belly. Have him "rock it to sleep" with each breath.

Good Morning, Superhero! Sometimes you have to work to find strength from inside. Stand straight and tall in front of a mirror and together call out one of these phrases:

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| "I am strong and brave!" | "I believe in myself!" |
| "I have a family who loves me no matter what!" | "I have hope for the future!" |
| "I respect others!" | "If I fall down, I'll get back up!" |
| | "My family will always help me!" |

Support Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Awareness

Connect with the "It's Up to Us" campaign for inspirational messages, educational facts, local resources, information on symptoms of mental illness, warning signs of suicide, updates on mental health and prevention efforts, and more!

Continue the conversation here:



Facebook: www.facebook.com/up2sd



YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/up2sd

Prefer Paperless?

To view this campaign bulletin online or download as a PDF, visit: Up2SD.org/Bulletins

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE

These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if the 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



If you're feeling alone, don't hesitate to reach out beyond yourself, so that you can help yourself.

"My name is Kat, and I'm a local, community-based activist. I've called both San Diego Access and Crisis Line and the TrevorLifeline when I was having a hard time. I've sometimes had a hard time negotiating being married to a woman (a same-gender partnership) within the context of my traditional, heteronormative family lineage. It isn't always easy to exchange familial tradition for personal integrity! Thus, as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I'm grateful that the therapists at San Diego Access and Crisis Line have been specifically trained to serve our community. I'm also grateful that warmlines like the TrevorLifeline exist, which are extremely helpful. Warmlines are typically comprised of volunteers from the community rather than licensed, mental health clinicians, and are there to listen. After making these phone calls, I felt more grounded and ready to take positive action in my life."

– Kat Katsanis-Semel, M.A., Mental Health America of San Diego
Pronouns: She, Her, Hers

- **TrevorLifeline:** a crisis intervention and suicide prevention phone service available 24/7 at **(866) 488-7386**.
- **Trans Lifeline:** a crisis hotline staffed by transgender people for transgender people; available every day from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. at **(877) 565-8860**. The line is primarily for transgender people in a crisis, who are either struggling with gender identity or thoughts of self-harm.



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 4–10 p.m.
- Visit: OptumHealthSanDiego.com
or Up2SD.org

COMMUNITY RESOURCES DIAL 2-1-1

