Santa Paula Unified School District

Mental Health Matters

May 2025

Mental Health Awareness Month

Use Person-First Language to Reduce Stigma

For millennia, people living with mental health and substance use challenges were imprisoned, tortured and subjected to inhumane treatment. Our society has come a long way since then, however the stigmatization of these challenges is still a significant problem. Even subtle instances of stigma can do harm – think about how often television shows depict individuals living with things like schizophrenia or alcohol use disorder as dangerous villains.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) describes stigma as negative attitudes (prejudice) and negative behaviors (discrimination). According to a recent report, over 50% of those with clinical level mental health risks do not seek help. In the U.S., 25% of those not seeking treatment report it is due to not wanting others to know. This is stigma in action, and it can lead to people feeling too ashamed to discuss their symptoms or seek treatment and act as a barrier to recovery.

PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

Instead of this...	*Try this.*
Mentally ill	Person living with a mental health challenge or use the diagnosis if the person prefers that language (e.g., major depressive disorder)
Crazy/insane/disturbed	Person living with a mental health challenge/trauma
Depressed/schizophrenic	Person living with depression/schizophrenia
Manic-depressive	Person living with bipolar disorder
Addict/junkie/druggie	Person living with a substance use challenge or disorder
Alcoholic	Person living with an alcohol use challenge or disorder
Ex-addict/clean	Person in recovery

LANGUAGE THAT FEEDS STEREOTYPES

Instead of this...	*Try this.*
Mental illness	Mental health challenge or crisis
Drug/alcohol abuse	Substance use challenge
Committed suicide	Died by suicide or lost to suicide
Failed suicide	Attempted suicide

Full article found at https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2022/04/use-person-first-language-to-reduce-stigma/

Need Mental Health Support?

OPTUM EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) OFFERS **FREE CONFIDENTIAL HELP**

Call toll-free

888-444-8624 any time

OR

Go to www.liveandworkwell.com and browse as a guest using code **CSEBO**



SPUSD

This newsletter is brought to you by the Mental Health Counselors:

Lisa de la O, LMFT:
LdelaO@santapaulausd.org

Rachael Forbes, LMFT:
RForbes@santapaulausd.org

Liset Llerenas , APCC:
LLlerenas@santapaulausd.org

Deborah Ujfalusy, LCSW:
DUjfalusy@santapaulausd.org

In case of an Emergency:

- **911 For Immediate Support**
- **Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 –(24 hours)**



31 Tips to Boost Your Mental Health

1. Write down three specific self-care goals for the month and post them where you'll see them.

Read more about self-care

2. Spend some time in nature today. Whether it's taking a walk, smelling the flowers, or sitting by a tree, nature can make you feel calmer.

Learn about how nature impacts your mental health.

3. Check in on your own mental health. Take a mental health test at mhascreening.org. It's free, anonymous, and confidential.

4. Try sharing your mental health story on social media or with close friends. This brave act can help reduce stigma in your community.

Get inspired by the stories on our YouTube channel.

5. Our physical health is linked to our mental health. Find some time to move your body today in whatever way feels right for you.

Not sure what to do? Try yoga. We'll show you how.

6. Take some time today to de-stress and unwind. Do a hobby you enjoy — or try a new one if you don't have a go-to hobby.

Feeling stuck? Download this coloring page.

7. Practice good sleep habits. Resist the urge to zone out on social media or watch TV and make your room cool, dark, and quiet. Aim for 8 hours of sleep.

Learn more about sleep and mental health.

8. Create a "calm space" in your home. Include things that help you relax, like your favorite blanket or book. Use this space when you need time to yourself.

Find out more about what makes a healthy home environment

9. Take some time to reflect on the causes you care about. Think of one way you can support these causes whether it is with your time, donations, etc.

Check out our blog: 10 Ways to Volunteer Your Time for Mental Health.

Full article found at https://mhanational.org/resources/31-tips-to-boost-your-mental-health/