Santa Paula Unified School District

Mental Health Matters

May 2026

Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to increasing understanding, reducing stigma, and promoting mental wellbeing for all. ***"More Good Days, Together"*** Mental Health America (MHA) 2026 theme encourages reflection on what makes a "good" day, promotes connection, and highlights the importance of support systems in helping make more positive days possible for everyone.

Understanding Stigma

Stigma refers to negative beliefs, attitudes, and discrimination toward mental illness.

- More than half of individuals with mental health conditions do not receive treatment
- Fear of judgment, discrimination, or negative consequences can delay seeking help

Effects of stigma may include:

- Social isolation or exclusion
- Lower self-esteem and reduced hope
- Decreased likelihood of seeking or continuing treatment
- Limited opportunities in education, employment, or housing

Mental Health Myths vs. Facts

Myth: Mental health challenges indicate weakness
Fact: Mental health is influenced by biological, environmental, and social factors
Myth: Therapy is only for severe conditions
Fact: Therapy can support coping, growth, and everyday stress management
Myth: Past coping without help means help is unnecessary
Fact: Mental health needs can change over time; support can improve outcomes
Myth: Treatment always involves medication
Fact: Care may include therapy, lifestyle changes, and social support
Myth: Talking about mental health worsens problems
Fact: Open discussion can reduce stigma and support healing

OPTUM

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**

mental health matters

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Emotional Awareness

- All emotions, positive and negative are a natural part of being human
- Recognizing and naming emotions supports mental wellbeing
- Avoiding or suppressing emotions may prolong distress
- Open conversations can build understanding and connection

Support and Recovery

Mental health care is individualized and may include a combination of:

- Counseling or therapy
- Medication (when appropriate)
- Peer, family, and community support
- Self-care and stress management strategies

Early support is associated with improved outcomes.

Creating a Supportive School Community

A healthy school environment can be strengthened by:

- Promoting kindness, respect, and inclusion
- Listening without judgment
- Encouraging help-seeking behaviors
- Increasing awareness and education about mental health

Unlike physical health conditions, mental health is often misunderstood and unfairly judged. Open, honest conversations can help reduce stigma, build understanding, and support emotional wellbeing. Mental health is an important part of daily life and overall wellbeing. Recognizing emotions and seeking support are key steps toward building health and resilience.

Full Articles Found at: https://www.nami.org/warning-signs-and-symptoms/ https://www.psychiatry.org/News-room/APA-Blogs/Myths-and-Facts-About-Mental-Health https://mhanational.org/mental-health-month/

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Local and National Resources and Support

911 For Immediate Support
Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 (24 hours)
Suicide Prevention Lines (24 Hours)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988 or (800) 273-8255
Suicide Prevention Crisis Line (877) 727-4747
National Hope line Network (800) SUICIDE or (800) 784-2433
California Youth Crisis Line (800) 843- 5200 –24 hours, bilingual
TEEN LINE (310) 855-4673 or text **TEEN** to 839863 – a teen-to-teen hotline with community outreach services, from 6pm-10pm PST daily. Text, email, and message board also available, with limited hours—visit http://teenlineonline.org for more information.
The Trevor Project (866) 488-7386 – a 24-hour crisis line that provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24. Visit www.thetrevorproject.org for more information.

In case of an Emergency:

911 For Immediate Support
Ventura County Crisis Team
(866) 998-2243 (24hrs)