Santa Paula Unified School District

Mental Health Matters

October 2026

National Bullying Prevention Month

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness about bullying and its effects, and promote prevention.



Bullying and Mental Health

Bullying is a common adverse childhood experience that can affect a young person's emotional well-being, relationships, and experience at school. The CDC defines bullying as unwanted aggressive behavior involving a real or perceived power imbalance that is repeated, or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying can be physical, verbal, social or relational, involve damage to property, or occur online through cyberbullying.

The effects of bullying can extend beyond the immediate experience. Young people who are bullied may experience increased anxiety, depression, loneliness, sleep difficulties, low self-esteem, and difficulty concentrating or engaging in school. Students who engage in bullying behavior and those who witness bullying can also experience social, emotional, behavioral, and academic challenges.

The Mental Health Impact of Bullying

Bullying can have a serious impact on a young person's mental health. It may increase the risk of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, social isolation, and difficulty concentrating or participating in school and activities.

The Importance of Belonging

Feeling accepted, respected, and included can support a young person's mental health and confidence. Schools and families can help by encouraging kindness, inclusion, positive relationships, and open communication.

Signs of Emotional Distress

Possible signs include:

- Sadness, anxiety, anger, or irritability
- Low self-worth or loneliness
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Changes in school performance, sleep, or appetite
- Avoiding school or social situations
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches

These signs can have many causes, but they may indicate that a student needs support.

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**

OPTUM

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

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

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The Role of the School Community

Bullying affects the entire school community, including students, educators, and families. Understanding the connection between bullying and mental health helps schools recognize students' emotional needs and provide appropriate support.

Creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment through positive relationships, kindness, and open communication helps students feel connected and supported. Every student deserves to feel safe, welcomed, included, and valued.

Full Articles Found at:
https://deconstructingstigma.org/guides/bullying-kids-teens https://www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/about/about-bullying.html#cdc_behavioral_basics_quick-quick-facts-and-stats



Statement from SPUSD

The Santa Paula Unified School District prohibits discrimination, harassment, student sexual harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyberbullying, and social media bullying; and the harmful effects of bullying on student well-being, student learning, and school attendance.

We strive to provide a safe school environment that protects students from physical and emotional harm. If you SEE something, SAY something. SPUSD Board Policies can be found in the "Students" section of the SPUSD Board Policies website.



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)