



# 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 Twenty-Nine

## 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<sup>®</sup>**  
LINK UP FOR INFORMATION AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Access & Crisis Line  
**(888) 724-7240**

COMMUNITY RESOURCES  
**2-1-1**



## Liven Up Your Health:

### Tips to Take a "Mindful" Pause

Our habits can become hardwired into our lives. Sometimes it feels like we are going through the motions without actually being present for the experiences we are living. It's important to keep in mind that the practice of pausing, breathing, and just "being" is essential to our well-being and mental health.

In the whirlwind of life, how can we pause and calm our minds to capture and truly experience every moment? By incorporating two elements: awareness and acceptance. Mindfulness is a state of mind in which we focus on the present moment, being fully aware of our feelings and emotions and accepting them as they are.

Mindfulness has been shown to have a strong positive impact on mental health and provide protective factors for suicide prevention. It has been shown to reduce stress, increase focus and concentration, decrease worry and anxiety, and enhance feelings of resiliency and the capacity to navigate distress.

Incorporating daily mindfulness practices into our routines can have a strong impact on our mental health. Try the STOP technique to cultivate calmness.

- Slow down
- Take a breath
- Observe your body, thoughts, and feelings
- Process your possibilities, then proceed

### Steps to Take a Mindful Coffee (or Tea) Break

Pause practice involves taking three conscious breaths at any moment throughout the day when we feel stuck or in need of a break. Use your coffee or tea break as a pause to be mindful and follow these steps for a meaningful break:

1. **Pause.** Make sure you fully pause and then sit before you start drinking your coffee or tea. Take a few deep breaths.
2. **Feel the raw elements of the coffee or tea.** Picture the soil, rain, and sun that went into creating this drink and the hands of the people who harvested and prepared it.
3. **Create your own inner state.** Your stress and happiness are created by your thoughts and attitudes. Breathe deeply and feel your stress melt away.
4. **Savor the first sips.** Enjoy the present moment. Focus on the aroma until your mind stops thinking and is just enjoying the drink.
5. **Relax and expand your vision.** Be silent for the first few sips. Roll your shoulders back and step outside the box of your momentary concerns and problems. This will help you gather perspective and regroup, to then return to your daily tasks with a fresh mind.



## Did You Know?

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness and Recovery Month. *It's Up to Us* to know the signs, find the words, and reach out.

# Shine a Light On: Self-Care and How to Flourish in Life

Life is short, so let's stop putting ourselves on the backburner. Self-care means intentionally disconnecting from the whirlwind of life and focusing on ourselves to recharge and engage in activities that revive us.

## Self-Care: How to Flourish in Life

**Social:** Humans are social beings – we need to feel connected to others. Social self-care practices can deepen our relationships and help create feelings of belonging and acceptance.

- Go to coffee with a close friend and engage in meaningful conversations
- Call a family member just to chat
- Spend time with those who encourage and lift you higher

**Physical:** These practices address your fitness, eating, and sleeping habits, as well as overall physical health. Taking care of your body will increase your energy levels and boost your self-esteem.

- Exercise regularly/try a new workout
- Eat nourishing foods
- Get a restful and full night's sleep
- Laugh

**Mental:** These strategies stimulate your mind and give it a chance to rest. This will allow for learning and growth.

- Read a book
- Solve a puzzle or play a game
- Listen to music
- Disconnect from social media

**Emotional:** Bringing peace and calmness to our inner thoughts can have many benefits, including reduced stress and anxiety, a better understanding of ourselves, and greater compassion and love toward ourselves and others.

- Practice self-reflection
- Say “no” to set healthy boundaries
- Use positive affirmations
- Talk to a friend about your personal struggles

**Spiritual:** Spiritual self-care can help you find more meaning in life and discover a sense of purpose.

- Spend time in nature
- Meditate
- Attend a religious service
- Practice yoga

## Get Up and Participate:

### Register, Walk, and Get Trained for Suicide Prevention

To celebrate suicide prevention week, *Walk in Remembrance with Hope* will hold its signature annual event for San Diego's suicide prevention and survivor support community in September, at Balboa Park. To register visit: [WalkinginHopeSD.org](http://WalkinginHopeSD.org)

The annual *Out of the Darkness Walk* sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention will take place in October. Visit: [www.AFSP.org](http://www.AFSP.org)

To find other ways to get involved in suicide prevention, visit the “Get Involved” section of the *It's Up to Us* website at [Up2SD.org](http://Up2SD.org)



# Read Up: Selecting the Right Tool for the Job (of Preventing Suicide)

Asking a loved one if they are thinking about suicide is not an easy thing to do. What if you are wrong? Or what if they say yes? Know that trusting your instincts and asking the question is absolutely the right thing to do. And you are not alone! Here are some steps and resources to consider when evaluating how to support the person you are concerned about.



## When is a call to a crisis line the right tool?

Crisis lines are designed to quickly assess the level of risk in a situation and get the caller to the appropriate services. The San Diego Access and Crisis Line (888) 724-7240 is available 24/7 and answered by trained counselors who are skilled in intervening with those who are acutely suicidal, as well as individuals who are concerned about someone else.

## When is a call to 9-1-1 the right tool?

Calling 9-1-1 connects the situation to first responders, such as law enforcement, firefighters, and EMTs. If you suspect that someone is about to or has already harmed themselves and requires medical attention, or if you are in danger, this is the right tool.

But it may not be the right tool in every circumstance. More often than not, other tools in the community can help avoid the potential trauma of a 9-1-1 response. For example, crisis line staff have the skills to assess and intervene to help someone who is acutely suicidal. Imagine someone being in emotional pain and instead of an emotionally stabilizing phone or in-person conversation with a caring and compassionate friend, family member, or mental health professional, they are potentially handcuffed and transported to the nearest emergency room in a police car, only to experience long wait times or held for psychiatric assessment. This experience might deter them from seeking the appropriate help later.

It's reassuring to know that most suicidal crises last for a brief period of time. Therefore, staying with the person (as long you feel safe) and connecting them to resources and ongoing support when the situation has calmed down might be the most effective course of action.

## How do I know if I should be worried about someone?

Becoming familiar with warning signs and resources, being willing to listen, and being ready to take steps to reduce access to lethal means are tools you can always have at your disposal.

**Know the Signs:** Pain isn't always obvious, but most suicidal people show some signs that they are thinking about suicide. If you observe one or more warning signs of suicide, step in or speak up.

**Find the Words:** "Are you thinking of ending your life?" Few phrases are as difficult to say to a friend or loved one. But when it comes to suicide prevention, none are more important.

**Reach Out:** You are not alone in helping someone in crisis. There are many resources available to assess, treat, and intervene.

## Instinct and compassion: tools you can always count on

Trust your instinct if it tells you something is wrong. Leading with compassion can help create a safe space for someone to talk about their pain, and this is one of the most helpful things you can do.

The more we talk about suicide and suicide prevention, the more we can reduce the stigma around the subject and infuse our community with hope and healing.

Visit [Up2SD.org](https://Up2SD.org) for a list of warning signs, conversation starters, and local resources.

## 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



# Learn QPR to Prevent Suicide!

QPR, which stands for Question, Persuade and Refer, is an emergency intervention to help a person who is considering suicide. Anyone who is in a position to recognize the signs that someone may be considering suicide is encouraged to sign up for a QPR training. In a one-hour workshop, individuals

learn to recognize warning signs, what questions to ask, and how to offer hope and help. The workshop is designed for parents, friends, neighbors, teachers, ministers, doctors, nurses, office supervisors, caseworkers, firefighters, and many others. QPR trainings are offered at no cost in San Diego. To sign up or to schedule a group workshop, visit [www.SPCSanDiego.org](http://www.SPCSanDiego.org) and click on "Trainings", or contact Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) at [lcayanan@sdchip.org](mailto:lcayanan@sdchip.org); (858) 609-7971.



## 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](http://OptumHealthSanDiego.com) or [Up2SD.org](http://Up2SD.org)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES  
DIAL 2-1-1

