



LA County Department of Mental Health Launches Campaign to Build Awareness, Spark Youth Movement to Drive Systemic Change, and Promote Mental Health as Fundamental Right

LOS ANGELES, CA, May 7, 2018 -- Los Angeles, May 07, 2018 -- At a downtown Los Angeles mental health policy summit late yesterday afternoon, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Director Dr. Jonathan E. Sherin announced his commitment to a new campaign to create a movement for mental health through a Call to Action toward a system that eliminates barriers and creates better access to mental health services for all. The start of that commitment will be the department's launch of the #WhyWeRise campaign this month, which will support youth becoming active and vocal catalysts for systemic change, as well as champions of the idea that mental health access should be a civil right for all people.

"Mental health needs to be a priority in our health system, and it's time to move talk into action," said Sherin. "For the LA County Department of Mental Health this means knocking down any barriers that hinder wellbeing and addressing systemic failures and inequities in the current mental health system."

The #WhyWeRise campaign will focus on empowering youth aged 14-24 to take ownership of their wellbeing and transform talk into action—for themselves, friends and family, and the larger community. The campaign will kick off with a large rally featuring Grammy winning artist Common on May 19. The event, which will also include speakers and other prominent performers, will be followed by a 10-day youth-oriented immersive cultural experience in the downtown Los Angeles area. The experience will feature art exhibitions and installations, musical performances, panels and powerful interactions to explore the wide range of issues related to mental health.

The #WeRiseLA event will be open to the public on weekday evenings and all day on weekends through Memorial Day, May 28, with a full program of special events, performances and screenings. On the weekdays, the site will be filled with middle and high school students from schools throughout the County.

In recognition of Mental Health Month in May, LACDMH is also sponsoring dozens of public events and community engagements across LA County. In addition, the agency recently awarded more than 200 community-based grants for a wide range of grassroots projects to activate communities and promote health and wellbeing.

The #WhyWeRise multi-platform campaign will be ongoing through 2018. In addition to an outdoor media campaign, it will also focus on creating opportunities for LA's youth to interact with influencers to share inspiring and personal videos and posts about taking action on mental health and wellbeing.

About the LA County Department of Mental Health

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is the largest public mental health system in the United States. Consistent with the mission of Los Angeles County, the department provides services to the County's most vulnerable residents.

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