



For Immediate Release
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**LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH HOSTS
'WE RISE 2020: VIRTUAL MAY'
TO STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT COVID-19 RECOVERY**

Virtual Events Throughout May Promote Wellbeing, Connection and Access to Quality Mental Health Care During Mental Health Awareness Month

(Los Angeles, CA) Under the banner of the groundbreaking WE RISE initiative, the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) is hosting dozens of virtual events in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month in May and as part of the Department's ongoing efforts to help residents heal and thrive during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

WE RISE 2020: Virtual May is a month-long spotlight on wellbeing and healing through art, music and creative expression to help the entire community. Now in its third year, WE RISE 2020 has been completely adapted for virtual platforms – to meet people where they currently gather and safeguard everyone's health amidst COVID-19. This year, WE RISE will also broaden its scope to support the resilience, recovery and wellbeing of all County residents, young and old, who are navigating the mental and emotional impacts related to COVID-19.

"WE RISE 2020 aims to drive a heart-forward movement that will bring the County together as we all struggle with difficult emotional experiences that are being shared across our collective in an unprecedented way right now," said Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D., director of LACDMH. "In so doing, WE RISE 2020 will help to transition our County from the despair of crisis to a mindset of hope and resilience."

Virtual events kick off on May 1, with dozens of opportunities for residents to build community with each other, take time for self-reflection and connect to resources – all for free. Programming highlights include: one-on-one conversations and live performances by diverse artists and celebrities; a Teen Town Hall; family-friendly activities like story time and art workshops; fireside chats with community leaders and grassroots organizations; a live event honoring the military and veterans on Memorial Day weekend; and even a virtual prom. Details are available on werise.la and additional virtual events will be added weekly.

WE RISE 2020: Virtual May adds to the wide variety of resources and services LACDMH is already providing during this global health crisis. County residents can find information and support 24/7 at dmh.lacounty.gov, and access the Help Line by calling 1-800-854-7771 or texting "LA" to 741741.

WE RISE is the signature experience of the Department's broader WHY WE RISE public education campaign, which is part of a national movement to transform the mental health system and help break through barriers by defying old assumptions about mental health, combatting stigma and recognizing the role that related social conditions play in the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

About The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)

As the nation's largest public mental health department, we ensure access to care and treatment for our most vulnerable residents in a region with more than 10 million people. With an annual budget approaching \$3B and a committed staff of 6,000, LACDMH embodies a "heart-forward" approach to supporting hope, recovery and wellbeing across the County. For more information on LACDMH, visit dmh.lacounty.gov or follow @LACDMH on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

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