



COVID-19's One Year Anniversary and Its Impact on Mental Health

March marked the one-year anniversary of LA County's COVID-19 emergency declaration and the beginning of numerous health and safety measures to protect the County's residents and communities. At LACDMH, this included supporting disaster response and recovery efforts, rapidly shifting to telehealth/telework, implementing safety protocols at our sites, and innovating ways to optimize care delivery while reducing COVID-19 transmission risk.

As LA County's road to recovery continues, the pandemic's mental health toll remains prevalent. According to a recent [KFF study](#), approximately 40 percent of adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in January 2021 – nearly four times the rate reported in early 2019.

Given COVID-19's broad impact on wellbeing, it is vital to learn how to recognize signs of chronic distress, manage stress in healthy ways, and seek support when needed. We have compiled a variety of information and resources to help support you as the County reopens, including:

- [Understanding the Mental Health and Emotional Aspects of COVID-19](#)
- [Alleviating Fear and Anxiety During Essential Trips in Public](#)

- [Coping with the Loss of a Loved One](#)

We encourage you to explore, utilize, and share these and other resources on our [website](#). You can also get live support 24/7 through our Help Line at **(800) 854-7771** or by texting 'LA' to **741741**.



LACDMH Responds to Anti-AAPI Hate

LACDMH joins the [County of Los Angeles](#) in denouncing the escalation of violence and other acts of hate and racism against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) locally and across the nation, including the Atlanta shootings that resulted in the deaths of six Asian women. We extend our support to the AAPI community, and we stand in solidarity with individuals and groups who are uniting against hate.

Experiencing, witnessing, or learning about these incidents can be traumatizing, especially for those already affected by recent acts of racism and race-based violence, including the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many others last year. These feelings may also be triggered or amplified by the videos and testimonies in the recently started George Floyd trial. Anxiety, depression, anger, frustration, and helplessness are all understandable emotions in response to these tragic events.

We encourage those who are impacted to actively engage in self-care, connect with each other, and reach out for support. Our Help Line at (800) 854-7771 can provide mental health support across numerous languages, including but not limited to Chinese (multiple dialects), Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Khmer.

Additional resources and information can be accessed on our [Racial Equity page](#), and if you have experienced or witnessed a hate incident, please report it through the [LA vs Hate website](#).



MHSA Three-Year Plan Available for Public Review and Comment

Our Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Three-Year Plan, covering Fiscal Years 2021-22 to 2023-24, has been posted on our [MHSA Announcements page](#). The plan gives LACDMH an opportunity to review its existing MHSA programs and services to evaluate their effectiveness, as well as an opportunity to propose and incorporate new programs.

In his Director's Message, Dr. Sherin said this plan contains "numerous service expansions and program innovations that are under way in LA County, as well as efforts to sustain programs that have proven effective and upon which so many depend each day. In pushing to reform our mental health system, it is my hope that MHSA resources will continue to help those in most need lead independent and connected lives with an abundance of opportunity for purpose each day."

The plan's public review and comment period is currently open through April 18, 2021, and the public is invited to review this plan and provide feedback by filling out our [online survey](#). We will also hold a [public hearing](#) for this plan on April 22, 2021, beginning at 11 a.m. PDT.



Today, March 31, is International **Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV)**! Founded in 2009 by transgender activist Rachel Crandall, TDOV uplifts the livelihood, resilience, and accomplishments of transgender people, including the recent confirmation of [Rachel Levine as assistant health secretary](#). When we celebrate the existence and survival of transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGI) individuals and communities, we reduce stigma, offer hope, and raise awareness about the lived experiences of TGI people, who are often dismissed or rejected.

TDOV also serves as a call to action to build and sustain a safe and affirming world for people of all gender identities. Many TGI members – particularly BIPOC transgender women and gender nonconforming people – experience discrimination, harassment, and violence in response to their actual or perceived gender identity. Facing this hostility and marginalization constantly also means that TGI people have unique healthcare and social service needs, and we encourage all service providers to practice a culturally-responsive, person-centered approach to care.

As we commit to reducing mental health and social disparities for TGI communities, there are [simple steps](#) we can take to affirm their lives and identities, and additional LGBTQ+ resources are also [available here](#).

Thank you for taking the time to read and engage with this issue of "Connecting Our Community," a monthly newsletter focused on the Los Angeles

County Department of Mental Health's updates and priorities.

*We welcome your comments, story ideas, and recommendations at
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