



Message from the Director

Dear DMH family,

In the wake of an active and inspired May, during which we celebrated "Mental Health Month," June arrived and has gone by in a flash but not without leaving indelible progress in its wake. For starters, we were finally able to cheer the recognition of Juneteenth as a federal holiday, which is a step in the right direction for breaking down racist systems. We also honored Pride Month and in the process developed an [evergreen LGBTQ+ resource](#). In addition, we continued our outstanding work with unaccompanied minors as part of our deep and enduring commitment to healing and inclusion.

As California and our County opens up in earnest from COVID-restrictions and the semblance of a "new normal" begins to form, many more challenges will confront us as a collective in transition. In the context of this endeavor, I hope you can find time to nurture yourselves and prioritize the development of balanced routines that support your wellbeing. To this end, I am happy to share that DMH is launching a new, free, [virtual mental health service](#) that can be used as a standalone application and/or to complement our continued offering of [Headspace](#). This new service, developed and administered by Prevail Health Solutions, brings confidential avatar-based therapy to you in your own space, at your own pace, and in your own time with real-time facilitation by trained peer specialists. Please take advantage of this resource and share it with your family and friends.

It is my sincere hope that over time with persistent and intentional efforts to stay connected with ourselves, our neighbors, and our communities, we will emerge stronger, more resilient, and more together than ever before.

Heart forward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon".

Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.
Director



LACDMH Announces Partnership with iPrevail, a Free Mental Health Resource

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is now offering iPrevail FREE to all L.A. County residents. [iPrevail](https://lacounty.iprevail.com) is an online mental health resource that brings traditional models of talk therapy to any internet-connected device or smartphone. Residents can connect 24/7 with trained peer specialists, join a community support group or try out one of the many digital programs. Sign up for your FREE iPrevail subscription at <https://lacounty.iprevail.com>. As our communities continue to navigate challenges related to the pandemic and re-emerge after a year in isolation, it is more important than ever to make your mental health a priority!



988



Suicide Prevention Lifeline

FCC Considering Text Messaging Support for 988 Line

As we eagerly plan and anticipate for the July 2022 rollout of [988](https://www.fcc.gov/988) – the easy-to-remember three-digit number to connect callers with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors – the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is recommending adding text messaging support to this number. In their [proposed rule](https://www.fcc.gov/988), FCC noted “Text-to-988” can be beneficial for at-risk populations who regularly uses or prefers text messaging to communicate with others, including

younger individuals, low-income individuals, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired. The FCC is seeking public comments on this proposed rule until July 12, 2021; visit this [page](#) to submit a comment.

Until 988 goes live next year, please continue to use [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)'s current number at (800) 273-TALK (8255) if you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis.



Happy Independence Day! Stay Cool and Protected While Celebrating

With the Fourth of July weekend upon us and more “extreme heat” days to come throughout the summer, LACDMH and the Department of Public Health urge all L.A. County residents to take appropriate precautions to [avoid heat-related illnesses](#). Residents with mental health conditions [may be especially vulnerable](#) as high temperature is a stressor that can trigger or exacerbate symptoms. Additionally, certain psychoactive medications can affect the body’s ability to regulate heat and stay hydrated.

During hot weather and especially when a “heat alert” has been issued, Public Health provides [excellent tips](#) to protect yourself and your loved ones. Additionally, L.A. County and its partners are safely operating [free cooling centers](#) throughout the region during times of high heat. Residents who do not have easy access to air conditioning are encouraged to visit these centers during heat events.



LACDMH in the News

Our ongoing efforts to promote mental health awareness and assist the most vulnerable among us continue to receive positive attention in the media. In case you missed it, check out some highlights of the excellent stories and representation by our LACDMH experts:

- Dr. Sherin was interviewed by [KTLA-TV](#) during a walk through of downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row to bring attention to the important work of our Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement team. He was joined by Supervisor Kathryn Barger and CA Senator Henry Stern for the event that was covered by numerous local media and highlighted by [L.A. County Channel](#).
- In a [Los Angeles Times podcast](#), Dr. Sherin discussed how post-traumatic injury from the global pandemic and systemic racism can be transformed into post-traumatic growth.
- In [La Opinion](#), [SINO-TV](#), [Radio Bilingüe](#), and other multicultural media outlets, our Speakers Bureau experts continue to share mental health information and resources during COVID-19 pandemic recovery to our County's diverse communities.
- [KPCC-FM / LAist](#) highlighted L.A. County's efforts to expand the use of clinicians to respond to mental health crisis calls and mentioned the expansion of LACDMH's psychiatric mobile response teams as part of that initiative.



Cultural Traditions and Connections

The following article is excerpted from [Cultural Traditions and Connections](#), a space featuring voices from LACDMH's diverse communities.

“Our Pain” by Anshu Agarwal, Psy.D., Clinical Psychologist

It has been two long months that I have been hearing about the devastation of the COVID-19 variant spreading through India. I have watched on the Indian News entire families get destroyed. In the United States people are talking about reopening, but India is closing down again. The pain has been growing in me, and it came to a head when my cousin was infected and died.

I remember in early April 2021, my cousin contracted COVID-19, but I did not think much of it. He was 33 years old, and all I could think was, he is young, he is healthy, he is going to make it. He was rushed to the hospital after a few days, and even then I did not think anything different, he is young, he is healthy, he is going to make it. He survived Covid-19, but due to his complications he developed viral Pneumonia, but still I was positive, he is young, he is healthy, he is going to make it. He then ended up on the ventilator, but still I thought, he is young, he is healthy, and he is going to make it. (Read more of [“Our Pain”](#) and additional articles from [Cultural Traditions and Connections](#).)



WE RISE 2021 A Success

Created by the community for the community, this past May, [WE RISE 2021](#) reminded residents that they are not alone, that resources are available, and that L.A. County is healing together. WE RISE 2021 reached an estimated audience of more than 626M viewers this past May driven by 1.6M social media impressions, 72,000 website page views, 1,600 total YouTube video views, and 250+ pieces of media coverage. This year's initiative was expanded to include more than 100 COVID-safe [community programs, workshops, and activities](#); 21 physically distanced [outdoor art installations and special projects](#); as well as 24 all-virtual digital experiences still available to view on [WE RISE YouTube](#). WE RISE collaborated with more than 375 community and corporate partners to host activities like a family-friendly "Rising with Chalk" program in 55 L.A. County Parks and supported a unique, poetry-writing "[Love Letters in Light](#)" program with County public libraries, among other activities.

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 pio@dmh.lacounty.gov and you may adjust your subscriptions settings at this [link](#).

dmh.lacounty.gov

Let's get social @LACDMH!

