



PATHWAYS TO HOPE

In times of stress and disaster,
there are people who care.
You're not alone!

5 STEPS FOR SAFETY AND SURVIVAL

Listos California is an effort to educate residents on disaster preparedness. In fact, listos means "ready" in Spanish. Here are five free and easy ways to keep you and your family safe:



Sign up for alerts

Arrange cell phone alerts, but also listen for emergency alerts on the radio and TV; check trusted websites for more information.



Make a plan

Create a contact list and an emergency meeting place; mark multiple escape routes on a paper map; find a free emergency shelter by dialing 2-1-1.



Pack a go bag (if you have to evacuate)

Gather identification, insurance/legal documents, your paper map, masks, medications, cash, and a list of last-minute packing (wallet, phone, phone charger, etc.).



Build a stay box (if you have to shelter in place)

Load up enough food, water, trash bags, batteries, pet/baby supplies, and health needs for three days.



Help others

Get to know your neighbors and be prepared to help (90% of the time, a neighbor is the first person on the scene).



For more information, visit listoscalifornia.org.

HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

Programs are still up and rolling— and now may be the best time to reach out

The Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency, along with its partner organizations in the community, is responsible for helping people with a wide array of issues, including domestic violence, mental health, child abuse, foster care, substance use, homelessness, and suicide prevention.

These issues are with us every day, but when disaster strikes—COVID-19, wildfires, intense heat waves, or economic downturns—they can worsen, especially if individuals and families are isolated at home without a lot of external support.

In fact, the events of 2020 have caused an uptick not only in terms of overall numbers but severity.

"Housing has become 100 times harder during this pandemic," says Tammy Cunningham, a lead parent partner for Parenting Network, which works closely with the County's child welfare department. "Some of these rental agencies want to charge you an application fee of \$20 or \$30 per adult...and you've got families barely making it, just getting back on their feet, so they have to choose: 'Do I pay the application fee or do I buy food for my kids?'"

The good news is that even with many County offices impacted by public health guidelines, the programs are still in place and there is help available—some of which has become even more convenient. "It seems people are more engaged in our (Zoom) support group because they don't have to worry about transportation or child care," she says. "I actually called my supervisor to ask when things return to normal, can we keep Zoom, because this is a big county—someone from Visalia was spending six to eight hours on a bus to attend support group."

Cunningham has an innate sense of how the County can better help people. "It was my personal experience, it's been the system I grew up in," she says. "I grew up in a foster home, then a group home. I lost my (older) children to adoption, went through rehab, was a battered woman, got some transitional housing, permanent housing, and finally Habitat for Humanity helped me own my own home."

Her life story is a powerful one she now shares with her clients, adding that it was her children who motivated her. "I have 8-year-old twins. My 23-year-old lives here now.

I was there when my grandson was born. I'm still able to model a healthy lifestyle for them."

She even suggests now is an ideal point for people to deal with their problems. "If you've lost your job, you have more time," she says. "I'm not telling anyone to do anything I haven't done. You can do it."

"I'm not telling anyone to do anything I haven't done. You can do it."

TAMMY CUNNINGHAM, LEAD PARENT PARTNER
PARENTING NETWORK



Tammy Cunningham at home with her family.
PHOTO COURTESY OF TAMMY CUNNINGHAM

AN ENDURING HOPE

BY ANNE STOKES

A survivor breaks the domestic abuse cycle

Graduating high school is a time for celebration. For Norma Peña however, it was the day she tried to take her life and the culmination of years of emotional abuse.

"I went to my graduation and I was looking for my mom. ... I asked [my aunt] and she said, 'She didn't want to come,'" she remembers. "All I could think was, 'You're worthless, you should just take your life, nobody loves you.' ... I felt hopeless, I felt abandoned, I was lonely, I was broken."

When Peña was 7, her mother met the man who would tear their family apart. For the rest of her life, her mother suffered severe physical and emotional abuse at her boyfriend's hands, including irrevocably alienating mother and daughter. Peña remembers her childhood as "hell on earth."

"The verbal abuse would usually lead to physical abuse," she says. "He would promise her the world and the next thing you know, she'd let him back in and the cycle would continue all over again."

Fortunately, today there is greater awareness of domestic violence and a better understanding of how to support survivors. According to Caity Meader, CEO of Family Services of Tulare County, her organization has doubled over the past eight years in terms of size and the diversity of services it offers in partnership with the County.

"There are a lot of long-term public health consequences of unaddressed violence in the home. That's for the survivors themselves but also for the children,"



Graduation day was a turning point for Norma Peña (shown above, at far left). Peña today (at right) helps others as a church pastor. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NORMA PEÑA

**"I'm
a survivor
and if I can survive
that, everyone can
survive that; you just
have to have the right
help."**

**NORMA PEÑA
DOMESTIC ABUSE
SURVIVOR**

explains Meader. "We know that when homes are safer and relationships are safer, everybody has a better opportunity to thrive."

After getting married and moving out, Peña found herself mirroring the same toxic behaviors. Recognizing the domestic violence cycle starting anew, she finally found help when a friend connected her with a church pastor.

"My biggest fear was I would be the same woman to my kids. I am grateful to say they didn't have to grow up in a home like I did," she says. "I thank God I was able to seek the help ... because on my own I would have never known anything different."

Today, Peña and her husband of 26 years—a pastor himself—help others through their church the same way she was helped.

"I'm a survivor, and if I can survive that, everyone can survive that; you just have to have the right help," she says. "You might not see everything you want to see right now, but once you start to see that change is possible, things will continue to get better."

FINDING HELP

CEO Caity Meader says Family Services advocates can help create a plan anonymously over the phone, online or in person. They also can help provide support for those who choose to leave an abusive situation, including:

HOUSING



- ✓ Emergency shelters
- ✓ Transitional housing assistance for up to two years

LEGAL ADVOCACY



- ✓ Criminal justice system: orders of protection
- ✓ Family court system: Custody, separation, and divorce proceedings

FREE COUNSELING SERVICES



- ✓ Individual counseling
- ✓ Group counseling
- ✓ Crisis counseling
- ✓ For children and adults

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES



Advocates can help connect people to:

- ✓ Financial assistance
- ✓ Nutrition services
- ✓ Medi-Cal
- ✓ Help navigating state and county programs



Reach out to Family Services of Tulare County's 24-hour crisis hotline at (559) 732-5941



Help is also available online at fstc.net through its chat line staffed Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Trained advocates are

SURVIVAL MODE

BY RAUL CLEMENT

Emotional instability is at the heart of the foster care experience

“As a child we’re not supposed to be in survival mode,” Bree Ramirez says. “We’re supposed to feel safe.”

Ramirez is speaking about instability in the life of foster youth. She and her biological sister were raised in foster care from her fifth birthday until she was 21. Now 24, Ramirez lives with her former foster mother. When she is not at her full-time job at a Jo-Ann Distribution Center, she helps foster youth going through the same experiences she did. She has done training as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and spent a year working for Foster Youth Services.

If her situation sounds stable now, that wasn’t always the case. She was removed from her first foster home after half a year.

“You could say they emotionally and physically abused us,” she says. Ramirez describes being made to stand in a corner for hours, the punishment lengthened if she so much as slouched.

She was in her next foster home for 10 years. It seemed like it would be permanent, but at 15 she ran away, in the throes of teenage love. In other circles, this might be dismissed as typical teenage behavior, but when she returned to the house, her belongings

were packed up. “After 10 years of raising me, they decided they didn’t want me,” she says.

Next, there were six months with a woman in her mid-70s. She was not in a condition to raise multiple teenagers. Finally, Ramirez ended up with the woman she lives with now, her third foster home in just one year. The end result is a feeling of rootlessness. She becomes emotionally attached quite easily, which might help explain why she ran away with her foster sister at 15.

“I’m so used to people walking out,” she says. “I don’t have anybody. I want you to stay.”

Eventually, Ramirez found a peer group through the Independent Living Program (ILP). The ILP assists foster youth between the ages of 16 and 21 to develop life skills they may not have acquired due to their background. This was the first time she’d been around people who fully understood her situation. When she was asked to train as a CASA, she seized the opportunity, wanting to offer that same peer advocacy she wishes she’d had at the same age.

“Don’t be afraid to reach out,” she tells the foster youth she helps now. “Sometimes you feel you’re alone when you’re really not.”

“Don’t be afraid to reach out. Sometimes you feel you’re alone when you’re really not.”

BREE RAMIREZ
FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

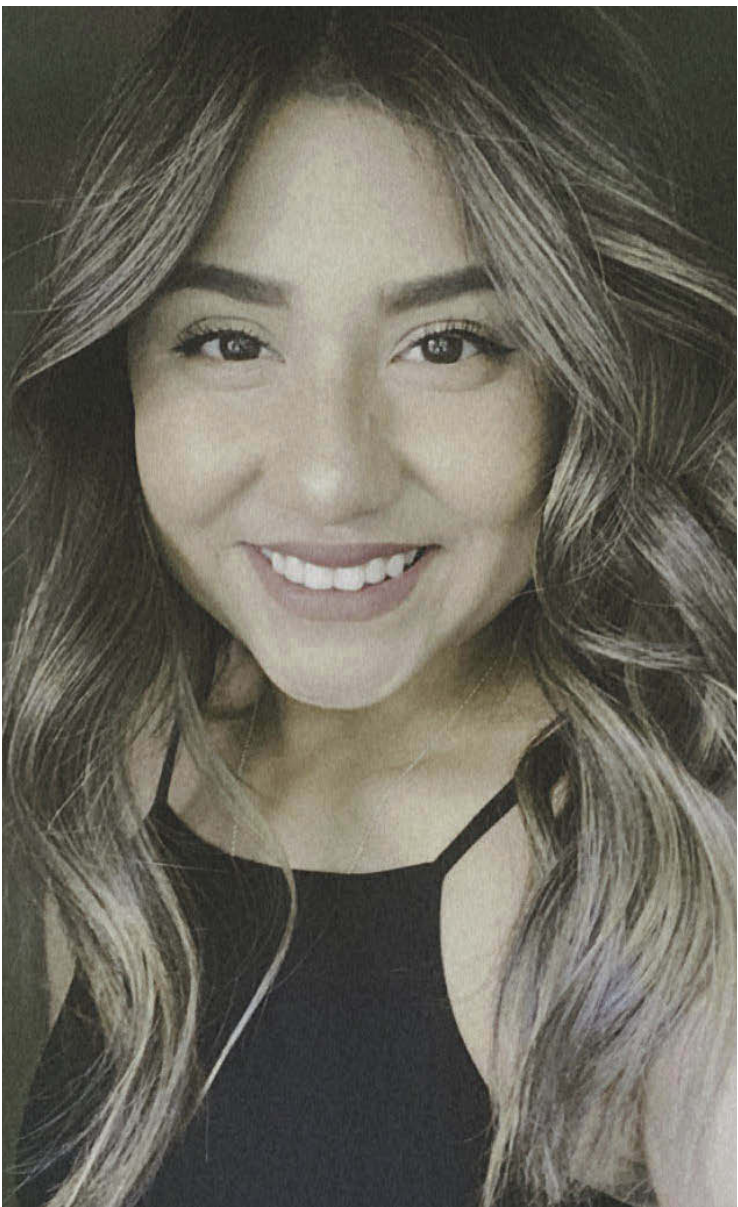


PHOTO COURTESY OF BREE RAMIREZ

RESOURCES FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Tulare County offers a wide variety of resources to help foster youth overcome difficulties with mental health and independent living:

Information on all these resources is available at:

 <http://tchhsa.org/fosteryouth>

 (559) 623-0300
Dream Center, (559) 302-3622



In partnership with the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency, the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) has placed social workers in 40 schools around the county.



The Dream Center, part of TCOE, offers a one-stop resource for current and former foster youth up to the age of 25. It provides on-site emergency hygiene supplies, clothing, food, internet, showers, laundry facilities, and access to social workers.



Alternatively, for young adults who have recently left the foster care system, the Independent Living Program can help find employment and facilitate the transition into adult life.



Youth ages 18-21 may be eligible to re-enter foster care under AB-12, a law that extends foster care to age 21 in California.

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY SAFE AND HOUSED

BY ANNE STOKES

County partners with nonprofit to support those struggling with homelessness

After a year-long sentence stemming from a series of DUIs, Edward Sanford found himself with nowhere to live during a global pandemic.

"I virtually just had the clothes I was wearing," he says. "You don't realize you've hit bottom until everything you've accumulated is gone."

Before his release, Sanford had tried to line up employment and a place to live, but when the coronavirus shut everything down, his options were limited.

"Everything went out the window, once the virus [hit], nobody was open for anything. The day I got out, that was it ... I was on my own," he says. "I'd ask all the counselors [in the jail] and they'd say, 'We have nothing, everything's full.' There was nowhere to go."

After his release, Sanford ended up at a motel, still reaching out for help. He was finally able to connect with a Tulare County caseworker who referred him to the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, a nonprofit that

partners with the County to administer rapid rehousing and supportive housing programs.

Due to his age (69) and existing health conditions, Sanford qualified for assistance under a new program called Project Roomkey, which paid for his motel room for several weeks. Launched in April, the program not only provides emergency housing to stem widespread COVID-19 transmissions, it also helps clients transition into more permanent and stable housing.

"Members of our homeless community who are medically fragile, we want to keep them out of harm's way, and one of the best ways to do that is to put them in a non-congregant setting, so they won't be at risk of transmission of some type of communicable disease," says Chaz Felix, Homeless Initiatives Program Coordinator with the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). "We've been working with the Homeless Alliance and our local housing authority to ... help them with their housing search so they're able to transition out of our Project Roomkey sites and into a place that's more stable and more permanent."

With help from his County caseworker, Sanford was able to move out of the motel room and into a retirement home better suited to meet his health care needs. He says the help he received from HHSA and the Alliance was invaluable.

"For all the doors that did slam [shut], another opened up and I just had to keep pushing and not give up," Sanford says. "When the Alliance [helped] me, everything changed. All I can think of is just not to give up."

For more information on the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, call (559) 738-8733 or visit www.kthomelessalliance.org.

"You don't realize you've hit bottom until everything you've accumulated is gone."

EDWARD SANFORD
CLIENT, TULARE HHSA AND KINGS/TULARE HOMELESS ALLIANCE



The Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) exists to help residents live full and healthy lives, something that can look different from person to person.

"There's no one-size-fits-all homeless individual, so we have a lot of different homeless programs," says Chaz Felix, Homeless Initiatives Program Coordinator for Tulare County HHSA. "Everyone has a different story. For some folks, it's easier to make that transition, but regardless of someone's history—because we're a housing-first approach, we'll take people in, and do our best to connect them with the needed resources."



HOUSING OPTIONS

- ✓ Emergency shelter
- ✓ Rapid rehousing for individuals and families who don't need a lot of supportive services on their way to a more permanent housing solution
- ✓ Permanent supportive housing



CONNECTION TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- ✓ Mental and behavioral health services
- ✓ Health care
- ✓ Nutrition assistance
- ✓ Financial assistance for rent, utilities, and other living expenses
- ✓ Help obtaining documentation such as California identification cards

Here's how to get connected to the right help:



Visit www.211tularecounty.org to view a directory of resources



Or call 2-1-1 to speak with an operator who can help refer you to the right service or agency.

FINDING SELF-ACCEPTANCE

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency helped a local woman regain her indomitable spirit

In the introduction to one of her dozen guided meditations on her YouTube channel “A Rose Enlightened Meditations,” Antonia Rose tells her viewers, “This is about letting go of negative thoughts, bringing in the positive, changing the story for ourselves, and being OK with who we are.”

As someone who has suffered from bipolar disorder (“manic depression”) and degenerative spinal disease for decades, it’s an approach to healing she has refined.

And the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency helped her on her journey. “They really came through for me,” she says. Rose continues to regularly see an HHSA therapist. “If I didn’t have her, I don’t know what I would do.”

Rose, 56, lived in the Bay Area and moved to Visalia in March 2019 after a 30-year relationship came to a close. “After it ended, I lived with my daughter and then my sister, then became homeless,” she says. “I came to Visalia to visit my mother and never left.” Rose now lives with and cares for her grandmother.

As her spinal disease progressed, she became “hooked on painkillers,” she says. “I was pretty much off them by the time I got here. I didn’t have the help I needed until I was referred to (HHSA).”

Though Rose is on disability, she has an impressive work history—nurse’s assistant, rape crisis intervention counselor, and facilitator for Angels on Stage in San Jose, which empowers special needs children and youth through the performing arts.

Rose found a home when HHSA introduced her to Clubhouse Visalia, a space for people with mental illness that fosters recovery through socialization and support.

“I started going every day,” she says. “It gave me purpose, and I learned that it’s

OK to talk about mental illness and not be ashamed of it.” Soon, she was leading a guided meditation class and joined a support group.

“It gave me purpose and I learned that it’s OK to talk about mental illness and not be ashamed of it.”

ANTONIA ROSE
HHSA THERAPY CLIENT AND MEMBER
OF CLUBHOUSE VISALIA

COVID-19 closed Clubhouse Visalia in June, then Rose’s grandmother was hospitalized. “I was alone for months and got pretty sad,” she says. “To get myself out of that, I started writing guided meditations.”

That led to her YouTube channel. “I hope it helps other people who struggle with mental illness,” she says. Rose also maintains a website, <http://A-Rose-Enlightened.webnode.com>, and can be found on Instagram and Facebook.

Rose seems indomitable. What keeps her going?

“Doing things that bring me joy has helped me find acceptance within myself,” she says. “Being patient with myself when I have times of struggle. I believe things will fall into place when they’re supposed to, so that brings a sense of peace.”

HHSA MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

“The three words that describe our services are ‘hope,’ ‘well-being’ and ‘recovery,’” says Natalie Bolin. She’s the Deputy Director of Clinical Services for the Mental Health Branch of the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency.

HHSA’s mental health services are wide-ranging and inclusive. They encompass:

- ✓ Mental Health Clinical Services: Two clinics for adults and six for children provide those with mental health issues the help they need to manage their symptoms and avoid crises.
- ✓ Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention, Treatment & Recovery: Outpatient and residential treatment, and prevention outreach.
- ✓ “It’s all about access. If consumers can’t come to us, we want to go to them,” Bolin says. To that end:
 - Two wheelchair-accessible vans—mobile clinics, really—visit clients in rural areas.
 - One-Stop Centers: Two compact community-based clinics make it convenient for area residents to get the services they need.
 - ✓ Wellness Centers: Anyone on the road to recovery can access the two Wellness Centers, where clients learn living skills and get social support.



Antonia Rose found creative outlets that helped her let go of negative thoughts.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTONIA ROSE



Veronica Machado Hampton pulled from her personal experience as a member of the LOSS team.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VERONICA MACHADO HAMPTON

NAVIGATING A NEW NORMAL

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

HHSA provides unique programs to prevent suicides and to support those who've lost a loved one

HHSA RESOURCES

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As director of the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency's Suicide Prevention Task Force, Noah Whitaker has the mission to stop such tragedies from happening and, when they do, help suicide-loss survivors find the resources to cope. He recommends:

- ✓ Those feeling anxious or depressed can **find someone who will listen without judgment** at the Community Warm Line (877-306-2413, 24/7).
- ✓ The Tulare County Suicide Prevention Task Force (sptf.org) has **target programs for prevention and early intervention**.
- ✓ Alliance of Hope is an **online community forum with support groups and counseling** for suicide-loss survivors (allianceofhope.org).
- ✓ The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255, 24/7) **provides support for those in emotional distress** and guidance for those concerned about another person who they think might be suicidal.



For more loss-related referrals and resources, call Noah Whitaker at (559) 624-7471.

At its core, the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency is focused on fostering the well-being of the community through an agenda of proven approaches, including those for mental health.

A special one is the Suicide Prevention Task Force (SPTF), whose goal is saving lives through supportive intervention. When suicides do occur, it offers grief and bereavement programs to help lighten the emotional burden borne by suicide-loss survivors.

In between prevention and survivor recovery is the innovative Local Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) Team, headed by SPTF director Noah Whitaker. He is a nationally recognized expert in community-based suicide prevention.

Essentially, when a possible death by suicide is reported to the county coroner's office, the coroner asks the family if it would welcome a visit from the LOSS Team. If so, the coroner contacts Whitaker, who in turn dispatches the team to the newly bereaved.

"Our goal is to arrive on scene, so we're part of the first-response effort," Whitaker says. "The point is to help the newly bereaved begin to navigate the path to a new normal. We're hoping every county in California will eventually have a LOSS Team."

Veronica Machado Hampton, a real estate agent in Visalia, has been a LOSS Team member for five years, bringing a unique empathy to the volunteer work. She lost an uncle to suicide 21 years ago. Her best friend lost

her 16-year-old daughter on Christmas Eve 2008, and Hampton's son lost his best friend a year ago. Hampton happened to be on that particular call.

Typically, when the LOSS Team arrives, "We're there to help (the survivors) through this time," Hampton says. "We interact with them and give them materials on where to get support and grief counseling and other services when they're ready to reach out."

The LOSS Team "is respectful and tries to understand as best we can why and what happened, and be a shoulder for support," she adds. "I want to be able to help wherever and however I can, inspired by my own experiences."

Hampton's LOSS Team experience has been "life-changing," she says. "I've been to support group meetings, and it's so helpful knowing there are other people going through what you are, and you can share experiences."

"Everybody is different in terms of how they process (tragedy) and how they grieve," she says. "I don't want to say it gets easier, because it doesn't. But there is help available. Even though you've had a loss, there is still hope out there. Never give up hope."

Need help? Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-8255.

"Even though you've had a loss, there is still hope out there. Never give up hope."

VERONICA MACHADO HAMPTON
LOSS TEAM MEMBER

ADDRESSING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

BY RAUL CLEMENT

An interview with Jennifer Newell, Psy.D.

Jennifer Newell is the Director for Behavior Health Services at the Tulare County Office of Education. She began working for TCOE BHS in 2013.

WHAT IS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES AND WHAT ROLE DOES IT SERVE?

TCOE Behavioral Health Services is the provider of educational-related mental health services for students in Tulare County; we serve elementary through high school students. We work very closely with the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency and are part of the Tulare County Mental Health Plan. TCOE has many partnerships with TCHSA, including two large state grants that has allowed us to place social workers in over 60 schools across Tulare County to help support students and families. BHS is proud to be part of an amazing collaborative of mental health providers under the Tulare County Mental Health Plan. We all work very hard to provide effective, culturally competent, and comprehensive mental health services to children, youth, and families across our county.

WHAT DOES PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ENTAIL?

TCOE BHS is one of several children's mental health providers in Tulare County's system of care. The Tulare County network of children's mental health providers provides a wide array of services, including individual therapy, family counseling, parent skills training, psychiatric care, case management, and consultation with school staff on how to work with children that have emotional or behavioral needs. In addition, many of us also provide a variety of mental health and wellness trainings to students, school staff, community members, and parents across the county.

IS THERE A REFERRAL PROCESS FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE? CAN THEY REQUEST IT THEMSELVES?

Each school has its own system of how to access support for students' mental health. For sites that have a school social worker or counselor on campus, typically a teacher can refer a student, students can self-refer, or parents can call and request services for their child. In addition, parents can reach out to their community-based mental health provider to request mental health services for their child. Sometimes, community-based providers come to the school to provide mental health services as well. We strongly encourage parents to reach out and connect with someone from their child's school or local children's mental health provider if they have mental health concerns for their child!

I UNDERSTAND YOUR EXPERTISE IS IN ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES). WHAT ARE ACES AND WHAT CONSEQUENCES CAN THEY HAVE?

Unfortunately, adverse childhood experiences are quite common; research has found that nearly two-thirds of people report at least one ACE. Children's responses to ACEs and trauma can be quite different from one child to the next. It's common to see children struggling with symptoms of depression and anxiety. Children often communicate through their behavior. Sometimes those behaviors can be externalizing behaviors and sometimes they can be internalizing. It might be yelling, cursing, hitting, or running out of the classroom when they get upset. Or the child may be withdrawn, quiet, and may not participate in class. We have a lot of students referred to us because they are seen as disruptive and out of control. These can be indicators of a child who has experienced

"It's really important that we pay attention to behavioral changes and gently check in when we notice them."

JENNIFER NEWELL, PSY.D.
DIRECTOR FOR BEHAVIOR HEALTH SERVICES



trauma. Similarly, we have students referred to us for a lack of attention and restlessness, which can sometimes be a response to trauma as well. The focus has shifted from asking "Why are you doing this?" to "What has happened to you?" By understanding these childhood experiences, we can then provide treatment and services to adequately address the trauma and promote mental wellness.

HOW IS THE TRAUMA BEHIND THESE BEHAVIORS ADDRESSED?

As mental health professionals, we start by building a positive, trusting relationship with the child. Depending on many factors, including the age, type of adverse experience, and symptoms the child is experiencing, the mental health professional will choose an effective intervention that is right for that individual child. It is typically a slow process to work through trauma in therapy. Additionally, we work on replacing the behaviors that are not serving them well with more pro-social and healthy coping strategies.

WHAT ARE SOME METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE?

From a school perspective, I would encourage staff to build relationships with every child, whether it be in the classroom or cafeteria or any other school setting. It's really important that we pay attention to behavioral changes and gently check in when we notice them. For parents, it's similar. Sometimes parents don't know when to reach out for help. Our message to them would be: When you're feeling uncertain or concerned about your child, reach out. There's no harm that will be done from reaching out, and there's a lot of good that can come from it.



BE ACES AWARE

Help reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences — ACEs — represent a largely unrecognized public health crisis. ACEs Aware, part of Gov. Gavin Newsom's "California for All" initiative, seeks to reduce ACEs and toxic stress by half in one generation.

With your help, we can meet this bold goal.

WHAT ARE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES?

ACEs include abuse, neglect, and/ or household dysfunction that occurs by age 18. The abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual; and neglect can be physical or emotional. Household dysfunction can be parental incarceration, mental illness, substance use, parental separation or divorce, or intimate partner violence.

WHAT IS THE TOXIC STRESS RESPONSE?

Children are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of an overactive stress response due to ACEs, because their brains and bodies are still developing. Research shows that repeated or prolonged activation of a child's stress response due to adversities, without the buffering protections of trusted, nurturing caregivers and safe, stable environments, leads to long-term changes in: the structure and functioning of the developing brain; the metabolic, immune, and neuroendocrine responses; and even the way DNA is read and transcribed.

This is known as the "toxic stress response." These responses are influenced by a combination of cumulative adversity, buffering or protective factors, and predisposing vulnerability.

WHAT IS ACES AWARE?

A partnership between the Office of the California Surgeon General and the Department of Health Care Services, ACEs Aware trains Medi-Cal providers to screen for ACEs and provide trauma-informed care; provides payments for ACE screening; and offers resources and tools to understand and respond to toxic stress physiology.

The mission of ACEs Aware is more important than ever, given the toxic stress being caused by the COVID-19 emergency, including disruptions in access to care and repeated or prolonged activation of people's stress response without the buffering protections of a caregiver and/or a safe environment. The challenges that some adults are feeling today may be potentially due to unresolved traumatic events experienced during childhood.

Find out more at www.acesaware.org or <https://tchhsa.org/ACES>.



HOW DO ACES AND TOXIC STRESS AFFECT HEALTH?

Adverse Childhood Experiences — ACEs — are strongly associated, in a dose-response fashion, with some of the most common and serious health conditions facing our society today, including at least nine of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States.

Examples of ACE-associated health conditions include: asthma, diabetes, depression, heart disease, and difficulties with learning and behavior.

People with four or more ACEs are:

*** 37.5 times**
as likely to attempt suicide

*** 11.2 times**
as likely to have Alzheimer's or dementia

*** 3.1 times**
as likely to have chronic lower respiratory disease

*** 2-2.3 times**
as likely to have a stroke, cancer, or heart disease

*** 1.4 times**
as likely to have diabetes

DON'T WORRY, BE READY

Disaster preparedness is important for every Californian



WHY SHOULD YOU GET PREPARED?

Your family and neighbors will rely on you in case of an emergency.

It is your duty to protect them and make sure your children, pets, and other important people in your life are safe and cared for when disaster strikes.

Preparation can save you and others.

Getting ready is much simpler than you think. Doing some small things today can make a big difference if there is a disaster.



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IS AS EASY AS A TEXT MESSAGE

Californians can sign up to learn how to get prepared for natural disasters by texting LISTOSCA to 72345. You will receive one text message per day, sent at the time you choose, over the course of a week. By the end of seven days, you'll learn how to complete five easy, free or low-cost steps to protect yourself and your family.



QUICK LESSONS IN SURVIVAL

In 20 minutes, take five steps for safety and survival. In this interactive online experience, you will learn about the role you play in your own safety and why you are the best person to help yourself and your family prepare for disaster. Be prepared to think through evacuation scenarios, practice packing your supplies, and learn how to help yourself and others get ready for disaster.

ARE YOU READY FOR A DISASTER?

Listos California is dedicated to preparing Californians for the next Big One—no matter what that may be. It could be a wildfire, earthquake, flood, or pandemic; whatever the disaster, Listos California wants everyone to be ready.

This statewide emergency preparedness campaign focuses on how each of us can do little things now that will help ensure our safety in a crisis.

Disaster preparedness will give you and your family some peace of mind plus the knowledge that, when the time comes, you'll be ready—not only to help yourself but others.



GET CERTIFIED

Register for the 20-hour, FEMA-certified Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training. The CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, allowing them to focus on more complex tasks.



BECOME A PREPAREDNESS HERO

Learn more about the eight-hour Listos basic emergency and disaster readiness public education program.

The mission is to provide vulnerable populations with information about the importance of disaster readiness that includes the sharing of preparedness skills and information with family and friends. The curriculum emphasizes targeted recruitment and presentations tailored to the specific cultural and linguistic needs of the target communities.

The core of the Listos program design is based on building sustainable relationships and partnerships with local businesses, community leaders, and nonprofit organizations, in order to provide valuable disaster awareness information to vulnerable populations while simultaneously helping those same populations to become familiar with public services available to them.



**SIGN UP FOR ANY OF THESE
PROGRAMS AT**

www.listoscalifornia.org/get-prepared



HHSA

**Tulare County Health & Human
Services Agency**

Information & Referral Line
1-800-834-7121
tchhsa.org



ACEs Aware
www.acesaware.org
<https://tchhsa.org/ACEs>



Self-Help Enterprises
www.selfhelpenterprises.org