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Riverside County Suicide Prevention and National Recovery Month 2021 Activity Guide

This year's Suicide Prevention and National Recovery Month focus on supportive transitions. Transitions can be conceptualized as an event or series of events that cause fundamental changes in the fabric of daily life – what people do, where they do it, and with whom.

Transitions, in any shape or size, expected or unexpected, welcomed or not welcomed, can be unsettling, disorienting, and stressful. They can impact our mental health and major life changes have long been understood to be environmental risk factors for suicide. Positive coping skills, resilience, and connectedness to family, friends, and our community can act as protective factors to help us navigate transitions.

While the pandemic has changed our fabric of life, it has also strengthened our resilience and resolve. As we reenter "normal" life – whether it is going back to school, reconnecting with friends, rediscovering favorite places, or reimaging our future, transitions are easier when we navigate them together. Remember, all of us can play a role in suicide prevention.

Together we can reconnect, reenter, and rebuild for the future!

There are many options for promoting Suicide Prevention Awareness and National Recovery Month, all of which can be done from home or online while practicing physical distancing. We have provided suggestions for how to plan your September activities week-by-week, or you can choose your favorites.





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Week One (September 1-5) – 'Reconnect'

Connect with Others

This week's theme is *Reconnect*. After a year and a half of staying at home for many, and being unable to connect with our loved ones, it is time to reconnect and get back in touch with those we love and care about. Spend some time connecting with 3 people you have not talked or checked-in with in a while. Be creative! Send a snail-mail postcard, a meaningful email or letter, or give them a call. Let them know you are there for them, and that you care.





Reconnect With Your Goals

We all need something to look forward to. Build hope by setting a few short, mid and long term goals. Make a plan! Share them with someone who can support you to achieving them.

Mental Health 101: Virtual Training

Learn more about mental health and how to take care of your well-being. Register for this free 90-minute live presentation to learn the about the mental health continuum, stigma reduction, and community resources. Thursday, September 2, 2021 (Register for English presentation from 5:30-7:00 PM; Register for Spanish presentation from 5:30-7:30 PM).







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Friday Fun Day (with Lotería/Bingo)

Reconnect with your inner child by having some fun playing a game. Lotería (Bingo) is a recognized fun-filled social activity and can be a great way to increase awareness and learn about resources for mental health and suicide prevention. Do at home with your family or host a virtual event. The game is available in English and Spanish and everything you need can be downloaded in the Each Mind Matters resource center here. Not into Loteria/Bingo? Choose a board game your family or friends love and have fun with it!

Connect with Your Community

We are social beings, and we are not meant to live in isolation. Community is critical for us to thrive, especially for someone with mental illness who is already experiencing the common symptoms of loneliness and isolation. Community provides many elements that are critical to mental health. Some of the most important benefits are a sense of *belonging*, providing *support* to those in need, and a sense of *purpose* in our lives. Look for opportunities that align to your interests, values, and beliefs. No matter if your community is big or small, finding people you connect with is vital for your mental



health. And remember, just as it's important for you to find your community, it's also important for others to have you as a part of their community. *We all need each other.*

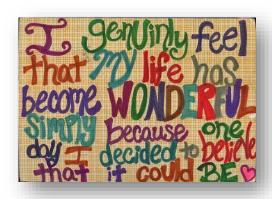


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Week Two (September 6-12) – 'Re-Enter'

Share Your Secret Power

Create an empowering message about your recovery on a postcard. The secrets are meant to be empowering both to the author and to those who read them. These postcards can have healing powers for those who write them, be empowering and inspirational to those who read them, give hope to people who identify with the message, and can help create an anonymous community of acceptance. Be creative and don't forget to tag us on social media using the hashtags #PEISEPT2021 and #RUHSRecoveryHappens2021.



Learn About Suicide Prevention

One of the biggest barriers in preventing suicide is stigma, which prevents people from seeking help. For that reason, it is important to know the risk factors of suicide and to increase efforts to improve prevention. It is imperative that everyone is educated about suicide prevention - as barriers to suicide include effective methods of prevention. Suicide is preventable and knowing the risk factors and warning signs can help save a life. We have a variety of topics to explore this month. *Sign up for a free Know the Signs Virtual Presentation*



Pain isn't always obvious, but we can all learn tools to learn how to reach out and help someone who may be in crisis. Register for this free 60-minute webinar to learn how to recognize the signs, find the words, and reach out. Available in English on **Tuesday, September 7 from 9:00 – 10:30 AM**. (Register for English presentation on September 7 from 9:00-10:30 AM; Register for Spanish presentation on September 9 from 9:00-11:00 AM).





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Find the (Cross) Words

Crossword puzzles are a fun way of learning terms and facts. Challenge yourself in your knowledge about suicide prevention downloading this crossword (English) and (Spanish) puzzle and solving all of the clues. Share it with your friends and family for a group activity!



Reach Out!

Suicide is Preventable. Familiarize yourself with a suicide prevention resource by visiting the <u>Know the Signs</u> website. You will find many local resources for yourself, or anyone who may be struggling and needs support.

Share about the many available resources. Visit <u>Up2Riverside</u> to find inspirational stories of recovery and learn about resources.





Directing Change Screening

Grab the popcorn and check out the amazing videos created by Riverside County youth in this statewide film contest. These short videos feature Public Service Announcements on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Watch some of these 60-second PSAs. Share them on your social media with others using #PEISEPT2021 and #RUHSRecoveryHappens2021.



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Pause and Take a Breath

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because when you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress. Schedule a *breathe break* each day this week.



QPR Training

QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention is a 1-2 hour educational program designed to teach lay and professional "gatekeepers" the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond. Join us on Thursday, September 9th at 3:00pm <u>HERE</u>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



World Suicide Prevention Day

Light a candle, near a window, on World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10th, at 8 PM, in support of suicide prevention, to remember a loved one lost to suicide and for the survivors of suicide. Help to share the message of suicide prevention with others.

The S Word

"A suicide attempt survivor is on a mission to find fellow survivors and document their stories of courage, insight and humor. Along the way, she discovers a rising national movement transforming personal struggles into action." This documentary film is available on the <u>Documentary Plus</u> streaming platform.





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Week Three (September 13-19) -- 'Focus on Recovery'

Express Yourself

The act of coloring is more than just a fun break from the stress of daily life, it can be very beneficial for your mental and emotional health. Take time for yourself and color using any available art supplies (crayons, coloring pencils, markers, etc.) to create a piece of art that represents your resiliency. Be creative! Write a song, create a dance, write a poem! Share how you improved your mood through artwork or music on your social media using the hashtags #PEISEPT2021 and RUHSRecoveryHappens2021.





Improve Your Mood

Music is another outlet that has been found to improve mood. In fact, research has found that people listen to music to achieve self-awareness, social relatedness, and arousal and mood regulation.

Make a playlist with songs to lift you up or soothe you. Share your playlist on social media to inspire others using the hashtags #PEISEPT2021 and #RUHSRecoveryHappens2021.



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Self-Care Plan

Self-care is not an elective pastime in our free time, but rather should be a priority along with other important elements of our life. Taking the time and intentionally caring for our whole self – body, mind, and soul – will keep us energized and mentally well. This is especially important for those helping and caring for others. Take a self-care assessment, learn tips, and find out how you can create a personalized self-care plan at Each Mind Matters Share with others by posting some pictures or videos of your self-care activity. Don't forget to use the hashtags #PEISEPT2020 and #RUHSRecoveryHappens2021 when sharing on your social media.





Self-Care and Wellness: Virtual Training

This presentation will focus on understanding how stress affects you (the psychological, spiritual, interpersonal, and physical impacts); learning strategies to help you manage stress more effectively and to build resiliency. There will be virtual practice of the different strategies to help you manage stress and practice self-care and wellness. Available, local resources will be discussed as well as how to connect. (Register for English presentation on Wednesday, September 15 3:00-5:00 PM; Register for Spanish presentation on Wednesday, September 15 from 3:00-5:30 PM).



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Hope Journal Bookmark Activity

A fun and easy activity that encourages Social and Emotional Learning with children, teens, and young adults is journal writing. Journal writing has been found to stimulate mindfulness, self-awareness, reduce stress and can be a helpful coping mechanism as it allows individuals to work through their thoughts and emotions. The hope journal bookmark and tip sheet can be found on the Each Mind Matters resource center in both English and Spanish here. Share your creativity on your social media using hashtag #PEISEPT2021 and #RUHSRecoveryHappens2021.

Movie Night - Substance Abuse Recovery

In early recovery, many people feel like they suddenly have a lot of free time that they aren't sure how to fill. Movies can be a great way to stay entertained for a couple of hours...and there is no shortage of films that are recovery oriented, and even inspirational. For some great addiction and recovery movies to add to your queue visit Practical Recovery.





Fortune Teller Affirmations

Create an affirmation fortune teller. Affirmations are positive statements that increase self-esteem and decrease stress. Reinforce positive thinking with a fortune teller affirmation. Find instructions on how to make an origami fortune teller here. For a list of ideas for positive affirmations click here.



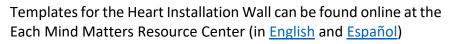


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Week Four (September 20-26) -- 'Rebuild'

Build-A-Heart

Suicide Prevention Week and Recovery Month both provide an opportunity for individuals, organizations, and communities to join their voices and broadcast the message that suicide can be prevented, and recovery is possible. A fun and meaningful way to create awareness is to write messages of support that, when assembled, create the shape of a heart. Create a heart wall installation in your home, community, or office setting. A fun way to show your support and build hope is to display a heart in your window along with messages of encouragement. Go on a "Heart Hunt" with your loved ones — how many hearts can you find out and about? Take pictures of your own display, or those you find, and post to your social media using the hashtag #PEISEPT2021 and #RUHSRecoveryHappens2021. Don't forget to include lime green ribbons to show your support for mental health.







Building Resiliency and Understanding Trauma: Virtual Training

This presentation will focus on understanding and defining trauma and different Trauma Types. We will look at the impact of trauma on the brain, understand Child Traumatic Stress (CTS), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Adverse Community Experiences. We will look at resiliency and how to be trauma-informed to carry and inspire hope that recovery from trauma is

possible. (<u>Register for English</u> presentation on Tuesday, September 21 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM; <u>Register for Spanish</u> presentation on Tuesday, September 21 from 4:30-7:00 PM).



Grief After Suicide

The Riverside County Suicide Prevention Coalition's Postvention subcommittee is hosting a FREE webinar for survivors of suicide loss. If you have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide please scan the QR code and register for the webinar on September 21, 2021 at 4pm.



Presenter Dr. John Jordan, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where he has specialized in work with survivors of suicide and other traumatic losses for more than 45 years. Jack is currently retired from seeing clients, but in the past, he has maintained a clinical practice as a grief therapist, working primarily with suicide loss survivors. He has also served as the Clinical Consultant for the Grief Support Services of the Samaritans in Boston, Massachusetts, and was the Professional Advisor to the Loss and Healing Council of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). For over 45 years, Jack has also provided training nationally and internationally for professional caregivers and has helped to lead many healing workshops for suicide loss survivors.



Thriving in School

The term back to school takes on an entirely new meaning this coming year, and with it comes additional challenges and stressors for our youth. In addition to re-engaging on the usual tasks and roles that schools have typically served, there will need to be an even more vigilant effort paid to youth mental wellness. Celebrate Wellness and Promote Positive Coping Skills for youth with easy-to-follow activities to enhance basic skills for social emotional wellness. Share the journal electronically or download the individual pages. Visit the Up2Riverside page for activities to help build-up students for a successful school year.



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Make a Move Towards Wellness



Exercise improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive function. Exercise has also been found to alleviate symptoms such as low self-esteem and social withdrawal. Thirty minutes of exercise of moderate intensity, such as brisk walking for 3 days a week, is sufficient for these health benefits. Make a plan to *rebuild* your physical health this week by incorporating a new exercise routine.

Rebuild Spiritually

Spirituality influences many decisions that people make. It encourages people to have better relationships with themselves, others, and the unknown. Spirituality can help you deal with stress by giving you a sense of peace, purpose, and forgiveness. It often becomes more important in times of emotional stress or illness. Spirituality means different things for different people, yet the results are the same. Take 10 minutes a day this week to pray or meditated and *rebuild* your mental wellness.



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Rebuild Hope!

Send out an email of "Hope". Find and share hopeful articles or quotes and send them to your friends, family, or colleagues. Share your messages, articles and quotes to your social media using hashtag #PEISEPT2021 and #RUHSRecoveryHappens2021.



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Week Five (September 27-30) -- 'Express Gratitude"



Dear Me

Thinking about and writing to the future - your future - is a powerful exercise. Take some time to reflect on what you think - and want - the future to bring in a year, five years, ten years...more? You can use this system to build your dreams, remind yourself of your accomplishments (even if small), and as a good way to send your future-self a pep talk reminding you about your resilience and recovery. Write an encouraging letter to yourself here. It's secure and free!

Attitude of Gratitude

There have been multiple studies on the link between gratitude and well-being. Research confirms that gratitude effectively increases happiness and can reduce depression. By working at shifting our mindset to one of gratitude, we can improve our well-being. Start the week off with your family and friends with a Gratitude Jar. Every day throughout the week, write down something you are grateful for, some words of hope and encouragement. At the end of the week, have dinner as a family, or set up a Zoom meeting with other family members and friends and go through your gratitude jars together. Letting others know how you are grateful for them and what they mean to you helps build our unity, connection, and support system.





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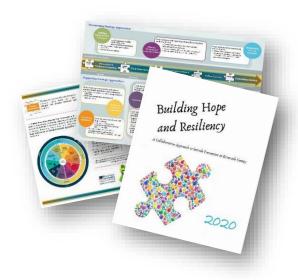


Gratitude Prompt/Reflection: Reconnect and rebuild with those you love with gratitude. Recognize those in your life for whom you are grateful for by writing them a gratitude note them telling them why and add it to your jar. Read these messages to them at the end of the week and see how a little *thanks* goes a long way.

Gratitude Jar group activity: Now that you have collected these meaningful notes throughout the week, it's time to read them and share the joy. Gather with your family and/or friends and read the gratitude messages in the jar.

A Collaborative Approach to Suicide Prevention in Riverside County

Riverside County released its Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan in June 2020. Created with collaboration from community members from different sectors in Riverside County, it encompasses the collaborative approach needed to work toward ending suicide. Contact PEI@ruhealth.org for your digital copy of the plan or find it on the Up2Riverside Suicide Prevention Week landing page. Find out how you can become part of the Suicide Prevention Coalition to help end suicide in Riverside County!





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Links

Each Mind Matters Suicide Prevention Toolkit:

https://www.suicideispreventable.org/prevention-kit.php

Link to Register for Virtual Trainings:

English: https://forms.gle/M31fLx7QvJPLQoVk9
Spanish: https://forms.gle/XbrDJDcJUqUm8geZ6

Lotería/Bingo:

https://emmresourcecenter.org/system/files/2021-07/Loteria%20Reconzca%20Las%20Senales Instruction.pdf

Know the Signs Crossword

Answer Key - English

https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Suicide Prevent-Crossword-puzzle-2021-Eng.Answer-Key.pdf

Respuestas – Español

https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Suicide Prevent-Crossword-puzzle-2021-Span-Answer-Key.pdf

Reach Out!

Available Resources and Information https://www.suicideispreventable.org/

https://www.suicideispreventable.c

Directing Change Films:

https://www.directingchangeca.org/films/

QPR Training Registration

https://ruhealth.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUoceytpzIrGNfsmGQb9BAnECkjTF50Q0M4

The S Word Documentary

https://www.docplus.com/details/the-s-word/jigdJ0xm/

Self-Care Plan:

https://www.eachmindmatters.org/spw2019/

Hope Journal Bookmark Activity:

https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/hope-journal-bookmark-activity

Movie Night:

Practical Recovery: https://www.practicalrecovery.com/prblog/7-movies-addiction-recovery-add-queue-right-now/



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Fortune Teller Affirmations:

Origami folding instructions (for fortune teller):

https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/how-to-make-a-fortune-teller/

Ideas for Positive Affirmations:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/affirmations b 3527028

Heart Installation Wall:

English:

https://emmresourcecenter.org/system/files/2020-06/EMM%20Heart%20Installation%20Tip%20Sheet%20English.pdf Spanish:

https://emmresourcecenter.org/system/files/2020-

<u>07/EMM%20Heart%20Installation%20Tip%20Sheet%20.eversion.Spanish.pdf</u>

Thriving in School Kit

https://www.suicideispreventable.org/back-to-school.php

Dear Me:

https://www.futureme.org/

