



**MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH;  
BEACH CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT REMINDS COMMUNITY  
“IT’S OK NOT TO BE OK”**

*BCHD website offers tools and resources to stay mentally healthy during COVID-19*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**REDONDO BEACH, Calif.** (May 5, 2020) – Each year, the month of May brings awareness to the importance of mental health. In 2020, we are all impacted by COVID-19, and now more than ever, during physical distancing and uncertain times, it is important for the community to come together around mental health.

Mental health affects millions of people across the United States, including the Beach Cities, where many people are dealing with mental health issues. The 2019 California Healthy Kids Survey found that 18% of Beach Cities 11th graders reported considering suicide in the past 12 months, while the 2017 Gallup Well-Being Index reported 43.4% of Beach Cities adults said they experienced significant daily stress in their lives.

This year, BCHD’s *It’s Okay to Not be Okay* campaign promotes mental health as a critical part of overall well-being and emphasizes the importance of individual’s mental health during this time. In addition to raising awareness, the campaign focuses on building social connection, tips and tools, virtual educational events and support groups, and information and resources available online.

“Now more than ever, we need to take care of one another. We need to check in and we need to engage with our community,” said Tom Bakaly, CEO of Beach Cities Health District. “It’s important to know the signs if someone is struggling, including yourself, and how to help others or get help that you might need.”

“Mental Health Awareness Month is an opportunity to focus on our mental health and well-being and be compassionate and empathetic for all the emotions we might be going through,” Bakaly said. “There are many great resources and providers in this community who are skilled at helping people. We need our neighbors to know they are not alone, there are people who can help. I’ve been very impressed by the outpouring of support our Beach Cities neighbors have shown for one another while we’ve been under the Safer at Home order.”

BCHD has virtual events and educational opportunities scheduled and a number of resources available at [www.bchd.org/mentalhealthawareness](http://www.bchd.org/mentalhealthawareness). Each week in May, BCHD will focus on a healthy habit of emotional well-being from the Change Direction initiative, a collection of concerned citizens, nonprofit leaders and leaders from the private sector who are working to change the culture about mental health, mental illness, and wellness. The habits for each week are Take Care, Check In, Engage, Relax and Know.

Some of the virtual events include:

- [Virtual Mindfulness Drop-In](#) - Wednesday, May 6, 5:30 - 6 p.m.
- [Online Families Connected Parent Chat](#) - Every Monday, 9:50 - 10:50 a.m.
- [Mental Health & Happiness Series Workshops](#) - Every Tuesday, 12:30 - 2 p.m.
- [Talk About It Small-Group Parent Workshop Series](#) - Every Thursday, 1 - 2 p.m.
  - Find parent tips to talk about mental health and other topics like vaping, empathy and social media at [bchd.org/talk](http://bchd.org/talk).

Bakaly also mentioned that during this time of heightened health concern, BCHD can offer help and support. Beach Cities residents needing assistance with errands, health-related information or referrals, can call the District's Assistance, Information & Referral line at 310-374-3426, ext. 256, seven days a week, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. or visit [bchd.org/resources](http://bchd.org/resources).

### **About Beach Cities Health District**

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) is among the leading preventive health agencies in the nation and has served the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach since 1955. As a public agency, it offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases in every lifespan. BCHD also operates AdventurePlex, a health and fitness facility where kids play their way to good health, and the Center for Health & Fitness, a comprehensive fitness center that is the only Medical Fitness Association-certified facility in California. Visit [www.bchd.org](http://www.bchd.org) or call (310) 374-3426 for more information.

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