

INCLUSION AND BELONGING CIRCULAR



OCTOBER - DECEMBER
2024

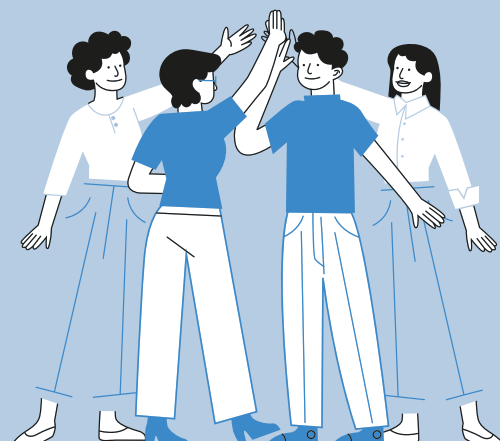
THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PROGRAM: OUR SHARED JOURNEY

In our dedicated journey towards creating a more inclusive and understanding community, the County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program stands as a beacon of commitment to progress. We are wholeheartedly committed to fostering cultural humility at all organizational and service levels. Our mission transcends beyond awareness; it is about actively engaging in respect, access, empowerment, and understanding the diverse tapestry of individuals, cultures, ethnic groups, genders, gender identities and expressions, sexualities, abilities, veteran statuses, spiritual affiliations, and linguistic backgrounds that enrich our community.

We are enthusiastic about leading, developing, enhancing, and maintaining a culturally aware workforce, shaping policies, services, and programs that not only embrace but celebrate our community's diversity. Our focused efforts are dedicated to ensuring improved healthcare outcomes for every individual, honoring their unique identities and experiences.

In line with our vision of making diversity, equity, and inclusion the foundational values of our behavioral health services and management operations, we are excited to share our 'Inclusion & Belonging Circular.' This quarterly publication will be a cornerstone in our collective journey towards well-being. It will highlight vital information, resources, and services within our community, supporting us all on this path of inclusive excellence.

Through the 'Inclusion & Belonging Circular' and our ongoing efforts, we aspire to build an environment where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued, and where the well-being of each individual is our shared responsibility. Enjoy!





MATT'S MESSAGE



A Season of Nurturing

I hope this message finds you well as we head into the holiday season. As the days grow shorter and we move into the last quarter of the year, many of us look forward to celebrations with family and friends. Yet, I also want to take a moment to acknowledge that this time of year can be incredibly challenging for many. The pressures of the season—whether from emotional expectations, financial stress, or the simple lack of time—can affect us all in different ways.

That's why I believe it's important to talk about self-care. But I'd like to take that concept a step further and propose a more expansive idea: self-nurturing. Self-nurturing invites us to look at our well-being holistically. It's more than just recharging it's about caring for the many dimensions of who we are, including our physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, environmental, and social health.

In a world that moves fast, especially during the holidays, it's easy to put others' needs ahead of our own. However, nurturing yourself is essential—not just for you, but for your ability to be the best colleague, parent, friend, and community member. When we care for our whole selves, we're able to show up for others in ways that are more sustainable and meaningful.

To support you on your journey to self-nurturing, here are a few resources you may find helpful:

- [Global Wellness Institute – What is Wellness?](#)
- [University of New Hampshire – The Wellbeing Wheel](#)
- [National Institutes of Health – The Social Wellness Checklist](#)
- [Global Wellness Institute – The Future of Work Chart](#)

This holiday season, I encourage you to reflect on what it means to nurture yourself in all its forms. Whether it's spending time in nature, practicing mindfulness, or seeking out community support, let's make space for what nourishes both our souls and our bodies. By doing so, we can build stronger, healthier communities.

Wishing you peace, joy, and strength this holiday season and beyond.

Warmly,

Matt





THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

**ADHD Awareness
Month**



**Domestic Violence Awareness
Month**

**Guide to a Fun and
Inclusive Halloween**



**Indigenous People's
Day**



National Coming Out Day



**National Depression and Mental
Health Screening Day**

**Latinx Representation Matters in
our County & County Behavioral
Health**



LATINX REPRESENTATION MATTERS IN OUR COUNTY & COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BY LAURA ZARATE



Latinx representation in SLO County Behavioral Health is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and effective mental health system. As a Latina who was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, and moved to the United States as a child, I understand firsthand the unique challenges and cultural nuances that shape the experiences of our community. Representation matters because it brings diverse perspectives to the table, ensuring that the services provided are not only culturally sensitive but also accessible to all.

When individuals see themselves reflected in their healthcare providers, it fosters trust and encourages them to seek help. Many Latinos face barriers such as stigma, language differences, and cultural misunderstandings when navigating the mental health system. By having professionals who share similar backgrounds and experiences, we can break down these barriers, create safe spaces for dialogue, and promote mental wellness within our communities.

Latinx representation in behavioral health can lead to better policy-making and resource allocation. When decision-makers understand the specific needs of Latinx populations, they can advocate for programs and initiatives that address issues such as trauma, access to care, and prevention strategies tailored to our cultural contexts.

As a proud Latina with double nationality, I believe that our diverse identities enrich the fabric of our society and enhance the quality of care we provide. It is essential to elevate Latinx voices in SLO County Behavioral Health to ensure that we are not only seen but heard, validated, and supported in our journey toward mental well-being. Together, we can create a healthier future for all.





GUIDE TO A FUN AND INCLUSIVE HALLOWEEN

Drink your Witches Brew and BOOze Safely!

Safety tips for Drivers: Be alert for other cars and pedestrians. Slow down and scan the area for pedestrians. Do not drink and drive and contact law enforcement if you see a drunk driver.

Tips for Pedestrians: Walk on the sidewalk and scan the area before crossing. Do not walk alone, use a buddy. Accompany young children.

Tips for Hosts: Serve plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages. Make sure everyone has a safe drive home with a sober driver (DD, Uber, Lyft, etc.)

Fentanyl can be a trick and not a treat!

If your Halloween celebration plans include substances, remember to:

1. Always have Naloxone on hand at all times!
2. If using, utilize test strips!
3. Never Use Alone!

Call Never Use Alone 877-696-1996, your Overdose Prevention Lifeline. Never Use Alone's peer operators are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Places to get Naloxone:

Behavioral Health Distribution

Narcan Delivery

Cal Poly Campus Health & Wellbeing

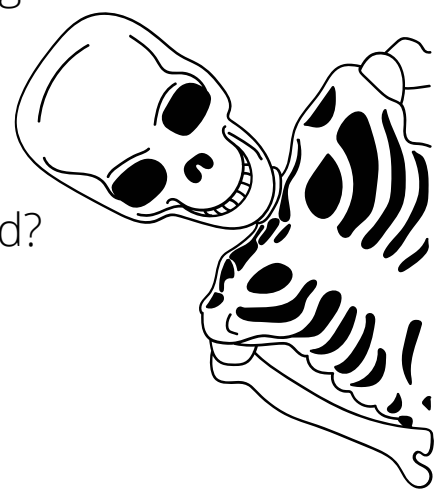


Someone's CULTURE is not a COSTUME, be ORIGINAL!

Cultural appropriation: the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture.

A guide...ask yourself these questions:

1. Is your costume racially, ethnically or culturally based?
2. Do you belong to that group of people?
3. Would you wear that costume around that group of people?



OCTOBER 11: NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY



As we approach National Coming Out Week 2024, it's essential to recognize that coming out is not a one-size-fits-all experience. This week is a time to celebrate the diverse paths that LGBTQ+ individuals take in their journeys toward authenticity, whether they are out, still finding their way, or not yet ready to share their identities with the world.

For some, coming out brings joy and acceptance, a powerful affirmation of who they are. For others, it may be met with challenges or difficult outcomes. National Coming Out Week honors every story whether it's one of triumph, struggle, or somewhere in between.

This week isn't just for those who come out with a label, but also for those who are still figuring things out, and those who embrace their identities without labels. It's for those who came out on their terms and those who were forced into the light before they were ready. 24% of LGBTQ+ young people who wanted mental health care but were unable to get it because they were not out with their LGBTQ+ identity and was afraid of being outed.

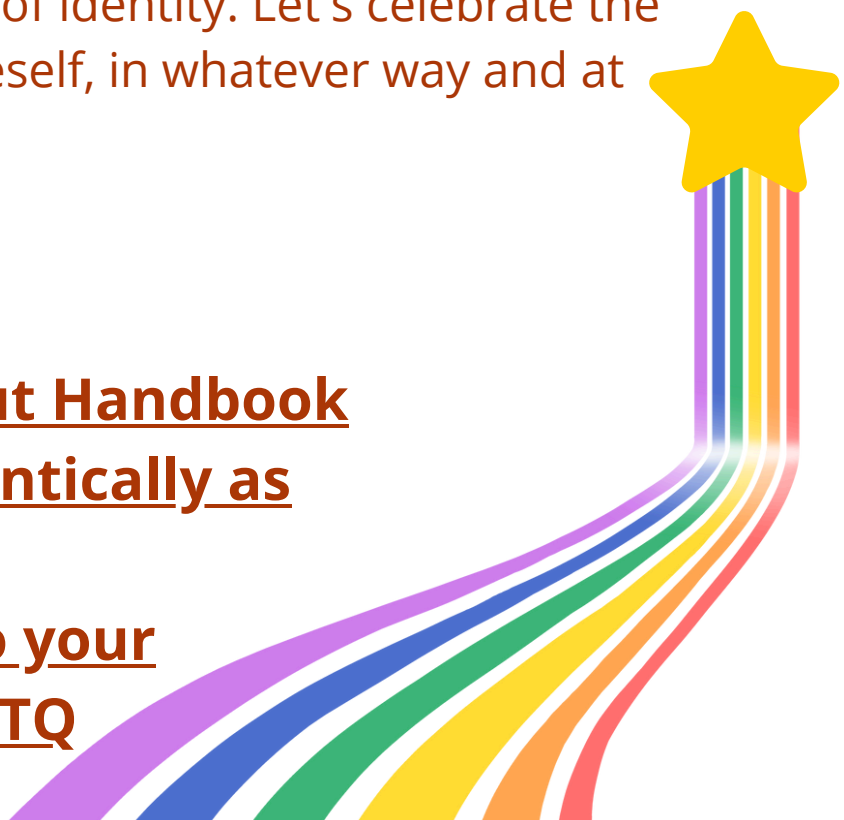
National Coming Out Week reminds us that bravery comes in many forms. It's in the decision to live authentically, to explore queer joy, and to navigate the complexities of identity. Let's celebrate the courage it takes to be true to oneself, in whatever way and at whatever pace that may be!

Resources:

[Trevor Project: Coming out Handbook](#)

[Coming Out: Living Authentically as Black LGBTQ+ People](#)

[Do Ask, Do Tell: Talking to your provider about being LGBTQ](#)



OCTOBER 14TH: NATIONAL DEPRESSION AND MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING DAY



What is National Depression and Mental Health Screening Day? This initiative aims to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and the need for regular mental health screenings. It encourages people to take proactive steps to assess their mental health and seek help if needed. The month-long campaign typically involves a variety of activities, including educational programs, free or low-cost mental health screenings, and public outreach efforts to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues. The goal is to promote early detection and intervention for mental health conditions, ultimately improving the overall well-being of individuals and communities.

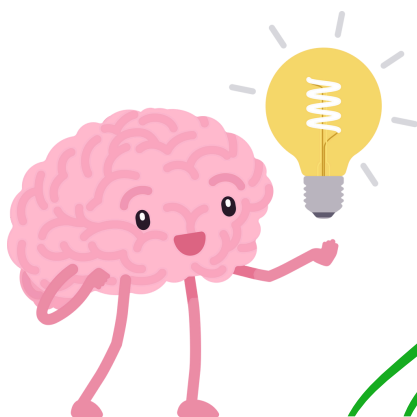
Statistics: Depression affects 3.8% of the global population, including 5% of adults (4% of men and 6% of women) and 5.7% of adults over 60. Approximately 280 million people worldwide suffer from depression. It is 50% more common in women than men. Over 10% of pregnant and postpartum women experience depression. Annually, more than 700,000 people die by suicide, making it the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds.

OCTOBER 14TH: IMPORTANCE & RESOURCES

Importance: Stigma around mental health can prevent individuals from seeking help due to fear of judgment, discrimination, or misunderstanding. This stigma often leads to delays in treatment, worsening symptoms, and increased isolation. By designating October as National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month, the focus is placed on dismantling these barriers. Public education campaigns aim to normalize conversations about mental health, encourage openness, and foster supportive communities. Addressing stigma is crucial in creating an environment where individuals feel safe and empowered to seek help early, ultimately improving overall mental health outcomes.

Where can I get a screening? to get screened contact the Behavioral Health Access Line to begin the process **(800) 838-1381**

[Check out our resource guide!](#)



INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY

OCTOBER 14TH



Indigenous People's Day, observed annually on the second Monday of October, is a meaningful occasion to honor the rich and diverse histories, vibrant cultures, and invaluable contributions of Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. This day provides a powerful opportunity to reflect on the strength, resilience, and ongoing struggles of Indigenous communities, both in the past and in the present. It is a time to recognize their profound impact on our collective history and the many ways in which their cultural heritage continues to shape our world today. Beyond this, Indigenous People's Day serves as a call to action, inviting all to engage in meaningful reflection on the rights and cultural preservation of Indigenous peoples.

This day was originally introduced as an alternative to Columbus Day, offering a crucial shift in focus from the celebration of colonization and its legacies to a recognition of the deeply rooted histories and significant contributions of Indigenous peoples. The movement to establish Indigenous People's Day began in the late 20th century, sparked by the desire to correct the historical inaccuracies, erasures, and harmful narratives often perpetuated by the celebration of Columbus Day. These narratives too often ignore the violence and oppression endured by Indigenous communities during colonization, choosing instead to glorify a history that overlooks the suffering of millions.

Today, more communities, cities, and states are embracing Indigenous People's Day as a moment to reflect on this deeper, more complex history, and to celebrate the richness of Indigenous cultures. Across the country, this day is marked by educational events, cultural celebrations, and advocacy efforts aimed at raising awareness about the experiences and rights of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous leaders and activists use this day to spotlight critical issues such as land sovereignty, the protection of sacred spaces, political representation, and the fight for social justice.

At its core, Indigenous People's Day is not just a celebration but also a reminder of the work that remains to be done to support and uplift Indigenous communities. While strides have been made in recent years to raise awareness about Indigenous rights, there is still much progress needed, from ensuring political autonomy and securing land rights to addressing issues of environmental justice and advocating for equitable access to education and healthcare. The preservation of Indigenous languages and traditions also remains a crucial and ongoing effort.

As we come together to celebrate Indigenous People's Day, we are encouraged to deepen our understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and contributions, and to actively support efforts that promote justice, equity, and recognition for all Indigenous peoples. This day calls on each of us to take meaningful steps toward healing historical injustices and building a more inclusive, respectful, and equitable future for Indigenous communities across the Americas and beyond.

OCTOBER: ADHD AWARENESS MONTH

What is ADHD? ADHD often begins in childhood and can persist into adulthood. It may contribute to low self-esteem, troubled relationships, and difficulty at school or work. Symptoms include limited attention and hyperactivity. Treatments include medication and psychotherapy.

Importance of ADHD awareness: Getting an ADHD screening is crucial because it provides clarity on whether ADHD is the root cause of challenges like difficulty focusing or managing tasks. With a proper diagnosis, individuals can receive a tailored treatment plan that may include therapy or medication, improving their ability to handle daily responsibilities. Additionally, understanding the nature of their difficulties helps individuals develop effective coping strategies and enhances overall functioning. A formal diagnosis also facilitates access to support and resources, making it easier to address the condition and improving quality of life.

Signs of ADHD in adult's vs children:

CHILDREN:

- Inability to sit still
- Inability to wait their turn
- Inability to play or work quietly
- Being disruptive or not listening in class
- Constantly running or climbing
- Excessive talking

ADULTS:

- Fidgeting
- Inability to sit still for a long period
- Impatience
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Recklessness
- Careless mistakes
- Excessive talking
- Interrupting others



How to make a welcoming environment with embracing inclusivity with your neurodivergent coworkers

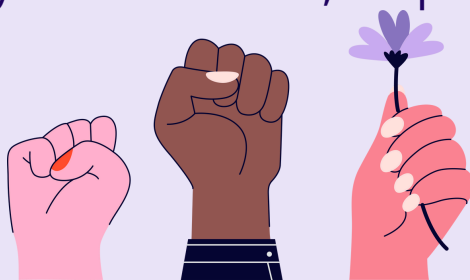
OCTOBER: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH



October is recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the pervasive issue of domestic violence and standing in solidarity with survivors. The county behavioral health department is deeply committed to supporting survivors in every aspect of their journey toward healing and empowerment. This month serves as an opportunity not only to spread awareness but also to uplift and empower those who have experienced domestic violence.

Domestic violence manifests in numerous forms, often extending far beyond physical abuse. It can include emotional manipulation, sexual abuse, financial control, and economic exploitation. Abusers may also misuse the legal system or leverage children as tools of coercion and control. These various forms of abuse are often insidious, making it crucial to understand the breadth and depth of domestic violence. Particularly concerning is the fact that individuals from historically marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), people with disabilities, women, and those who identify as queer or transgender, are disproportionately affected by domestic violence. These groups face systemic barriers that increase their vulnerability to abuse and limit their access to resources and support.

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we reaffirm our commitment to acknowledging and addressing the complex and multifaceted nature of domestic violence. We stand with survivors, offering them the support, resources, and empowerment they need to reclaim their lives. Let us work together to create a community where everyone feels safe, respected, and valued.



OCTOBER: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH



National Hot Line

Call 1-800-799-7233 or Text: BEGIN to 88788

Central Coast Hotline

24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Free of charge.

Text or Call, any time: 800-783-0607

Lumina Alliance

Crisis and information Line (805) 545-8888

Connect services like individual/group therapy, emergency housing or nearby referrals.

SAFER Resources for Students at Cal Poly.

Cuesta College Student Health Services





What is Happening in NOVEMBER?

Día de Los Muertos

Native American Heritage Month

Veteran's Day

Transgender Day of Remembrance



DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a deeply meaningful and culturally rich celebration that takes place on November 1st and 2nd, primarily in Mexico and among Mexican diaspora communities around the world. This vibrant festival honors the lives of deceased loved ones, welcoming their spirits back to the world of the living for a joyous reunion filled with music, food, and colorful traditions.

The origins of Día de los Muertos date back thousands of years to the Indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica, including the Aztec, Maya, and Toltec civilizations. These cultures believed in the cyclical nature of life and death and held annual rituals to honor the deceased. When Spanish colonizers arrived in the 16th century, they brought with them Catholic traditions, including All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. Over time, Indigenous practices merged with Catholic observances, creating the unique celebration we know today.

At the heart of Día de los Muertos are ofrendas, or altars, which are lovingly assembled in homes and cemeteries to honor the departed. These altars are adorned with photographs, candles, and marigolds (cempasúchil), which are believed to guide the spirits back to the world of the living. Offerings of food and drink, such as pan de muerto (a traditional sweet bread) and sugar skulls, are placed on the altar to nourish the spirits during their visit. Each element of the ofrenda is chosen with care and carries deep symbolic meaning, reflecting the belief that the dead are never truly gone as long as they are remembered.

The celebration also includes communal gatherings in cemeteries, where families clean and decorate the graves of their loved ones, often spending the night sharing stories, songs, and meals. In cities and towns across Mexico, parades, and public festivals bring communities together in a colorful display of life and death, where participants wear elaborate costumes and face paint that mimic the iconic calacas and calaveras (skeletons and skulls) associated with the holiday.

Día de los Muertos is a time to reflect on the interconnectedness of life and death and to celebrate the enduring bonds that tie us to our ancestors. It is a celebration that transcends sorrow, transforming the act of mourning into one of remembrance and joy. By embracing this tradition, we honor the rich cultural heritage of Mexican and Indigenous communities, recognizing the profound ways in which these traditions continue to influence and enrich our shared experience.





DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS FESTIVAL



Latino
Outreach
Council

PRESENTS

FESTIVAL

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

**COSTUME
CONTEST**

**FACE
PAINTING**

**ALTARES
OFRENDAS**

**03 Sunday
NOV.**

**SAN LUIS OBISPO
MISSION PLAZA**

**11:00 A.m.
05:30 P.m.**



**Free
ENTRANCE**

ARTS & CRAFTS

**FOOD
DRINKS**

**MARIACHI
Aztec
Dancers**

**FOLKLORIC
DANCERS**



HISTORY CENTER
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

SOMOS
REVISTA BILINGÜE



NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH: EMBRACING HERITAGE, RESILIENCE, AND WELLNESS



November is Native American Heritage Month, a time dedicated to honoring the rich cultures, histories, and contributions of Native people across the United States. This month is filled with blessings, honor, and respect for the diverse communities that have shaped and continue to shape the fabric of our nation. It's a time to celebrate the enduring strength and resilience of Native peoples, whose cultures and traditions have not only survived but thrived despite centuries of adversity.

However, as we celebrate, it is essential to recognize the profound challenges that Native American communities face, particularly in the realm of mental health. Native Americans experience the highest rates of suicide of any minority group within the U.S., and these rates have been increasing since 2003. The tragic loss of life within Native communities speaks to a larger issue one that is rooted in historical trauma, systemic inequities, and the ongoing effects of colonization. The impact of these factors on mental health is profound, contributing to not only high suicide rates but also to elevated levels of substance use disorders, involving both illicit drugs and alcohol. These struggles are exacerbated by limited access to culturally competent mental health services, creating barriers to the care that Native people deserve.

At County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health, we acknowledge these disparities and are committed to making a difference. Our mission is to support, uplift, and empower our Native clients, ensuring that they receive the compassionate care and respect they are entitled to. We recognize that mental health care must be culturally informed and responsive to the unique needs of Native communities.

This includes understanding the deep connection between land, culture, and well-being, and how these elements are integral to healing and mental health. We stand in solidarity with our Native clients, not only during Native American Heritage Month but every day of the year. We see the racial and cultural disparities in both mental and physical health care, and we are dedicated to advocating for equity and justice. Our work is guided by the belief that every person, regardless of their background, deserves access to quality mental health care that honors their identity and experiences.



NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH: FURTHER INFORMATION & RESOURCES



As we move forward, we invite everyone to join us in this commitment. Let us all take this month as an opportunity to learn more about Native cultures, to listen to Native voices, and to advocate for the changes needed to address the mental health crisis affecting Native communities.

Together, we can create a future where all people are valued, supported, and empowered to live healthy, fulfilling lives!

Learn more with this short list of resources:

[Native Land CA](#)

[Digital Atlas of California Native Americans](#)

[California Indian History](#)

[California Tribal Fund](#)

[Indigenous Peoples of California: Guide at The Bancroft Library](#)

[California Native American Day](#)

[Northern Chumash Tribe](#)

[Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians](#)

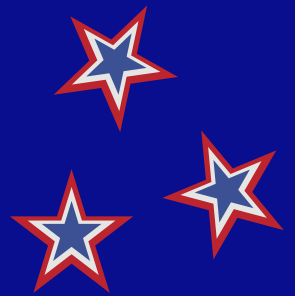
[Santa Ynez Chumash Museum and Cultural Center](#)





VETERAN'S DAY

NOVEMBER 11



This Veterans Day, we gather as a nation to honor the incredible bravery, dedication, and sacrifice of all who have served in our armed forces. It is a time to recognize and celebrate the many faces of our veteran community, whose service has protected our freedoms and shaped the course of our history.

We honor the diverse veterans who make up this community, including queer and trans veterans who have served with pride, often in the face of adversity. Their courage and resilience, both in defending our nation and in challenging societal norms, is deeply appreciated. Veterans of color, whose service has been pivotal in shaping our country's defense, have made profound contributions despite the obstacles they have faced. Their commitment is a vital part of our military's legacy, and we are grateful for their lasting impact.

We also recognize veterans who are victims or survivors, whose strength in overcoming trauma inspires us all. Whether dealing with physical or emotional scars, these veterans demonstrate extraordinary resilience, and we must continue to support them in their recovery. Additionally, we extend our recognition to unhoused and displaced veterans. These individuals deserve our unwavering support as we strive to ensure they receive the respect, care, and resources they need to live with dignity.

Female veterans have also played an essential role in our military's history. Their leadership and perseverance have broken barriers, allowing future generations of women to serve in greater numbers and capacities. We honor their service and the paths they have paved for others.

Every veteran, regardless of their background or role, has contributed to the strength and security of our nation. Whether you served in times of conflict or peace, in leadership or on the front lines, we thank you for your sacrifice. We see you; we honor you, and we are committed to ensuring that your service is recognized and appreciated.

Today, and every day, we celebrate the contributions of our veterans and pledge to advocate for the care and support they so rightfully deserve. Your service has left an indelible mark on our country, and for that, we are profoundly grateful. Thank you for your commitment to protecting our nation and its values!

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: NOV 20



Today, on Transgender Day of Remembrance, and every day, we honor and celebrate the lives of transgender and gender-expansive people. This day is not only a solemn reminder of the violence and discrimination faced by trans individuals but also a call to action, urging us to protect and support those whose very existence continues to be under attack.

In 2024, at least twenty-five transgender and gender-expansive individuals were tragically and inhumanely taken from us through acts of violence, including gun violence and intimate partner violence. These are not just numbers but human lives with dreams, hopes, and loved ones. Their loss is a painful reminder of the systemic issues that place trans individuals at a much higher risk for violence. Transgender people are disproportionately impacted by domestic violence, physical assault, and murder, simply because of who they are.

Of the lives lost in 2024, 72% were people of color, 44% were Black, and the intersection of racism and transphobia makes these individuals even more vulnerable. Sixty percent of the victims were killed by a gun, highlighting the role that firearms play in the epidemic of violence. Forty-seven percent of the victims knew their killer, often pointing to the grim reality of violence within personal relationships. Furthermore, 32% were misgendered or deadnamed after their deaths, compounding the disrespect and erasure of their identities, even in death. It is essential to remember that this violence is not isolated it stems from a culture of transphobia, systemic inequality, and discrimination that pervades many aspects of society. Trans people face challenges that affect every facet of their lives, from healthcare to employment, to education, and housing, and they are often left vulnerable by the systems meant to protect them.

Trans people deserve to love and be loved. They deserve to live without fear, to exist in a world that values and affirms their identities. They deserve to become elders, sharing their wisdom and experiences with future generations. Trans people deserve life!

As we reflect on the names and lives of those we have lost, let us also commit to creating a world where trans people are safe, celebrated, and able to live authentically. Transgender Day of Remembrance calls on each of us to take action to advocate for policy changes, to support trans rights, and to foster inclusive communities where every person, regardless of their gender identity, can thrive.

Take a moment today to remember and honor the trans individuals who came before us, those who continue to fight for visibility and justice, and those who will follow. Let their memories inspire us to work towards a future where no person is harmed or killed simply for being themselves.



**Dates and
Information to
Remember in
DECEMBER**

Holiday Support

Human Rights Day

World Aids Day

Kwanzaa



HOLIDAYS CAN BE TOUGH: TIS THE SEASON TO GET THROUGH WITH REASON



Family Challenges:

During the holidays, managing family dynamics can be smoother with some planning. Set clear boundaries and communicate expectations ahead of time, including gift-giving and time commitments. Practice self-care by taking breaks and maintaining healthy habits. Focus on positive shared activities like cooking or games, and avoid sensitive topics that might spark conflict. Be mindful of emotional reactions, respect differences, and consider creating new or adapted traditions. If tensions arise, stay calm and have an exit strategy if needed. Emphasize gratitude and enjoy the moment to make the holiday season more enjoyable for everyone.

Drug and Alcohol Support Ideas:

If you're working to stay clean and sober during the holidays, remember that it's okay to feel challenged—this season can be tough. Eating beforehand and alternating with non-alcoholic drinks can help you stay in control. Be gentle with yourself if you encounter triggers, and have a plan to navigate situations that make you uncomfortable, whether it's stepping away or seeking support from someone you trust. It's also okay to engage in or create activities that don't center around alcohol or drugs. Remember, your well-being comes first, and every small step you take is a win.

Drug and Alcohol Support During the Holidays:

The holiday season can be a joyful time, but it can also bring unique challenges, particularly when it comes to drug and alcohol use. Social gatherings, stress, and the pressure to celebrate can lead to difficult situations. It's important to prioritize your well-being during this time. If you or someone you know is struggling, we have resources available below, including individual and group therapy options to support you. Stay safe, take care of yourself, and reach out if you need help.

HOLIDAY SUPPORT CONTINUE:



Financial Challenges:

The holiday season, often a time of joy and celebration, can also bring significant financial challenges, affecting both clinicians and their clients in profound ways. For clinicians, the pressure to maintain the highest standard of care amidst personal financial strain can be overwhelming. Many face the burden of balancing holiday expenses, professional responsibilities, and the emotional toll of supporting clients who may also be experiencing financial hardship.

For clients, the holidays can magnify feelings of stress, anxiety, and inadequacy, especially when financial limitations hinder their ability to partake in traditional celebrations or provide for loved ones. It is crucial to acknowledge these challenges and foster a supportive environment where both clinicians and clients feel understood and valued. By openly addressing the financial pressures that accompany the holiday season, we can work together to create a space where everyone feels empowered to navigate these difficulties with compassion and resilience.

Available Resources:

[SLO City support:](#)

[Food insecurity:](#)

[Food banks nearby](#)

[Too good to go app](#)

Clothes and Toys:

[Operation Santa - SLO County Social Services](#) – (805) 788-2575

[Toy Bank of Greater Paso Robles](#) – (805) 400-9561

[Marine Corps Reserves Toys for Tots](#)

[San Luis Obispo Salvation Army](#)



WORLD AIDS DAY

December 1



World AIDS Day, observed on December 1, is both a solemn occasion and a celebration. It's a day to remember the lives tragically lost to HIV/AIDS and honor those still fighting. It is also an opportunity to confront the deep-seated stigmas that persist, particularly those fueled by transphobia, homophobia, and biphobia. These biases have disproportionately impacted the LGBTQ+ community and continue to create barriers to healthcare, support, and acceptance.

For many, especially transgender women, gay men, and bisexual individuals, the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS is compounded by the discrimination they already face due to their gender identity or sexual orientation. This intersection of prejudices forces many to live in fear, hiding their HIV status out of shame or concern for further marginalization. Too often, trans and queer individuals experience rejection from family, friends, and even healthcare providers. World AIDS Day calls us to actively combat these layered forms of discrimination, ensuring that all individuals—no matter who they are—receive the compassion and care they deserve.

At the same time, this day reminds us of the remarkable resilience of the LGBTQ+ community, which has long been on the frontlines of the fight against HIV/AIDS. Despite facing discrimination, they have been instrumental in advocating for better healthcare, treatment, and prevention. World AIDS Day gives us the chance to recognize this strength and commitment, while also highlighting the ongoing disparities that continue to affect LGBTQ+ people, particularly in access to healthcare.

Medical advancements, including antiretroviral therapy (ART), have transformed HIV from a fatal disease into a manageable condition for many. Today, millions of people living with HIV can lead healthy, fulfilling lives. However, the fight is far from over. Not everyone has equal access to these life-saving treatments, and those in marginalized communities often struggle to get the care they need. Transgender individuals, in particular, face additional challenges, from being misgendered or disrespected in healthcare settings to lacking access to gender-affirming care.

World AIDS Day is a time not only to reflect on these achievements but also to renew our commitment to making healthcare more inclusive and equitable. Ending HIV/AIDS requires that we address the underlying stigmas tied to gender identity and sexual orientation. It requires us to ensure that everyone, regardless of who they are or where they live, has access to the treatments, resources, and support they need to thrive.

Ending the HIV epidemic is not just about the science of treatment but also about dismantling the harmful social stigmas that continue to surround the virus. We must confront transphobia, homophobia, and biphobia head-on, creating a world where all people are treated with dignity. By destigmatizing HIV/AIDS, we can foster better education, access to healthcare, and open dialogue about the realities of living with HIV.

This year, World AIDS Day calls on all of us to stand in solidarity with those affected by HIV. It's a day to honor the lives of those we've lost, celebrate the resilience of those still here, and pledge to create a future where HIV is not a source of fear, shame, or discrimination. Together, we can build a world where HIV is simply a medical condition not a marker of identity—and where everyone is treated with compassion, respect, and understanding.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: DECEMBER 10



Human Rights Day provides an essential opportunity to pause, reflect, and take action. In the current climate, both globally and within our own country, the rights and dignity of many are in jeopardy. It's a day to not only celebrate the victories we've achieved as a global society but also to confront the pressing challenges and injustices that still permeate our world. We live in a time where the rights of individuals and communities continue to be violated whether through systemic discrimination, violence, inequality, or the denial of basic freedoms.

As we commemorate this day, it's important to acknowledge the milestones we've reached. We've seen advancements in gender equality, the protection of marginalized communities, and a broader acceptance of diverse identities. More people are speaking out, mobilizing, and fighting for the inherent dignity of every person. We should celebrate this progress as it is a testament to the resilience and courage of countless activists, leaders, and ordinary people who have dedicated their lives to creating a more just world.

Yet, this Human Rights Day serves as a critical reminder that there is still much work to be done. Too many continue to face discrimination based on their race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, or economic status. The rights to freedom of speech, to education, to safety, and to a decent living remain out of reach for many. In some corners of the world, even the most basic rights like the right to life, to live free from fear and violence are under attack. In the U.S. alone, the rise of xenophobia, transphobia, islamophobia, and anti-Blackness are targets of all vulnerable groups, and the erosion of civil liberties are urgent issues that require our collective attention and action.

This Human Rights Day, let us reflect on not only the wrongs that have been done but also on the world that could be. Imagine a society where everyone has equal access to opportunity, where the rights of all people are protected, and where justice prevails for those who have been marginalized. This vision is not unattainable; it begins with each of us. Whether through advocacy, education, or simply standing in solidarity with those whose voices have been silenced, we each have a role to play in shaping a more just future.

CELEBRATING KWANZAA

DEC 26TH-JAN 1



Kwanzaa is a joyful and vibrant celebration that brings people together to honor African heritage, culture, and community. Created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966, Kwanzaa was born out of the Black Freedom Movement to help African Americans reconnect with their cultural roots and promote values of unity and self-empowerment. It's a week-long celebration, from December 26 to January 1, where families and friends come together to reflect on shared values, honor traditions, and have a lot of fun.

Each day of Kwanzaa focuses on one of the "Nguzo Saba" or seven principles: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith). These principles guide how people connect with their communities, build bonds, and uplift one another. Whether it's lighting the kinara, which holds seven candles symbolizing these principles, or sharing homemade meals and handmade gifts, Kwanzaa is all about celebrating the strength and beauty of African culture and identity.

In 2024, Kwanzaa feels especially important. It's a time to reflect on Black culture and community in the face of ongoing challenges, but also to celebrate resilience, creativity, and joy. From the rich traditions to the festive gatherings, Kwanzaa is a chance to share stories, make music, and cook amazing food, all while reinforcing the importance of unity and purpose.

It's also a time to connect with the deeper meaning behind the celebrations—how communities can support one another, build economic empowerment, and continue a legacy of resistance and resilience. It's not just about looking back at history but also about creating a stronger, more connected future.

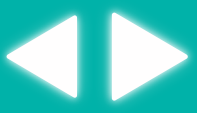


KWANZAA

With all the challenges in today's world, celebrating Kwanzaa in 2024 is a way to keep those vital conversations going about unity, identity, and progress. It's a reminder to find strength in community, joy in traditions, and hope in the future—while having a lot of fun along the way!

Kwanzaa is also a celebration for everyone, whether you've been observing it for years or you're new to the tradition. It's about embracing culture, learning, and building connections across generations. You might attend local Kwanzaa events, learn the significance of African art and symbols, or take part in a feast with foods from different African and African American traditions. The spirit of Kwanzaa encourages creativity, collaboration, and joy, making it a celebration that uplifts the entire community. Whether you're making music, dancing, or simply reflecting on the principles, Kwanzaa brings people together in a powerful and joyous way, year after year.





DEIB PROGRAM IS NOW ON THE WEBSITE!



Checkout our updated website!



The DEIB Program is now prominently featured on our website, which serves as a comprehensive hub for information related to our initiatives. The site provides detailed insights into the DEIB Program, including our team's mission, vision, and strategic approaches. Our strategies focus on key areas such as Leadership and Development, Policy and Program Enhancement, Community Engagement and Partnership, and Continuous Improvement.

To support our goals, the website highlights a range of valuable resources and documents that all community members and staff should familiarize themselves with. These resources include information about active committees, affirming services, and materials available in Spanish and Mixteco. Additionally, users can access important plans and publications, Inclusion and Belonging training opportunities, and other supplementary materials. We are committed to keeping the community informed and engaged, so please expect to find more detailed updates and information about the website in each quarterly circular.



[Click here for the website!](#)



THE SLO SOBERING CENTER

The SLO Sobering Center, managed by Good Samaritan, offers crucial short-term sobering and transition services to individuals in need. As a harm reduction facility, the center provides certified withdrawal management services using a social model approach, with Medication Addiction Treatment (MAT) available when necessary. One of its primary goals is to divert individuals from jail and the legal consequences of minor offenses, offering a safe environment where they can sober up and receive immediate support. The center also plays a key role in connecting individuals to mental health and substance use treatment services, case management, housing, and other essential resources in the community.

Funded by CenCal Health and grants from the County's Opioid Settlement Funds, the Sobering Center is a critical asset in the fight against the opioid crisis. Its 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operation ensures that adults aged 18 and older have constant access to these life-saving services. Located at the Health Agency Campus on Johnson Avenue in San Luis Obispo, the center provides a compassionate, non-judgmental space for individuals to recover and transition to further care.

The importance of sobering centers extends beyond individual communities, they are essential in all counties. Sobering centers reduce the load on emergency rooms and law enforcement by offering an alternative to jail for those with substance use issues. They provide immediate, non-punitive support for individuals at risk of harm due to intoxication, ensuring safety and reducing the likelihood of repeat offenses. By connecting people with ongoing treatment and housing services, sobering centers promote long-term recovery and stability, making them invaluable resources for public health and safety across all regions.

For bed availability at the SLO Sobering Center, call: **(820) 280-0415**.



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2180 Johnson Ave., San Luis Obispo; (805) 781-4275

705 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo; (805) 544-2478

1152 East Grand Avenue Arroyo Grande; (805) 489-4026

1523 Longbranch Ave., Grover Beach; (805) 473-7080

NALOXONE SAVES LIVES

RESOURCES



CRISIS RESOURCES

Central Coast Hotline: call or text 1-800-783-0607

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: call or text 988

Crisis Text Line: text 'HOME' to 741-741

Friendship Line: (People Aged 60+) 1-888-670-1360

Military & Veterans 24/7: call 988 and press 1 or text 838255

Trevor Lifeline: (LGBTQ+ Youth) call 1-866-488-7386 or text 'START' to 678-678



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Aegis Treatment Center: 805- 461-5212

Al-Anon Central Coast: 628-400-3033

Alcoholics Anonymous Central Coast: 805-541-3211

Cal Poly Health Services: (Students Only) 805-756-1211

Central Coast Area Narcotics Anonymous: 800-549-7730

Community Action Partnership (CAPSLO): 805-544-4355

Community Counseling Center: 805-543-7969

County of SLO Behavioral Health: 1-800-838-1381

Crisis Stabilization Unit SLO: (805) 788-2507; **call for bed availability**

Cuesta College Health Services: (Students) 805-546-3171

ECHO Shelters: 805-462-3663

Gala Pride and Diversity Center: 805-541-4252

Hospice of SLO County: 805-544-2266

LINK Family Resource Center: 805-466-5404

Nar-Anon Central CA: 800-477-6291

Restorative Partners: 805-242-1272

SLO Food Bank: 805-238-4664

Sobering Center SLO: (820) 280-0415 **call for bed availability.**

Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA): 805-540-6500

Wilshire Hospice: 805-547-7025

40 Prado: 805-544-4004



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS
OBISPO
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENT



**CENTRAL COAST
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INCLUSION AND BELONGING CIRCULAR

OCT-DEC
2024