

Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles

A Local Community Approach to "Encouraging the Art of Making a Difference"



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FOX 11

This event was a result of EIC's Entertainment and Media Communication Institute's *Mental Healthcare: Media Blueprint Think Tank* where a vision was set forth, "To increase the nation's mental health and decrease the burden of mental illness." It was at this event, EIC vowed to work with members of Congress to communicate about mental health issues at the local level.





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Panelists Philip Bruce, Susan Abram and Dr. Aliza Lifshitz



Foreword

Dear Reader:

Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles is a unique approach to support and position mental health concerns within the community through strategic partnerships dedicated to making a difference. The goal of *Picture This* is to establish ongoing relationships to successfully determine the most pressing mental health-related concerns of the Los Angeles, California area through the convening of local media leadership, Los Angeles-based mental health medical experts, local stakeholders, elected officials, advocacy leaders, policy experts and scholars.

The local "media industry" has a unique ability to influence attitudes and behaviors that affect the public's health by raising awareness and providing accurate, timely and newsworthy information. The Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC), in collaboration with Fox 11 KTTV, developed **Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles** to identify priorities for news coverage, community service activities, public service announcements and story portrayals.

EIC and Fox 11 KTTV are pleased to be catalysts in Los Angeles through a community action media strategy that will serve our public by innovatively addressing mental health issues. During a time when there are many problems that may advance mental illnesses such as the economy, the war, unemployment rate, the housing crisis and the realities of the financial market in America, this is an important and timely initiative.

In the increasingly complex media environment, it is important to note that local media plays an integral role as a primary information source that has the power to reach the public in an unequivocally significant community-centered manner. By enriching the opportunities for local story tellers, news providers, journalists (radio, print, broadcast and online) and public officials to address mental health related stories with a high degree of accuracy, the Los Angeles audience gains greater knowledge while decreasing mental illness stigma in the community.

This publication is intended to encourage further coverage of mental health as well as support the news reporting process with fresh news angles, and timely, accurate information about mental health-related issues. It is also intended to encourage real, personal stories from individuals who have experienced mental illness first-hand, along with tips and ideas for consideration to proactively position mental health concerns in Los Angeles's media space.

It is our pleasure to partner with Congresswoman Grace Napolitano who Co-Chairs the Congressional Mental Health Caucus and Congresswoman Diane Watson, Chair of the Congressional Entertainment Caucus. We are also greatly appreciative of the time dedicated to this effort by all community mental health stakeholders. All those who participated in the forum should be extremely proud of this accomplishment.

Thank you for *your commitment of time* and passion in addressing mental health issues in Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Brian Dyak, President and CEO
Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.
www.eiconline.org

Kevin Hale, General Manager
KTTV Fox 11, Los Angeles
www.myfoxla.com



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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

January 30, 2008

On behalf of the United States Congress and the Constituents of the Thirty-Eighth District, I extend a warm welcome to all distinguished guests who support the invaluable work of the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC), especially Brian and Marie Dyak, and the great work of Fox, in promoting mental health awareness in all media.

I am very honored to join these organizations in recognizing the need to promote accurate, responsible and educational information that will aid in not only ridding the stigmas and fears behind mental illness, but also in helping put a face to this illness. It is all of our responsibility to be the voice for those who have had to suffer in silence. The time has come to throw the shutters open and shed light on an issue that affects the daily lives of so many Americans.

Thank you, KTTV Fox 11, for partnering with EIC and for your vision and dedication to this noble cause. I only hope others will learn of your commitment and join our cause.

As Co-Chair of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, I bring greetings from my Co-chair Representative Tim Murphy, and extend my best wishes as you continue to work in promoting accurate portrayal of mental health in the media and look forward to a long and lasting relationship with you.

I wish your organization many more years of continued success.

With friendship,

Grace J. Nagelitan
Member of Congress



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Introduction & Event Description

The Goal

EIC and Fox 11 united to raise awareness and eradicate the stigma associated with mental health issues. The purpose of *Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles* was simple: Create greater awareness about mental health in Los Angeles through the acquisition, sharing and imparting of knowledge.

Local media (including newscasters and journalists in broadcast, print and online media outlets), medical experts, communication experts, stakeholders and elected officials in the Los Angeles community were convened at Fox 11 KTTV studios to identify strategic ways to strengthen the awareness of mental health issues and services in Los Angeles. A panel of Los Angeles media professionals including, Gerri Shaftel, medical producer at Fox 11 News; Carlos Amezcua, co-anchor of FOX 11 news; Bill Handel, host of "Handel on the Law," a legal advice talk show on KFI AM 640; Susan Abram, reporter at the *Los Angeles Daily News*; and Dr. Aliza Lifshitz, Univisión TV Network's health expert.

This event grew out of EIC's Entertainment and Media Communication Institute's Mental Healthcare: Media Blueprint Think Tank where a vision was set forth: "To increase the nation's mental health and decrease the burden of mental illness." It was at this event, EIC vowed to work with members of Congress to communicate about mental health issues at the local level.

Read on to learn about the conversations that took place and the priorities identified as the most effective way to use the power of the media in changing the way the public perceives mental health. To watch video clips from the event and access up-to-date mental health information, resources and services please visit: <http://media.myfoxtla.com/mentalhealth/> . This website was developed by Fox 11 especially for the *Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles* forum by the KTTV team.



Brian Dyak, President and CEO of the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc., addresses the *Picture This* audience.



Depiction Priorities and Recommendations for Local Los Angeles Media

A diverse representation of experts and professionals, (including individuals representing veterans' affairs, clergy, consumers, psychiatrists and psychologists, researchers, advocates and other stakeholders) who interface with various facets of mental health on a daily basis in Los Angeles was convened to come to a consensus on depiction priorities and recommendations for local media to address mental health.

We asked our Picture This experts this question:

"If mental health-related issues could be addressed in electronic, print and broadcast news in any manner, what are the most important aspects of mental health to communicate to Los Angeles audiences?"

The following reflect the top priorities as identified by our expert attendees:

Priority 1: Represent **diversity in mental health-related news stories to effectively relate to and connect with the Los Angeles community.**

- ▶ Due to the many diverse populations in the Los Angeles community, it is important to have more accurate representations of different ethnic, socioeconomic and age groups within news stories about mental illness.
- ▶ Diversity among families and Los Angeles community members should be represented in reporting about mental health instead of just focusing on a few individual or stereotypical types. Consider the population(s) you are trying to target when developing news stories.
- ▶ A broader and more real spectrum of representation through the media is necessary if we are going to effectively reach Los Angeles communities and constituencies.

Priority 2: Demonstrate that success in recovery is possible with **treatment.**

- ▶ Consider portraying the role of family and friends in effective, successful treatment. To address all aspects of mental illness stories accurately, it is important to acknowledge that treatment involves more than just the individual.
- ▶ Consider emphasizing the downside to keeping mental illness a secret. Communicate that treatment works and recovery happens. It is more expensive and painful to keep it secret.
- ▶ Consider communicating messages that share stories of people that have lived the experience and recovered. Going a step beyond to provide resources and appropriate, accurate information is important because people do not always know where to go and what to do when they are confronted with mental illness. Consider including action steps to reinforce treatment and recovery.
- ▶ Confront the fear of treatment in a straightforward manner and end suffering now. The simple message that treatment works is one that cannot be overstated. There are ways to get better



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and by portraying treatment and recovery in news stories about mental health, people are able to understand mental illness.

- ▶ Compelling stories about mental illness portrays the importance of seeking help for mental health in addition to substance abuse and domestic violence. The interaction among these three issues is very real and often hard to differentiate. This not only makes for compelling news stories, but also provides an opportunity to address the possibilities for successful treatment and recovery.
- ▶ Consider reporting about the services that are available and the services that are needed in Los Angeles to make treatment and recovery an attainable goal.
- ▶ Portray the negative consequences that are associated with not getting treatment, in addition to showing the positive outcomes associated with receiving treatment.

Priority 3: Portray the importance of navigating the system and access to care.

- ▶ Following great representation of mental health-related issues through stories in the news media, attention must be paid to communicating action steps. For example, how does the Los Angeles family or individual get access to treatment? How do we get to a psychiatrist? How do we get to a psychologist? How do we get to a therapist of some sort? How do we get involved now in treatment, if we have a family member or even ourselves who we can relate to in those news stories?
- ▶ Many Los Angeles populations do not know how to navigate the system, even at times when resources are provided. Consider making sure all information is represented in a manner that is user and culturally friendly to make it easier to achieve the greatest access to care.
- ▶ Include information in news stories to educate the Los Angeles community about access including insurance, service providers, where to go for help, how to get to these places, and what to look for when seeking treatment.
- ▶ With the high rates of returning veterans, stories about mental health and mental illness within the VA system are not only compelling, they also provide the opportunity to address access to treatment (or lack thereof) for veterans.
- ▶ In addition to addressing access to treatment, consider reporting about the quality and delivery of services. We cannot assume that the type of care that is delivered is providing the desired outcomes. Consider portraying cultural competence and quality of services delivered from both the patient and provider perspectives.
- ▶ Consider that people in the Los Angeles community may have access in terms of their care, but the coverage is very limited in some ways and may also be restricted. Portray the realities of access to care in addition to access to follow up support services in the Los Angeles community.
- ▶ Portray access to mental illness treatment in a manner that is normalizing and inclusive within the community. In other words, these issues need not be addressed as a separate mental health treatment component, but rather portrayed as accessible to the Los Angeles community as an important element of overall health and wellbeing.



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- ▶ Consider the importance of health literacy when developing news stories. In other words, the ways in which mental illness is being depicted and the ways that media representatives develop messages to tell stories needs to be understandable and accessible at all levels. Message design and delivery are most effective when they are tailored to receiving audiences.

Priority 4: Reduce stigma attached to mental illness by clearly and accurately portraying diverse individuals, families and social networks dealing with real-life brain diseases.

- ▶ In the Los Angeles community it is important to keep in mind the way news stories may depict different cultural groups, including representing families from different backgrounds as well as age groups using intergenerational and multigenerational angles. Reduced stigma through the portrayals of these many different cultural groups is important in Los Angeles because some cultural groups are not as willing to be open about mental health-related issues. Media provides an opportunity to help open up that dialogue in a safe place and through trusted sources.
- ▶ At times there seems to be an underlying perspective that mental illness is something that is unnatural, something that's not part of us, or something that should not be talked about. Consider using story angles that demonstrate that we, as a society, are all in this together. This can help correct an "us versus them" dichotomy that fuels further stigma.
- ▶ Consider the importance of portraying providers of mental health care in addition to patients: their competence, burn out, and the stigma they may harbor due to preconceived notions society at times places upon providers.
- ▶ Remember when developing news reports that mental illness looks like all of us because it affects all of us. Consider the fact that media has the opportunity to normalize the face of mental illness through news stories. Work with local mental health stakeholders and those with real experience to portray mental illness and provide accurate information and messages.
- ▶ Consider addressing the reality of emotions that relate to diagnosis, treatment and stigma such as feelings of resentment, misunderstandings, guilt, mistrust and confusion. Recognizing that others are going through the same emotions provides a sense of support, relief and encouragement to move forward with treatment and recovery.

"Media brings to our homes information, messages, and it is part of our family, so we welcome you in media as family members." — Dr. Ana Nogales



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Your Developing News Stories

Questions to Ask

Here are some sample questions to ask as you are researching and developing stories involving mental health:

- ▶ Can you position the story in a manner that focuses on the successes of individuals with mental illness rather than negative depictions that may perpetuate stigma and feelings of fear, mistrust and shame?
- ▶ Does the storyline convey that effective treatments for most conditions of mental health-related illnesses are available (but underutilized)?
- ▶ Does the storyline acknowledge the person's problems and struggles as well as the positive aspects of his or her life to give a more balanced report with hope?
- ▶ Does the audience see the effects of mental illness on relatives and friends?
- ▶ Did the individual have a problem with substance abuse?
- ▶ Does the storyline convey that mental illness is a form of physical illness rather than a character flaw?

Language/Terminology

It is essential to use healthy terminology when writing about mental health. Using the proper terminology can eliminate stigma in society.

Keep in mind that a person suffering from a mental illness is not defined by the illness. Oftentimes people are referred to as the illness and not as a person that is coping with the illness. To ensure you use healthy terminology and expressions, see the list below to guide you to express mental health issues in a sensitive and respectful manner.

Disrespectful Language:

▶ Derogatory Labels

Avoid, where possible, any slang term referring to mental illness, including crazy, lunatic, nuts, deranged, deficient, wacko, loony tune, psycho, mad, freak, weirdo, schizo, manic, handicapped, special, slow, low-functioning, retarded, disturbed, weird, strange, insane, loco, abnormal, normal, and other words with negative connotations or inherent judgments. Also, avoid phrases such as "off his meds" when used in a judgmental or derogatory context.



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Myths vs. Facts¹

Your accurate, timely news stories provide an indispensable public service by debunking common myths and misconceptions about mental health-related issues.

The following myths and facts may help to clarify mental health issues and underscore the need to address the priority messages identified regarding treatment, stigma, hope, integration of healthcare, parity, and decriminalization of the mentally ill.

Myth: There's no hope for people with mental illnesses.

Fact: There are more treatments, strategies, and community support systems than ever before, and even more are on the horizon. People with mental illnesses lead active, productive lives.

Myth: I can't do anything for someone with mental health needs.

Fact: You can do a lot, starting with the way you act and how you speak. You can nurture an environment that builds on people's strengths and promotes good mental health.

Myth: People with mental illnesses are violent and unpredictable.

Fact: In reality, the vast majority of people who have mental health needs are no more violent than anyone else. You probably know someone with a mental illness and don't even realize it.

Myth: Mental illnesses cannot affect me.

Fact: Mental illnesses are surprisingly common; they affect almost every family in America. Mental illnesses do not discriminate—they can affect anyone.

Myth: Mental illness is the same as mental retardation.

Fact: The two are distinct disorders. A mental retardation diagnosis is characterized by limitations in intellectual functioning and difficulties with certain daily living skills. In contrast, people with mental illnesses—health conditions that cause changes in a person's thinking, mood, and behavior—have varied intellectual functioning, just like the general population.

Myth: Mental illnesses are brought on by a weakness of character.

Fact: Mental illnesses are a product of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. Research has shown genetic and biological factors are associated with schizophrenia, depression, and other mental illnesses. Social influences, such as loss of a loved one or a job, can also contribute to the development of various disorders.

Myth: People with mental illnesses cannot tolerate the stress of holding down a job.

Fact: In essence, all jobs are stressful to some extent. Productivity is maximized when there is a good match between the employee's needs and working conditions, whether or not the individual has mental health needs.

Myth: People with mental health needs, even those who have received effective treatment and have recovered, tend to be second-rate workers on the job.

Fact: Employers who have hired people with mental illnesses report good attendance and punctuality, as well as motivation, quality of work, and job tenure on par with or greater than other employees. Studies by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the National Alliance for the Mentally



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Ill (NAMI) show that there are no differences in productivity when people with mental illnesses are compared to other employees.

Myth: Once people develop mental illnesses, they will never recover.

Fact: Studies show that most people with mental illnesses get better, and many recover completely.

Recovery refers to the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities. For some individuals, recovery is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life. For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms. Science has shown that having hope plays an integral role in an individual's recovery.

Myth: Therapy and self-help are wastes of time. Why bother when you can just take one of those pills you hear about on TV?

Fact: Treatment varies depending on the individual. A lot of people work with therapists, counselors, their peers, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and social workers in their recovery process. They also use self-help strategies and community supports. Often, these methods are combined with some of the most advanced medications available.

Myth: Children do not experience mental illnesses. Their actions are just products of bad parenting.

Fact: A report from the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health showed that in any given year 5-9 percent of children experience serious emotional disturbances. Just like adult mental illnesses, these are clinically diagnosable health conditions that are a product of the interaction of biological, psychological, social, and sometimes even genetic factors.

Myth: Children misbehave or fail in school just to get attention.

Fact: Behavior problems can be symptoms of emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders, rather than merely attention-seeking devices. These children can succeed in school with appropriate understanding, attention, and mental health services.



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Our Picture This Los Angeles Key Speakers, Media Panelists and Facilitators

Key Speakers:

Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, Co-Chair of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus

"Having the media work with us to address mental health issues that we, in America, struggle with every day is something that we have been dreaming about. Collaborating with mental health stakeholders is groundbreaking and I am honored to join everyone here in recognizing the need to communicate accurate information about mental illness to the public to dispel fear and stigma associated with an issue that affects so many Americans.

What influence can the media bring to mental illness? Media has the great ability to reach thousands if not millions of people in the Los Angeles market that is so vibrant. Media is able to provide factual information that will help identify where individuals can go to seek help. Over half of the American population gets their information from television and other media outlets. More than fifty percent of the U.S. population has three television sets in their homes. This demonstrates how vital the delivery of media services is in ensuring the provision of accurate information in an easily understandable and accessible manner.

Another important element that media can influence, especially in Los Angeles, is addressing stigma in a culturally sensitive manner. We have such a multicultural society here and the public needs to understand that mental illness affects all cultural groups. It discriminates against nobody. It has no boundaries. It has no color. It has no age. Media can educate the public about warning signs, risk factors of not seeking medical help and promote facts about mental health to all cultural groups."



Over half of the American population gets their information from television and other media outlets.



Congresswoman Diane Watson, Chair of the Congressional Entertainment Caucus

"I sincerely appreciate all of you who have come here this afternoon. It is essential to communicate about important health issues, including mental illness. I cannot say a greater thanks to EIC and to Kevin Hale and the Fox

Do you know that in the next 24 hours, 1439 teens will attempt suicide?



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KTTV Team for recognizing that the media plays a large role in generating awareness. I commend those who have worked hard in media, the entertainment industry and in politics for their work to address substance abuse and mental health issues.

Do you know that in the next 24 hours, 1439 teens will attempt suicide? Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people 15 to 19 years old. Population studies show that at any point in time, 10 to 15 percent of children and adolescents have some symptoms of depression. Also, between 20 percent and 40 percent of adolescents with major depression develop bipolar disorders within five years after the depression onset.

It should be noted that the population in Los Angeles grows by about 2,000 each day. People come to our great community with different cultures and different customs. Some of these individuals, especially families in the lower income brackets that do not have the resources, are falling through the cracks. Some are ashamed to say that they need help, or that a family member has a mental illness. The important thing to remember is that mental illness is manageable with the proper help and treatment.

**Kevin Hale,
General Manager, Fox KTTV Channel 11**

"On behalf of all of us at Fox 11, I would like to welcome all our participants, mental health professionals and media representatives. We are very happy to be a part of this event and pleased to be a catalyst to help bring some of the troubling issues that we're all dealing with right now to the forefront in Los Angeles.

I'd like to also thank Congresswoman Napolitano, Co-chair of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, and Congresswoman Diane Watson, Chair of the Congressional Entertainment Caucus, for attending today. It is very timely that we are meeting here today to talk about mental illness at a time with layoffs and rising unemployment, a housing crisis and a lot of things that are upsetting people.

I wanted to begin with a short story. In the early 1920s, in a small town in Great Falls, Montana, a little boy and his Mom went into a dry goods store to pick up some supplies and groceries. When the owner of the store saw them, he ran over with a big bowl of candy and went up to the little boy and asked if he'd like a handful of candy.

The boy was a little shy and pulled back, so the owner offered to give him a hand. The owner put his hand in and gave the young lad a fistful of candy. When they got outside, his mother asked the boy why he was so shy when the owner wanted to offer him candy. The little boy replied very simply, "Because his hands are bigger than mine."

I thought about that story and I thought about what we are doing here today. I

believe that when the media and the mental health professionals in this community work together, we



I believe that when the media and the mental health professionals in this community work together, we have bigger hands.



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have bigger hands. We can do a better job in addressing mental health issues due to your participation in our joint efforts.

I am very pleased to have you all here today and I know we are going to have a very productive afternoon. We are already taking steps in the right direction by live web streaming this forum and dedicating an entire section on our website, MyFoxLA.com, to mental health as an ongoing resource for information about mental.

I am proud to continue the partnership which we have begun. Thank you."



**Paul Barkopoulos, M.D.,
Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine,
UCLA; Attending Medical Staff,
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center at UCLA**

"Thank you all for coming today. Over the summer, I had the pleasure of participating in EIC's Entertainment and Communication Media Institute Think Tank for Mental Health issues. Much of the reason we are gathered here today is an outcome of that Think Tank and Congressional briefing around bridging gaps within research, practice and communication about mental illnesses.

From a personal perspective, I have spent 99 percent of my time in my office treating patients. These are typically individuals who have spent years dealing with various issues and then finally come to see me when they feel their lives are devas-

tated. They want me to tell them that they are just nervous and do not have mental illness, such as bipolar disorder, because they do not want to be deemed "crazy" and deal with that stigma. If society and media perceive that people with mental illnesses are insane, psychotic, or violent, it makes people avoid coming into my office.

Those who finally come in to see me are the ones who are onboard already. It may have taken years, but they are onboard. Most will come in and they will begin medication and proper treatment. The important element is that it is just the tip of the iceberg. All those people who do not come in are out there suffering.

I ask myself what is the best way to deal with this? I can provide Internet sites to visit and books to read, but

accurate representations of mental illness through news media and entertainment programming have a powerful reach and impact. I was truly honored to be involved in the Mental Healthcare Think Tank in Washington because it brought together actors, communication experts, media leaders and medical experts to discuss ways to get mental health messages out to inform audiences at large.

The Think Tank provided the chance to brainstorm and problem solve with perspectives representing

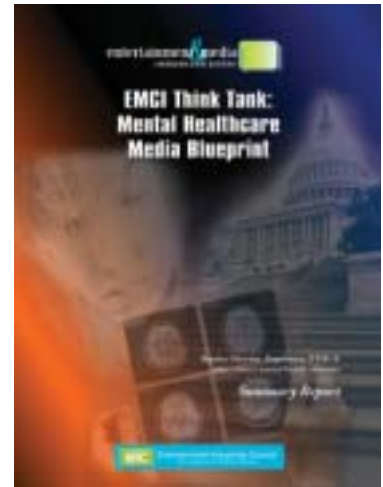
Accurate representations of mental illness through news media and entertainment programming have a powerful reach and impact



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various disciplines. The outcome from that event included accurate messages and depiction suggestions for media, but also put forward a value proposition to elected officials to work together and make communicating about mental illness a priority. Please read the Think Tank report in its entirety by visiting http://eiconline.org/z_images/THINK_TANKfor_web.pdf.

Today's Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles is a direct extension of that in working with Congresswoman Grace Napolitano and Congresswoman Diane Watson along with media representatives and mental healthcare leaders. Thank you to everyone for your hard work and dedication."



Media Panelists:

Geri Shaftel, Health Producer, KTTV Fox 11

"One of the big challenges in covering mental health is access to patients. Often, doctors and caregivers feel that it's inappropriate to ask their patients if they would be interested in sharing their stories. It is not a violation of HCPA to tell patients that their situation would make a good story and that it helps others feel

less alone if they knew what you were going through. I encourage you to be open to discussing the possibility with patient's stories that draw you in. The mental health

stigma is huge; people feel it is different from a knee or a back injury. I think it's important to know that when we tell these stories, every person who has a challenge also has a gift. And what we do is look for that gift and present balance, so that we present the whole person. I think television is a 'show me' medium, so what we can do in television that you can't do on the Internet and print is to take the viewer into people's lives and show what the world looks like to them. I encourage you to contact me with these stories."

I think television is a 'show me' medium, so what we can do in television that you can't do on the Internet and print is to take the viewer into people's lives and show what the world looks like to them.



Carlos Amezcua, Anchor, KTTV Fox 11

"We cover the news every day and we touch the issues that viewers deal with on a daily basis through our nightly newscast. Television is a one-on-one medium and our reporters do thorough research on the stories we tell. We report what we believe to be fair, accurate and true. And we take it very seriously. If we present stories that tweak you a little bit, that you don't particularly care for, or you think we're not well informed to give a complete and accurate picture, then I



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challenge you to pick up the phone, or send an email or note and ask to speak to one of us. We don't always know if a story is inaccurate unless you tell us. We're glad to retract it, correct it, or expand on it. Even with studio lights, cameras and anchors, the real story is that we are here as a public service to you and to tell the stories of the people that you encounter in our community. And that's what the partnership is all about, that's what Kevin Hale was talking about; the 'big hands.'

Because we're all interconnected, and what affects you, affects us.

Because we're all interconnected, and what affects you, affects us."

**Bill Handel,
Radio Host, KFI AM 640**

"I'm a radio talk show host. There are 300 radio markets in the United States, ranging from New York and L.A. with millions of listeners, to tiny markets with thousands of listeners. Virtually every market has a talk show. Knowing talk show hosts as I do, they are not the paragon of mental health! I'm going to take my field, very narrow that it is, as an example of how to get the word out. We've all had major issues. So I'm thinking, what are the issues that I talk about, that I live, that I share with everybody? Three immediately came to mind without even blinking-drug addiction, autism and bipolar disorder. I get emails from PR agencies all day long. If someone writes me about autism, I'm looking. If someone writes to me about the issues of ADHD in private school, I'm looking. Certainly drug addiction, I'm looking. There are advertising agencies that specialize in what is called 'endorsed commercials,' where the hosts and personalities of music radio and talk radio know everything about their listeners. The advertisers know listeners' interests and who they are. Contact these advertisers; I'll give you the names of the agencies. You are a non-profit. They won't say no. Tell them you are a member of a mental health organization, do you have anybody on your staff who has family, who has friends, who has kids, who have been through that issue before?"



**Philip Bruce,
General Manager, National Public Radio**

"What we do at National Public Radio when we cover a story is try to explain why and try to look at it as an example of things that are happening across America. And I think that's maybe the different kind of layer that we can add upon it. And I cannot emphasize to you enough when you're hearing from all these other fine journalists here, the need for us to be able to talk to human beings. If you're familiar with

What we do at National Public Radio when we cover a story is try to explain why and try to look at it as an example of things that are happening across America.

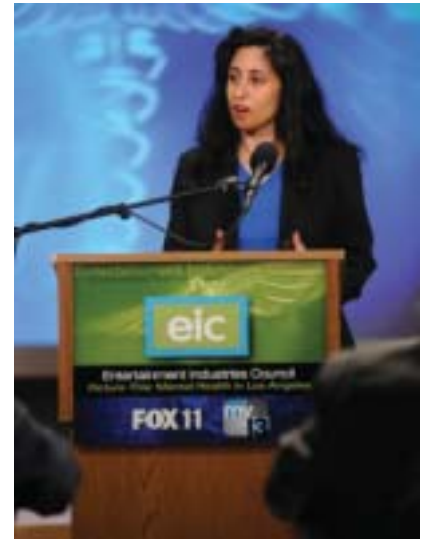


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what we do, we try to give deep personal stories. You've heard of these 'driveway moments.' Some of them are funny. Some of them are things that you may be able to tell a friend. Some of them are tragic. Some of them are sad. But they're memorable. And we hope to have a lot of those in every broadcast we have. The value of that to all of you as health care professionals is if you create a memory that helps somebody realize what problem they're facing, it may not be just theirs and that they realize that there's someplace to get some help, I think we've all accomplished something there."

**Susan Abram,
Writer, Los Angeles Times**

"A message that I really want to get out is that newspapers still allow readers into other people's lives, but we do it with words. We don't want to just 'tell,' we want to 'show.' And that's our challenge. With decreasing staff and smaller papers, we're relying on all of you to be our eyes and our ears. We cover the San Fernando Valley and it's a challenge for us, because of the large geographic area. If something is happening nationally, we like to localize our stories and find someone who is experiencing the same issue. As breaking news moves onto the Web and is covered more heavily by television, we at newspapers are now more enterprising. We do have the opportunity to find stories that might not be covered by them. Often times television reporters open up the morning paper and take a look and say, you know, that's a great story idea.



A message that I really want to get out is that newspapers still allow readers into other people's lives, but we do it with words.

Much news media still respond to press kits more than video disks, so when a story runs in a local paper, please include it in your kits."

**Dr. Alicia Lifshitz,
Univisión Health Reporter and Radio Host, KTNQ**

"The Latino media is doing a lot related to healthcare in the Latino community, but there's more that needs to be done, especially with mental health issues. If you think that there is stigma in the general public related to mental health, when it comes to the Latino community, it is magnified by leaps and bounds; many are cultural. And professionally, I've had the privilege of seeing how Latinos react to the potential diagnosis of mental disease, both in my office and when they call my radio show. And as an internist, I know that depression can manifest



The Latino media is doing a lot related to healthcare in the Latino community, but there's more that needs to be done, especially with mental health issues.



Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles

itself in many different ways. People feel comfortable calling me because I am not threatening. And in some ways they are amenable to discussing things and are more open to listening. Patients say that they do not believe in psychologists or psychiatrists. I'm not a mental health professional, but I usually tell them that psychologists and psychiatrists are professional people that studied to help other people. You don't have to believe in these professionals, that you basically just make appointments with them. I open the door so that they can go. I give them permission to go to a mental health professional."

John Noble, Actor, Fringe

"It's so evident that the media have an incredibly important role to play in helping people to understand about mental illness. Simple case, the show that I do this week alone played to over 12 million people. It's an astonishing thing to think that you actually reach out and touch that many people in one hour. And so the role that we play in television is just enormous. What we can do, if we get it right, is to help the public to better understand mental health issues, to help them see that people with mental illnesses can lead productive lives if they get the right diagnosis and treatments. Equally important, is that we can help to reduce the stigma that's attached to people with mental illness and always has been."

What we can do, if we get it right, is to help the public to better understand mental health issues.

Table Facilitators Share Their Thoughts

...Why Los Angeles?



"*Picture This* is a coalition of health care professionals, media experts, creative artists, communication specialists, and politicians, all coming together for the purpose of creating a massive blueprint that will allow for accurate care portrayals of mental health issues to effectively reach all Americans. Then, *Picture This*, a subsequent gathering of all these disciplines again, but this time with a uniquely L.A. flavor. Los Angeles, the media capital of the world, brimming with a huge population of people craving mental health access and knowledge, brimming with fine centers of learning and wonderful creative talent, as the perfect vanguard community to put it all together and help lead the rest of the nation. The picture just gets brighter and brighter."

—Dr. Paul Barkopolous, M.D., M.P.H., Assistant Clinical Professor UCLA



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"The issues we face related to mental health in the Los Angeles community, in many ways, mirror the issues we face as a larger society. Stigma is a subtle and insidious poison to our community, hampering advancement in prevention, recognition, and treatment of mental illness. Media coverage can be a potent antidote and despite having different perspectives and agendas, if legislators, media, and mental health professionals can continue to work together for the betterment of our community, great things will come."

—Dr. Praveen Kambam, M.D., Chief Fellow Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior

"Los Angeles is looked upon by people around the world not only as a uniquely exciting and dynamic city, but as a role model for its progressive, forward-thinking culture. Unfortunately, Los Angeles is also known as the "gang capital of the nation," and the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) determined that L.A. has the second highest illicit drug use, binge alcohol use, and cigarette consumption among our nation's metropolitan areas. Given our diverse population, which includes a broad range of ethnic groups and economic levels, our city has crucial mental health needs. But available mental health services are scarce. We need to take care of our Angelinos. If we fail to do so, we face not only increased health costs; we will also pay the price of increased mental illness and its impact on our families, our communities and our overall economic productivity. The mental health of our citizens needs to become a top priority if Los Angeles is to live up to its worldwide exemplary reputation."



—Dr. Ana Nogales, Licensed Clinical Psychologist



"Mental health matters at this time more than any other as families navigate the complexities of living in the Los Angeles metro area (e.g. Traffic, schools, jobs, and daily living pressures). Mental health is one of the most important health issues that family members must recognize and face in the 21st century as signs and symptoms most often are first detected via friends and family. We must educate families to recognize the signs and symptoms of the wide array of mental health issues uniquely impacting our Los Angeles metro area as well as provide specific, concrete tools to truly help those struggling with mental health issues when they need it."

—Dr. Lisa Sparks, Presidential Research Fellow in Health and Risk Communication, Professor and Director, M.S. in Health Communication, Chapman University



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What is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to a state of emotional and psychological well-being. Mental illness may include any of various conditions characterized by impairment of an individual's normal cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning, and caused by social, psychological, biochemical, genetic, or other factors.

Mental illness-related issues are very common in the United States. An estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. That is about one in four adults.ⁱⁱ

Mental Illnesses Defined:

- ▶ What is depression? Depression is a serious medical illness - not something exaggerated or made up. It is more than just feeling "down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days. It involves feeling "down" and "low" and "hopeless" for weeks at a time.ⁱⁱⁱ
- ▶ What is Bipolar Disorder? Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a serious medical illness that causes severe shifts in a person's mood, energy and ability to function.^{iv}
- ▶ What is Schizophrenia? Contrary to the common misconception, it does not mean "split personality," but rather represents a constellation of symptoms that can include unclear thinking, feeling paranoid and hearing voices or seeing things others cannot. Schizophrenia is one of the most disabling and vexing mental disorders; just as "cancer" refers to numerous related illnesses; many researchers now consider schizophrenia to be a group of mental disorders rather than a single illness.^v
- ▶ What is Social Phobia? Social Phobia, or Social Anxiety Disorder, is an anxiety disorder characterized by overwhelming anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations. Social phobia can be limited to only one type of situation-such as a fear of speaking in formal or informal situations, or eating or drinking in front of others-or, in its most severe form, may be so broad that a person experiences symptoms almost anytime they are around other people.^{vi}
- ▶ Crisis Mental Health Response: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recommends that every community should have a Crisis Mental Health Plan as part of its overall Emergency Operations Plan. Local mental health providers are pre-trained and their job descriptions include responding to the psychological needs of first responders and community members during and after community crises. Crisis mental health responders may be drawn from community mental health centers, crime victim assistance programs, faith-based counseling agencies and social service agencies that serve special populations.





Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles

California Facts and Figures: Did You Know...?

Mental Health Measures:

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), 10.23 percent of adults 18 years of age or older in California suffer from serious psychological distress. This translates to 2,672 adults. In addition, 6.14 percent of adults in California had at least one major depressive episode, which is 1605 people. The percentage of youth in California, ages 0 to 17 suffering from serious psychological distress is 7.78.^{vii}

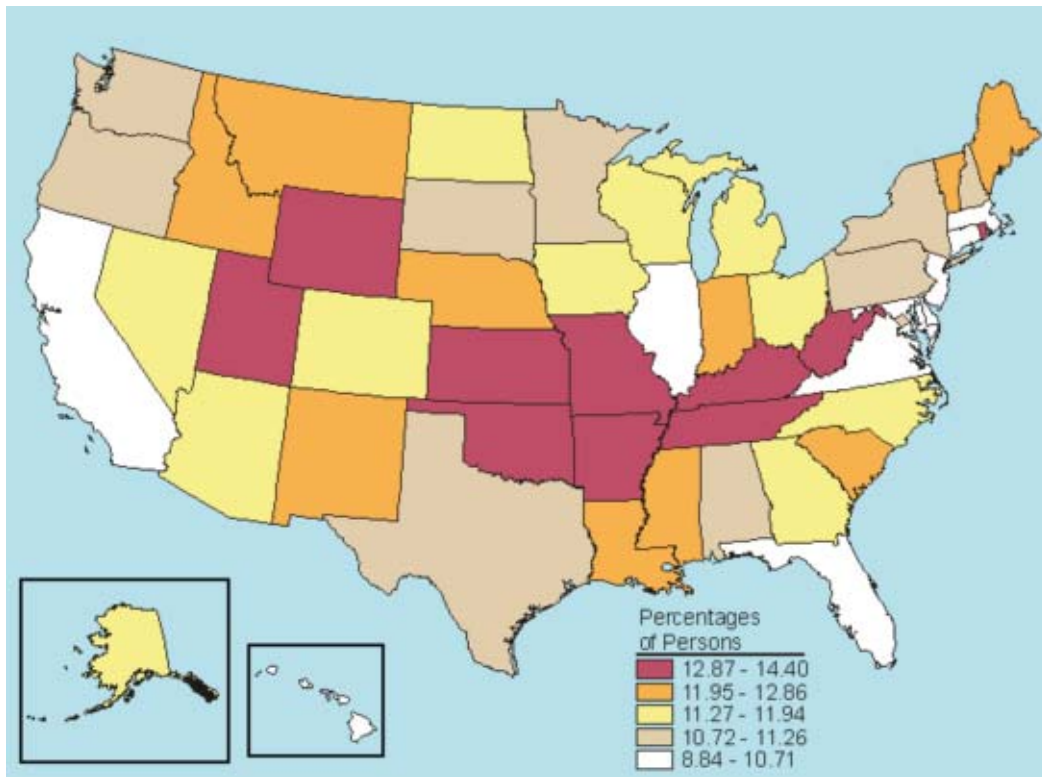


Image Source: SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2005 and 2006.

In California, suicide is the 10th ranking cause of death, with an average of 3,152 residents dying each year. This translates to an average of 8.6 suicides every day. California has a total of 15,931 hospitalized suicide attempts per year. This translates to 43.6 suicide attempts every day or 47.2 attempts per 100,000 people.^{viii}

According to SAMHSA, rates of past year major depressive episodes have remained among the lowest in the country for all population groups, except those age 12 to 17, for whom the rates have been at or slightly lower than those in the total U.S. population.^{ix}



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California's voters passed The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) in the November 2004 General Election. MHSA promised to greatly improve the delivery of mental health services and treatment across the State of California.

The MHSA represents a comprehensive approach to the development of community-based mental health services and supports for the residents of California. The MHSA addresses a broad continuum of prevention, early intervention and service needs and the necessary infrastructure, technology and training elements that will effectively support this system. To provide an orderly implementation of MHSA, the California Department of Mental Health planned for sequential phases of development for each of the components.

Access to Care:

In California, 20 percent of the population does not have health insurance. This statistic includes 800,000 children. In addition, 80 percent of the uninsured families have a family member working full time, year round. Uninsured workers want to avoid going to the doctor if at all possible. This can lead to worsening conditions.^x

Mental Health Services:

The California Department of Mental Health operates five state hospitals with an average daily stay of 878 people.^{xi} The Metropolitan State Hospital (MSH) provides five different treatment programs for individuals with different needs. Services from one of the five California Department of Mental Health hospitals are available to residents from all 58 California counties.



Marie Dyak, EIC Executive VP, addressing the group.



Los Angeles Community Resources

100 Black Men of Los Angeles, Inc
<http://www.100bmla.org/>
(323) 294-7444

A Thousand Joys
<http://www.athousandjoys.org/>
(626) 858-9946

African American Health Consortium
<http://www.cbhn.org/>

American Psychiatric Nurses Association (CA Chapter)
<http://www.calapna.org/>
(866) 243-2443

Associated Hispanic Physicians of Southern California, Inc.
<http://www.ahpsc.com/>
(877) 457-4377

Bay Area Consortium for Quality Health Care
<http://www.bacqhc.org/>
(510) 652-3300 or (510) 835-2262

Black Health Leadership Council of Los Angeles, Inc.
<http://www.blackhealthcouncil.org/>
(323) 299-2227

California Black Women's Health Project
<http://www.cabwhp.org/>
(310) 412-1828

California Latino Medical Association
<http://www.calma.org/>
323.266.2455

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
<http://www.cpehn.org/>
(510) 832-1160

California Promotora Network
<http://www.visionycompromiso.org/>

California Veterans Board
<http://www.cdva.ca.gov/>
(916) 653-2041

City of Norwalk, CA
<http://www.ci.norwalk.ca.us/>
562-929-5700

City of Pomona, CA
<http://www.ci.pomona.ca.us/>

Community Health Councils, Inc.
<http://www.chc-inc.org/>
323.295.9372

Council of Black Nurses - Los Angeles
<http://www.cbnlosangeles.org/>
(213) 892-6939

L.A. County Department of Mental Health
<http://dmh.lacounty.gov/>
800-854-7771
24 Hour Hotline

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
<http://www.dbsalliance.org/>
(800) 826-3632

Department of Public Safety (Norwalk)
<http://www.ci.norwalk.ca.us/publicsafety2.asp>
(562) 929-5732
Division of Juvenile Justice

Southern Youth Correctional Reception Center and Clinic
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions_Boards/DJJ/About_DJJ/Locations/SRCC.html
(562) 868-9979

Facing Bipolar
<http://www.facingbipolar.com/>

Family Success by Design, Inc.
<http://www.familysuccessbydesign.org/>
(626) 305-0144

Helpline Youth Counseling
<http://www.helplineyouthcounseling.org/>
(562) 864-3722

L.A. Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse
<http://www.lacada.com/>
Outpatient: (562) 906-2676
Residential: (562) 906-2685
HIV/AIDS Prevention: (800) 458-4132

Latino Behavioral Health Institute
<http://www.lbhi.org/>
(818) 831-3395



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Latino Health Access

<http://www.latinohhealthaccess.org/>
714-542-7792

Los Angeles County Office of Education

<http://www.lacoe.edu/>
562 922-6111

Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center

<http://www.lagaycenter.org/>
(323) 993-7400

Los Angeles Hispanic Health Network

<http://www.hispanicnet.org/>
213-739-7016

Los Angeles Urban League

<http://www.laul.org/>
(323) 753-2401

Mental Health Association (Los Angeles County)

<http://www.mhala.org/>
888-242-2522, ext. 225

NAMI - California

<http://www.namicalifornia.org/>
(916) 567-0163

NAMI (Asian Pacific Los Angeles)

<http://www.namicalifornia.org/>
(213) 252-2100

NAMI (Los Angeles South Central)

<http://www.namicalifornia.org/>
(213) 473-3607

NAMI (Urban Los Angeles)

<http://www.namiurbanla.org/>
(323)294-7814

NAMI (Westside Los Angeles)

<http://www.namila.org/>
(310)478-8761

NAMI (Whittier)

<http://www.namicalifornia.org/>
(562) 692-8006

National Coalition of 100 Black Women (LA Chapter)

<http://www.ncbw.org/>
(310) 837-5495

Nogales Psychological Counseling Inc.

<http://www.ananogales.com/>
213-384-7660

Pacific Clinics

http://www.pacificclinics.org/los_angeles_county.html
(626) 254-5000

Phoenix House

<http://www.phoenixhouse.org/california/>
800-378-4435

Rio Hondo Temporary Home

<http://www.riohondohome.org/>
562/863.8805

SFS Lions Club (Veteran)

<http://norwalklions.tripod.com/>

Southern Youth Correctional Reception Center and Clinic

<http://www.span-california.org/>
760/753-4565

Tri-City Mental Health Center

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions_Boards/DJJ/About_DJJ/Locations/SRCC.html
(562) 868-9979

Vet-to-Vet Program

<http://www.tricitymhs.org/>
(909) 623-6131

EIC commends Fox 11 KTTV as the first station in the Los Angeles market to take the lead in establishing a comprehensive mental health resource page on their website. Please visit [http://media.myfoxLos Angeles.com/special/mentalhealth.html](http://media.myfoxLosAngeles.com/special/mentalhealth.html) to gain mental health information as well as to consider how you might also create a mental health resource page.



Acknowledgements

Researching health issues can be as basic as finding research papers on the Internet or as complex as delving into public policy and the philosophical positions of interest groups. Most important is the perspective of people who, for one reason or another, make a deeper commitment by dedicating their time to a cause.

This document is a publication resulting from a formal meeting of experts in the field of mental health as well as print, electronic and broadcast news media professionals at Fox 11 KTTV in Los Angeles, California. Numerous individuals and organizations provided insight into the complex issues surrounding mental health and related concerns as we created *Picture This: Mental Health in Los Angeles*.

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100 Black Men of Los Angeles, Inc.
A Thousand Joys
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End Notes

ⁱSubstance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. "SAMHSA'S Resource Center to Promote Acceptance, Dignity, and Social Inclusion Associated with Mental Health: Myths and Facts." 7 July 2007 http://www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov/publications/myths_facts.aspx

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^xCalifornia Department of Mental Health. "Mental Health Services Act." 9 June 2009 http://www.dmh.ca.gov/prop_63/MHSA/docs/Mental_Health_Services_Act_Full_Text.pdf

^{xi}California Department of Mental Health. "State Hospitals: Seclusion and Restraint Data." 9 June 2009 http://www.dmh.ca.gov/Services_and_Programs/State_Hospitals/S_and_R/default.asp

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