



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BUILDING STRONG MINDS

MENTAL HEALTH & SUPPORT | YMCA YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals ages 15-34 in California¹

7.1% of high school students in San Diego Unified School District attempted suicide in the past 12 months²

69% of youth experience mental health challenges while homeless³

THE Y's RESPONSE

YMCA Youth & Family Services works to ensure that all children and young adults can access behavioral health, psychiatric support, and mental health treatment regardless of the severity of their symptoms and any health insurance restrictions.

ABOUT US

Every day, the Y strengthens communities for kids, adults, seniors and families with programs that protect, teach, connect, heal, nourish and encourage. It's how we help communities find the power of their full potential.

As the largest YMCA Association in the nation, 1 out of every 8 community members and 1 out of every 5 children come to the YMCA of San Diego County for the programs and services offered. We focus our work in three primary areas: Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility. We provide critical assistance to our County's most vulnerable families and youth in the following ways:

- **Youth Development:** ensuring all youth learn and thrive in quality learning environments and acquire skills that set them on a path to a successful adolescence and adulthood,
- **Healthy Living:** providing the skills and knowledge to encourage sustained physical and mental health among youth and families,
- **Social Responsibility:** combating large-scale social issues to foster a sense of long-term self-sufficiency and minimize reliance on public systems.

Every family is different and many face more than economic challenges. Through a diverse range of countywide programs, we build, strengthen and empower families and individuals to achieve economic stability and mobility. We use prevention and intervention to lift families to sustained self-sufficiency, touching families at all stages of youth development so no one – regardless of their circumstances – suffers the consequences of poverty or inequality.



¹ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. State Fact Sheets - California 2019.

² San Diego Unified School District. 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

³ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed Opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National Estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Mental and behavioral health challenges do not discriminate across socio-economic or ethnic boundaries, and any family is susceptible to the instability that comes from having a loved one with mental illness. However, when individuals suffer from poverty, the lack of financial means to properly address mental and behavioral health issues threatens their ability to perform well in school, maintain employment, and develop beneficial relationships.

Whether an individual is trying to succeed in school, embark on a fruitful career, end a homeless experience, or fulfill the biological need to connect with others...
mental health challenges pose a major barrier to achieving personal goals.

There is little families can do to influence a mental health diagnosis, but responding to these challenges with resilience will positively impact their ability to thrive and engage in activities that contribute to overall well-being.

THE Y's RESPONSE

The YMCA has been a leader in mental health services for more than 40 years, providing supportive services to help individuals and families understand a diagnosis and design a life where they can continue to thrive. Our trained service providers include licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical social workers, registered associate marriage and family therapists, marriage and family therapist trainees, registered associate clinical social workers and social work interns, and associate professional clinical counselors and professional clinical counselor trainees.

Affordable Community Counseling is available throughout San Diego county for individuals, couples, and families seeking any form of emotional support, including tele-therapy options to minimize barriers to attending appointments. We promote easing the financial and logistical burdens that make it difficult for under-resourced families to fully utilize the services that meet their mental and behavioral health needs.

Counseling Support for Youth in Foster Care is tailored to the unique experiences and challenges youth in foster care face. The program offers eligible youth access to free clinical therapy and coaching guidance to build resilience in the face of the trauma and disconnection that come from exposure to the foster care system.

School-based Counseling and Support is a collaborative effort between YFS, communities, schools, and families to ensure our youth can thrive academically. These programs include the Healthy Start Building Bridges Program at Roosevelt Middle School, Sherman Academy, and Ocean Beach Elementary as well as the TIDES Program at 13 schools in central San Diego. Emotional support services are available for school staff, and parents are connected to supportive services via a YMCA case manager.

Residential Treatment is an intensive program for adolescents, ages 12 to 17. While in treatment, youth attend counseling sessions and engage in daily enrichment and recreational activities that are designed to help them learn basic living skills, take responsibility for their own behavior, and interact more effectively with their family and others. Strong interpersonal skills are key to developing the relationships necessary to succeed in adulthood.

Trainings and Workshops are available on a variety of behavioral and mental health topics including mindfulness, critical thinking, crisis management and cultural awareness. Our subject-matter expertise and knowledge gained from directly serving members of our community are an ideal combination to educate service providers and professionals on topics such as trauma-informed care, mindfulness, conflict mediation, cultural awareness, and crisis management.

Learn more about
YMCA YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

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OUR MISSION

The YMCA of San Diego County is dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to helping all people realize their fullest potential as children of God through the development of the spirit, mind and body.