

Winter-Spring 2019

# Mental Health. California

CHILDHOOD  
NUTRITION  
FOR HEALTHY  
BRAIN  
DEVELOPMENT

*Youth  
Reinvestment  
Fund*

SPRING ORGANIZING FOR  
MENTAL CLARITY

*Mental Health  
Awards  
Dinner  
Highlights*

SPECIAL EDUCATION

*and IEPs*

CHIA SEEDS AND  
DEPRESSION

*Disparities in Mental Health Access and*

# Treatment in California

# Supporting the movement for better mental health

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# Special Education and IEPs

by Tashana Davis

**IF YOU NOTICE YOUR CHILD HAVING TROUBLE IN SCHOOL, HE OR SHE MAY BENEFIT FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES. IN CALIFORNIA, CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES HAVE A RIGHT TO A PROPER EDUCATION. HERE ARE 5 TIPS TO REMEMBER IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN ENROLLING YOUR CHILD.**

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## Special Education Service Assessments and Eligibility

To get started, request an assessment with your local school district. The assessment consists of tests, interviews, and observations to help evaluate your child's strengths, and will identify the types of services your child can benefit from. Emotional/behavioral issues, language issues, medical problems, and learning disabilities are some factors that may hinder your child's success. California recognizes this and can provide support if your child is eligible.

## Individualized Education Program

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement created to identify your child's educational needs. Once your child becomes eligible, the IEP team, including you as parent/guardian, will develop the plan including educational performance, learning goals, and needed services.

## IEP Team Requirements

The IEP team is a team of qualified professionals who are knowledgeable about the education curriculum and the availability of resources. Your IEP team is there to help you determine which services are best suited for your child based upon the evaluation. The IEP team can answer any concerns or questions you may have.

## Misconception About IEPs

It's a common misconception that an IEP means that a child is not smart or capable. In actuality, the program focuses on providing your child with a different learning style and needed supports to help them with any subject in which they struggle.

## Parents' Rights

Parents have a right to disagree with assessments or proposed IEP plans. If you are not satisfied with the plan or evaluation of your child, you may seek a second opinion before you sign the agreement. It is always best to do what's in the best interest of the child.



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*Nature*

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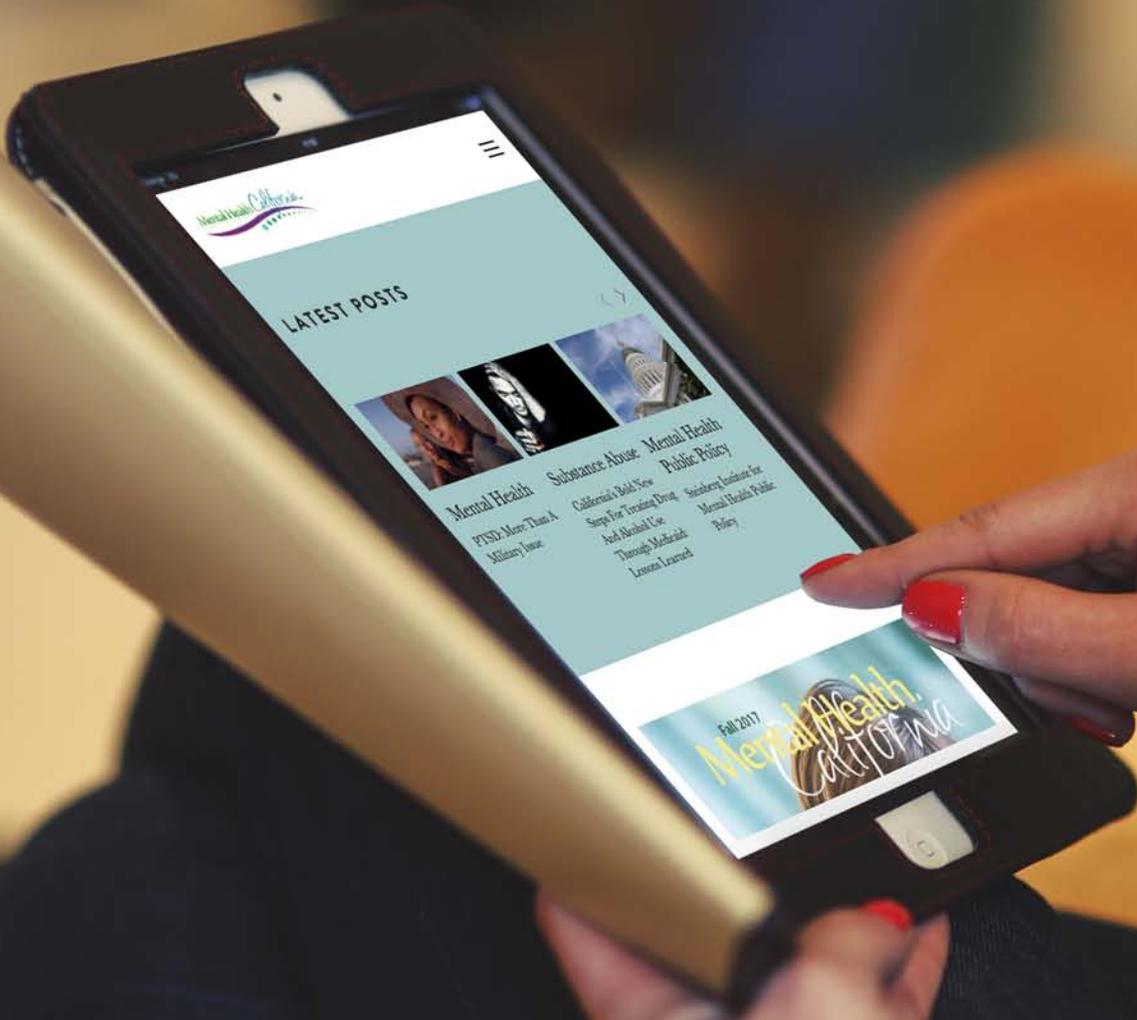
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# Founder's *Note*



**Fortunately, our industry has the tools, cultural brokers, scientific expertise, funding, and most importantly, “the will” to elevate ideal shifts in the delivery of mental health services toward cultural relevancy, linguistic competency, and in a manner that meets the community right where they are.**

California’s vast landscape offers many windows to the various communities and populations that contribute to the significant diversity across our state. We are fortunate to be included in the spectrum of the cultural richness that defines our existence, which lends itself to meaningful and expanding relationships with new people who bring new life perspectives, yet perhaps new challenges. Within a rapidly changing society, it can be difficult to maintain a pace that offers relevancy, respect, and inclusiveness to all, but we must not lean on any real or perceived excuse toward living our best lives, and insisting that those we serve do exactly the same, in their own manner, and on their own cultural terms. Fortunately, our industry has the tools, cultural brokers, scientific expertise, funding, and most importantly, “the will” to elevate ideal shifts in the delivery of mental health services toward cultural relevancy, linguistic competency, and in a manner that meets the community right where they are at all times. New partnerships will emerge and the breaking of bread toward a new and inclusive healthcare system will punctuate the California landscape in new and exciting ways. It is of critical importance that we all work together. Not only is there a need for culturally relevant mental health services, but we desperately need

more healthcare workers. Toward this, the California Future Health Workforce Commission, co-chaired by University of California President Janet Napolitano and Dignity Health CEO and President Lloyd Dean, recently announced a bold set of recommendations to eliminate the projected shortfall of health providers the state is expected to face in the field of primary care by 2030. These recommendations would also nearly eliminate what is projected to be a severe psychiatry shortage and bolster the pipeline of students and health workers who seek to provide care in underserved communities. This great news for California! We also want to see the best care provided to our state’s children. In this issue, we include articles on special education, healthy brain development, and the state’s \$35 million Youth Reinvestment Fund.

Here’s to a wonderful 2019!

**Kristene (K.N.) Smith**  
Founder & CEO

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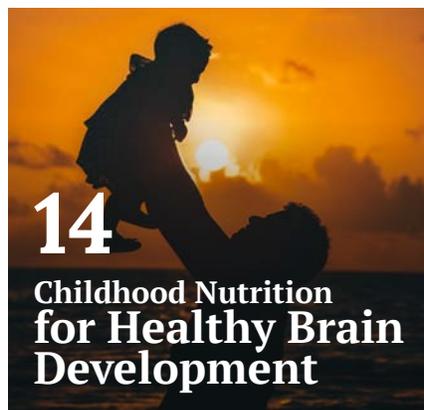
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# Winter





Decorative Books



\$1.99

# Spring Organizing for *Mental Clarity*

by Stephanie Kirby



**SPRING BRINGS AN INCREDIBLE TRANSFORMATION IN NATURE. THE FRESH AIR, NEW GROWTH, AND WARMER WEATHER TEND TO MAKE US WANT TO OPEN WINDOWS AND DEEP CLEAN THE HOUSE. THE ACT OF CLEANING AND ORGANIZING ALSO HELPS US EMERGE FROM THE DREARY WINTER AND IMPROVES MENTAL HEALTH GOING INTO THE NEW YEAR. HERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS GETTING ORGANIZED HELPS IMPROVE MENTAL CLARITY.**

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### Improved Sleep

A study by the National Sleep Foundation revealed most people sleep better in a clean room. Because sleep plays an important role in our ability to function throughout the day, we should take time to organize the bedroom beginning with making the bed every morning.

### Increased Productivity

Science proves that clutter overloads the brain making it difficult to stay focused on a task. Therefore, by organizing, we improve productivity. We can start by focusing on the areas where we work the most such as a desk, workshop, studio, or kitchen counter.

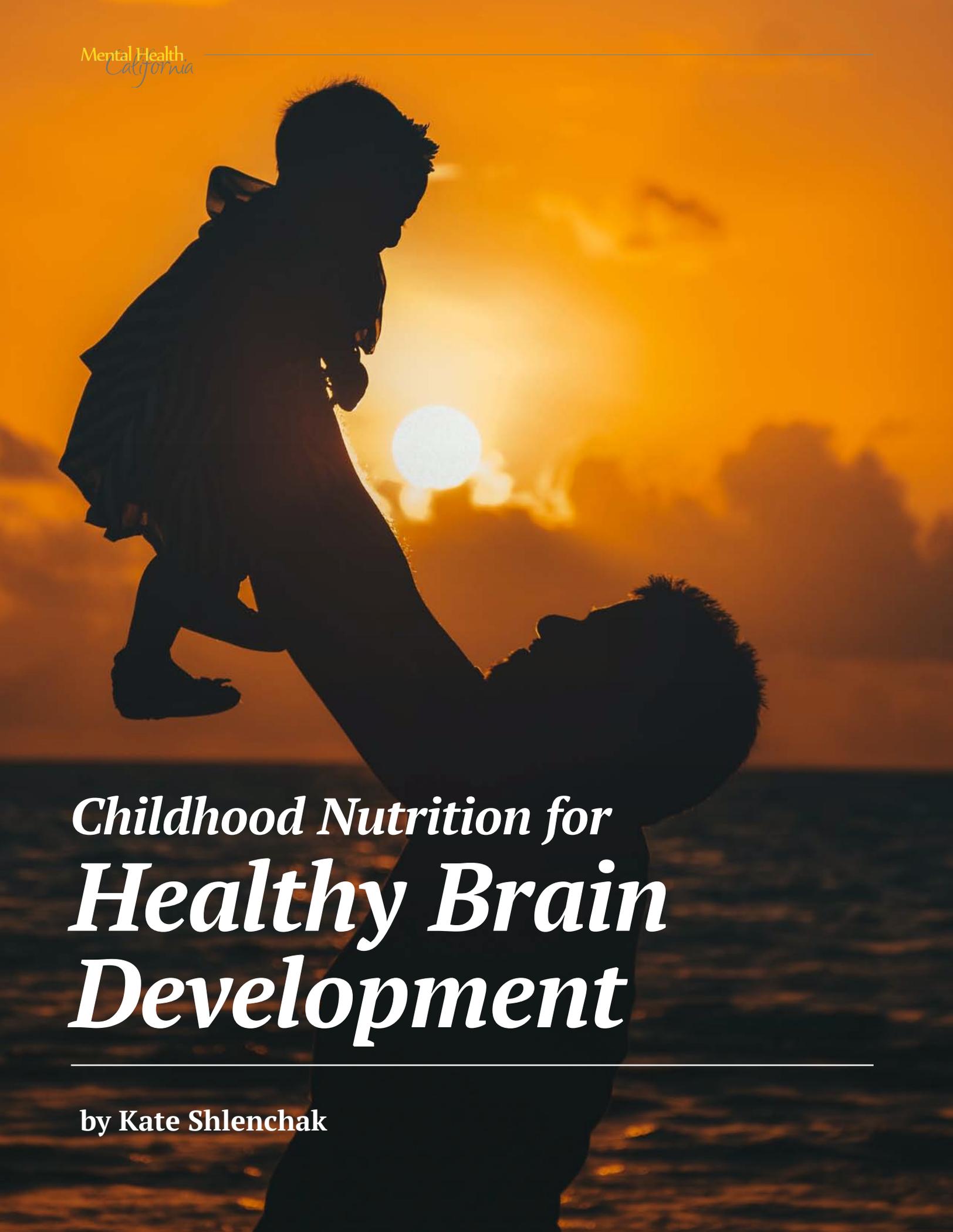
### Reduced Stress and Guilt

Many times, our homes and offices are cluttered by unfinished projects. Being constantly surrounded by this clutter reminds us of all the things

we have failed to complete. There are also those things that are still waiting to be done. Start by sorting through the piles to separate them into the appropriate categories, and then prioritize.

### Time Savings

Clutter is a gigantic time waster. When our space isn't organized, we waste precious time having to sort through piles to find what we need. This often results in us running late or buying things we already own, but can't find. Create a familiar base for the most important items such as car keys, bills, and other important documents, and use labeled storage containers for the rest. Imagine the feelings of peace and tranquility if everything in our lives was organized. Instead of becoming overwhelmed by clutter, choose a few small organizing projects that will make the biggest impact.

A silhouette of a man lifting a child into the air against a bright sunset background. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The man is on the right, and the child is on the left, both in profile. The child is being held up by the man's hands, and they are both looking towards the sun.

*Childhood Nutrition for  
Healthy Brain  
Development*

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by Kate Shlenchak

**A**nually, approximately 1 out of 6 children suffers from hunger. In most cases, it's because of poverty, not food dearth. However, in many cases, pregnant women don't supply their body and fetus with the right nutrients. After birth, a baby also has a higher risk of malnutrition that promotes unhealthy brain development.

The first 1,000 days of a child's life play a vital role in brain development, especially when it comes to nutrition. Brain development during pregnancy and the baby's first 1,000 days define how the brain will function for the rest of a child's life. Nerves are covered with myelin as they grow and connect, forming the systems that determine how a baby will feel and think later in life. Those changes and connections affect – either positively or negatively – processing speed, sensory systems, attention, memory, learning, impulse control, mood management, the ability to plan, and even multitasking skills.



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**After birth, a baby's brain development and growth depend on the quality of nutrition. Ideally, breast milk contains the best combinations of all the nutrients for enhancing healthy brain growth. Formula loaded with required nutrients, especially iron and healthy fats, can also promote healthy brain development.**

When a child is malnourished, they're deprived of essential vitamins, minerals, protein, and calories. This prevents them from growing healthy – either mentally or physically. A child's brain is smaller than normal due to decreased myelination and dendritic growth, as well as reduced glia production that supports the brain's cells, which keep forming after birth and takes part in myelin

production. This leads to the need for certain nutrients, including healthy fats, protein, iron, copper, zinc, selenium, iodine, vitamin A, folate, and choline for proper brain development. Iron deficiency, in particular, contributes to cognitive deficits in toddlers. Iron is vital for keeping a healthy number of red blood cells that carry oxygen and fuel brain growth. After birth, a baby's brain development and growth depend on the quality of nutrition. Ideally, breast milk contains the best combinations of all the nutrients for enhancing healthy brain growth. Formula loaded with required nutrients, especially iron and healthy fats, can also promote healthy brain development.

Due to the rapid pace of myelination in babies, it's important to incorporate healthy fats into their meal plans. Toddlers need at least 50 percent of healthy fats of their total calories. Breast milk remains the best source of those fats, so it is important to encourage new mothers to breastfeed, if at all possible.



# Community *Resources*

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**MHSA-Funded County Behavioral  
Health Programs**

*Provided by NAMI California*

## Contra Costa County

### Hope House - Crisis Residential Program

CCBHS contracts with Telecare to operate a recently constructed MHSA financed 16 bed residential facility. This is a voluntary, highly structured treatment program that is intended to support seriously mentally ill adults during a period of crisis and to avoid in-patient psychiatric hospitalization. It also serves consumers being discharged from the hospital and long-term locked facilities that would benefit from a step-down from institutional care in order to successfully transition back into community living. Services are designed to be up to a month in duration, are recovery focused with a peer provider component, and will be able to treat co-occurring disorders, such as drug and alcohol abuse.

 <https://cchealth.org/mentalhealth/mhsa>



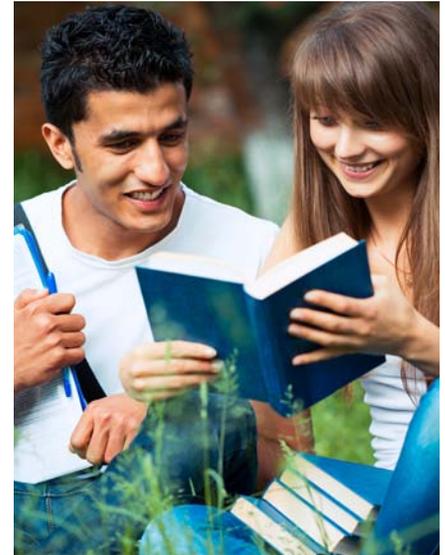
## Ventura County

### Children's Crisis Stabilization Unit

The CSU is in the beginning stages in the creation of the new receiving center for medically stable children and adolescents (ages 5-17 years) assessed as a danger to self, a danger to others or gravely disabled due to a mental disorder. The CSU will also function as a crisis stabilization specialty mental health program for children and adolescents who do not meet the criteria for civil commitment and can be safely discharged in less than 24 hours to lower levels of care in the community. Typically, children, youth and caregivers voluntarily commit to this phase of treatment. The Team continues to assess each client prior to discharge on their ability to demonstrate safe behavior and participate in additional crisis stabilization services while on the CSU.

 <http://www.vhca.org/agency-divisions/behavioral-health>

**PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FUNDED BY THE CALIFORNIA MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (PROPOSITION 63). RESOURCES GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY NAMI CA.**



## Stanislaus County

### Ending the Silence

This program, run by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Stanislaus chapter, is designed to introduce students the facts about mental illness. It includes a power point education presentation about the facts of mental illness, anti-stigma information, and suicide prevention. A hand-out entitled, "How to Help a Friend", is included which highlights the symptoms of mental illness in youth. The program is taught by a retired school teacher trained by NAMI and another speaker who is now in recovery.

 <http://stanislausmhca.com>

# Disparities in Mental Health Access and Treatment in California

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS SUCH AS ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ARE SOME OF THE MOST PREVALENT HEALTH CRISES IN AMERICA TODAY. IN CALIFORNIA, APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 6 INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCE A MENTAL HEALTH CRISES EACH YEAR, AND 1 IN 24 HAS A SERIOUS MENTAL DISORDER THAT ACUTELY AFFECTS EVERY ASPECT OF DAILY LIFE. ALTHOUGH SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE, 63% OF ADULTS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS DO NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT. THERE ARE AT LEAST SIX ISSUES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO DISPARITIES IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES IN CALIFORNIA, AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

by Cynthia Johnson

**People are unaware that services are available, or they do not believe that they have a problem.**

Minorities, more so than Caucasians, tend to be unaware that there are trained professionals who can help them address their problems. Issues tend to be overlooked and not addressed until the situation spirals out of control. In addition, while individuals who have a mental health concern may know of services within their community, they may not feel that their problems are serious enough to warrant making an appointment. Personal perceptions such as, “I’m just a little stressed,” are common. For someone with an obvious mental illness, they may believe there is nothing wrong with them so why would they seek help. Called anosognosia, this is seen in

over half of people with severe mental illness like schizophrenia.

**Cultural barriers can cause issues in admitting that there is a problem.**

If someone admits they have a mental health disorder, they may feel like a failure and think they should be able to handle it on their own or that it will go away over time. Asking for help may be perceived as a sign of weakness, particularly for men across all cultures. For minorities, especially Latinos, lack of access to appropriate mental health care may be the result of language barriers. If mental health treatment options are available nearby, there may not be anyone at the facility who can communicate effectively in Spanish or other languages, and the person seeking treatment may not have a complete

understanding of English. There are fewer licensed mental health professionals available today, and many of those currently practicing are nearing retirement age. California is indeed facing a critical shortage of trained professionals, particularly those from cultural communities needing services and interventions.

**Lack of access to appropriate mental health services is dependent upon region.**

Mental health practitioners tend to stay in one location. This means that there may be several in one geographic area while another location has no one to provide services. Therefore, even if someone is willing and able to seek treatment, there may not be a provider close enough to provide services. There are also individuals who want treatment, but don’t know

how to find it. A lack of education about systems navigation can exist. If they do not have a primary care provider, they likely have no one to ask about services. Other issues that affect access to treatment include lack of transportation, arranging child care, and conflicts between school or work-related activities.

### **Cost for mental health services can be prohibitive.**

While some individuals have health insurance, most of the payment for mental health services comes from Medicaid. When compared to those without health insurance, Medicaid recipients receive care more often for substance abuse problems and mental health concerns. However, there remains a large gap between people who report that they have an unmet mental health treatment need and those who receive mental health services. The high cost of private insurance is a significant barrier for care. The segment of the population without insurance comprises the greatest number of people who need it. Even those with insurance cite high deductibles and copays as deterrents for seeking appropriate services. Of individuals who are enrolled in California's public health insurance plan, Caucasians take advantage of mental health treatment at about twice the rate of minorities and make up less than ¼ of enrollees in the plan.



### **Stigma about mental illness keeps many from seeking treatment.**

Not only do people with a mental illness struggle daily to manage their symptoms while functioning, but they often do not seek care because of numerous prejudices and stereotypes that exist from misconceptions about disorders. Much of society lacks understanding and compassion about mental illness, leading affected individuals to be less likely to seek treatment. In addition, self-stigma forces affected persons to turn against themselves and feel weak for needing and wanting help. Fear against the unknown causes people who need care the most not to obtain intervention. There is also prejudice against those with mental health issues. An employer may be less likely to hire someone with a mental disorder because they do not understand it. Fear of rejection leads some to not seek-out life opportunities. Books and movies do not help, as they portray people with mental illness as homicidal characters, childlike, or as though they are responsible for their illness and can change if they want to. People with mental illness may be excluded from social situations and are viewed as irresponsible with an immature personality that means people should care for them. Shame and fear keep people from seeking care because of the negative attitude and discrimination that occur. They don't want to be labeled and have their life goals negatively impacted.

### **Feelings of distrust and hopelessness abound.**

Many individuals find it hard to speak freely about their feelings with a clinician, counselor, or doctor. They don't want to tell strangers about their problems, and have concerns that their private information will not remain confidential. For people who have had a mental illness for a long time, it can cause demoralization. They may feel that they have suffered this long and there is no point in seeking treatment now.

In 2017, legislators in 19 states, including California, discussed 74 bills relating to behavioral health inequalities. Many of the bills focused



The number of young people with a mental health condition rises each year. In 2018, youth experiencing a major depressive episode, or MDE, increased from 11.93% to 12.63%. For youngsters with MDE who received treatment, there was only a 1.5% decrease in frequency of an MDE. 62% of youth with a mental health condition obtained no treatment. Youth with at least one mental health condition comprised 70% of young people in the juvenile justice system. At least 20% of these individuals have a serious MDE. 37% of students ages 14-21 and older who meet special education requirements and have a mental health condition drop out of school. This group constitutes the highest dropout rate of any disability group. With suicide being the tenth leading cause of death in the United States, it is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-34.

on increasing awareness of mental health disparities or supporting cultural competency among mental health providers. California's bill, ACR 96, highlights May as National Mental Health Awareness Month. The resolution says, "Although mental illness impacts all people, many of those in lower-income communities receive less care, poorer quality of care, and often lack access to culturally competent care, thereby resulting in mental health disparities." While more needs to be done to increase awareness and make more services available to more individuals with mental health concerns, there are exceptional efforts underway that the general public can and should support to create a more equitable California.



# Legislative Update

## “Youth Reinvestment Fund”

The Youth Reinvestment Grant Program was established in the 2018 Budget Act (Senate Bill 840, Chapter 29, Statutes of 2018) and the related trailer bill (Assembly Bill 1812, Chapter 36, Statutes of 2018). The Youth Reinvestment Grant Program provides \$37.3 million to be allocated as follows: 94 percent, or \$35,062,000, must be awarded to local jurisdictions through a competitive grant process for implementing evidence-based, trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and developmentally appropriate diversion programs in underserved communities with high rates of juvenile arrests and high rates of racial/ethnic disproportionality within those juvenile arrests. Three percent, or \$1,119,000, must be awarded to Indian tribes for implementing diversion programs for Indian children using trauma-informed, community-based, and health-based interventions. Up to three percent, or \$1,119,000, may be used by the BSCC for the administration of the grant. This grant is currently in development and awards are anticipated to be made by June 30, 2019. Assemblymember Reginald Jones-Sawyer, Sr. (D – South Los Angeles) unveiled his plan to end the school to prison pipeline, by securing this \$37.3 million from the 2018-2019 California State Budget to establish the Youth Reinvestment Fund. This fund will help improve the outcomes of vulnerable youth populations by using trauma informed community and health-based interventions in lieu of arrest, detention and incarceration. “Today is a big day for the youth of California, as the Golden State is finally recognizing our duty to invest in vulnerable adolescents,” said Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer. “The Youth Reinvestment Fund will be used to divert our children from the juvenile justice system and provide them with the care and treatment they so desperately need to live productive lives.”

Through the use of diversion programs, a ten percent reduction in juvenile misdemeanors, or status offense arrests, will save California taxpayers \$800 million per year. Status offenses such as running away from home, breaking curfew and getting into school fights have imprisoned nearly 35,000 kids in California alone. If these 35,000 children had been diverted from the juvenile justice system, California could have saved over \$8 billion. This funding could have been allocated to education, health or public safety programs. In addition, funds from the Youth Reinvestment Grant Program have been specifically set aside for Indian tribes for the purpose of implementing diversion programs for Indian children that use trauma-informed, community-based, and health-based interventions. Funding priority shall be given to diversion programs that address the needs of Indian children who experience high rates of juvenile arrests, high rates of suicide, high rates of alcohol and substance abuse and average high school graduation rates that are lower than 75 percent.



Cecelia Ahern  
Love You

# *Relax*

# Comfort





Denise Williams, Kaiser Permanente; Clint Williams, Turner Construction; K.N. Smith, Founder, Mental Health California

# Mental Health Awards

## *Dinner Highlights*

**A**mongst the gorgeous backdrop of the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria, individuals from all sectors and ethnic backgrounds came together to celebrate California's mental health leadership. With over 250 glamorous attendees, our semi-formal awards dinner presented an exciting mixture of education, fellowship, and entertainment entwined with the promise of

tomorrow. Because mental health is health, we experienced an open, honest, and compassionate environment with many highlights throughout the evening. With exceptional entertainment, magic tricks, great food, fantastic wine, and social connecting all evening long, our event not only communicated important and lasting messages, but elevated our reasons to celebrate California's behavioral health leadership. We

sincerely applaud each of our honorees for their demonstrated success in helping to resolve complex community mental health concerns through administrative leadership, advocacy, research, public policy, outreach, clinical work, or direct services. Our 2018 honorees included Dr. Richard Pan, State Senator, California's 6th Senate District for the "Legislator of the Year Award"; Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of



Yvonna Brown, MSW, Director, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Merced County Department of Behavioral Health

Clinical Internal Medicine at the School of Medicine at the University of California at Davis, and Founding Director of the UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities for the “Research & Health Disparities Award”; and Yvonna Brown, MSW, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Director/Deputy Public Guardian/Conservator, Merced County Department of Behavioral Health for the “County Behavioral Health Leadership Award”. We are so thankful for the tireless efforts of our esteemed honorees and their numerous contributions to the health and wellness of so many Californians. It is important for all of us to come together as mental health advocates, business executives, public agencies, tech innovators, educators, civic leaders, community leaders, philanthropists, healthcare organizations, and public policy leaders. Therein, we find greater meaning in creating a dynamic



Featured Artist, Vocalist/Bassist, Shaun Munday



Sandra Shewry, Director of External Engagement, California Health Care Foundation (left) and guests at the CHCF table.



Stephanie McLemore Bray, Executive Director, United Way California Capital Region

opportunity for awareness of one of our most serious public health concerns. Each one needs the other in order for the collective to provide effective behavioral health solutions, especially for vulnerable populations. Again, we thank you sincerely for sharing in our vision. We are also incredibly grateful for the inspiration from our guest speakers, each of whom brought exceptional insights into mental health. Speakers included award-winning Hollywood film producer and screenwriter Sterling Anderson; Cassandra Cochran, Director of the TLCS Triage Navigator Program; David Woods Bartley, a well-known and dynamic speaker, storyteller, and trainer with lived experience; and Captain Ernie Daniels (ret.), Chair of the Board of Trustees of Highlands Community Charter School. Through a blend of

Guests from Highlands Community Charter School enjoying the entertainment.



education, awareness, inspiration, and entertainment, we kept the flow going with exceptional performances by some of the entertainment industry's most talented performers. Our featured entertainment, STR8 Funk, featured the legendary "Queen of Funk", Patryce "Choc'Let" Banks, one of the founding members of Graham Central Station. Throughout the program, the audience was thrilled with multiple performances by vocalist/ bass player Mr. Shaun

Munday, a one-of-a kind talent who blends soul-drenched vocals with show-stopping bass guitar technique. For our opening number, Shaun was joined in a duet by Mr. Robert Vann (tenor) to re-create the Luciano Pavarotti/ James Brown performance of "It's a Man's World". It was a tremendous highlight of the evening! The Harley White, Jr. Trio and our featured string trio (cello, viola, and violin) beautifully supported the vocalists throughout the show.

Not to mention the soaring vocals of Ms. Arielle Birdsong during her incredible performance of "Chandelier". From honoree to speaker to performer, the evening was incredibly memorable and touched the lives of audience members from all walks of life.

Celebrating those  
**making lasting  
change.**

We are proud to sponsor Mental Health California™ in their efforts to educate Californians on health and mental wellness.



# *Springtime*

# Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

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*by Sahara Powell*



If you've ever watched an episode of "America's Got Talent" or "Deal or No Deal" then you're familiar with judge and comedian, Howie Mandel. While being known for a successful career in comedy, Mandel is also known as being one of the most well-known pop culture icons dealing with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). In a 2014 interview with CNN about his disorder, Mandel mentioned that "As a child [he] didn't know that these things even existed. [He] knew that [he] felt isolated."

People with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder may find themselves feeling similar to Mandel. 1 in 40 people are diagnosed with OCD throughout their lifetime, which equates to nearly 2% of the U.S. population, according to the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI).

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is a chronic disorder in which a person's intrusive, repetitive, and irrational thoughts create uncontrollable and excessive urges to repeat certain actions and behaviors. By this definition, the repetitive thoughts become the obsessions, while the uncontrollable urges make-up the compulsive side of the disorder. Common obsessions of OCD include, but are not limited to, a fear of germs, doubts of having done something correctly, a fear of being inappropriate in public, needing things to be in a specific order, and having taboo thoughts involving sex or violence. These obsessions then lead to compulsive behaviors such as excessively cleaning or washing themselves or repeatedly checking things for correctness or completeness, which can lead to an overall disruption of daily activities and life.

While having OCD can be a major intrusion on someone's life, there are many resources and treatments to help those in need. The two



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**People with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder may find themselves feeling similar to Mandel. 1 in 40 people are diagnosed with OCD throughout their lifetime, which equates to nearly 2% of the U.S. population, according to the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI).**

most popular forms of treating OCD are through medication and psychotherapy. In terms of medication, the two types typically utilized to help reduce symptoms of OCD are "Serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs) and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)", according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Psychotherapy is another option for those suffering from OCD. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a popular form of psychotherapy, which Dr. Steven J. Phillipson says, "focuses on the application of cognitive conceptualization and cognitive management to help the [person] to develop a therapeutically sound response-set to this anxiety disorder. Cognitive conceptualization focuses on removing the sense of culpability, shame, and guilt that is pervasive among OCD sufferers." It has been reported that psychotherapy can be just as useful and helpful in managing OCD as medication.

For more information on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, please visit:

- National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) website: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website: <https://www.nami.org/>
- International OCD Foundation: <https://iocdf.org/>

A close-up photograph of a white bowl filled with a white, gelatinous chia seed pudding. The pudding is topped with several fresh, bright red strawberries and several slices of green kiwi fruit. The kiwi slices show their characteristic black seeds. The bowl is set against a light-colored wooden background.

# Chia Seeds *and Depression*

by Meagan McPhillips

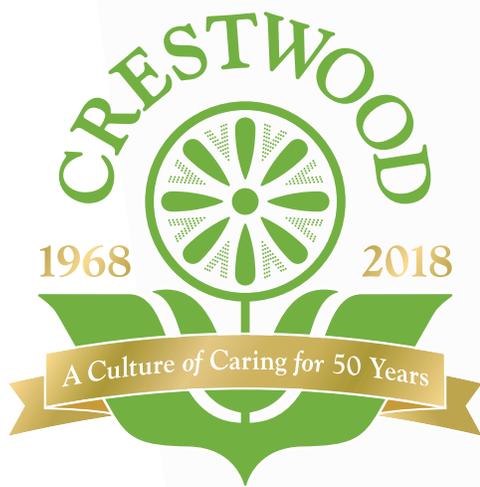
**D**epression is a growing epidemic that affects millions of people throughout the world each year. According to the World Health Organization, globally, 300 million people are affected by depression. Stress, work-life balance, unhealthy eating habits, and genetics are some causes of depression. Fighting depression can be a daily struggle, but there are healthy, natural ways to obtain relief every day. One superfood that may help fight depression is chia seeds.

Chia seeds are an excellent dietary addition that is healthy, easy to find, and may safeguard against depression. These seeds are full of omega-3 fatty-acids which protect against depression. Patients with depression typically show lower levels of omega-3 fatty acids, which play an important role as a mood stabilizer. Studies have shown that



patients who took only omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids showed significant improvement with depressive symptoms over patients who did not. Chia seeds are also full of fiber, antioxidants, minerals, and help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

This superfood has a nutlike flavor and are super easy to add into any meal. Simple ways to incorporate chia seeds into your diet are adding them to cereal, yogurt, salads, smoothies, or even alone as a snack. You can also grind and mix them with flour when baking or create a chia fresca – chia seeds with lime or lemon juice and sugar mixed in water. Chia seeds are easy to find at your local, organic foods store, or online.



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