

Hello September

We're back! It's been a busy few months, and we're excited to share what's been happening. When I started Resilience Social Work as a solo project, the goal was to provide training and consulting to help individuals and communities become trauma-informed and improve their services. However, over the past year, a resounding echo reached us – the distressing scarcity of accessible and affordable mental health services.

A variety of voices, including those from LHA Promotoras and various community agencies, shared their frustration stemming from clients, who, having mustered the courage to seek help, found themselves on prolonged waiting lists. This struck a chord with me, especially after my involvement with the mental health ambassador program at Latino Health Access, where we aimed to reduce the stigma around seeking mental health support.

Being myself, I couldn't just stand by, so I decided to take action:

- First, I opened up some slots to offer individual therapy services.
- Second, an application was submitted with Medi-Cal for RSW Inc. to become a Medi-Cal provider with the intent to understand it better and encourage other private clinicians to do the same. Hopefully making more slots available for Medi-Cal recipients. I'm happy to announce that we just got approved!

- Third, RSW Inc. applied and became a California Victims Compensation Board Provider to help victims of crime who might not have insurance. I'm proud to say we are already serving a couple of families impacted by crime.
- Fourth, applications for accreditation with different insurance boards were submitted to provide therapy for those with insurance. RSW inc. is now able to accept CIGNA and we are already working with clients in need of emotional support through EAP Services.
- Finally, the big news is that we've transitioned from being a solo practice to having a team of four therapists at RSW Inc. This step allows us to make a bigger impact.
- But the growth doesn't stop there, RSW Inc. is now a Field Site for Virginia Commonwealth University, and we have an MSW-Intern joining us this year. She is already working on a mental health awareness campaign for social media, (have you seen our suicide prevention posts on Instagram?) and we're thrilled to have her on board. We're also grateful to have a Volunteer and his time and dedication to our mission.

So, as you can imagine, these past few months have been quite eventful. We're excited to show you the progress we've made, and the progress to come! Thank you for your continued support.

Marilyn Mejia-Peña, LCSW

For consultation, training requests, client referrals, questions or comments e-mail info@resiliencesocialwork.com, message via www.resiliencesocialwork.com or call 562-384-9299.

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September

is suicide prevention month

We are experiencing a suicidal, mental health, and substance use crisis in the United States as evidenced by the CDC reports that in 2021 (www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html):

- A person died by suicide every 11 minutes.
- Suicide was the **second-leading cause of death** for people **ages 10–14 and 25–34**.
- Nearly 900,000 youth ages **12–17** and 1.7 million adults attempted suicide.

Were you aware of this? I was in shock, and extremely saddened when I first read that it was the second leading cause of death in children 10-14. I asked myself so many questions, among them, what are we missing? Why are we not catching them in time? What is happening in their young lives that is pushing them to feel so hopeless and to the point of suicide? Are they reaching out for help and we are not paying attention? The blaring answer to all my questions was that we definitely needed to do better in all aspects of prevention, at all levels including the school, home, medical clinics, and the children themselves. The good news is that there has been some improvement in suicide prevention awareness since then. In the past 3 years, I have been fortunate to have been personally involved in a couple of the funded projects in Orange County to help diminish stigma and increase suicide prevention awareness. I also noticed changes in the medical field when my 11-year-old was administered a suicide assessment at a Dr. visit and learned this is a newly added form to routine physical exams. Those changes make me hopeful that in the past few years, there has been improvement made in education and early intervention. However, we still have a ways to go and need to continue in our prevention efforts for youth and adults, and it will take all of us, not just clinicians to address it. Therefore, we are sharing some tools and resources you can utilize to become suicide aware and join the prevention efforts.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR CLINICIANS:

The Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ), the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), and the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) Modified for Teens (PHQ-A)

Mental Health Crisis Resources

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
Call or text 988

Chat via 988lifeline.org/chat

offers 24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People who are worried about a loved one who may need support can also call.

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ community)
Text **START** to 678-678 or call 866-488-7386
Chat via thetrevorproject.org/get-help

Crisis Text Line
Text COALITION to 741-741
Chat via crisistextline.org

SAMHSA

Offers resources, including guides and manuals on treatment, intervention and prevention for families and clinicians at <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help>

PHONE APPS

SUICIDE SAFE

From SAMHSA is a resource for clinicians on how to utilize the SAFE-T approach to reducing suicide risk, includes sample conversation starters, training and links to resources.

SUICIDE SAFETY PLAN

provides a helpful tool that allows you to develop a safety plan directly on your phone to make it easily accessible. It includes linkage to resources and is simple and easy to complete.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Anxiety Relief: Effective Therapeutic Interventions

Thursday, September 21 12-1:00 p.m.
or
Saturday, September 30 10-11:00 a.m.

Virtual (link will be sent after registration)

Investment: \$25

Join us for a transformative workshop designed to provide practical and effective therapeutic interventions to address anxiety symptoms

SIGN UP AT www.resiliencesocialwork.com.

