

CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for
Education

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Message From EASE

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Free/Low-Cost Events

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Free confidential support for school district
employees and family members:

Work-related concerns
Emotional distress
Stress
Anxiety
Depression
Substance use
Grief and loss
Life transitions
Family issues
Wellness

Professional counselors are available.

Call EASE for 24/7 assistance.

Connect with EASE:

1-800-882-1341

MESSAGE FROM EASE DIRECTOR

July often brings a welcome shift in pace. For many of us in education and the helping professions, summer provides an opportunity to step away from the constant demands of the school year and focus on something we often encourage in others but may neglect for ourselves: rest.

As I reflected on this month's article about slowing down, spending time in nature, and supporting our wellbeing, I was reminded of the book *"Sacred Rest"* by Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith. One of the book's central messages is that rest is about much more than sleep. We can feel exhausted even after a full night's rest because we may be experiencing mental, emotional, sensory, social, creative, or spiritual fatigue. The book invites us to ask an important question- **What type of rest do I need most right now?**

Here are a few key takeaways from the book:

- **Rest is more than sleep.** Different types of fatigue require different forms of restoration.
- **Slow down without a goal.** Leisure doesn't need to be productive to be valuable.
- **Take breaks from stimulation.** Reduce screen time, noise, and constant notifications when possible.
- **Spend time in nature.** Even a short walk outdoors can help restore balance and reduce stress.
- **Protect your energy.** Set boundaries and prioritize relationships that replenish you.
- **Rest is not earned—it is essential.** Taking care of yourself helps sustain your ability to care for others.

As we move through the summer months, I encourage you to pause and check in with yourself. Rather than asking, "What else do I need to accomplish?" consider asking, "What do I need to feel restored?" Whether it's spending time with loved ones, enjoying a quiet morning with a cup of coffee, or simply permission to do less, these moments of intentional rest can have a profound impact on our overall wellbeing. As professionals who dedicate so much of ourselves to supporting others, we often forget that we, too, deserve the same compassion and care we readily extend to those around us.

My hope for you this summer is that you give yourself permission to slow down, reconnect with what grounds you, and embrace the type of rest that nourishes you most. After all, caring for ourselves isn't a luxury- it's one of the most meaningful investments we can make in our health, our work, and the communities we serve. Wishing you a restorative and well-deserved summer. **Remember that EASE is available year-round to support you!**

July Awareness Days

Click each hyperlink to access and review the following information:

- **Month-Long Celebrations:**
- **July 4: [Independence Day](#)**

Low-Cost/Free Activities

Click each hyperlink to access and review the following information:

- **Month-long Events:** [Grand Park's Wellness Break: Yoga & Breathwork Class](#), [Friday Movie Nights: Hidden Figures](#), [Marina del Rey Summer Concerts](#), [Grand Performances \(DTLA\)](#), [Shoreline Village \(Long Beach\) Concert Series](#), [La Mirada Concerts Under the Stars](#), [Torrance Summer Nights](#)
- **July 4:** [Warner Center Park 4th of July Extravaganza](#), [City of Santa Clarita Fireworks Show](#)
- **July 10:** [Way to Play Day](#)
- **July 11:** [Central Library Centennial Festival](#)
- **July 14:** [Neurodivergent Family Night](#)
- **July 16:** [Torrance Historical Society Rock the Block](#)
- **July 18:** [West Covina Library Fixit Clinic](#), [Wellness Social](#)
- **July 25:** [Jollypalooza at Norwalk Town Square](#)
- **July 26:** [LA QUINCEAÑERA FASHION SHOW](#)
- **July 29:** [Kids and Cops - Paint Night](#)



Connect with Nature this Summer

Summer often invites us to move a little differently. Longer days and warmer weather can offer opportunities to step away from constant demands and reconnect with what helps us feel grounded. In a world that encourages us to stay busy and productive, taking time to slow down is not a luxury—it is an important part of maintaining our well-being.

One way to support wellness is through slow leisure, the practice of engaging in activities without focusing on productivity or achievement. Whether it's enjoying your morning coffee without distractions, reading a book for pleasure, taking a leisurely walk, gardening, or simply sitting outside and observing your surroundings, slowing down allows your mind and body time to rest and recharge. These moments of intentional pause can reduce stress, improve mood, and help us feel more present in our daily lives.

Connecting with nature is another simple yet powerful way to support mental health. Research shows that spending time outdoors can lower stress, improve focus, and promote emotional well-being. You don't need a long hike or a special destination to experience these benefits. A short walk during your lunch break, sitting under a tree, visiting a local park, tending to plants, or taking a few mindful breaths outside can help calm the nervous system and restore a sense of balance. Even a few minutes spent noticing the sights, sounds, and sensations of the natural world can provide a meaningful reset during a busy day.

July is also recognized as **National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month**, also known as **BIPOC Mental Health Month**. This observance shines a light on the importance of mental health awareness, equity, and access to care for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Many individuals face barriers to mental health support, including stigma, cultural misunderstandings, language differences, and limited access to culturally responsive services. Increasing awareness helps foster understanding, reduce stigma, and encourage conversations about mental health within families, workplaces, and communities.

Supporting mental health awareness can start with small actions—listening with empathy, learning about diverse experiences, checking in with loved ones, and recognizing that seeking support is a sign of strength. Everyone deserves access to compassionate care and resources that honor their unique experiences and cultural backgrounds.

Across cultures and generations, people have supported their well-being through connection with nature, community, storytelling, spirituality, movement, and time with loved ones. Many Indigenous traditions have long recognized the healing relationship between people and the natural world, reminding us that wellness can be nurtured through a sense of connection, balance, and belonging.

As we recognize National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, we are reminded that there are many paths to healing. This summer, consider slowing down, spending time in nature, and reconnecting with the practices that help you feel grounded and restored. Small moments of rest and connection can support resilience and overall well-being.

Author- **Dr. Alia Elasmr, PPS-CWA, LMFT- EAP Specialist, EASE**

Workshops and Resources

Click the images and text to access and review the following event details and resources:



What to Wear to Protect Your Skin from the Sun

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S., and nearly 20 Americans die from melanoma — the deadliest form of skin cancer — every day.

That's why it's important to dress to protect yourself from the sun. In addition to **seeking shade** and **applying sunscreen**, **wearing sun-protective clothing** can go a long way in protecting you from the sun's harmful UV rays, which can increase your risk for skin cancer. However, not all clothes are created equal when it comes to sun protection. Some clothes provide better UV protection than others.

The right sun-protective outfit:



Provides long-lasting sun protection.



Works great for all skin types and colors.

To help protect your skin from the sun, wear these clothes and accessories outdoors whenever possible:



A wide-brimmed hat with no holes in the fabric



Pants



Dark or bright colors



Sunglasses with UV protection



Tightly woven fabrics (ones you can't see through)



A lightweight, long-sleeved shirt

For more effective sun protection, select clothing with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) number on the label.



Make sure to apply a **broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen** with an **SPF of 30** or higher to all skin not covered by clothing.



Reapply sunscreen every two hours when outdoors, or after swimming or sweating.



Don't forget your feet! When wearing sandals, flip-flops, or going barefoot, apply sunscreen to all exposed skin.

To learn more about skin cancer prevention and detection, talk to a board-certified dermatologist or visit SpotSkinCancer.org.

EASE IS AVAILABLE



HOW TO CONTACT EASE

1

SCAN QR CODE FOR WEBSITE

2

CALL THE OFFICE

562-922-6683

3

EMAIL US

ease@lacoe.edu

4

CALL THE EASE 24/7 HOTLINE

EASE Hotline: 1-800-882-1341

Select "1" for EASE office
Select "2" to speak with a Counselor

summer BINGO

camp in the backyard	make a summer playlist	take a social media break	volunteer for a local organization	take an after dinner walk
play tourist in your own town	make smores	play with sidewalk chalk	say NO to an obligation	go to a yard sale
watch the sunrise	fly a kite		go to the fair	make homemade popsicles
have ice cream for dinner	host a lemonade stand	shop the farmers market	buy yourself or someone else flowers	go berry picking
pack a picnic and eat lunch outside	do a random act of kindness	play with water balloons or in the sprinklers	try a new restaurant	watch the sunset

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www.mytherapyworks.com

TALK TO US

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EASE has counselors available. Call 800-882-1341