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EDGAR GALVAN / el Don



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ABOUT THE COVER



Freshman forward Marquise Mitchell helped Santa Ana defeat L.A. Mission College Sept. 7. It was the first game for the Dons in two years.



KATE BUSTAMANTE
CARRIE GRAHAM
EDITORS

WE KNOW YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Welcome back to campus, Santa Ana College fam!

This is Carrie, Editor-in-Chief, and Kate, Multimedia Editor, and we're your *el Don* editorial team for Fall 2021.

As the only two staffers who were here in March of 2020, we're excited to be back in the newsroom after a year and a half, working with our amazing crew of rookies — and our new podcast-slash-broadcast

studio — to bring you the news you care about.

Things are constantly changing, especially now as COVID-19 shapes the way we experience our world from day to day. We know there has been a lot of misinformation out there, including some spread by media. We want you to know that we aren't them.

We're your fellow students and neighbors and we're here

because we care about this community just like you. We believe that the news should be relevant to you, and that it should inform you — but never decide for you.

We hope to build your trust in local news sources and prove that integrity in reporting still exists. Also, we want you to know *your* stories matter, so reach out to us on social media any time.

KEEP IN TOUCH, FOLLOW US!

ONLINE:



INSTAGRAM:



SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR OUR LINKTREE, AND TO REGISTER FOR OUR NEWSLETTER:



FOOD

THRIVE CENTER OPENS FOOD PANTRY



Students can get free groceries and snacks at SAC's new food pantry, which is open every day except Tuesday and weekends. Students can get up to one bag of donated goods per week as well as grab-and-go snacks once a day. The pantry is the first service offered by the Thrive Center, a new basic needs center founded to provide access to food, clothing, career workshops and housing assistance.

✓ Tanya Moore

TRANSPORTATION

OCTA STUDENT PASSES RENEWED



You can ride any Orange County Transportation Authority bus using your SAC student I.D. thanks to a 2017 pilot program that was extended for another year in August. The updated agreement now includes a small fee for students. The cost is \$5.75 for full-time students and \$6.75 for students with six units or fewer. Activate your ID card at the Cashier's Office on the second floor of the Johnson Center.

✓ Tanya Moore



Enrollment woes

STORY
CARRIE GRAHAM
PHOTO
TANYA MOORE

Thousands dropped out of school when the pandemic first hit. Not all are returning to campus, concerning school officials.

Kristopher Cecil loved majoring in English. A transfer from Tennessee State University, he was a starter on the Dons football team and thrived on the interaction of his in-person classes.

Three weeks into his second semester at SAC, the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, forcing his classes online. Like many, Cecil said that distance education was not replicating the interaction of in-person courses. So, he dropped his course load to work full-time and support himself.

Today, Cecil said he would like to return to college, but he's not sure he ever will.

"Going to SAC was a very short-lived experience. A great one, but it ended so fast, and I had to go right back to the reality of just working, thinking maybe it's just not meant to be," Cecil said.

Cecil is one of the thousands of SAC students who have not returned since the pandemic.

From the fall semester of 2019 to the fall of 2020, state data shows that 1 in 4 students left SAC. However, the numbers are improving.

California community colleges receive most of their funding based on the number of full-time enrolled students, or FTES. Add in part-time and non-credit students, and SAC lost around 600 FTES.

A new state funding model determines funding by averaging enrollment over a three-year period. Because the state said schools would not be

held liable for pandemic numbers until next year, administrators aren't speculating on how much funding the college will lose.

"We are actively working on improving enrollment, and we're already up 13% from this time last year," SAC Public Information Officer Dalilah Davalos said, referencing the total headcount.

Though SAC administrators are preparing for the worst-case scenario, they're also increasing enrollment by working with local high schools.

The Dual Enrollment program collaborates with area high schools to offer college credit for classes that meet specific curriculum requirements. In the last year, it has nearly doubled both the number of participants and course options.

"We need the headcounts, or as much enrollment as possible, because we're seeing a trend across the board in Orange County that enrollment is going down, not just community colleges but also for the high schools," Dual Enrollment Coordinator Basti Lopez De La Luz said.

Another effort designed to boost enrollment is the addition of small blended classes—courses allowing both in-person and online during the same class time. Of those, 90% filled, compared to 65% of courses with only an on-campus option.

While most remote-blended classes this semester are business courses, there are plans to include other subjects in the future.



STORY
LUCERO GARCIA
PHOTO
UNSPASH

COVID CLINIC ENDS AFTER ONE DAY

Citing low turnout, Ralph's Pharmacy abandons Vax Wednesdays partnership with college.

Starting in September, campus officials promoted a weekly on-campus clinic meant to bolster COVID-19 vaccination rates among students. It was called Vax Wednesdays, and was supposed to run weekly from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

But on the first day of the event, Sept. 22, fewer than a dozen were vaccinated, and pharmacists from Ralph's abandoned the clinic after one hour.

"We only had six appointments, so we only stayed until 10 a.m. to accommodate those specific appointments and potential walk-ins," said Lord Sarino, manager of administrative services at Ralph's Pharmacy in Orange.

El Don reporters visiting the clinic observed at least one student who walked in after 10 a.m. and was unable to get vaccinated.

Vax Wednesdays were cancelled and an announcement made a few weeks later on official school social media. SAC Public Information Officer Deliah Davilos blamed low turnout.

"We are no longer working with Ralph's to vaccinate students because of low turnout, but we are working diligently to find a replacement pharmacy," Davilos said.

Sarino said Ralph's Pharmacy needed to reach up to 200 students for the semester to keep the program running — a benchmark set by Ralph's, not SAC, Davalos said.

Officials are looking for another

pharmacy to partner with for an on-campus vaccine clinic, which Davalos hopes to secure by Thanksgiving.

Rancho Santiago Community College District hasn't mandated vaccinations for students, but college officials are encouraging it as part of "Vax for the Win." The incentive program gives students a \$200 Campus Store gift card for submitting proof of vaccination. Funding for the gift cards comes from federal pandemic relief money.

"I am getting vaccinated not only because my family and friends recommended me, but I also want the money from Vax For the Win," said freshman Branden Carrillo, who was one of the few students to get vaccinated on Vax Wednesday.

As Sarino packed up his station and an ice chest of leftover doses an hour after opening the first and only Vax Wednesday, he said he understood that getting vaccinated is a personal choice. Still, it's the only way we can try to end the pandemic.

"Even though young people may not be having severe symptoms, they can still pass it onto their family members and their friends that have immune issues or are more susceptible," Sarino said. "The more people we get vaccinated, the faster we can end the pandemic."

To find your closest vaccine distributor, visit sac.edu/covid19

BY THE NUMBERS

2M

Total number of fully-vaccinated people in OC

39

Percentage of people ages 18-34 who are unvaccinated in OC

22K

Number of people under 65 in SAC's zip code who are vaccinated

Source: CA Immunization Registry

FALL SPORTS ARE BACK

TWO YEARS LATER



After two years, fall sports are back on at Santa Ana College. All athletics were canceled in March 2020 due to COVID-19, forcing athletes to stay in shape over the last year and a half via web workouts and Zoom check-ins.

Spring sports played a full 2021 season, but with restrictions. Athletes had to get tested for COVID-19 weekly and spectators were not allowed at practices or games. This season, testing remains but spectators are allowed and masks are only required for indoor games.

Many of the athletes who played during the 2019-2020

season are now gone due the pandemic and transfers, leaving this season's teams rostered with mostly freshmen.

Even with all of the safety measures set in place, practices and games across the board have been canceled due to positive COVID-19 tests among players and staff.

Some teams are already showing promise. Men's football has broken four college records with the help of Dons' new Head Coach Anthony White, and men's soccer is undefeated in conference play.

—Stephanie Martinez

ATTENDING GAMES

Support the Dons in-person this season with these rules:

No tournaments i

Spectators are permitted at all single opponent home contests, but not at tournaments.

Stay in your seats i

Spectators must remain in the seating or bleacher area for the entire game.

Mask up indoors i

All spectators indoors must be masked, regardless of vaccination status.

◆ "COMPETING ALWAYS TAKES A TEAM EFFORT FROM OUR ATHLETICS DEPT, AND DURING A PANDEMIC THAT IS EVEN MORE TRUE."

—Mary Hegarty, athletic director

SOCCER RECAPS

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY EDGAR GALVAN

MEN'S KEY PLAYERS

With a dominant defense, the Dons are leading the Orange Empire Conference undefeated in their first season back on the field since 2019.

- Sophomore midfielder Marcelo Aguirre
- Freshman midfielder Jose Villa



"Marcelo Aguirre is a candidate for MVP if he continues his form."
—Head Coach Jose Vazquez



"Jose Villa has just been magic. I think the kid is gonna have a bright future if he continues his education and plays here."
—Head Coach Jose Vazquez

It's an impressive return for the team consisting mostly of freshmen with only four returning players. The Dons are now more than halfway through the season, with an overall record of 8-3-4 and a conference record of 5-0-2. They are

undefeated in conference with five remaining matches. Santa Ana College has only tied against Golden West College and Fullerton College. The Dons defense has led them to the top position in the conference. In net, freshman

goalkeeper Jorge Cortes has been tough for opponents to score on, with a total of 36 saves in conference. The Dons have also excelled on the attack this season, with a total of 20 goals in conference and an overall of 31 goals.

WOMEN'S



Struggling offensively the Dons women's soccer team is currently in sixth place in the Orange Empire Conference.

- Freshman forward, Wendy Milan

Added three goals and three assists so far this season, becoming the Dons' most effective attacker.

The Dons' post-pandemic season has been difficult with only one victory so far in conference. The team's current overall record is 3-7-4 and a conference record of 1-5-3. Santa Ana has slipped up twice, giving away draws in the final minutes. With a squad containing 15 freshmen, they have only

scored four goals in nine matches. Santa Ana has five matches to improve defensively having conceded a total of 26 goals this season. In goal sophomore goalkeeper Jasmine Garcia has been put to the test with a total of 72 saves and only one shutout match in conference so far.

WRESTLING

Words by Sergio Gutierrez

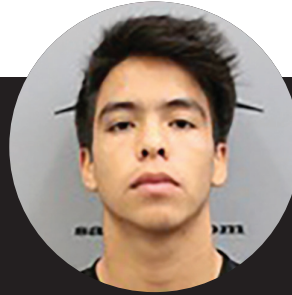
After missing last season, the Dons are pushing through adversity, including a late start because of a wrestler testing positive for COVID-19. The team lost four returners and have two vacant spots, in both the 197 and 285 weight classes. Despite setbacks, the team has two wins and four losses in season dual meets.



Slim loss to state champ

Mata had a close match up with a returning state champion and only lost by one point. Still, Mata shows outstanding performance on the mat, defeating a Palomar wrestler with a technical fall by 18-3.

Jose Mata
125 lbs. but wrestling up at 133 lbs.



4-3 but hopeful for State

Camarena recently had a difficult matchup against Palomar College losing after multiple takedowns. Camarena, however, has had thrilling match-ups in the past, beating a Rio Hondo wrestler 12-5.

Hector Camarena
133 lbs. but wrestling up at 141 lbs.

11

EXTRA POINTS SCORED IN ONE GAME BY KICKER AARON ROJAS

7

TOUCHDOWNS BY CESAR AYALA, THE MOST SCORED IN A SINGLE GAME

83

POINTS SCORED IN A SINGLE GAME, BEATING A 1924 RECORD

338

PASSING YARDS BY CESAR AYALA IN A SINGLE GAME

20

COMBINED TACKLES BY LEADING DEFENSIVE DONS

FOOTBALL

On a winning streak with new coach

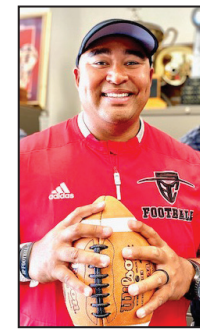
Words by Adriana Estrella

▶ Record-breaking season

After losing the first two games of the season, the Dons broke records with an 83-0 shutout at Los Angeles Pierce College on Oct. 2. After winning four games in a row, the Dons are 2-0 in conference play, putting the team in first place with a position for a post-season bowl opportunity.

▶ One season to turn it around

Dons Head Coach Anthony White is a former PAC-12 player who turned the struggling Buena Park High School team into champions. After four years off, he's excited to be coaching again.



Coach White

"I WANT STUDENT ATHLETES TO ALWAYS RECOGNIZE THAT EVERY DAY THEY SHOW UP THAT THEY ARE AFFECTING THEIR FUTURE."



VOLLEYBALL

Words by Carrie Graham
Photos by Kate Bustamante

AFTER TWO YEARS OFF THE COURT, DONS VOLLEYBALL IS OFF TO A ROCKY START

The all-freshman team has a current Orange Empire Conference record of 1-9 with an overall record of 6-11.

The Dons' most recent win was against the Riverside City College Tigers with a final score of 3-2. Outside hitter Kassandra Zavala helped the Dons get the win, serving up 19 kills.

Their next home match is against Fullerton College on Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. and their season ends with a home match against sister school Santiago Canyon College on Nov. 17.



Freshman outside hitter Kassandra Zavala leads the team in kills off serving.

CROSS COUNTRY

ON THE RUN

Words by Marifer Gutierrez

The all-freshman team is steadily finding their pace this season, placing 16th in the Biola Invitational on Sept. 10 and 8th at the Golden West Classic on Sept. 24.

Bryce Tanikawa

In the first race of the season, Tanikawa was the first Don across the finish line in the 8K with a time of 29:17.9



Aldo Trujillo

In the Dons' first 4-mile race, Trujillo led the team, coming in at 21:36.0 and earning 5th place overall.



5:05

Average mile pace of freshman runner Angel Sicilia in the 8K at Cal State Fullerton Oct. 22.

He placed 14th out of 149.

MEN'S

Coach Breig

"THIS FIRST GAME WE'LL BE FIGURING OUT WHO WORKS WELL WITH WHO, WHAT STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES WE HAVE, AND JUST LEARN ON THE GO"

Their home game is the first basketball game in the state after 2 years.

Men's basketball kicks off Nov. 1 with a home game against the San Diego Mesa College Olympians. Not only will it be the Dons' first game back, but also the first official community college basketball game statewide. Head Coach David Breig says that rebuilding the team after the pandemic has been

a challenge.

Only one player, Sophomore Josh Danque, is returning this season. Danque was just coming off the bench in the 2019-2020 season and had an average of 3.8 points scored per game. Danque, along with 17 new players are still competing for a spot on the team.

WOMEN'S

Two returners and all 15 rookies ready to play.

Dons' Women's Basketball team returns to the court on Nov. 2 for a home game against the Santa Barbara City College Vaqueros.

They had an overall record of 13-15 in their last season in 2019-2020. Sophomores Nicole Robles and Megan Roach are the only players to return to the team.

Robles, who stands 5'2", led the 2019-20 conference in 3-point shot percentage. Roach's coach expects a breakout season from the forward, who leads her team by example. Robles



and Roach are also joined by 13 freshman players from across Orange County, and Head Coach Flo Luppiani is optimistic about the

upcoming season.

"We're picky about who we recruit because the culture of the team is really important. All of our players fit well with

that culture," says Luppiani.

"All of them stand out. Every single one. We don't recruit people to sit around."

NOVEMBER HOME GAMES

MEN'S BASKETBALL

November 1 @ 6 p.m.
v. San Diego Mesa

November 4 @ 5 p.m.
v. Glendale

November 6 @ 11 a.m.
v. Long Beach

November 10 @ 4 p.m.
v. El Camino

November 17 @ 2 p.m.
v. Chaffey

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

November 2 @ 6 p.m.
v. Santa Barbara

WOMEN'S SOCCER

November 5 @ 3 p.m.
v. Cypress

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

November 12 @ 6 p.m.
v. Fullerton

MEN'S SOCCER

November 2 @ 3 p.m.
v. Golden West

November 9 @ 3 p.m.
v. Irvine Valley

November 12 @ 3 p.m.
v. Orange Coast

CROSS COUNTRY

November 5 @ 9 a.m.
SoCal Finals
at Mile Square Park

November 9 @ 10 a.m.
CCCCAA State
Championships
at Woodward Park, Fresno

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO VIEW SCHEDULES FOR ALL UPCOMING GAMES



Additional reporting by: Marifer Gutierrez, Carrie Graham and Kate Bustamante
Special thanks to the Athletics Department and all the coaches, athletes and staff.

CAMPUS

STORIES FROM THE LAND AT MAIN GALLERY



Stories of the Land is an on-campus exhibit featuring 13 Southern California women artists.

The showcased artwork pulls from their indigenous, immigrant, enslaved, free, migrant and refugee experiences.

This exhibit will run until Nov. 17 in the Main Art Gallery located on the first floor of the C Building and is open Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Masks are required.

✓ **Mario Cabrera**

DTSA

TWO DIA DE LOS MUERTOS EVENTS



Noche de Altares and Viva La Vida events commemorating Dia de los Muertos are returning this weekend after skipping a year.

Both events will take place on Nov. 6 in Santa Ana. Organizers for Noche de Altares have opted for a more "communal setting" according to a Facebook post, it will be held at El Centro Cultural de Mexico from noon to 6 p.m. Viva La Vida will be in Downtown from 1 to 10 p.m.

✓ **Mario Cabrera**



Photomaestras

STORY
MIRANDA NAVARRO
PHOTO
CARLOS DUARTE

Downtown art show presents work from local teachers and students reflecting on life, protest and social change

Loss, resistance and the role of educators in times of violence and change. That's the theme of *La Maestra*, the second art show at Crear Studio, a new community space in Downtown Santa Ana that showcases work by and for BIPOC.

As the founder of LibroMobile and Barrio Writers, Crear Gallery Director Sarah Rafael Garcia has a history of collaborating with local creators and developing spaces to cultivate diversity. Along with Lisa Alvarez, her former professor from Irvine Valley College, Garcia centered this exhibit around one of Alvarez's most intense works: *Falda de Ayotzinapa*.

The falda, or skirt, is a functional art piece made of dozens of newspaper clippings and informational posters. Get closer and you realize that each bears the face and name of 43 students kidnapped and murdered in 2014 while on their way to a protest in Iguala, Mexico.

Alvarez would wear the falda to protests, but decided during the pandemic to hang it up, and allow others to appreciate it at the same time. *La Maestra* was born.

Other pieces were handpicked by Juliana Rico, a photography teacher and practitioner who taught at Santa Ana College. She mentored many of the

Santa Ana artists featured during her time at SAC.

Each piece in *La Maestra* spurs conversation.

Former SAC student Daisy Monroy Lopez was mentored by Rico and has been practicing photography since she was 15. Her piece, "As The World Caves In," depicts a globe engulfed in flames. To Lopez, the work represents a never-ending battle between humanity and nature.

"It's a commentary on the current state of our planet," Lopez said. "It's how climate change and some of our decisions can affect the planet and how they are made from home."

Other former SAC photo students featured in the show include Maximiliano Maldonado and Carlos Duarte. Their photos range from fiery protest images to stylized portraits of Maldonado's father.

Garcia, Rico and Alvarez all agree that educators and students play a big part in societal change. Rico says she encourages her students to step out of their comfort zone.

"Teachers do more than teach. They create leaders in our community," Garcia said. "They preserve history and they inspire us to do more than just exist."

La Maestra runs through Nov. 15 during exhibition hours and by appointment at 222 W. 5th St.

OPINION TANYA MOORE

WHERE'S THE FOOD ON CAMPUS

I'm constantly hungry at school.

On campus, the new Cafe 17 is closed because of electrical problems with brand new equipment, the Don Express never opened back up due to low foot traffic, and after being open for only a few weeks the coffee cart, Ooh La Latte, is now closed.

There's the Thrive Center food pantry, but since I already used my free bag of groceries for the week I can only grab a granola bar for a snack.

The only place left on campus is the Quick Stop, a convenience store, where students line up waiting to heat up Top Ramen noodles in the communal microwave.

For many, preparing meals at home takes time, energy and money that isn't available to them.

This situation is worsening the issue of food insecurity already on our campus.

School officials need to prioritize students and ensure we have the option to receive hot, healthy food.

Expanding the food pantry could be a great start.

The administration needs to put more time and effort into ensuring reliable food sources on campus, the health and productivity of students depends on it.



Staff Editorial

PREMATURE EVAXULATION

Short-lived jab efforts leave students unsatisfied

As students finally returned to campus, Santa Ana College launched its Vax for the Win campaign, enticing students to upload proof of vaccination in exchange for a \$200 gift card to the campus store. And then — with no update — the site to upload documents didn't work. And then it did.

The same can be said for the Vax Wednesdays program, which students were told would be available by appointment or walk-in starting Sept. 15. But the college didn't provide a space for it until the following week.

When they did finally offer vaccines on campus, the providers left once they had serviced the appointments, after only one hour. Now Ralph's pharmacy has dropped its partnership with us, leaving SAC scrambling to find a replacement.

The administration may not have meant it this way, but at this point it really feels like they just don't respect or care about the students.

Many of our students work one or more jobs, have family obligations and face transportation barriers, making getting to a clinic to get vaccinated elsewhere difficult, if not impossible.

Obviously, SAC isn't obligated to provide either the vaccine or an incentive program, and we appreciate that the college is trying. But a lot of that value is lost when time isn't taken to make sure the resources we are offered will be accessible when we're told they will be.

With everything we've struggled through over the last year and a half, the last thing we need is more uncertainty.

FIGHTING CRIME BOTH WAYS

Comic fans have something to say about Superman coming out.

WORDS AND PHOTO ILLUSTRATION
BY EDUARDO VELASQUEZ / el Don

On National Coming Out Day last month, DC Comics announced the next issue of *Superman: Son of Kal El* will reveal the new Superman will be openly bisexual. DC comics was met with lots of criticism and backlash about changing one of their most popular characters.

If you don't read the comics or know about the DC comics universe, you might be out of the loop on who exactly Superman is at the moment. Throughout the years, comic book publishers have let different people carry the titles of already established superheroes. The first and most popular Superman is named Clark Kent and this is who everyone thinks DC Comics is making bisexual. However, the person who currently has the Superman title is Jon Kent, the son of the first Superman and Lois Lane.

Jon Kent, who debuted in July 2015, has only been in the comics for about six years and is a completely independent character from his father. Since his first appearance, Jon has had his own personal set of experiences that brought him to where he is today.

Just like how Clark Kent has Lois Lane, Jon Kent now has his own love

interest in the form of Jay Nakamura. Just how Clark and Lois' relationship wasn't a big deal, this one shouldn't be either.

With more and more LGBTQ characters finding their way into the media we consume, many fans are upset and view this as pandering or as an agenda being pushed onto audiences. This isn't the case at all, the appearance of new LGBTQ characters is simply a reflection of the world around us.

According to a Gallup survey conducted this year, about 6% of Americans identify as LGBT. The true percentage may be even higher if the survey included other identities and preferences. This percentage has been consistently rising with about a 1% jump since their 2017 survey.

Times are changing and people are more and more comfortable with coming out and expressing who they truly are. DC reflects these new times with the continuous inclusion of LGBTQ characters not just in their comics but in other media as well. Jon Kent is simply the latest character to come out, but hopefully he's not the last.



Let's talk mental health. Reporter Miranda Navarro asked students and faculty walking through the SAC campus how they're feeling. They had the option to share self care tips.

how

"I'm feeling okay, kind of indifferent."

Self care tips: Don't seek validation from others, seek it within yourself, because at the end of the day, what you think about yourself is what matters.

-Leonardo

"Right now I'm feeling good, but that's just for today, talk to me tomorrow and that would be a different story."

-Professor Marty Romero

60%
OF COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE UNAWARE OF WHAT STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM.

ya

1 IN 5
AMERICANS WILL EXPERIENCE A MENTAL ILLNESS IN A GIVEN YEAR

feeling?

"I am feeling blessed, I really can't complain."

Self care tips: Instead of worrying about others just take time to think about yourself, what makes you feel empowered and what you are grateful for.

-Jackson Cecil

"I am struggling today...I have so much on my plate as a student and additional responsibilities...I had to drop one of my classes because I can't keep going with everything else going on and still succeed. So yeah, I'm struggling but I'm here and I'm here to work."

-Anonymous

MANY STUDENTS DON'T COME BACK TO SCHOOL BECAUSE OF READMISSION POLICIES AFTER BEING OUT FOR MENTAL HEALTH.

"Today I actually feel good for the first time in awhile, and I'm pretty happy about that"

Self care tips: I like to go outside, go for a walk, go to the beach... and I like to talk to my friends.

-Anonymous

You are not alone.

Call the National Alliance on Mental Illness Helpline at 800-950-NAMI
In a crisis, text "NAMI" to 741741.

SOURCES: CDC, JOURNAL OF AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH

PAGE DESIGN: Kate G. Bustamante