

## Memo

**To:** All County Employees and Residents  
**From:** Alameda County Behavioral Health Department  
**Date:** October 3, 2024  
**Subject:** Celebrating Navratri

**Dear Colleagues and Community Members,**

Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD) is pleased to recognize and celebrate Navratri, a significant Hindu festival celebrated annually between October 3rd and October 12th. This nine-night celebration honors the divine feminine and provides an opportunity for spiritual reflection and cultural appreciation.



### **The Significance of Navratri**

*Navratri holds profound importance in Hindu culture and beyond:*

1. **Spiritual Renewal:** The festival provides a time for introspection, spiritual growth, and connection with the divine.
2. **Cultural Celebration:** It showcases the rich traditions, music, and dance forms associated with Hindu culture.
3. **Community Bonding:** Navratri brings people together, fostering a sense of unity and shared cultural experience.
4. **Empowerment Symbol:** The celebration of the goddess Durga represents the triumph of good over evil and the power of feminine energy.

### *Brief History of Navratri*

Navratri, which means 'nine nights' in Sanskrit, is a festival dedicated to worshipping the Hindu deity Durga. The festival symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and is celebrated differently in various parts of India. In North India, it's often associated with the story of Lord Rama, while in the East, it's connected to the goddess Durga's victory over the demon Mahishasura.

### **ACBHD's Commitment**

*ACBHD recognizes the importance of cultural celebrations in maintaining mental well-being and community connections. To honor Navratri, the community will:*

1. **Hosting a Virtual Navratri Celebration:** We'll organize an online event featuring traditional music, dance performances, and an explanation of the festival's significance.
2. **Offering a "Wellness Through Culture" Webinar:** We'll conduct a session exploring the mental health benefits of cultural celebrations and spiritual practices.
3. **Creating a Navratri Resource Guide:** We'll publish information about local Navratri celebrations, their significance, and how community members can participate respectfully.
4. **Partnering with Local Hindu Organizations:** We'll collaborate with local groups to provide culturally sensitive mental health resources during the festival period.
5. **Decorating ACBHD Offices:** We'll adorn our offices with traditional Navratri decorations to create an inclusive environment and raise awareness about the festival.
6. **Organizing a Staff Cultural Competency Workshop:** We'll provide training to our staff about Navratri and other Hindu festivals to enhance our ability to serve our diverse community.

We encourage community members to participate in these initiatives and to take this opportunity to learn more about the rich cultural tapestry of our county.

Remember, cultural celebrations can play a significant role in mental well-being. If you're seeking culturally sensitive mental health support, our department offers resources and services that respect and incorporate diverse cultural practices.

For more information about our Navratri activities or to access culturally sensitive mental health resources, please visit our website at <https://www.acbhcs.org/>.

Together, we can create a community that celebrates diversity and supports the mental well-being of all its members.