Together We Can: Keeping People with Mental Illness Out of Jail

We see it in the news far too often: a person in a mental health crisis coming into contact with law enforcement, taken to jail instead of receiving the mental health care he or she needs. The results are heartbreaking and often tragic; lives are irrevocably changed and jails are overcrowded with people who don’t necessarily belong there in the first place.

California’s Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) launched an 18 month review of this issue and has just released the report, Together We Can: Reducing Criminal Justice Involvement for People with Mental Illness. While not a comprehensive study of mental illness, it’s an actionable roadmap for change calling for California to make an immediate and strong commitment to address this complex issue. “One of the greatest policy failures of our time was dismantling our state mental health care institutions without having adequate community-based treatment in its place,” said MHSOAC Commissioner and Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown. “Our jails shouldn’t be used in place of treatment. We believe we should, and can, do better.”

The Commission’s report contains six recommendations, with a focus on collaboration in creating change:

- California’s mental health agencies, in partnership with law enforcement and others, should have a comprehensive prevention-focused plan to reduce the incarceration of mental health consumers in their communities.
- The Board of State and Community Corrections should facilitate a collaborative effort with counties to identify, develop and deploy services and strategies, including universal screening for mental health needs at booking and more training for custody staff.
- California must maximize diversion from the criminal justice system, including expanding options for restoring competency to those incompetent to stand trial.
- The Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health should fortify its efforts to support collaboration among state agencies toward prevention and diversion efforts.
- California’s Health and Human Services Agency should reduce any barriers to make data available that would help identify service gaps.
- California, in partnership with counties, should expand technical assistance to increase cultural competence, improve professional training, increase the use of data and evaluation and advance the dissemination of best practices.

“This report represents hope, collaboration and the leveraging of opportunities to help the many Californians who are in the system inappropriately,” said MHSOAC Chair Tina Wooton. “Through strategy and coordination, we have an enormous opportunity to bring public awareness, public support and reduce the stigma of mental illness to make real transformational change.”

To view the full report: www.mhsoc.ca.gov/criminal-justice
To view a video: www.mhsoc.ca.gov

NAMI SMC Slate of Board Officers for 2018 – 2019

In accordance with the NAMI San Mateo County bylaws, our annual election of officers will take place at the March 28, 2017 General Meeting. Nominations will be accepted at our office, from the floor at the General Meeting, and on our website at the beginning of March. Installation of officers will take place at the April board meeting, following the election in March. The NAMI SMC Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the following slate of officers for 2018-2019:

President: Jerry Thompson, R.N.
VP: Bill Kerns
Treasurer: Carol Gosho

It is our pleasure to welcome Kathy Stern and David Korth to the NAMI SMC Board. With extensive ties to the community, professional work in human services and county organizations, along with their passion and personal interest in supporting mental health, we are delighted that they are sharing their time and their talents with us. Welcome Kathy and David.
**Mental Health Hackathon**

*N*amed *M*ental *H*ealth

**Saturday & Sunday, February 3-4**

NAMI San Francisco is sponsoring a mental health hackathon in February! Hackathons are think tanks that bring together coders and experts of a given field to come up with innovative solutions or products, in this case for a good cause. The event is still in particular need of coders and providers. Come together and innovate for mental health by participating in this 24 hour event! Link to hackerthon: [https://hackernoon.com/announcing-hackmentalhealth-silicon-valleys -mental-health-hackathon-1f886fd3e5c](https://hackernoon.com/announcing-hackmentalhealth-silicon-valleys-mental-health-hackathon-1f886fd3e5c)

Sponsored by Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission and California Institute of Integral Studies.

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**2018 NAMI California Annual Conference**

*United Voices
A Stronger California*

**Friday, June 1—Saturday, June 2**

Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel & Spa
Del Monte Golf Course
1 Old Golf Course Road, Monterey

Check out this exciting LOCAL conference at [https://namica.org/conference/](https://namica.org/conference/). For Early Bird registration visit: [https://41339.thankyou4caring.org/2018-pre-super-early-bird -registration](https://41339.thankyou4caring.org/2018-pre-super-early-bird-registration). For special hotel pricing please call (831) 372-1234 or go to [https://aws.passkey.com/go/2018NAMI](https://aws.passkey.com/go/2018NAMI). Please reach out to us with any questions or to submit/complete exhibitor reservations. For Non-Profit rates, forms and completed reservations please email Marcel@namica.org.

**Sing the National Anthem at the Conference!**

NAMI California is in search of a lucky volunteer to sing the National Anthem at the opening of the conference.

To be eligible to sing the National Anthem at the opening of the ceremony, candidates must:
- be 18 years of age or older;
- have previous experience singing the national anthem in front of a live audience;
- provide a video recording while performing the National Anthem to Thao Duong at [Thao@namica.org](mailto:Thao@namica.org) for information.

**Google Partners with NAMI**

NAMI is excited to partner with Google once again on a posttraumatic stress disorder screening questionnaire. This screening tool can be a crucial step toward getting a proper diagnosis and treatment for this condition. When searching for "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," "PTSD" or related queries on Google using your mobile phone, you will see a Knowledge Panel that gives you the option to tap "check if you may have PTSD." This will bring you to PC-PTSD-5, a clinically validated screening questionnaire to assess your likelihood of having this condition. (Note: getting an in-person assessment is essential to a diagnosis of PTSD and this screening tool can give you important information to discuss with your doctor.)

Click here to go Google’s blog, where you can read more about this important new feature.

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**Car Donations Accepted!**

We have received our first donation—THANK YOU!!!

A free, convenient service for converting that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefitting NAMI San Mateo County. You can donate online ([http://www.v-dac.com/org/?id=94-2650681](http://www.v-dac.com/org/?id=94-2650681)) or call 877-999-8322 to make your donation. Thank You!

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**Jail Chaplain**

Spiritual counseling for incarcerated persons - Marty at St.Vincent de Paul Society: 650-796-0767.
Volunteer Commentary—LIKE NAMI SMC!

I first heard of NAMI while searching for organizations to volunteer at for my senior benchmark project. The benchmark project required us to research and do volunteer service related to a social issue. After reaching out to several nonprofit organizations, NAMI’s San Mateo branch let me know that they were in need of a volunteer. So, during the winter break of my senior year, I volunteered at the San Mateo branch for fifteen hours across three days.

Simply working at NAMI allowed me to understand the nature of mental illness better. NAMI employees combat stigma against illness daily and seek to not only raise public awareness but also to help people understand the nature of mental health. What many people, including some who have been diagnosed, don’t understand is that mental health is not any different from any other aspect of health, and having a mental illness is not any different than having a physical sickness or injury. While many would accept seeking treatment for a broken leg, there is a lot of internal and external skepticism that NAMI employees must help their clients overcome in order to help them heal.

Services like NAMI directly help people and have a truly commendable impact on the local community. Volunteering for an organization that is built on human empathy and compassion is something unique and poignant. I would highly recommend volunteering there because doing so will not only help a local organization that does good work but will also allow you to gain a better understanding of the nuanced nature of mental health.

—Sabrina Sun
Irvington senior graduating in 2017-18

Donating Stock to NAMI SMC

On Tuesday, February 13, NAMI SMC will be able to accept donations of appreciated stock with the opening of an account with Ameritrade. A stock transfer to NAMI SMC is a meaningful way to make an impact on our mission to improve the quality of life for people with mental illness and their families through support, education and advocacy.

Instead of giving cash, people with investments in stocks, bonds and other securities they've held for at least one year can donate those that have appreciated in value. ... In fact, donating stock saves even more taxes than donating cash, since there is no capital gains tax and you may be able to automatically increase your gift and your tax deduction.

Please check the website at http://namisanmateo.org/get-involved/how-to-donate for further details.

Family to Family Teachers Needed!

Due to a growing demand to participate in NAMI's signature Family to Family program, we offer 6 classes in English during the year and 2 in Spanish. However, in order to do so, we need additional teachers! If you are a Family to Family graduate who would like to give back and teach classes - we need you!

Training is provided over a long weekend. Please contact the NAMI office at 650-638-0800 for details or email us at nami@namisanmateo.org

NAMI SMC Board Members Needed

NAMI San Mateo County (SMC) is looking for three or four new and enthusiastic Board members who want to make a difference in the SMC mental health arena - by helping family members and individuals with a mental health diagnosis receive the support, education and advocacy they need and deserve.

In our 43+ years of operation we have grown from a very small volunteer-run agency to a much stronger organization. The Board of Directors provides program and policy direction, raises funds to develop and support new programs and services, as well as links to the broader community. We are currently seeking individuals who have experience in finance, fundraising, marketing, and law.

Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at our San Mateo office.

If you would like to be considered to serve on our board, all interested parties should contact Helene Zimmerman at hzimmer@namisanmateo.org. Thank you.

New Additions to the Library

Please visit the library at the NAMI San Mateo County office - we have books and videos available to check out! Watch for our latest additions below. If you have read a book related to Mental Health issues that you believe would benefit others, please email the office with the title and author.

Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression—and the Unexpected Solutions by Johann Hari.

What really causes depression and anxiety - and how can we really solve them? Award-winning journalist Johann Hari suffered from depression since he was a child and started taking anti-depressants when he was a teenager. He was told that his problems were caused by a chemical imbalance in his brain. As an adult, trained in the social sciences, he began to investigate whether this was true - and he learned that almost everything we have been told about depression and anxiety is wrong.

Across the world, Hari found social scientists who were uncovering evidence that depression and anxiety are not caused by a chemical imbalance in our brains. In fact, they are largely caused by key problems with the way we live today. Hari’s journey took him from a mind-blowing series of experiments in Baltimore, to an Amish community in Indiana, to an uprising in Berlin. Once he had uncovered nine real causes of depression and anxiety, they led him to scientists who are discovering seven very different solutions – ones that work. It is an epic journey that will change how we think about one of the biggest crises in our culture today. His TED talk – “Everything You Think You Know About Addiction Is Wrong” – has been viewed more than 8 million times and revolutionized the global debate. This book will do the same.

Visit www.namicalifornia.org/ to get the latest on legislative activity.

We appreciate your participation in advocacy!

Visit www.namicalifornia.org/ to get the latest on legislative activity.

We appreciate your participation in advocacy!

NAMI San Mateo County News   February 2018   -3-
Whole Person Care, HOPE & NAMI SMC

The Whole Person Care Pilot is designed to coordinate health care, behavioral health care and social services for clients who are high users of multiple systems and continue to have poor health outcomes. An essential part of the Pilot is the development of the Helping Our Peers Emerge (HOPE) program designed to provide peer and family support services to assist individuals who are in psychiatric hospital settings and help them to successfully transition back into the community.

Working in collaboration with Heart & Soul, California Clubhouse and Voices of Recovery, NAMI SMC has been selected by the San Mateo County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services to provide “family support” to the family members of Peers who find themselves hospitalized.

The HOPE Family Partner will work with families in their loved ones recovery process by engaging and building relationships through sharing their own personal lived experience of supporting a loved one with mental health issues.

Family Partner Job Opportunity

NAMI SMC is actively seeking Family Partners to help us fulfill our role within the greater HOPE program. If you are interested in applying, please review the full job description that can be found at http://namisanmateo.org/about-us/jobs/ and complete the application, or email us for more information at nami@namisanmateo.org. We look forward to speaking with you.

The HOPE program will launch in April.

Social Security Benefits or Vocational Rehab Questions?
Call Wendy Jordan at 650-802-6482

Support Group Leaders Needed

We have openings for Support Group Leaders. If you have attended our support groups and would like to “give back,” this is your in. To learn more, please contact Helene at hzmmer@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800. In order NOT to close any support groups, we need your help! Please consider becoming a member of our Support Group Team!

Update on NAMI SMC’s Peer PALS Program

We are looking for Peer and PAL applicants! Please consider applying as a Peer to receive the friendship and support of a PAL OR please share this with someone who could benefit from our program. To make a difference in someone’s life, call today for information on how to become a PAL. Learn more about this FREE program at http://namisanmateo.org/about-us/jobs/ and/or email Rocio the Peer PALS Coordinator at PeerPals@namisanmateo.org.

Peers: This program helps decrease loneliness and isolation, increase comfort in social situations and self-esteem, and convey lifestyle habits that promote and maintain recovery.

PALS: First complete NAMI’s Peer to Peer class or similar education/mentoring classes through a community service agency or college. Call 650-638-0800 to discuss. Join us!

Los jueves, febrero 8 – marzo 15 • 5:30–8:30pm
Fair Oaks Elementary, Salon 20
2950 Fair Oaks Avenue, Redwood City

Bases y Fundamentos de NAMI es un programa gratuito de seis sesiones, diseñado para padres y otros cuidadores de niños y adolescentes con problemas emocionales y de comportamiento. Ayuda comprender los problemas emocionales que están causando los problemas de conducta, y el papel importante que las familias desempeñan. Hay cuidado de niños y cena. Para registrarse contacta con Claudia Saggese: 650-573-2189 y Yolanda Ramirez: 650-519-1047.

EVERY Monday of the month • 7:00-8:30pm
NAMI office, 1650 Borel Place, #130, San Mateo

Connection provides persons with mental health conditions a gathering of respect, understanding, encouragement and hope. The group is led by trained individuals who are experiencing at living well with mental illness. No registration is required. Just drop by; we look forward to meeting you. Call 650-638-0800 or email at education@namisanmateo.org with any questions.

Check out Wellness Matters, the SMC BHRS newsletter http://smchealth.org/wm
### SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS  (for information on NAMI Support Groups call 650-638-0800)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI Cordilleras MHR Center Family Group</strong></td>
<td>1st Mondays (2nd if 1st is a holiday), 6:30-8pm, 200 Edmonds Road, Redwood City, 650-367-1890. Penney Mitchell &amp; Julie Curry, NAMI SMC co-facilitators.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI Parents of Youth &amp; Young Adults</strong></td>
<td>(ages 6–26), 2nd Mondays, 7-8:30pm. 222 W. 39th Ave. &amp; Edison, Board Room, San Mateo. Park in the large lot on west side of building, off 37th Ave. Enter building through the “Hospital &amp; Clinic West Entrance,” follow the signs on the 2nd floor Board Room W-225, 638-0800. Ginny Traub &amp; Florian Davos, facilitators.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI Coastside Support Meeting</strong></td>
<td>for family members, 2nd Mondays, 6:30-8pm. El Centro DE Libertad; 225 Cabrillo Hwy South Ste #105d (the bldg next to Coastside MH), Half Moon Bay. Info: 650-638-0800.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI Connection</strong></td>
<td>for persons working on their wellness &amp; recovery. <em>Every</em> Monday, 7-8:30pm. 1650 Borel Place #130, San Mateo. Call NAMI SMC 650-638-0800 for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cafe para Padres</strong></td>
<td>ultimo Martes de cada mes. Clinica Shasta 727 Shasta St. Redwood City. Para preguntas contacte a Yolanda Ramirez al 650-599-1047.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI Spanish-Speaking Support Group</strong></td>
<td>2nd Tues, 6-7:30pm, 802 Brewster, RWC. 650-573-2189.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI Jewish Family &amp; Children’s Services</strong></td>
<td>family and friends are welcome. 4th Tuesdays, 7:00pm. 200 Channing Ave., Palo Alto. Contact Navah Statman NAMI Facilitator (408) 253-7623.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI San Mateo Medical Center</strong></td>
<td>for family members. 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 6:30-8pm. 222 W. 39th Ave. &amp; Edison, San Mateo. Board Room (main entrance elevator to 2nd floor, left to the end of the hall). Carol Metzler &amp; Judy Singer, NAMI facilitators.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI South County Support Meeting</strong></td>
<td>for family members, 2nd Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm. Mental Health Clinic, 802 Brewster, RC, 650-363-4111. Pat Way, NAMI SMC facilitator, Liz Downard RN, MSN. <strong>Park behind building and knock loudly on door.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>DBSA Mood Disorder Support Group</strong></td>
<td>for persons with uni- and bi-polar disorders, mania, depression, or anxiety; family members welcome. Tuesdays, 7-9pm, College Heights Church, 1150 W. Hillsdale Blvd, San Mateo. Contact at <a href="mailto:DBSAnate@um.att.com">DBSAnate@um.att.com</a> or 650-299-8880; leave a message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Korean Support Group</strong></td>
<td>a family/consumer group. 4th Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm. Full Gospel Mission Church, 20920 McClellan Rd. (opp. De Anza College), Cupertino. Info: Kyo, 408-253-9733.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individuals Living With Their Own Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>Tuesdays, 1-2:30pm. Redwood City - Sequoia Counseling Services, sliding scale fees apply. Contact Deborah at 650-363-0249, x111.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parent Chat</strong></td>
<td>for parent/caregivers of kids aged 14-24 with mental health challenges. 2nd &amp; 4th Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm. Orchard Room, Los Altos Arbor, 13 San Antonio Rd. Info: Trudy 650-208-9116 or Donna at 650-823-0997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI Stanford</strong></td>
<td>2nd Wednesdays for <em>families and friends</em> / 4th Wednesdays for <em>spouses and partners</em>. Both: 7-8:30pm. 401 Quarry Road #2213, Stanford Dept. of Psychiatry &amp; Behavioral Sciences (parking is between Vineyard &amp; Quarry). Info: 650-862-2886 or Pamela Polos, <a href="mailto:pamelapolos@comcast.net">pamelapolos@comcast.net</a> / Georgia Vouraki, <a href="mailto:georgiavk@gmail.com">georgiavk@gmail.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jewish Support Group</strong></td>
<td>(open to all denominations), for those with mental illness and families and friends. 2nd Wednesdays, 6:15-8:30pm. For info, call Carol Irwin 408-858-1372. Beit Kehillah, 26790 Astraadero Rd., Los Altos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAMI North County Support Group</strong></td>
<td>for family members. 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 5:45-7pm, 375 89th Street, Comm. Room, Daly City. Info: 650-301-8650. Co-facilitators: Karen Pyles LMFT and Valerie Nolan, RN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Coastside Dual Diagnosis Group</strong></td>
<td>development for clients in all stages of recovery. Thursdays at 4-5pm. 225 So. Cabrillo Hwy #200A, Half Moon Bay. 726-6369 for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Body Image &amp; Eating Disorders</strong></td>
<td>Thursdays, 6:30-8pm, 1225 Crane St, Ste 205, Menlo Park. Open to family and friends. RSVP required: <a href="mailto:emlycaruthersmft@gmail.com">emlycaruthersmft@gmail.com</a>. More info: 408-356-1212 or e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@edrcsv.org">info@edrcsv.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>H.E.L.P. for those with a mental illness and/or in a supporting role</strong></td>
<td>Thursdays, 6:00pm optional dinner; 6:30-7:30 program, 7:30-8:30 prayer. Menlo Church, Garden Court, 950 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park. Info: Jane Clark 650-464-9033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation of SF Bay Area</strong></td>
<td>3rd Saturdays, 1:30-3:30pm, Seton Medical Center, 1900 Sullivan Ave., 2nd Fl. Conf. room near cafeteria, Daly City. For more information: 415-273-7273; <a href="http://www.ocd-bayarea.com">www.ocd-bayarea.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chinese Language Family Support Group</strong></td>
<td>Cantonese/Mandarin. Call Alice at 650-573-3571 for more information.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Japanese Education &amp; Support Group</strong></td>
<td>call (415) 474-7310 for information.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consumer Support Groups</strong></td>
<td>Heart and Soul, call 650-232-7426 for days &amp; addresses, or visit <a href="http://www.heartandsoulinc.org">www.heartandsoulinc.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cluttering &amp; Hoarding</strong></td>
<td>Support Groups, Workshops, and Private Consultations - Groups/programs change, contact Emily Farber, MSW, 650-289-5417, <a href="mailto:efarber@avenidas.org">efarber@avenidas.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NAMI Education Programs
To be added to the Wait List, call 650-638-0800 or email us at education@namisanmateo.org

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
Sign up for the evidence-based education class that fits your need. (Support Groups on page 5) Courses are FREE, comprehensive, and popular. Gain skills and understanding in an interactive, supportive environment.

♦ Basics—For parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness.
♦ Family to Family—For relatives of an adult family member with mental illness. Class meets once a week for 12 weeks.
♦ Peer to Peer—Better living skills for people with mental health issues taught by people with mental health issues.
♦ Provider—for Mental Health and AOD professionals, para-professionals and all others serving individuals with serious mental illnesses and their families. CMEs pending approval for qualified attendees. Please contact us to set up an in-house program for your organization.

BHRS Family Contacts
Suzanne Aubry | Claudia Saggese
Dir. Family Service | Family Liaison (habla Español)
650-573-2673 | 650-573-2189

Peninsula Veterans Affairs Center
Are you a vet or know one who needs help, is experiencing PTSD and/or other symptoms? Call 650-617-4300 or visit 345 Middlefield Road, Bldg. 1; Floor 1, Menlo Park.

Shopping Supports NAMI SMC
Sign up NOW! Tell a friend!
Together, shopping through any of these mediums makes a real difference. For more information, contact the office at 650-638-0800 or nami@namisanmateo.org.

S.H.A.R.E.S goes escrip! Save Mart, Lucky and Foodmaxx have now partnered with escrip. Go to www.escrip.com, click on “sign up,” follow the instructions to register your grocery cards and your existing credit/debit cards for NAMI San Mateo County. You’ll earn up to 3% on qualifying purchases when you check out with your registered phone number. Go to escrip.com/shares to register.

Always start at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. When you log onto smile.amazon.com please choose NAMI San Mateo County as your charitable organization; from there your shopping purchases will be linked directly to us!

San Mateo County Mental Health Emergency Numbers
Police: 911
Tell the dispatcher you are calling regarding a person who has a mental illness. Request a CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) trained officer and/or someone who has experience in dealing with the mentally ill. For non-emergency situations, call your local police department.
HELPFUL: Tips to prepare yourself for a 911 call are available on the BHRS website. Download “Mental Health Emergency” at www.smchealth.org/MH911 or visit the blog: http://smcbhrsblog.org/2015/03/30/mental-health-emergency-materials-aka-family-script/.

24 Hour Crisis Line & Support Help: 650-579-0350 | 800-784-2433
Calling the local number will get you someone in San Mateo County. Calling the 800 number will get you the first person available. This person may not be in San Mateo County.

Psych Emergency: San Mateo Medical Center: 650-573-2662 Kaiser South San Francisco: 650-742-2511
Mills Peninsula Hospital: 650-696-5915 Kaiser Permanente SMC: 650-991-6455

FAST: 650-368-3178 | 650-371-7416 (pager)
Family Assertive Support Team - When your loved one is in emotional distress.

For additional non-emergency numbers relating to Mental Health issues, access www.namisanmateo.org.
Each year my daughter made progress with her treatment and was better and more stable each year. This progress was encouraging, but I was always waiting and ready for a setback. The most difficult times were the fall and winter, she suffered with depression and suicidal thoughts at this time, and sometimes she felt very out of control. Fortunately, we made it through, we spent many nights crying and sleeping on the couch together. After her diagnosis, I never dreamed that my daughter would ever be living such a happy, independent and wonderful life. Now, eight years after her first hospitalization, we are moving forward with our lives, we are all stronger for it and I am grateful for every day that she is with us. It is heart-warming to see her so well and hear her plans for the future. I am so thankful that she found the strength and had the insight into her illness to attain the recovery that she enjoys today.

To learn more about what writing your story might entail and how we can work with you regarding privacy issues, please contact Helene Zimmerman, at hzimmer@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800.

2018 NAMI National Convention

June 27-30 New Orleans

Early Bird registration is open through February 28, visit NAMI Convention for more information and presentation opportunities.

Great reasons to attend:

• Learn from experts who share exciting research, tools and treatment options. Hear powerful stories and make connections with people you can relate to. Deepen your recovery toolbox with advanced support and coping methods. Earn continuing education credits as a licensed counselor, social worker or registered nurse. Develop NAMI leadership skills that can take the NAMI movement to the next level. Celebrate NAMI New Orleans’ 40th Anniversary by cruising down the Mississippi aboard the Creole Queen Riverboat.

This year’s keynote speaker is Chamique Holdsclaw, an esteemed WNBA player who autobiographed Breaking Through: Beating the Odds Shot after Shot, which details her history of depression and attempted suicide amidst her basketball career, as well as her inspiring recovery journey.

Save the Date! - 2018

• June 1-2 NAMI California Conference in Monterey. https://41339.thankyou4caring.org/2018-pre-super-early-bird-registration


• Sept. 22 NAMI Walks – San Jose. More info soon!

From Kathleen Shea

My three children are all precious in their own ways, but my daughter is the love of my life. She was a delightful baby and grew up to be a very kind and confident young lady. When she was a sophomore in high school, she was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. After months of treatment with medication and psychotherapy, she was able to return to high school and graduated. As it turns out, the depression was just the start of a long journey through mental illness to recovery. At the age of 20, she started a downward spiral which resulted in numerous admissions to five different psychiatric units in the Bay Area. The eight years that followed her first hospitalization in 2010 were the most difficult years of her life, she suffered with psychosis, paranoia, anxiety and addiction related to her Schizoaffective Disorder diagnosis. Thankfully, she has a deep understanding of her illness and has been compliant with her treatment. She has learned how to manage her illness and is now living a full life; she is a patient advocate and active in NAMI.

Trying to support my daughter through her illness and suffering was the most painful experience for me. In the first few years, I felt like I was watching her die slowly and painfully every day. I did my best to take care of her and help her, but nothing I did really changed anything. She was miserable and her illness affected our whole family. I felt angry at times because her behavior was so unacceptable, but I had to accept it. The behavioral symptoms of mental illness are extremely difficult to understand. It was even more difficult for my husband to understanding our daughter’s illness and symptoms. He always had many suggestions and advice for her which made her angry and defiant. Within a year of her diagnosis, my husband and I attended Family to Family which was extremely helpful. It helped us to talk with other parents who were going through similar struggles with their children. We learned about mental illness, treatment and communication techniques and we learned to take one day at a time. I was working full time and I was a student in a doctoral program at the time of my daughter’s diagnosis. My first impulse was to drop everything and take care of her, but I knew that if I stopped my life to focus on hers, both of us would suffer in the long run. I tried my best to accept the situation, to keep her safe and to provide the health care and home that she needed. I was able to adjust my work situation so that I could be closer to home and to her medical team if I was needed. One of the hardest things was to be “on call” for her. For several years, we very rarely left her at alone home unless it was for work or school, my husband and I very rarely went out of town and vacations were nonexistent. I was not comfortable leaving her at all, even when I went away for a weekend or business trip, I spent much of the time on the phone with her because I was afraid for her safety.

It’s important for people living around mental illness conditions to know that they are not alone. Sharing a story about your personal experiences with mental health challenges—as an individual with a diagnosis, or as a family member or friend—can help in your own recovery as well as provide encouragement and support to others with similar experiences.
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Your membership in NAMI San Mateo County is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our Tax ID number is 94-2650681. Thank you for your support!
Survey Opportunity for Working Mothers

A survey is being conducted by the Working Mother Research Institute to understand how people with non-apparent disabilities (including autism, ASD, PTSD nd other cognitive and mental disabilities) feel about their experience in the workplace (or, if not employed, their experience in looking for employment). The results of the survey will be used to improve employers’ ability to recruit and retain members of this critical talent pool.

**Who can participate?** The survey is intended for working mothers who have a disability themselves. It is not intended for a relative or caregiver of a person with a disability. Participation is completely voluntary and responses will be confidential and reported in aggregate only.

**How do I participate?** To participate, please click on the following link: https://bonnier.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bg49htm8mJUn?Source=NAMI

The survey could take up to 30 minutes to complete. You will have the ability to save your results and finish the survey at a later date if you are unable to complete it in one sitting. If you experience technical problems with the survey software, please email at disabilitiesurvey@workingmother.com

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**When Happiness Isn’t a Choice**

American poet T. S. Eliot wrote: "I said to my soul, be still and wait without hope, for hope would be hope for the wrong thing: wait without love, for love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith, but the faith and the love are all in the waiting. Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought: So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing."

I thought about that quote this weekend.

A woman posted a comment about hope in the depression support group, Group Beyond Blue, in which I participate. She said that her therapist told her that hope is more of a cognitive process than an emotion, that we can make a conscious effort to develop hope. I agreed, for the most part, because when I’m feeling hopeless, there are specific things I do to increase my hope:

- I flip through my mood journal to see evidence that I always emerge out of the black hole, that I haven’t stayed in there indefinitely. I study my sanity numbers (1 to 5) that fluctuate over the course of a month, a week, a day.
- I pull out the picture of a young woman who attended Group Beyond Blue some years after I graduated, who reminds me of a younger version of myself, except that her life ended in suicide. When I look at her smile I can feel her presence and hear the word, “Believe,” that her father has repeated to me.
- I review the nuggets of encouragement that my mentors and good friends have told me when I despair: “You WILL feel better.” “It won’t always be like this.” “You got well before.” “Hope is a skill,” someone in our group wrote. “Happiness is also a skill. It’s a choice.”

That’s when I felt a punch to the gut. I responded defensively, “Happiness is a choice” sounded to me the same as the hurtful question I got from a family member shortly after my hospitalization for severe depression: “Do you WANT to get better?” as if I was fabricating my suicidal thoughts for attention. Or maybe she thought I really liked the meatloaf and cherry Jell-O lunches.

Now I know the woman in my support group didn’t mean it that way. She was merely saying that we can decide whether or not to choose a path to happiness, and can, through cognitive behavioral therapy, change our thought patterns to be more optimistic. I’ve been immersed in this kind of literature lately: Buddha’s Brain by Rick Hanson, PhD, and Richard Mendius, MD; Change Your Brain, Change Your Life by Daniel Amen, MD; and Train Your Mind Change Your Brain by Sharon Begley. They basically all say that we have much more control over our thoughts — in the way neural passageways are formed — than we previously thought.

Which is good news. I have benefited immensely from the cognitive behavioral therapy exercises by David Burns, MD, and the like: by recognizing the distorted thoughts running around naked without a towel inside my head, and by applying his methods for untwisting them. For example, when my husband and I have an argument and I jump to “my marriage is doomed,” I know I have a few distortions going on (overgeneralization, all-or-nothing thinking, mental filter, disqualifying the positive, jumping to conclusions, catastrophizing, and emotional reasoning). By “identifying the distortions,” “examining the evidence,” and “thinking in shades of gray” — three of his methods to untwist distorted thinking — I arrive at rational thought again.

Except for when I can’t.

That’s what bugs me about “happiness is a choice” philosophies. I think they work on mild and moderate depression, definitely on situational depression. But for some forms of severe depression and treatment-resistant depression or complicated mood disorders — at least for those periods of time when you’re on your knees begging God to take you — my experience has been that any attention to your thoughts only makes it worse.

It is like someone saying to me, “Eat this oyster, but don’t swallow it” (I’m allergic to shellfish).

I equate it to allergies because there have been times I’ve had allergic reactions to drugs, food, and supplements — like the time I took natural progesterone — that my suicidal thoughts were so strong, my desire to leave this place so intense, that I was not in control. The only thing that kept me here was my knowledge that my thinking was a reaction to the supplement, that my brain was merely inflamed, just like my fingers get when I eat oysters. Sometimes incessant death thoughts have been a result of thyroid disease, my pituitary tumor, or some other comorbid illness. Acute stress can trigger it. Trying to retrain my thoughts at these times makes me feel worse, like I’ve failed, just as I would feel if the expectation was that my fingers would not swell.

Neuroscience backs my experience.

One research study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in particular, used high-definition brain imaging to reveal a breakdown in the emotional processing that impairs the depressive’s ability to suppress negative emotions. In fact, the more effort that depressives put into reframing thoughts — the harder they tried to think positive — the more activation there was in the amygdala, regarded by neurobiologists as a person’s “fear center.” Says Tom Johnstone, PhD, the lead study author at the University of Wisconsin: "Healthy individuals putting more cognitive effort into [reframing the content] get a bigger payoff in terms of decreasing activity in the brain’s emotional response centers. In the depressed individuals, you find the exact opposite."

I remember my doctor telling me about this study in the days and months following my hospitalization. I was beating myself up, as usual, because I was trying so hard to apply cognitive behavioral exercises to my thinking, but I couldn’t get past wanting to die.

I wasn’t ready for thought, like Eliot says.

The trick is knowing when to apply optimism, cognitive behavioral therapy, and all the brain exercises that can form new neural passageways, and when to turn the brain off and just keep swimming.

Sometimes I’m swimming against currents that are so strong, that even my best attempts are going to result in backward motion. Last month, when I swam across the Chesapeake Bay, at times there were cross currents and headwinds that made it feel as though you were swimming in a washing machine. I kept looking up to see how far I had to go. However, every time I did that I swallowed a gush of diesel -tasting water and hurt my shoulder. I made better progress when I kept my head in the water, forgot about where I was going or how far to land, and just focused on one stroke after another.

It seems as though the darker the place, the less thinking required. Sometimes I choose a path to happiness, and can, through cognitive behavioral therapy, change our thought patterns to be more optimistic.

Therese Borchard