General Meeting

100 S. San Mateo Drive
San Mateo
Mills Health Center / Hendrickson Aud.
Free evening parking in front

Wednesday, July 25
6:30pm Reception
7:00-8:30pm Program

Tools & Tricks to Build a Better Life – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Anna Nedelisky, Ph.D.

Join us to hear the story of how CBT and DBT were created. We will learn who benefits from the therapies, and get a sense of how these treatments work. By the end of the talk, we will have learned a couple of tricks from both CBT and DBT, and you will know how and when to use them.

NAMI San Mateo County General Meetings are free and open to the public. We welcome all who support our mission to improve the quality of life for people with mental illness and their families.

The Double Standard Of Mental Illness

By Michelle Walshe | April 25, 2018

Mental health conditions are not the only illnesses to suffer from stigma: AIDS, leprosy and obesity are others. However, Princess Diana shook hands and shook the world at the same time. Antibiotics took care of leprosy and obesity receives a lot of attention from the media. But mental health…it still languishes in the shadows.

It receives occasional celebrity glances, but I feel like these campaigns actually move mental health further away from understanding. The answer is not more exposure to mental health, but more education. First Aid, CPR and sexual education can be found in schools, gyms and offices. Yet CBT could be mistaken for a television channel and mindfulness still invokes eye-rolling.

Everyone should be minding their own mental health, but it’s also important to know the signs in others—which is hard to do if you don’t know what you’re looking for.

If a family member walked into your living room, bent over in pain and screaming for help, what would you do? You would help, of course. And generally, you’d know what to do. If you saw blood, you’d try to stop it. If the person was choking, you’d open their airway. You wouldn’t be performing surgery if that was required, but you could call a doctor or drive them to a hospital or go to a pharmacy and get painkillers.

But with mental health, the picture is so different. We don’t do any of the above. We generally ignore the symptoms, often only seeing them in hindsight. Then we say, “Cheer up!” “Things aren’t that bad!” “Look on the bright side!”

In the same way that these phrases will not cure a burst appendix, they can’t cure a bout of depression either.

For the most part, but by no means always, a person experiencing mental illness will present as withdrawn, detached or dissociated from reality. But because they’re not screaming in pain or doubled over, we think (misguidedly) that a few feel-good phrases are the best medicine. But the real best way to help when you see these behavioral changes—no matter how subtle they may be—is to recognize that this is the scream you’re looking for. It’s silent, so you must be on high alert, but just like stroke symptoms, the faster you act, the better the outcome is going to be.

(Continued on page 7)

Personal Stories of Change & Understanding

By John Goodwin

I retired last year from the National Park Service after serving 27 years as a law enforcement ranger. I worked at both wilderness parks and in urban environments. Many people I met would tell me I had the best job in the world. My usual reply would be “you’re right, at least on most days.”

I started out my career having enthusiasm and passion. As a ranger, I wore many “hats” to include: law enforcement, EMT, search and rescue, boat operator, structural and wildland firefighter. During my career, I experienced the thrill of finding lost and injured visitors and was able to use my EMT skills to save more than a few. I also suffered the disappointment of dealing with those I couldn’t save. Most of that anguish in the early years was short-lived, or so I thought. It wasn’t until my first lightning strike in the year 2000 did I realize that all the past experiences had accumulated. The physical pain of the lightning strike was difficult but it was nothing compared to the months of mentally putting my life back together again. I received some treatment and was cleared to go back to

(Continued on page 7)
3rd Community Advocacy Forum POSTPONED

**The Forum has been rescheduled to the fall** as we make more contacts and learn more about the process. Please watch your inbox for an email from the Forum.

Benefits of NAMI’s Peer to Peer Class

As you look at the photograph of smiling faces, it appears that we have all been good friends for a long time. That is not the case. Ten weeks ago we were strangers. The Peer to Peer class taught us many things but it didn’t cover how to become friends. That came naturally because of what the class did teach us: an understanding of our own diagnoses, a willingness to be vulnerable and open, the validation we received every time we shared personal and painful moments, as well as more clinical lessons on how to better cope with mental illness, what we can do if incarcerated or in the hospital, and hands-on activities like creating a relapse plan. It is true that this class teaches many useful tools and gives much-needed information. What became maybe even more powerful were the unintended lessons of acceptance, validation, safety, and compassion. Making strangers into friends in ten weeks is not an easy feat, yet Peer to Peer did that for us, and if I might speak for all of us, we are so very grateful.

—Lori Howard, Peer to Peer Graduate

May 23rd General Meeting Review

The program focused on three community programs: Serenity House, Addiction Studies and Integrated Treatment

Serenity House is a 10 bed short-term crisis residential facility that will open mid-summer at 3701 Hacienda Street in San Mateo. With input from Pernille Gutschick of BHRS, we heard Nicole Ibarra, Managing Director and Gabrielle Galinanes, Licensed Nurse and Art Therapist outline the services that will be available. These include DBT, CBT, trauma informed practices, and family advocacy, with a goal of preventing in-patient hospitalization and relapse. The 24/7 staff will include a half-time nurse practitioner, two clinicians, a family advocate, and a full time cook. The typical client would be having a mental crisis but not of the level that would require a 5150 hold. The facility is unlocked so admissions are voluntary and initiated by a phone call from the individual. They will accept Medical and Medicare insurance.

Next, we heard from Angela Stocker, M.A., Director of Addiction Studies at the College of San Mateo. Her students in this 60-unit, AA program are trained to treat people with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse diagnoses, addressing prevention, education and recovery, and the dangers of marijuana use. Two graduates, now counselors, and one current student shared stories of their own recovery and involvement in the Addiction Studies curriculum. This is an important, forward-thinking program that may be a good next-step for someone doing well in their recovery and/or looking for a second career. [http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/aods/](http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/aods/).

Finally, Linda Strassia LCSW, manager for outpatient Behavioral Health at Mills Peninsula Medical Center, addressed the standard of care today: Integrated treatment of mental illness and substance abuse which is diagnosed in 18% of patients and is likely much higher. Mills has several inpatient and outpatient programs, all of which include this approach. Therapist Peter Hess and Art Therapist Tonya Alexander were a “tag team” discussing the importance of thorough assessment, helping patients get to know themselves, and believing that no program works without a thoughtful aftercare plan. Mental health conditions most often begin between ages 18 and 25 but children as young as 10 are emerging in their system after experimenting with substances resulting in psychosis. Recovery is a slow process in which they hope all family members would be involved. Relapse is common, not a failure, and they strive to help each individual learn to be pro-active for him or herself.

Thanks to all who presented and worked at this informative program, and it was good to see those who attended!

Let’s Talk Mental Illness Wrap Up

Although it might have felt like the British Invasion on May 13th, it was just Ian Adamson of Mateo Lodge and Helene Zimmerman of NAMI SMC doing what they do best….providing support for family members and persons that live with a serious mental illness. Thanks to the First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame for hosting “Let’s Talk Mental Illness - Coping with Mental Illness.” It was an enlightening Mother’s Day morning. Thanks to all that attended.
Training for LEAP Program

June 21-23
Crowne Plaza, 1221 Chess Drive
Foster City/San Mateo

How to create relationships with persons who have serious mental illness that can lead to treatment and recovery

Join Dr. Xavier Amador, world renowned psychologist and author of I’M NOT SICK, I Don’t Need Help, for the LEAP Training. This course teaches Family Caregivers, Healthcare Professionals, Criminal Justice Professionals, and Peer Specialists how to create relationships with persons who have serious mental illness (SMI) that can lead to treatment and recovery—reducing involuntary hospitalizations, homelessness, incarceration and other devastating outcomes.

Choose your session and learn LEAP in 1-day or get certified to teach in 2-days:

Learn the LEAP® Approach
DAY 1 (June 21): Professionals ($150*); Family, Friends & Peer Specialists ($25*)
- Identify Anosognosia vs. "Denial"
- Lower anger, resistance and defensiveness
- Re-establish broken relationships/alliances
- Create an alliance that leads to treatment

Become a Certified LEAP® Trainer
DAY 2 (June 22): Professionals ($275*), or
DAY 3 (June 23): Family, Friends & Peer Specialists ($150*)

Enroll in the both days to become a trainer, join a national network and receive ongoing support from Dr. Amador and senior LEAP Faculty.

Course Includes:
- The 7 LEAP® Communication Tools
- Cutting-edge science-based practices
- Updated Anosognosia Research
- “I’M NOT SICK, I don’t Need Help” book
- Interactive Role Plays

Click here to learn more and REGISTER.

(888) 801-LEAP (5327) ext. 106
brenda@leapfoundation.center
www.leapfoundation.center

16th Annual NAMIWalks

Saturday, September 22, 2018
Guadalupe River Park, San Jose
Check in: 8:30am; Start time: 9:30am
www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley

Walk Team Captains are gearing up to build big teams this year! Prepare to join a team or build one of your own! Talk to a Team Captain or gather some family members/friends/coworkers/neighbors and visit the website above. Create a login and password to enter and build your personal profile.

Add a fun picture on your profile and a story that highlights why you want to join the fight against stigma.

Also, the site offers the option to be a virtual walker where you can register on a team, raise money and awareness without leaving the comfort of your living room.

Visit this link for a Sponsorship Brochure.

Mental illness can be isolating but it doesn’t have to be. #JoinTheMovement

Docent Led Wildflower Walk & Picnic

The beautiful 3k hike of the serpentine grasslands of Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve on May 5th offered some stunning scenery, surprises and views! Thank you to our Docents from The Friends of Edgewood for the good hike!

And a very special thank you to our sponsor Behavioral Health & Recovery Services of San Mateo County.

NAMI SMC Chosen as Donation Recipient

Viva La Diva is proud to announce NAMI San Mateo County as a co-recipient for funds collected for this year’s San Francisco Carnaval. Viva La Diva, a dance troupe brought together through participation in Latin dance classes at Prime Time Fitness Center, will also be donating to La Raza Centro Legal in San Francisco.

Viva La Diva is honored to participate in this year’s parade.

In recognition of Mental Health month, Viva La Diva is proud to support NAMI this year!

—Linda Halog, Ellie Rodriguez and Sara Watson

Check out Wellness Matters, the SMC BHRS newsletter http://smchealth.org/wm

We are grateful for donations...

...in honor of
Mental Health Month from Joseph J. Teresi, Jr.
...in memory of
Linford Gayle from Kimberly Nobles
Alma Pioli Peterson from Violet & Bill Guerra
Elizabeth Spanjian from Violet & Bill Guerra
NAMI San Mateo County appreciates those who send donations that honor loved ones. Our sincere gratitude!
Peer PALS—the Latest!

The Peer PALS Program has experienced considerable growth in the last month and we have now reached 12 matches for the first time! Throughout the program’s 8-month span, we have graduated 8 matches from the program, and the very first individual to receive support as a peer has now transitioned to be a PAL and will soon be going through the mentor training!

While we continue to look for Peer and PAL applicants, **we have an immediate need for PAL applicants who wish to contribute their friendship and support to individuals who could greatly benefit from it.** Please consider signing up to be a PAL and make a difference in someone’s life. Interested individuals can learn more about this FREE program at [http://namisanmateo.org/about-us/jobs-and/](http://namisanmateo.org/about-us/jobs-and/) or email Rocio 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. To discuss the program, call 650-638-0800. Join us!

Facilitators Needed

We're looking for persons to facilitate our programs! Training is provided to lead our education programs, presentations and support groups - please contact the NAMI office at 650-638-0800 for details.

We are also looking for individuals with lived experience who are interested in telling their story for In Our Own Voice presentations.

New Additions to the Library

Please visit the library at the NAMI SMC 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.

Walk A Mile: Tales of a Wandering Loon
by Chris Young

As a kind, chatty, and good-humoured man with a zest for life and a passion for helping people, Chris Young adored his job as a social worker. But things fell apart when, in 2008, he was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. His illness brought about the end of his calling and he found himself in need of a new project and purpose. And so it came to be that in 2011 Chris began a campaign called Walk A Mile In my Shoes. He walks around the edge of society being where many people with mental health problems feel they are – without spending any money and relying on the kindness of strangers. In 2015 he joined forces with See Me Scotland to distil the success of the coastal walk into a series of events, inviting other people to join him and discuss mental health. He encouraged them to literally walk a mile in each other's shoes.

MHSARC Meetings

(Mental Health & Substance Abuse Recovery Commission)

FULL COMMISSION MEETINGS
1st Wednesday, monthly: 3pm-5pm
Time/locations vary, check 650 573-2544 or www.smchealth.org/mhsarc
Health Services Building, Room 100
225 W. 37th Ave. San Mateo

AGE FOCUSED COMMITTEES
Older Adult Committee:
1st Wednesday monthly: 11am-12noon
Call for location: 650 573-2544
Adult Committee Meeting:
3rd Wednesday, monthly: 10:30am-11:30am
Children and Youth Committee Meeting:
3rd Wednesday, monthly: 4pm-5pm

Jail Chaplain

Spiritual counseling for incarcerated persons - contact Marty at St.Vincent de Paul Society: 650-796-0767.
### SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

*(for information on NAMI Support groups call 650-638-0800)*

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
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<td>• NAMI Cordilleras MHR Center Family Group</td>
<td>1st Mondays (2nd if 1st is a holiday), 6:30-8pm, 200 Edmounds Road, Redwood City, 650-367-1890. Penney Mitchell &amp; Julie Curry, NAMI SMC co-facilitators.</td>
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<td>• NAMI Parents of Youth &amp; Young Adults</td>
<td>(ages 6-26), 2nd Mondays, 7-8:30pm. 222W. 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 &quot;Hospital &amp; Clinic West Entrance,&quot; follow the NAMI signs to the 2nd floor Board Room W-225. 638-0800. Ginny Traub &amp; Florian Davos.</td>
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<td>• NAMI Coastside Support Meeting</td>
<td>for family members, 2nd Mondays, 6:30-8pm. El Centro De Libertad; 225 Cabrillo Hwy S. Ste #114B (the bldg next to Coastside MH), Half Moon Bay. Info: 650-638-0800. Facilitator: Jennifer货币 musician.</td>
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<td>• NAMI Connection</td>
<td>for persons working on their wellness &amp; recovery. Every Monday, 7-8:30pm. 1650 Borel Place #130, San Mateo. Call NAMI SMC 650-638-0800 for information.</td>
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<td>• NAMI Spanish-Speaking Support Group</td>
<td>2nd Tues, 6-7:30pm, 802 Brewerst, RWC. 650-573-2189.</td>
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<td>• NAMI Jewish Family &amp; Children's Services</td>
<td>family and friends are welcome. 4th Tuesdays, 7:00pm. 200 Channing Ave., Palo Alto. Contact Pamela Polos, <a href="mailto:mpolos@comcast.net">mpolos@comcast.net</a>.</td>
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<td>• NAMI San Mateo Medical Center</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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<td>• NAMI South County Support Meeting</td>
<td>for family members, 2nd Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm. Mental Health Clinic, 802 Brewerst, RC, 650-363-4111. Pat Way, NAMI SMC facilitator; Liz Downard RN, MSN. Park behind building and knock loudly on door.</td>
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<td>• DBSA Mood Disorder Support Group</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:DBSASanMateo@um.att.com">DBSASanMateo@um.att.com</a> or 650-299-8880; leave a message.</td>
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<td>• Individuals Living With Their Own Mental Illness</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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<td>• Parent Chat</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 Library, 13 San Antonio Rd. Info: Trudy 650-208-9116 or Donna at 650-823-0997.</td>
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<td>• NAMI Stanford</td>
<td>2nd Wednesdays for families and friends/ 4th Wednesdays for spouses and partners. Both meetings: 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 at <a href="mailto:pamelapolo@comcast.net">pamelapolo@comcast.net</a> / Georgia or <a href="mailto:georgia@nami.org">georgia@nami.org</a>.</td>
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<td>• Jewish Support Group</td>
<td>open to all denominations, for those with mental illness and families and friends. 2nd Wednesdays, 6:15-8:30pm, Beit Kehillah, 26790 Arastradero Rd., Los Altos. For info, call Carol Irwin 408-858-1372.</td>
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<td>• NAMI North County Support Group</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>
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<td>• Coastside Dual Diagnosis Group</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>
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<td>• Body Image &amp; Eating Disorders</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>
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<td>• H.E.L.P.</td>
<td>for those with a mental illness and/or supporters, 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>
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<td>• Korean Support Group</td>
<td>For Family Members: Cupertino, 4th Friday: 12:30-2:30pm. Call for location: Kyo, 408-712-1149.</td>
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<td>• Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation</td>
<td>of SF Bay Area, 3rd Saturdays, 1:30-3:30pm, Seton Medical Center, 1900 Sullivan Ave., 2nd Fl. Conf. room near cafeteria, Daly City. Info: 415-273-7273; <a href="http://www.ocdbayarea.org">www.ocdbayarea.org</a>.</td>
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<td>• Japanese Education &amp; Support Group</td>
<td>call (415) 474-7310 for information.</td>
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<td>• Consumer Support Groups, Heart and Soul</td>
<td>call 650-232-7426 for days &amp; addresses, or visit <a href="http://www.heartandsoulinc.org">www.heartandsoulinc.org</a>.</td>
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<td>• Cluttering &amp; Hoarding Support Groups, Workshops, and Private Consultations</td>
<td>- Groups/programs change, contact Emily Farber, MSW, 650-289-5417, <a href="mailto:efarber@avenidas.org">efarber@avenidas.org</a>.</td>
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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.

Save the Date - 2018

✦ July 15 3–5pm Challenging Assumptions about Mental Illness. Presenters with lived experience talk openly about what it’s like to live with a mental health condition. Call NAMI office for location.
✦ Sept. 22 NAMI Walks – San Jose. See page 3!

Shopping Supports NAMI SMC
Sign up NOW! Tell a friend!
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!

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

BHRS Family Contacts
Behavioral Health & Recovery Services
Suzanne Aubry Claudia Saggese
Dir. Family Service Family Liaison (habla Español)
650-573-2673 650-573-2189

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.


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

For additional non-emergency numbers relating to Mental Health issues, access www.namisanmateo.org.
The Tony Hoffman Community Mental Health Service Awards Announced

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Recovery Commission gives recognition for public education or advocacy to promote mental health awareness and needs or to address stigma, services to persons with mental illness, creation of new and innovative programs or community support activities, recognition of fundraising for mental health activities or long-term financial support to mental health programs, working for new mental health legislation, and compassionate treatment of persons with mental illness. Congratulations to this year's recipients:

Claudia Saggese (Service Provider) — Claudia has been supporting English- and Spanish-speaking families for the past 13 and a half years with BHRS, NAMI SMC and the San Mateo community.

Loren Shea (Client/Volunteer)—After attending a NAMI General Meeting with her mother, Loren signed up for the Peer to Peer class in 2016 and was motivated to become a co-teacher of the program. In 2017, Loren told her story as an “In Our Own Voice” presenter, to inspire others and show first hand that recovery is possible. Since becoming trained, Loren has taught a Peer to Peer class and shared her story numerous times at the San Mateo Medical Center.

Dr. Murie Hooper (Service Provider) and Language Circle of California, Inc. (Business) were also recognized this year.

Visit www.namicalifornia.org/ to get the latest on legislative activity.
We appreciate your participation in advocacy!

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

(From Double Standard on page 1)

Sympathy and empathy is always with the person experiencing the mental illness. And rightly so. Mental illness often feels like being at the bottom of a well you cannot climb out of. And like any illness, you feel sick. Some days, you feel sick every minute.

But there is an army of people struggling as well because mental illness is one of the hardest, most frustrating, most guilt-inducing illnesses to care for. Every caregiver berates themselves for the time they lost their temper, their patience or their cool. Not to mention the guilt and the unease that travels with them every time they leave the house or if their phone rings unexpectedly—the permanency of being on edge, the constant companion that is worry.

But most of all, every caregiver carries the same gnawing question: What if they could have caught their loved one’s illness sooner? What if they missed something—a clue, a sign?

Caregivers and individuals are somehow both expected to recognize symptoms, understand them and then get ourselves or our loved ones the right kind of help in an area of medicine where even the professionals seem to struggle to diagnose clearly. But how can we do that if we’re not properly educated first?

Michelle Walshe teaches teenagers full time in a College of Further Education in Dublin. Her spare time is spent reading and writing, and is frequently published in the national media in Ireland. She’d lived in America, Australia, Switzerland, Germany and Morocco but home now is with her family in Ireland. Michelle has spent the last year taking care of her mother, who experiences bipolar disorder. Check out her blog at www.thesparklyshell.com.

(From Personal Stories on page 1)

work.

The following decade I suffered another lightning strike, a bear and alligator attack, investigated numerous fatalities, suffered 17 assaults in the line of duty with hospital stays for 7 of those, and had 2 surgeries for injuries. In 2009, I suffered two horrific assaults in the line of duty. After the second assault, I became increasingly agitated at my co-workers, my family and the public. I lost interest in everything, except for the job. I had frequent nightmares and kept reliving the many events over and over in my mind. I literally felt like my life was circling the drain.

In late 2009, I was sitting at a computer when I happened across an article on a police website that talked about a weeklong first responder retreat in Northern California. I applied and was accepted into the program. The program was at a facility called the West Coast Post-Trauma Retreat (WCPR). The WCPR included peer support and clinical treatment. I knew after I left the WCPR that it had saved my life. With continued counseling, family, peer and friends support, I realized I could never be the person I was but I also knew I could be happy with the person I had become.

I want to make sure that people, especially EMS, Police and Fire Department personnel, are aware there are mental health services out there for them. I had three friends during my career that committed suicide due to work related issues. The stigma that still exists out there is why I support NAMI and wanted to share my story.

John Goodman is a NAMI member and was a walk team captain last year. He is on the Colma City Council and was instrumental in bringing NAMI-SMC and the work NAMI does to his fellow council members.

It’s important for people living around mental illness to know that they are not alone. Sharing a story about your personal experience with mental health challenges—as an individual with a diagnosis, or as a family member or friend—can help with recovery. To learn more about what writing your story might entail and how we can work with you regarding privacy issues, please contact Helene at 650-638-0800 or kzimmer@namisanmateo.org.
Membership / Donation Form

Donate, renew or join NAMI SMC also at namisanmateo.org

☐ Individual Member ($40)*
☐ Household Member ($60)*
☐ Open Door Member ($5)*
☐ Renewal or ☐ New Membership Amount Enclosed: $______

* A portion of your membership is sent to NAMI National and to NAMI California

☐ My Company has a Matching Gift Program: _____________________________ (company name)

Name__________________________________________________________
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Pay by: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MC Credit cards charged to billing address.
Credit Card#_________________________________ Expires_______ 3 Digit code_____
Amount $______ Signature__________________________

How did you hear about NAMI?

☐ Family ☐ Consumer ☐ Friend
☐ MH Professional ☐ Business or Agency

Please check all that apply: I/we am/are

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 being a part of the NAMI SMC family!

NAMI San Mateo County
1650 Borel Place, Suite 130
San Mateo, CA 94402

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Time Value

NAMI California Conference
June 1-2 | see page 2

LEAP Training
June 21-23 | see page 3

Challenging Assumptions about Mental Illness
July 15 | see page 6

General Meeting
July 25 | see page 1

NAMI San Mateo County
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