Nick Wolfram’s Family Story: Thankful for the NAMI Lifeline

By Nickelous Wolfram

I didn’t realize it at the time but my difficulties with the mental illness in my family began over 65 years ago, when I was born. Only recently has this become clear to me; my mother and two of my older sisters match the symptoms of my 31 year-old daughter who was conclusively diagnosed with bipolar I disorder recently. Unlike many children who experience night terrors of monsters or boogie men, my greatest childhood fear was that I might lose my mind. Now I realize that I intuitively understood very early on that I had close family members with occasional symptoms of mania. Over the years the layers of denial of these facts were encouraged by my mother and became thicker like the armor of a rhinoceros. I’ve always loved my mother and found ways to explain her behavior throughout her life. 18 years ago I was her caretaker in her final weeks of life. During her life she struggled mightily with major problems related to my older sisters’ actions and was tortured with feelings of guilt for their actions.

When our own daughter ‘Rebecca’ was initially diagnosed with bipolar I disorder, and hospitalized at age 15, my wife and I were completely devastated. In subsequent years Rebecca seemed to improve and the layers of denial led us to believe that she had been misdiagnosed. Shortly after Rebecca turned 18, despite our advice, she dropped all treatment and ran off with her boyfriend who she later married. Subsequently, she returned to school and received a degree from a well-respected university, so we thought she had permanently turned a corner and was completely healthy. Unfortunately about a year ago, at age of 31, she had a major psychotic episode that triggered her divorce, her bankruptcy and put her in the hospital against her will. My rhinoceros-thick denial armor was shattered, as was her life. My wife and I were desperate to help her, and though we have not been able to break through her own pathological denial (anosognosia) we are now able to understand the situation and lend more competent help to her. This is mostly due to the help of NAMI’s Family-to-Family educational program, which we recently graduated from. Thank you NAMI for helping me understand how to live free of guilt through understanding and knowledge!

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 hzimmer@namisanmateo.org.

Help break the stigma of silence surrounding mental illness……..

Peer PALS Needs Financial Support

Peer PALS has had a terrific year, producing 25 matches and helping to improve the lives of so many. While we are proud to have grown tremendously over the course of these past few months, we need additional funding to maintain what we have built, and to continue growing. Jelena’s testimonial speaks to the success and benefits of the program.

We urgently need additional funding to continue this most successful program (seeking an additional $30,000).

(Continued on page 2)
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.

Peer PALS Testimonial: By Jelena

My name is Jelena and I started Peer PALS in March, 2018. Rocio introduced me to the wonderful lady, Sheila. This was a perfect match. By sharing her own experiences and wisdom, Sheila helped me to overcome my own struggles with mental illness.

This program is an amazing asset of the NAMI team in San Mateo, and I hope that it will touch many more people who share similar struggles!

Thank you to the wonderful Mom – our first major donor - who has shown her support of the program with a most generous donation!

Become a Peer PAL

Interested individuals can learn more about this FREE program at www.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!

To learn more about supporting the program, please contact Helene at hzimmer@namisanmateo.org, or call 650-638-0800. Donations can also be made online at www.namisanmateo.org/donate

Nov. 13 General Meeting Review
NAMI Thanksgiving

As our NAMI friends and families gathered in the Hendrickson Auditorium in the Mills Health Center on November 13th, we were serenaded by the excellent six-piece jazz ensemble “Melonade”. Only one of these very talented Stanford students was a music “major” who hopes to turn his talent into a career. The rest are at various levels in their college and post-graduate work and hope to enter careers in business, technology, and other chosen fields, while continuing to play music as a hobby. We hope to see more of them both before and after they go their separate ways.

Armando Sandoval shared the story of his many years of service to NAMI as a long-serving board member and Community Outreach Liaison with the BART Police, and a family member who is grateful for the support he receives through NAMI. He is also grateful and proud of the growth he and his wife have experienced together as they’ve advanced their educations and career achievements and look forward to embarking on PhD programs together in the very near future.

Julisa Voinche presented her insightful perspective as an active NAMI Peer who loves to meet and connect with new people and share her story of hope and recovery. Having grown up with a great deal of instability in her family she values her NAMI family and helped to remind each of us how important we are to each other.

And by the way, the Pies and other goodies were DELICIOUS! Especially the specialty and home-made ones. Thanks to all who donated your favorite holiday treats! Please remember to support NAMI with a small (or big) donation at these monthly events to help defray the cost of food, coffee, supplies and equipment.

Medicaid waivers allowed for inpatient psychiatric treatment.

This past November marked a milestone for our efforts to reduce the preventable tragedies caused by the lack of inpatient treatment and encourage #ABedInstead.

On November 13th, Secretary Azar of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services announced important regulatory changes that will allow states to receive Medicaid reimbursements for mental health treatment in inpatient settings known as IMDs, or institutions of mental disease.

Secretary Azar’s announcement acknowledges the negative outcomes this policy has historically caused, and new waiver guidelines create an opportunity for states to address their shortcomings in treatment delivery.

Like most complicated regulatory reform, it will take time for meaningful change to take effect, but this one offers enormous potential to improve psychiatric care and to reign in the costs associated with neglecting those most in need.

Thank you to all those who helped make this happen. www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/fixing-the-system/features-and-news/4105-medicaid-waivers-allowed-for-inpatient-psychiatric-treatment

Visit www.namica.org to get the latest on legislative activity.
It’s time to sign up for health coverage for 2019!

Open enrollment on HealthCare.gov will run through December 15. The annual open enrollment period allows people to enroll in or renew their health insurance coverage.

Why is this important for people with mental health conditions?

All health plans offered through HealthCare.gov must cover mental health and substance use services at the same level as other health conditions. Additionally, 8 out of 10 people who sign up on Healthcare.gov qualify for financial help, which can lower monthly premiums by about $50 to $100.

An important factor to consider this year is that more skimpy health plans will be available for people to purchase than in recent years. These short-term, limited duration (STLD) plans are available during this year’s open enrollment period and some websites or insurance brokers may encourage people to buy these plans.

STLD plans do not have to comply with mental health parity and are allowed to:

- Deny coverage for any pre-existing condition, including mental illness;
- Charge higher premiums for people with a history of mental health conditions;
- Not cover mental health and substance use disorder treatment;
- Deny coverage of services resulting from self-inflicted injury.

Don’t miss out! Sign up for a plan that is required to cover mental health at [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov) by Dec. 15.


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

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Membership & End of Year Appeal Time!

It’s that time of year! Please renew your membership with NAMI San Mateo and/or make an end of year donation. We value and need your support as we receive NO funding from any government agency and/or NAMI National (all NAMI affiliates operate independently. If you haven’t yet joined the 2019 membership, please use the request for membership renewal you receive in the mail, or there’s a form on the back page of this newsletter; *Gifts of Stock now accepted* or join/donate on our website [www.namisanmateo.org/donate](http://www.namisanmateo.org/donate).

By joining at this local affiliate level (preferred) you will receive the local San Mateo County monthly newsletter, the NAMI California web newsletter, and the NAMI National full-color magazine, each offering their respective level of coverage and commentary. Thank you for continuing to support NAMI SMC.

No gift is too large or too small.
“We are most grateful for all your support”. Thank you.

Check out Wellness Matters, the SMC BHRS newsletter [www.smchealth.org/wm](http://www.smchealth.org/wm)

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Cordilleras Mental Health Rehabilitation Rebuild Update

On Wednesday, October 17, Terry Rittgers, Cordilleras Campus Redesign Projects Clinical Services Manager, San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and Scott Gurley, Project Manager, San Mateo County Project Development Unit, gave an update on the rebuild of Cordilleras that was first envisioned in 2013.

**History:** The current building was built as a Tuberculous Hospital in 1952 and became a Mental Health Rehabilitation Center (MHRC) in 1975 – 35 years ago. As the current building is deteriorating and expensive to maintain, and methods of treatment for individuals with serious mental illness have evolved, it was determined that a new facility would be expeditious.

In November 2014, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors accepted the feasibility study for the replacement of the building. San Mateo County Manager, John Malhibe stated that “this facility has outlived its life and we will have a new state of the art facility for those who need this level of care.”

**The Vision & Goals of the new Cordilleras will:**

- **Focus on Wellness** – to be healthy
- **Promote Respect** – to be livable
- **Build Community** – to be collaborative
- **Heal through Nature** – to be environmentally conscious
- **Strive for Recovery** – to flourish.

To get an update on this project please attend our NAMI San Mateo General Meeting on January 23rd at the Mills Health Center / Hendrickson Aud. 100 S. San Mateo Dr, San Mateo.
Taking Care After a Traumatic Event

A traumatic event is any situation that causes a person to experience unusually strong emotional reactions that have the potential to interfere with their ability to function normally at work or at home.

When you are involved in or witness a traumatic event, your actions and the actions of those around you can be crucial in reducing the effects of the trauma. The 24 to 48 hours after an incident will ultimately affect the amount of reactive stress you’ll experience. It can also impact the time needed to recover.

If the traumatic event affects your entire workplace, you may find comfort in knowing that you are not alone in your feelings. The attitude and support of both colleagues and supervisors in the workplace can be a critical aid to recovery.

Tips and tools you can use

- If you are personally impacted by trauma and experience immense emotional pain, severe physical symptoms or have difficulty coping, talk to a health professional. While the effects of a traumatic event may sometimes last months or even years, there are some steps that can be taken immediately to help reduce the negative impact. Here are some points to think about:

**Yourself:**

- Try to maintain a normal routine as much as possible. This will help you rebuild a sense of security and safety.
- Try to exercise within the first 24 hours.
- Cut down on caffeine and tobacco, avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Limit your sugar intake.
- Eat food at regular mealtimes, even if you don't feel hungry.
- Aim for small helpings of nourishing foods.
- If your sleep is disturbed, get up and do something.
- Realize that emotional responses are normal reactions to a traumatic event. Whether you are angry, fearful, anxious, sad or disoriented, what you are experiencing is common.

**You and your family:**

- Give yourselves time to heal.
- Ask for support from your family and friends.
- Keep a diary.
- Join a local support group.
- Establish or re-establish your routines.
- Avoid major life decisions.
- Become knowledgeable about the feelings you’ll likely encounter as time goes by.

**Reactions after the initial shock subsides:**

- Feelings may continue to be intense and unpredictable. Many people feel depressed or more irritable than usual.
- Repeated and vivid memories of the event are common.
- There may be difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Sleep and eating patterns may be disrupted.
- Recurring emotional reactions are common.
- Relationships may be strained.
- Social withdrawal may occur.
- Physical symptoms may accompany the stress.


New Additions to the Library

The Anguished Prince: A Fairytale in Reverse
By Peter Weiler

As a Psychotherapist and President of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Westside Los Angeles, I was deeply touched by this magical fable.

The story of this Prince describes the anguish and despair of growing up in a family where one is not a good fit with their parents. The Prince is one of these children that fell far from the parental tree. The Prince also experiences a brain disorder called bipolar disorder. This causes his struggles and behavior to be even more out-of-sync with his family.

But in this fable, the Prince meets a peasant girl who turns out to be a Fairy Princess herself. She helps guide the Prince to find his true self. The Prince’s story is truly poetic and magical. The book gives hope to all struggling with neglectful unaware families and a mental health condition.

I urge everyone affected by mental illness and their families to read this book. This book lets everyone know that a sweet recovery may be in store for them too!

Sharon Dunas, LMFT. President – National Alliance on Mental Illness Westside Los Angeles.

Please visit the library at the NAMI SMC office - we have books and videos available to check out! If you have read a book related to Mental Health issues that you believe would benefits others, please email the office with the title and author.

Individuals with Schizophrenia Wanted for VA-Stanford Research Study

- We are looking for individuals between the ages of 18 and 55 to participate in a study seeking to discover the brain changes associated with schizophrenia.
- Participation will entail interviews, computer testing, and magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI/MRS).
- A confidential phone screen will be conducted to determine initial eligibility. Research participants will be compensated up to $135.

For more info please visit http://med.stanford.edu/yoonlab/ or call the Yoon Lab at (650) 849-1930 or email brain-research@stanford.edu.

Principal Investigator: Jong Yoon, M.D. For general info about participant rights, call 1-866-680-2906.

Spread the Word About the NAMI Blog

The NAMI Blog is our way of getting tips, research, information and messages of hope to you. We have recently announced our 2019 themes. Write for us today!

To learn more go to: www.nami.org/About-NAMI/Publications-Reports/NAMI-Advocate/NAMI-Blog-Advocate-Submission-Guidelines
We're looking for persons to facilitate our programs. We especially need family support group leaders, now! 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.

**Storage Space Needed**
NAMI SMC is in need of storage space to house our extra NARSAD Artworks products – gift cards and posters. For the past eighteen months, a wonderful friend of NAMI SMC has allowed us to use space at his place of business. At this time, he can no longer do so – hence our quest for a replacement storage area.
If you are able to provide space to us gratis, that would be wonderful! Please contact Helene at 650-638-0800 or nami@namisanmateo.org for more information.

**Car Donations Accepted!**
Thank you for considering NAMI-SMC as your donation destination!
A free, convenient service for converting that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax-deductible donation benefiting NAMI San Mateo County. You can donate online (www.v-dac.com/org/?id=94-2650681) or call 877-999-8322 to make your donation. Thank You!

**Facilitators Needed**
We're looking for persons to facilitate our programs. **We especially need family support group leaders, now!** 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.

**“Wish List”**
Would you like to support a great cause? NAMI SMC needs your help! Below are a few items that we need to support some of our activities:
- Laptop (gently used)
- Tent A-Frame Sign & Graphics
- Retractable Banner Stand & Graphics
- Acrylic Brochure Wall Display
- Larger Office Space
- Storage Space Needed
Thank you for your consideration. For item specifics, please contact Helene Zimmerman, Exec. Director at hzimmer@namisanmateo.org, or call 650-638-0800.
*NAMI SMC is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.*

**We are grateful for donations...**

*...in memory of*
Warren & Marilyn Hagberg from J M Rienecker
Aino Mayer from Rosalie Gerrans, Arthur N Paley
Frances Stephani Pierce from Mrs. Margaret Parker
*NAMI San Mateo County appreciates those who send donations that honor loved ones. Our sincere gratitude!*

**To All Our Volunteers!**
~ THANK YOU ~
We couldn’t do it without you!

Family to Family Teachers:
Zoe Assaf, Florian Davos

General Meeting:
Mee Chen, Grace Hand, Lisa Kenney, Bill Nash, Mila Viernes

Newsletter Mailing:
Mary Beaudry, Tom Curran, Silvana Garetz, Patricia Michel, Ammi Rostin, Howard & Clancy Stein

Newsletter production:
Gregg Hardin, Ron Dugrenier, Kim Nobles, Kathy Stern, Pat Way

Office Support:
Eveline Coffman, Grace Hand, Holly Reich, Lauren Shea

Resource Fairs:
Shelby Lane, Mickey Podolsky

Special Projects:
Jane Cummings, Teri Greenwood, Ashley Langston

Thank you for your Yummy Pie Donations!
Jessica Frihart, Carol Goshio, Lauren Shea, Kathy Stern, Jerry Thompson, Ginny Traub, Pat Way, Helene Zimmerman

All of our Support Group Leaders!
MHSARC Meetings  Open to the public
(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

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

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.

Jail Chaplain
Spiritual counseling for incarcerated persons - contact Marty at St.Vincent de Paul Society: 650-796-0767.

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

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: www.smcbhrsblog.org

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
Mills Peninsula Hospital: 650-696-5915
Kaiser South San Francisco: 650-742-2511
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.
### SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

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<th><strong>Monday</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI Cordilleras MHR Center Family Group</strong> 1st Mondays (2nd if 1st is a holiday), 6:30-8pm, 200 Edmonds Rd, Redwood City, 650-367-1890. Penney Mitchell &amp; Julie Curry, NAMI SMC co-facilitators.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI Parents of Youth &amp; Young Adults</strong> (ages 6-26), 2nd Mondays, 7-8:30pm. 222 West 39th Ave &amp; Edison St, 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, facilitators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI Coastsider Support Meeting</strong> for family members, 2nd Mondays, 6:30-8pm. El Centro De Libertad; 225 South Cabrillo Hwy, #114B (next to Coastsider MH), Half Moon Bay. Info: 650-638-0800. Facilitator: Jennifer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI Connection</strong> 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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<th><strong>Tuesday</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI Spanish-Speaking Support Group</strong> 2nd Tues, 6-7:30pm, 802 Brewer Ave, Redwood City, 650-573-2189.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI Jewish Family &amp; Children’s Services</strong> family and friends are welcome. 4th Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm. 200 Channing Ave, Palo Alto. Contact Barbara St.Clair, <a href="mailto:bstclair@namisantaclara.onmicrosoft.com">bstclair@namisantaclara.onmicrosoft.com</a> or 415-879-0399.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI San Mateo Medical Center</strong> for family members. 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 6:30-8pm. 222 W. 39th Ave &amp; Edison St, San Mateo. Board Room (main entrance elevator to 2nd floor, left to the end of the hall). Carol Metzler &amp; Judy Singer (1st &amp; 3rd Tues) - NAMI facilitators. Call NAMI SMC at 650-638-0800 for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAMI South County Support Meeting</strong> for family members, 2nd Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm. Mental Health Clinic, 802 Brewer Ave, Redwood City, 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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<tr>
<td><strong>DBSA Mood Disorder Support Group</strong> for persons with uni- and bi-polar disorders, mania, depression, or anxiety; family members welcome. Tuesdays, 7-9pm, College Heights Church, 1150 West 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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<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals Living With Their Own Mental Illness</strong>, 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>Parent Chat</strong>, 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><strong>NAMI Stanford</strong> 2nd Wednesdays for families and friends / 4th Wednesdays for spouses and partners. Both meetings: 7-8:30pm. 401 Quarry Rd, #2213, Stanford Dept. of Psychiatry &amp; Behavioral Sciences (parking is between Vineyard &amp; Quarry). Contact Georgia Vouraki <a href="mailto:georgiavk@gmail.com">georgiavk@gmail.com</a> or 650-862-2886.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jewish Support Group</strong> (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><strong>NAMI North County Support Group</strong> for family members. 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 5:45-7pm, 375 89th St, Daly City. Comm Room. Info: 650-301-8650. Co-facilitators: Karen Pyles LMFT and Valerie Nolan, RN.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coastsider Dual Diagnosis Group</strong> development for clients in all stages of recovery. Thursdays at 4-5pm. 225 South Cabrillo Hwy, #200A, Half Moon Bay. 650-726-6369 for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body Image &amp; Eating Disorders</strong>, 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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<tr>
<td><strong>H.E.L.P.</strong> 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><strong>Korean Support Group</strong> For Family Members: Cupertino, 4th Friday: 12:30-2:30pm. Call for location: Kyo, 408-712-1149.</td>
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<td><strong>Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation</strong> of SF Bay Area, 3rd Saturdays, 1:30-3:30pm, Seton Medical Center, 1900 Sullivan Ave, Daly City, 2nd Fl. Conf. room near cafeteria. Info: 415-273-7273; <a href="http://www.ocdbayarea.org">www.ocdbayarea.org</a>.</td>
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<td><strong>Chinese Language Family Support Group</strong> Cantonese/Mandarin. Call Alice at 650-573-3571 for information.</td>
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<td><strong>Consumer Support Groups, Heart and Soul</strong>, 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>Cluttering &amp; Hoarding Support Groups, Workshops, and Private Consultations</strong> - 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 Holiday Open House
Dec. 11 - 14 | see page 2

General Meeting
Cordilleras Mental Health Rebuild Update
Jan. 23 | see page 1

NAMI Newsletters also online at:
www.namisanmateo.org/about-us/newsletters-2

In the December 2018 Online Edition:
♦ The effects of anxiety on the body
... and more.

Upcoming Events Calendar
www.namisanmateo.org/event

NAMIWalks 2018
Thank you to all participated in the 2018 NAMIWalks! We raised $40,000, which allows us to continue to bring NAMI’s signature programs and presentations to the community at no cost to providers.

NAMIWalks 2019 = Sat. Sept 21!!

Membership / Donation Form
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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 being a part of the NAMI SMC family!

NAMI San Mateo County
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San Mateo, CA 94402

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Time Value

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The Effects of Anxiety on the Body
By Jayne Leonard, from Medical News Today
Reviewed by Timothy J. Legg, PhD, CRNP

Anxiety can impact physical and mental health. There are short- and long-term effects on both the mind and body.

While many people know about the effects of anxiety on mental health, fewer people are aware of the physical side effects, which can include digestive issues and an increased risk of infection. Anxiety can also change the function of the cardiovascular, urinary, and respiratory systems.

In this article, we discuss the most common physical symptoms and side effects of anxiety.

What is an anxiety disorder?

Anxiety describes a group of disorders that cause worry, nervousness, and fear. These feelings of anxiety interfere with everyday life and are out of proportion to the triggering object or event.

In some cases, people are unable to identify a trigger and feel anxious for what seems like no reason.

While mild anxiety can be expected in some situations, such as before an important presentation or meeting, persistent anxiety can interfere with a person’s well-being.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, anxiety disorders represent the most common mental illness in the United States and affect 40 million adults in the country every year.

While these disorders respond well to treatment, but only 36.9 percent of people with an anxiety disorder receive treatment.

Types of anxiety disorders include:

- **Generalized anxiety disorder** — excessive anxiety for no apparent reason that lasts for 6 months or longer
- **Social anxiety** — fear of judgment or humiliation in social situations
- **Separation anxiety** — fear of being away from home or family
- **Phobia** — fear of a specific activity, object, or situation
- **Hypochondriasis** — persistent fear of having serious health issues
- **Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** — recurring thoughts that cause specific behaviors
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder** — severe anxiety after a traumatic event or events

Symptoms

People with anxiety can experience a range of physical and psychological symptoms. The most common include:

- feeling nervous, tense, or fearful
- restlessness
- panic attacks, in severe cases
- a rapid heart rate
- fast breathing, or hyperventilation
- sweating
- shaking
- fatigue
- weakness
- dizziness
- difficulty concentrating
- sleep problems
- nausea
- digestive issues
- feeling too cold or too hot
- chest pain

Some anxiety disorders have additional symptoms. For example, OCD also causes:

- obsessive thoughts
- compulsive behaviors that aim to reduce the anxiety caused by the thoughts
- periods of temporary relief, which follow the compulsive behaviors

Effects of anxiety on the body

Dizziness and lightheadedness are potential symptoms of anxiety. Anxiety can have a significant effect on the body, and long-term anxiety increases the risk of developing chronic physical conditions.

The medical community suspects that anxiety develops in the amygdala, an area of the brain that manages emotional responses.

When a person becomes anxious, stressed, or frightened, the brain sends signals to other parts of the body. The signals communicate that the body should prepare to fight or flee.

The body responds, for example, by releasing adrenaline and cortisol, which many describe as stress hormones. The fight or flight response is useful when confronting an aggressive person, but it is less helpful when going for a job interview or giving a presentation. Also, it is not healthy for this response to persist in the long term.

Some of the ways that anxiety affects the body include:

**Breathing and respiratory changes**

During periods of anxiety, a person’s breathing may become rapid and shallow, which is called hyperventilation. Hyperventilation allows the lungs to take in more oxygen and transport it around the body quickly. Extra oxygen helps the body prepare to fight or flee.

Hyperventilation can make people feel like they are not getting enough oxygen and they may gasp for breath. This can worsen hyperventilation and its symptoms, which include:

- dizziness
- feeling faint
- lightheadedness
- tingling
- weakness

**Cardiovascular system response**

Anxiety can cause changes to the heart rate and the circulation of blood throughout the body.

A faster heart rate makes it easier to flee or fight, while increased blood flow brings fresh oxygen and nutrients to the muscles.

When blood vessels narrow, this is called vasoconstriction, and it can affect body temperature. People often (Continued on page 10)
experience hot flashes as a result of vasoconstriction. In response, the body sweats to cool down. This can sometimes be too effective and make a person feel cold. Long-term anxiety may not be good for the cardiovascular system and heart health. Some studies suggest that anxiety increases the risk of heart diseases in otherwise healthy people.

**Impaired immune function**

In the short-term, anxiety boosts the immune system's responses. However, prolonged anxiety can have the opposite effect.

Cortisol prevents the release of substances that cause inflammation, and it turns off aspects of the immune system that fight infections, impairing the body's natural immune response.

People with chronic anxiety disorders may be more likely to get the common cold, the flu, and other types of infection.

**Changes in digestive function**

Cortisol blocks processes that the body considers nonessential in a fight or flight situation.

One of these blocked processes is digestion. Also, adrenaline reduces blood flow and relaxes the stomach muscles. As a result, a person with anxiety may experience nausea, diarrhea, and a feeling that the stomach is churning. They may also lose their appetite.

Some research suggests that stress and depression are linked to several digestive diseases, including irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

One study, of outpatients at a gastroenterology clinic in Mumbai, reported that 30–40 percent of participants with IBS also had anxiety or depression.

**Urinary response**

Anxiety and stress can increase the need to urinate, and this reaction is more common in people with phobias. The need to urinate or a loss of control over urination may have an evolutionary basis, as it is easier to flee with an empty bladder.

However, the link between anxiety and an increased urge to urinate remains unclear.

**Complications and long-term effects**

Insomnia is a potential complication of anxiety. Having anxiety can lead to long-term negative effects. People with anxiety may experience:

- depression
- digestive issues
- insomnia
- chronic pain conditions
- difficulties with school, work, or socializing
- a loss of interest in sex
- substance abuse disorders
- suicidal thoughts

**Causes and risk factors**

The medical community has yet to identify the cause of anxiety, but several factors may contribute to its development. Causes and risk factors may include:

- traumatic life experiences
- genetic traits
- medical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, or chronic pain conditions
- medication use
- sex, as females are more likely to experience anxiety than males
- substance abuse
- ongoing stress about work, finances, or home life
- having other mental health disorders

**Diagnosis and treatment**

To make a diagnosis, a doctor will evaluate symptoms and check for any underlying medical conditions that may be triggering the anxiety.

Anxiety is highly treatable, and doctors usually recommend a combination of some of the following:

- medication
- therapy
- support groups
- lifestyle changes involving physical activity, meditation

**Outlook**

Anxiety is the most common mental health disorder in the U.S. It causes both physical and psychological symptoms, and it can be very distressing.

Long-term anxiety increases the risk of physical illnesses and other mental health conditions, such as depression. However, anxiety can respond very well to treatment. Most people who receive treatment recover well and can enjoy a good quality of life.

*Timothy J. Legg, PhD, PsyD, CRNP, ACRN, CPN - Dr. Timothy Legg is board-certified as both a geriatric and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner and is also a licensed psychologist.*

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**Taking Care Of Yourself**

To be able to care for the people you love, you must first take care of yourself. It’s like the advice we’re given on airplanes: put on your own oxygen mask before trying to help someone else with theirs. Taking care of yourself is a valid goal on its own, and it helps you support the people you love.

Caregivers who pay attention to their own physical and emotional health are better able to handle the challenges of supporting someone with mental illness. They adapt to changes, build strong relationships and recover from setbacks. The ups and downs in your family member’s illness can have a huge impact on you. Improving your relationship with yourself by maintaining your physical and mental health makes you more resilient, helping you weather hard times and enjoy good ones.

**Intergenerational Family Support through Child-Parent Psychotherapy**
This webinar will highlight Child-Parent Psychotherapy, a trauma-informed, trauma-specific, evidence-based, intergenerational intervention for children 0-5. The presenters will use case scenarios from their work in Philadelphia with women with substance use disorders who are pregnant or parenting a young child.

The first cohort of parents has an average ACE score of 6.

**Register Now for this Upcoming Webinar:**
Thursday, December 11, 2018 | 12:00 PM PST

**Reducing Recidivism for People with Mental Illnesses in Jails**
A national expert joins representatives from San Joaquin County, California, and Yavapai County, Arizona, to describe strategies for reducing recidivism among people with mental illnesses in the justice system.

**Register Now for this Upcoming Webinar:**
Thursday, December 12, 2018 | 11:00 AM PST