

## General Meeting

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

**Wednesday, Sept. 25**

6:30pm Reception with snacks  
7:00-8:30 Program

**In Our Own Voice:  
Living With and Overcoming  
the Challenges Posed by  
Mental Illness**

*Presented by*  
Tom Curran and Christopher Jump  
Certified NAMI IOOV presenters

Learn about mental illness from people who have been there. This is a recovery education presentation given by trained consumer presenters for other consumers, family members, friends, health providers, law enforcement, faith communities and interested members of the community. It is interactive, comprehensive and enriches the audience's understanding of how people living with mental illness cope with the reality of these illnesses while recovering and reclaiming productive lives.

Mark your calendars for  
September 25th...  
Plan to attend, bring a friend, and  
pass the word on to others!

*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 illnesses and their families.*

## 2013 NAMI California Conference Recap

Another outstanding conference! Comments from the August 16-17 conference in Burlingame included how great it was to see the familiar faces of the MH community. The programs were educational and provocative, well worth the time and effort to attend. For example, Dr. Amen's program was interesting (a polished speaker and the brain scans were informative), but could have been more focused on mental illness-related conditions.

*The NAMI CA website comments:* From legislators to filmmakers, legal experts to psychiatrists to consumers and family members, the nearly 500 attendees at this year's NAMI California conference came away inspired and re-charged.

The conference was opened by California Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg, a long-time advocate for mental health. He was presented with NAMI California's Legislator of the Year award. Workshops covered significant, diverse topics including consumer empowerment, MHSA PEI projects, suicide prevention, reducing disparities in the strategic plan, NAMI's policy agenda, community policing, mental health courts, and preventive interventions. We were honored to present a showing of the film, *Of Two Minds*.

PowerPoint presentations from conference workshops are online for viewing and downloading at [www.NAMICalifornia.org](http://www.NAMICalifornia.org). The 2014 conference will be in Newport Beach on August 1 & 2.



## Back to Campus, Back to School Material Offers Guidance for Students, Parents, Administrators

In recognition of the challenges a new school year presents, Mental Health America is providing new resources on student mental health. "A student's mental health is just as important as their general health," said Wayne W. Lindstrom, Ph.D., president and CEO of Mental Health America. "We know the start of a new school year can be a stressful time for students of all ages. These resources are designed to help everyone—students, parents and administrators—promote good mental health and ensure resources are available."

A Back to Campus toolkit (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/backtocampus>) includes fact sheets for students and information for colleges and universities about what types of services should be in place to address the mental health needs of the student body:

- > **Checklist for Institutions of Higher Learning**—reviews various programs and services that colleges and universities can implement.
- > **Stressed or Depressed? Know the Difference**—looks at the common signs of stress and depression and how they differ.
- > **Boost Your School Performance by Taking Care of You**—provides simple everyday steps for students on taking care of one's mind as well as body.
- > **Top Ten Freshman Year Issues** (and how to deal with them)—addresses challenges and solutions of the first year in college.
- > **A Fact Sheet on Alcohol & Substance Use, and Depression**
- > **A Back to School List of Tips** ([www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/back-to-school](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/back-to-school)) provides important steps parents can take to support their child as he or she heads back to school.

*Source: [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/index.cfm?objectid=741D7133-985E-C104-41463EF40FB7A08A](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/index.cfm?objectid=741D7133-985E-C104-41463EF40FB7A08A)*

*Contact: Steve Vetzner; (703) 797-2588 or [svetzner@mentalhealthamerica.net](mailto:svetzner@mentalhealthamerica.net)*

## **NAMI Education Classes In Fall**

Call 650-638-0800 to register

*Now's the time to sign up for the appropriate class for you. Our popular classes are free and comprehensive. Enrich your life by learning more about mental illness: gain skills, understanding and compassion in an interactive, supportive environment. Pre-registration is required.*

**Seats Still Available!**

### ➤ **Provider Course**

**Class starts on September 5, weekly for 5 weeks.**

We welcome Mental Health and AOD professionals, para-professionals and all others serving individuals with serious mental illnesses and their families to this FREE 5-session class. 15 hours of CMEs pending approval for qualified attendees.

### ➤ **Peer to Peer**

**Class starts on October 10**

A free 10-week class for people with mental health issues taught by people with mental health issues.  
"Learning to Live Well with What We've Got"

### ➤ **Familia a Familia (Spanish)**

**Starts September in Redwood City**

Condado de San Mateo ofrece el curso "Familia a Familia": diseñado específicamente para padres, esposos, hijos y otros familiares de una persona que sufre una enfermedad mental. Aprenda sobre las enfermedades cerebrales, su tratamiento y habilidades para ayudar a usted y su familia enfrentar la enfermedad. Curso gratuito de 12 semanas que se reúne una vez por semana.

Registrarse con anticipación - Vacantes limitadas  
Contactarse con Claudia al 650 573-2189 o Gloria al 650 573-2660

### ➤ **Family to Family (English)**

**\*Starts September 17 in San Mateo**

\*Class has filled for the fall. Please call our office to register for the next class in early spring.\*

For parents, spouses, children and other family members of persons with a mental illness. Learn about facts and skills to help you and your family.

Class meets one night a week for 12 weeks.

## **Need help with SSI issues?**

Call Joe Hennen at 650 802-6578

## **Choices in Recovery**

**Thursday, September 5 • 12:00pm - 2:00**

**Cordilleras Mental Health Center**

**200 Edmonds Road, Redwood City**

The guest speaker is Michael Fuller, MD. This is a free educational program, designed to inspire people living with schizophrenia, schizoaffective, or bipolar 1 disorder to take ownership of their mental health recovery journey so they can live meaningful lives. Topics include: Recovery plan elements / Establishing a recovery team / The role of medication in recovery / Accessing supportive treatments / Strategies for success.

Register with Kim Ruhl at (805) 252-2020 or email [kruhl@its.jnj.com](mailto:kruhl@its.jnj.com). Sponsored by Telecare Cordilleras.

## **Heart & Soul 8th Annual Picnic**

**Saturday, September 7 • 11:00 to 4:00**

**Central Park, San Mateo**

Come for a day of great food, fun, games and good friends!



## **6th Annual Housing Hero Awards**

**Thursday, October 3 • 3:00 - 4:30 pm**

**Redwood Shores Library Community Room**

**399 Marine Parkway, Redwood City**

Each year the Change Agent Housing Committee offers clients, partners, and BHRS staff an opportunity to nominate a person or organization who has gone to great lengths to help one or more clients with mental health and co-occurring substance use issues get or keep housing. Often clients need advocates, support, assistance, and champions to help them find, and become successful and safe in stable housing. Each year we hear inspiring stories about caring and compassionate people who make a difference.

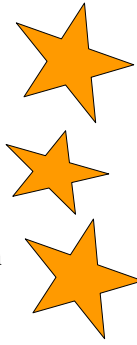
We invite you and the clients you work with to be a part of the 2013 celebration!

BHRS contacts: Claudia Saggese, Family Liaison (habla Español) 573-2189 & Suzanne Aubry, Dir. Family Service and Support, 573-2673

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## Volunteer Appreciation

Esther Ludena has actively volunteered as an outreach volunteer delivering newsletters far and wide as well as assisting NAMI San Mateo in other areas. She says “yes” to volunteering whenever she can and quietly gets the job done...all with a friendly smile on her face! Thank you Esther!!



Thanks also to those that volunteered at the recent NAMI California Conference in Burlingame: Helen Greggans, Dorie Stimson, and Francesca Sampognaro. And to Maureen Sinnott and Sharon Roth, thanks for helping Carol Gosho with jewelry sales! Hope you all enjoyed the conference!

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## The NAMI CA History Project Needs You

Send your stories, photos, and remembrances to NAMI California, which is rounding up members' recollections as part of a larger project to recognize the courageous and dedicated people who created our organization and the movement that it sparked across the nation.

Address your contributions for this effort to:  
Steven Kite, Deputy Director  
1851 Heritage Lane, Suite 150, Sacramento, CA 95815  
steven.kite@namicalifornia.org

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## Help Is Available

- San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services ACCESS Team: (800) 686-0101, TDD: (800) 943-2833
- If you or someone you care about needs help, call the 24 Crisis Hotline at: (650) 579-0350 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or visit [www.crisiscenter.cc](http://www.crisiscenter.cc).
- If in a psychiatric crisis, call 911 or go to Psychiatric Emergency at San Mateo Medical Center, 222 West 39th Ave., San Mateo, CA, 94403. Phone: (650) 573-2662.
- Contact NAMI for family support, education and advocacy. 650-638-0800.

For San Mateo County BHRS newsletters,  
visit <http://smchealth.org/wm>

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## Yes We Can Recover!

San Mateo County Community Recovery Coalition and Voices of Recovery present their 24th Annual September National Recovery Month of activities:

### September 4: 4:00pm

- David Lewis Award Presentation for Community Advocacy. 225 W. 37th Ave., Room 100, San Mateo

### September 17: Philomena Walk of Hope and Recovery Art Show

- **7:30am:** Breakfast at Bridges. Meet at the Bridges program at 680 Warren Street in Redwood City.
- **9:00-11:00am:** Philomena Walk of Hope and Recovery Art Show. Walk to County Center.
- **Recovery Art Show** through September Caldwell Memorial Art Gallery, 400 County Center, Redwood City.



### September 26:

- **11am-3pm:** Annual Recovery Happens Picnic Flood Park, 215 Bay Road, Menlo Park. The picnic will again include a Resource Fair featuring useful information for consumers. Space is limited. RSVP to Kelly Sheridan 573-3437 or [kasheridan@smcgo.org](mailto:kasheridan@smcgo.org).



### Raffle items are needed!

We ask that you take a peek into your closets and garages to see if you have any un-wanted and un-used Christmas or birthday gifts laying around taking up space. Please contact Junior with the Asian American Recovery Services, Inc., 6181 Mission St. in Daly City at (415) 337-0140 ext.16 and he can arrange a pick up or a place where you can drop off your item(s). Gift Cards or Certificates are also welcomed. Thank you in advance for your donations and support!

**Volunteers are needed** for the day of the picnic. Please contact Angela Bruno-Castro at [AngBC@mhasmc.org](mailto:AngBC@mhasmc.org) or (650) 368-3345 x 102.

**SEE YOU THERE!**

**San Mateo County Crisis Center**  
650-579-0350

**800 Suicide (800-784-2433)**

**Chat Room for Teens**  
Open Monday-Thursday, 4:30pm to 9:30pm  
[www.onyourmind.net](http://www.onyourmind.net)

A consumer recovery support group for people living with mental illness will begin **September 21, 3:30-5:00pm** (after the movie), at The Source (Heart and Soul), 500 E. 2nd Ave., San Mateo. Led by trained individuals who are personally experienced at living well with mental illness. No registration required, call NAMI SMC with any questions: 650-638-0800.

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## **Ask A Cop: What to do in a Crisis if your Community Doesn't Have CIT**

By Herb Cotner and Sherry Cusumano Source: nami.org

*San Mateo County has been training public servants in CIT (Crisis Intervention Teams) for 8 years; always ask for a CIT trained officer in a crisis.*

**Q:** My community doesn't have CIT. If I have to call the police in a crisis, what I should I do to ensure the best outcome for me and my family?

### ***Inform the Officer, then Step Back***

**A:** Our answer is the same regardless of whether the officer responding to the call is CIT trained or not. A good police officer wants to do the right thing in these situations and you can help him by sharing what you've learned about your loved one. If you have officers coming to your house, you will want to greet them where they can safely talk with you while also being able to see clearly the family member you called about or the location where they currently are.

You want to calmly tell them everything you know that either upsets your family member or that has helped in the past to resolve similar crises. Let the officer know if your loved one is suicidal, if he is psychotic or has a history of psychosis. Communicate this in common but precise terms saying, for example, that your loved one "is seeing the devil trying to attack him and in the past when that has happened, has gotten a knife or a big weapon for protection." Let them know if in the past when someone approached him, he attacked them with the weapon.

It can be hard to keep calm and keep track of all the important information. One very useful thing that you can do is to have your NAMI crisis file complete and up to date so that you can share that information with the officer.

After you've filled in the officer, answer their questions and then you can ask questions such as, "Officer, what do you want us to do? Where would you like us to stand when you talk with our family member?"

### ***Helping the Officer Stay Calm and Safe***

In the CIT class, we teach our officers that when they respond to calls, they need to recognize that there are multiple crisis events occurring at the same time. The first crisis is happening with the individual who has the illness. The second crisis is the one going

on with the rest of the family; if you were able to control the situation, then you would not have called the police to intervene. What you want to do is to behave in such a manner as to prevent a third crisis event. You definitely don't want the officer responding to your call to spiral into a crisis as well! If you challenge the officer's authority, yell at him or start telling him what he needs to do, you hinder the officer in doing his job. The more stressed the officer becomes, the harder it is for him or her to do their job and the likelihood of a bad outcome is increased.

### ***Why Officers Act the Way they Do***

From our interaction with NAMI families, we've learned that law enforcement have not done a good job of explaining why they do what they do. All good police officers work from a perspective of maintaining safety, and are trained to ensure the safety of the public, themselves and other officers. When they don't have much information, they react to the immediate circumstances to keep everyone safe. That's why informing them in advance can help prevent a tragedy. However, continuing to engage the officer after that initial conversation is distracting and can make it hard for the officer to focus.

### ***Perspective on Hard Situations***

Stepping back from a volatile situation is very hard. Here is the perspective that we find helpful. It comes from our experience teaching Family-to-Family classes. In the beginning, Family-to-Family students often want to fix their family member, but they soon learn to focus on loving their family member while also letting go of things they can't control. NAMI and its educational courses do an excellent job of teaching us to identify what we can and cannot control. We are able to control our own behavior and we can't control other people. Sometimes as our behavior changes, that can have an impact on the situation. The same principle applies here: when police come to your house, you can't control their behavior. But you can control yours, and you can assist the officer as he does his job and not hinder him or her in getting the situation resolved.

### ***About Ask a Cop***

Ask a Cop is an occasional column produced by NAMI's CIT Center, answering common questions about law enforcement and mental health issues. To ask a question, please email [laurau@nami.org](mailto:laurau@nami.org) with the subject line "Ask a Cop." Please note that we will not be able to answer all questions or to discuss individual legal cases.

*Contributors: Sr. Corporal Herb Cotner is a 25 year veteran of the Dallas Police Department. He has served Dallas PD as a CIT officer and is the department's Crisis Intervention Mental Health Liaison. Sr. Corporal Cotner is the Vice President of NAMI Dallas and the 2013 recipient of NAMI's Cochran Criminal Justice Award, a national award for compassionate responses in law enforcement.*

*Sherry Cusumano, RN, LCDC, MS is the President of NAMI Dallas and Executive Director of Community Education and Clinical Development at Green Oaks Psychiatric Hospital in Dallas, Texas. She's been trained in the Memphis Model CIT Program and has worked closely with the Dallas Police Department to assist in providing CIT training to numerous law enforcement agencies in the region.*

## **NAMI-SMC Support Group Meetings (call 650-638-0800 for more information)**

**NAMI Connection** for people living with mental illness.

1st & 3rd SATURDAYS, starting September 21, 3:30-5pm, after the movie. The Source (Heart and Soul), 500 E. 2nd Ave., San Mateo (Claremont and 2nd). No registration required, call NAMI SMC office at 650-638-0800 with questions.

**Cordilleras MHR Center Family Support Meeting**, 200 Edmonds Road, Redwood City, 367-1890

1ST MONDAYS, 6:30-8pm (2ND Monday if 1st Monday of the month is a holiday).

Penney Mitchell, NAMI SMC facilitator; Crystal Hutchinson, MFT; Leah Ladouceur, BSW.

**Parents of Youth Support Meeting**, NAMI SMC, 1650 Borel Pl, Ste 130, San Mateo, 638-0800.

2ND MONDAYS, 7-8:30pm. Kristy Manuel and Ginny Traub, facilitators.

**San Mateo Medical Center** for family members.

1ST & 3RD TUESDAYS, 6:30-8pm. 222 W. 39th Ave. & Edison, Board Room (main entrance elevator to 2nd floor, left to the end of the hall). Terry & Polly Flinn, Juliana Fuerbringer and Rosemary Field, NAMI SMC facilitators.

**South County Support Meeting** for family members, Mental Health Clinic, 802 Brewster St., Redwood City, 363-4111.

2ND TUESDAYS, 6-7:30pm. Pat Way, NAMI SMC facilitator; Liz Downard RN, MSN.

**Coastside Support Meeting** for family members, Coastside MH Cntr, 225 S. Cabrillo Hwy, #200A, Half Moon Bay, 726-6369.

2ND MONDAYS, 7-8:30pm. Marie Koerper, NAMI SMC facilitator; Mary Em Wallace, RN, NP, MFT, Ph.D.

**Jewish Family & Children's Services**, family and friends are welcome. 200 Channing Ave., Palo Alto, 688-3097.

4TH TUESDAYS, 7:00pm. Sharon & Ron Roth, NAMI SMC facilitators; Laurel Woodard, LMFT.

**Spanish-Speaking Support Group** for family members. South County BHRS, 802 Brewster Ave, Redwood City.

2ND TUESDAYS, 6-7:30pm. Contact Claudia Saggese at 573-2189.

### **Other Meetings**

**Asian-Language Family Support Groups**

THURSDAYS, 6-7:30 pm, Cantonese/Mandarin. 1950 Alameda de las Pulgas (650) 261-3701 or (650) 573-3686.

**Burlingame Support Group** for family members and people living with a mental illness. Info: Maureen 415-420-5097

THURSDAYS through May 9, 7-9pm, Peninsula Temple Shalom, 1655 Sebastian Drive, Room 11, Burlingame

**Coastside Dual Diagnosis Group**, development for clients in all stages of recovery.

THURSDAYS, 4-5pm. 225 S. Cabrillo Hwy #200A, Half Moon Bay. 726-6369 for information.

**Consumer Support Groups**, Heart and Soul, San Mateo. Call 650-343-8760.

**DBSA Mood Disorder Support Group** for persons with uni- and bi-polar, depression, or anxiety.

- WEDNESDAYS, promptly 6:30-8:30 pm. Contact: DBSAPaloAlto@gmail.com. Supporters may attend with their consumer. VA Hospital, 3801 Miranda Ave, Hosp Bldg 101, Room A2-200, Palo Alto.

- TUESDAYS, 7-9pm College Heights Church, San Mateo 1150 W. Hillsdale Blvd. Families welcome. Fred Wright, 299-8880.

**Dual Diagnosis Group for Consumers**, no charge.

MONDAYS, 2:30 pm. The Source, 500 A Second Ave., San Mateo. Call 650-343-8760 for more information.

**Eating Disorders Support Group** for family & friends of loved ones. Visit [www.edrcsv.org](http://www.edrcsv.org) or call Kira Olson at 408-356-1212.

1ST and 3RD SATURDAYS, 9:30-11am Mills-Peninsula Hosp., Rm 4104, 100 S. San Mateo Drive

**Hoarding Education Group** for significant distress with clutter. Contact [hoarderdoctor@gmail.com](mailto:hoarderdoctor@gmail.com) or 650-799-3172

1ST and 3RD THURSDAYS, 5:30 - 6:15pm. Mills Health Center, Room 4104, 100 S. San Mateo Dr. \$5 donation requested.

**Hoarders' Support Group** for persons with a history of extreme hoarding and chronic disorganization.

2 THURSDAYS a month. To register or to get more information call (650) 343-4380.

**H.E.L.P. for those coping with a mental illness and/or those in a supporting role**, Menlo Park Pres., 950 Santa Cruz Ave.

THURSDAYS, 6:00pm optional dinner; 6:30-7:30 program, 7:30-8:30 prayer. Garden Court. Contact Jane at 650-464-9033.

**HOPE (Hope, Offering, Prayer and Education)**, for those with mental illness and/or in supporting roles.

1ST and 3RD TUESDAYS, 6:30pm, First Pres Church, 1500 Easton Dr., Burlingame. Call 355-5352 or 347-9268 for info.

**Japanese Education & Support Group**, call (415) 474-7310 for information.

**Jewish Support Group**, for those with mental illness and families and friends, Beit Kehillah, 26790 Arastradero Rd., Los Altos

2ND WEDNESDAYS, 6:15-8:30pm. For info, contact Carol Irwin (408)858-1372.

**North County Support Group** for clients, family and friends.

2ND and 4TH THURSDAYS, 5:45-7pm, 375 89th Street, Community Room, Daly City. More info: 650-301-8650.

**Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation of SF Bay Area**, information: 415-273-7273; [www.ocd-bayarea.com](http://www.ocd-bayarea.com).

3RD SATURDAY, 1:30-3:30pm, Seton Medical Center, 1900 Sullivan Ave., 2nd Fl. Conf room near cafeteria, Daly City.

**Telecare**, for family and friends of residents. 855 Veterans Blvd, Redwood City, 817-9070.

2ND WEDNESDAYS, 5:30-7pm.

**Women Living With Their Own Mental Illness**, Redwood City - *sliding scale fees apply for this meeting*.

TUESDAYS, 1:00- 2:30pm. Contact Deborah at 363-0249, x111.

## Cordilleras Benefit Scramble

Wednesday October 2, 2013  
12pm. Registration begins at 11am  
Crystal Springs Golf Course in Burlingame  
([playcrystalsprings.com](http://playcrystalsprings.com))

You are invited to attend and participate in the Cordilleras Benefit Scramble that benefits NAMI SMC and Telecare clients. 4 person scramble. Box lunch and Buffet dinner. Silent/Live Auction (Mitch Juricich emcee). Awards reception following dinner. 10K hole-in-one, closest to and long drive prizes.

See website for registration and sponsorship information. Donations at the door or mail check to Mike Stimson, c/o NAMI SMC, 1650 Borel Place Ste 130, San Mateo, 94402. For more information contact John Summers at 650-367-1890 / [jsummers@telecarecorp.com](mailto:jsummers@telecarecorp.com). Entry form or register online at <http://www.golfdigestplanner.com/23736-Nami>.

## Research Studies

For questions regarding your rights as a research subject, call 650-723-5244.

- On **depression in older adults** age 65+, earn \$140, please contact 415-476-7046.
- On **bipolar offspring** - children 9-17 years old with depression or ADHD and mood problems, who also have a parent with BD. Call 725-6760.
- On **families with bipolar disorder**, psychoeducational therapeutic techniques. Call 725-6760.
- On **adults with bipolar to assess the effectiveness of lithium vs. seroquel as part of optimized treatment plan**, call 498-4801 or email [skill@stanford.edu](mailto:skill@stanford.edu).
- On **depressive schizoaffective**, both treatment and non-treatment studies, earn \$100-\$200, 724-0070.
- Lamotrigine (Lamictal) as an add-on treatment for **Bipolar I in children and adolescents**. Call Stanford at 725-6760.
- **Emotions and Thinking in Bipolar** at UC Berkeley for people who have experienced problems as a result of mania. Up to 4 sessions on campus to complete tasks, lasting 1-3 hours. Earn \$15/hour for sessions. Eligibility: history of bipolar disorder, between ages of 18 and 60, fluent in English. Contact at [calmprogram@gmail.com](mailto:calmprogram@gmail.com) or (510) 542-8969 for more information.
- **Schizophrenia** - do computer activities improve thinking skills? Call: Lauren Drag, PhD or David Grimm, BA/BS, (650) 493-5000 x65656.



Watch for the NEW NAMI-SMC website!

## Balancing Involuntary Treatment and Autonomy – How Others Do It

Treatment Advocacy Center, August 20, 2013

One of the American Psychiatric Association journals recently published a provocative examination of how France – famously the home of “liberty, equality, fraternity” – squares its national motto with its civil commitment practices for people with severe mental illness.

“In the United States, 19th century criteria for civil commitment based on patients’ need for treatment and physician-controlled procedures gave way in the 1970s to dangerousness criteria, extensive procedural protections, and judicial review,” according to the introduction to “The evolution of laws regulating psychiatric commitment in France” (July 2013).

“Although most countries have moved in the direction of greater procedural formality and oversight, many nations have struck a balance different from the U.S. balance between the interests of people with severe mental illness in receiving treatment and their liberty and autonomy interests. This description of commitment law in France offers an illustrative example.”

Indeed, it does.

According to the article in the “Law & Psychiatry” column of the magazine:

- France’s primary concern is for the patient’s need for treatment rather than his/her dangerousness to self or others, as is widely required in the US;
- Medication over objection is incorporated with the commitment order rather than requiring separate proceedings as is commonly the case in the United States;

The story also says that “compulsory community treatment” following hospital discharge has become a trend throughout Europe with Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden and the United Kingdom embracing it in recent years and some Spanish cities currently experimenting with it.

“Knowing that France has chosen a somewhat different course (as has England, where criteria oriented toward need for treatment remain a basis for commitment) should stimulate us to consider the appropriateness of the balance we have struck,” the column suggests.

We couldn’t agree more. In too many states and counties, the US civil commitment system leaves patients who are gravely disabled and suffering from untreated mental illness to completely disintegrate before intervening to spare them, their families and their communities the consequences of non-treatment. The land of “liberté, égalité, fraternité” has struck a more humane balance. We should, too.

Source: <http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/about-us/our-blog/69-no-state/2375-balancing-involuntary-treatment-and-autonomy-how-others-do-it>

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## MHSARC Meeting

Wednesday, Sep 4 • 3:00 - 5:00pm  
(first Wednesday of every month)

Time/locations vary, please check with 650-573-2544  
or [www.smchealth.org/MHSARC](http://www.smchealth.org/MHSARC)  
Health Services Building Room 100  
225 W. 37th Ave., San Mateo

All meetings are open to the public

**AGED-FOCUSED COMMITTEES:**  
225 37th Ave., Diamond Room, San Mateo

**Older Adult Services Committee** • 10:30am - 12:00

**Adult Services Committee** • 1:30pm - 3:00

**Children and Youth Services Committee** • 4pm - 5:00  
(2000 Alameda De Las Pulgas., Room 209)

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## Board of Supervisors Meeting

Tuesday, September 3 • 9:00 a.m.  
Board Chambers

400 County Center, First Floor, Redwood City

Board of Supervisors agendas are found at  
<http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/bos>.

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## NAMI Bikes! November 2

Choose either a 25 kilometer, 50 kilometer or 100 kilometer scenic route (approximately 15 miles, 30 miles or 60 miles). The ride will take you through the beautiful towns of Davis and Winters before returning to the Central Park in Davis to celebrate. With rest stops along the way to keep you hydrated and satisfied, this fully supported ride will roll with the message that Mental Health matters!

Your NAMIBikes registration includes a t-shirt and NAMI Bikes water bottle. Registration is \$45 and can be waived with a commitment to raise \$250.

Or volunteer and be a part of event day as support crew.

Join us on November 2 to Fight Stigma and Ride.

Visit [www.namicalifornia.org](http://www.namicalifornia.org) and sign up to ride or volunteer, or get more information.

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## Jail Chaplain

Spiritual counseling for incarcerated persons - Marty at St. Vincent de Paul Society - 650-366-9847.

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## Mental Health Awareness: What Can I Do To Help?

- **Educate yourself and others.** Learn and share the facts about mental health and about people with mental health problems, especially if you hear or read something that isn't true;
- **Treat people with mental health conditions with respect and dignity.** Respect the rights of people with mental health disorders. Don't discriminate against them when it comes to housing, employment, education, health care. Like other people with disabilities, people with mental health needs are protected under Federal and State laws.
- **Beware of your attitudes and behaviors.** We've all grown up with prejudices and judgmental thinking. But we can change the way we think! We can see and treat people as unique human beings, not as labels or stereotypes. We can see the person beyond their mental health condition; they have many other personal attributes that do not disappear just because they also have a mental health issue.
- **Be aware of the language you use.** The way we speak can affect the way other people think and feel. Don't use hurtful or derogatory language. Beware of labels. Calling someone "a schizophrenic" implies their identity is based on their illness. Instead, saying "a woman living with schizophrenia" shows that she has more to her than her diagnosis. Stop using words like "crazy" or "insane" to describe someone with an emotional issue.
- **Reach out.** If you have a friend or family member who you have been concerned about, call them to see how they are feeling. Listen intently, without judgment.
- **Be supportive.** Think about how you'd like others to act toward you if you were in the same situation. If you have family members, friends or co-workers with mental health problems, show compassion, be supportive and encourage their efforts to get well.
- **Take a stand.** Ask others to stop promoting stigma and using hurtful language. Educate them about mental health and let them know how their words and actions can hurt others.
- **End the silence.** If you have been feeling down, stressed, or anxious, call or meet with a trusted friend or family member and tell them how you are feeling. Remember that when you speak about your experience with mental illness, you give others permission to share their experiences.
- **Take a pledge!** Pledge to help eliminate the stigma around mental health conditions.
- **Host a stigma reduction forum** at your workplace, school, church or other group function. Learn more.

Source: <http://smchealth.org/mentalhealthmonth>

Visit <http://www.namicalifornia.org/> to get the latest on legislative activity.  
*We appreciate your interest in advocacy!*

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**Educational Classes**

Starting this fall - see page 2

**MHSARC Meeting**

September 4 - see page 7

**Choices in Recovery**

September 5 - see page 2

**Heart & Soul Picnic**

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**Yes We Can Recover!**

September activities - see page 3

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**General Meeting**

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**6th Annual Housing Hero Awards**

October 3 - see page 2

**NAMI San Mateo County**

1650 Borel Place, Suite 130  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
650-638-0800  
FAX: 650-638-1475  
namismc@sbcglobal.net  
www.namisanmateo.org  
Office open: 9am-1pm, M-F (or by appt.)

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## **A Saner Approach? New Ways of Treating Mental Illness**

*By Alissa Quart*

*From the August 2013 issue of O, The Oprah Magazine, Oprah.com*

### **As diagnoses of bipolar disorder soar, a grassroots movement is offering alternatives.**

In 1999, when Jacks McNamara, a thoughtful, dark-haired artist from Oakland, was a 19-year-old junior at Brown University, she had a sudden breakdown. Formerly an outgoing, involved student, McNamara grew so obsessed with thoughts of corporate conspiracies and the end of the world that she stopped going to class. In her mind, life resembled a dystopian science fiction movie, and she often couldn't remember what day it was.

McNamara's distraught parents placed her in a private psychiatric facility. After her insurance company stopped paying for her care, she transferred to a nonprofit hospital, where she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She rang in the millennium watching TV in the dreary patients' lounge—and spent the next ten days in treatment as doctors gave her a series of symptom checklists and tried to determine the right medication. She often felt marginalized, belittled, and misunderstood by these psychiatrists, none of whom provided the trauma therapy she thought she needed (and that might have plumbed her history of sexual abuse and assault).

McNamara came out of the hospital convinced there must be a better way; over the next several years she connected with others who shared her thinking. In 2002 she cofounded the Icarus Project, an alternative support group for people struggling with mental illness. "Before we started Icarus, I had zero desire to be an activist for mental health—I had hoped my issues would just go away," McNamara says. "But when I began talking to others like me, I realized that if the help we wanted wasn't out there, we could create it ourselves."

The Icarus Project, an entirely peer-run organization with more than 15,000 members worldwide, is part of a growing, sometimes controversial, cause known as the Recovery Movement, or Mad Pride. The movement's goals: to redefine what it means to be sick for the 45.6 million American adults living with mental illness; develop a more collaborative treatment process between doctors and patients; make the public less fearful of people labeled mentally ill; and most important, destigmatize mental disorders for those who are diagnosed.

"The Mad Pride approach is so different from traditional psychiatric care," says Carla Rabinowitz, 49, a community

organizer for a mental health nonprofit in New York City, who says leading peer groups helped her move past the stigma of living with bipolar disorder. "You see people who are thriving, people who are struggling. You see what you need to do to keep yourself going."

In a departure from groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, the Icarus Project doesn't push a particular brand of self-help. Meetings, in places as diverse as Minneapolis and Richmond, are lively, lacking any firm structure, and dark humor is a constant. Members may take turns one-upping each other over the records they've broken while depressed (30 straight days of not getting dressed trumps 20 days of not answering the phone). The Oakland chapter convenes at a crafters' collective to bring an inspiring, creative energy to sessions. New members are often encouraged to create wellness maps, which detail what they're like when they're well—and when they're not—and what friends can do to help.

Next: How wellness maps aid recovery

For McNamara, who now lives in Oakland and is studying somatic therapy (a psychological approach to healing that uses mind-body exercises), the wellness maps have proved invaluable to recovery. If she has stopped eating (a warning sign of mania), an Icarus member will step in and take her grocery shopping. If stress triggers her depression, another member will drag her out for a hike. "Guiding someone back to healthy patterns is sometimes enough to prevent her from spiraling into crisis mode," McNamara says. "We're not a bunch of alternative, hippie woo-woos. Studies have shown that people who have psychosocial support and extended networks do better than people who rely solely on medication."

Christine Chapman, 30, was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, which causes both schizophrenia and mood problems, but when her meds did nothing to abate her dark thoughts, she took her frustrations to the group, and members urged her to question her meds. She found a new psychiatrist, who diagnosed her with bipolar II (a milder form of bipolar disorder that doesn't cause full-blown mania) and medicated her properly. Now a stay-at-home mom, Chapman finds support from Icarus members online—another popular option for those who aren't interested in meetings or don't have a chapter nearby.

In the mid-20th century, only one in 13,000 people was hospitalized for bipolar disorder, according to one estimate, but today about 5.7 million Americans suffer from some version of the condition—yet the advent of a wide range of new treatments, mostly prescription drugs, has not necessarily led to greater quality of life. The Icarus Project is firmly against forced medicating but otherwise sets no guidelines; some members adhere to the pharmacological regimens set

by their doctors, while others question the necessity of psychoactive drugs at all.

"Medication can take the edge off the extreme emotions, but taking care of yourself in other ways is equally important," McNamara says. Indeed, some studies highlight the benefits of more unconventional methods; one recent report found that schizophrenics who practiced yoga (in addition to taking medication) for four months experienced significantly fewer episodes and enjoyed greater social functioning. Yoga, acupuncture, meditation, and even special diets (like limiting white flour or sugar) are alternative approaches many in the Icarus community have come to embrace.

Not surprisingly, conventional health advocates are sometimes wary of groups like Icarus. They warn against the instability of DIY communities that depend on friends and online peers rather than credentialed professionals. "There are mentally ill people who can integrate into society, but some patients need round-the-clock care," says Art Caplan, PhD, director of biomedical ethics at the New York University Langone Medical Center. "For some, the emotional support offered by these groups is not enough and can lead to dangerous or even fatal consequences."

Other scholars, while acknowledging that some people will never benefit from Mad Pride groups, argue that many do. Bradley Lewis, PhD, an associate professor of psychiatry and humanities at NYU, champions the work of alternative mental health groups. "People are finally questioning the categories in the DSM-5, the latest edition of the diagnostic manual that psychiatrists and psychologists use, as the criteria for

conditions are becoming wider to include more and more people," says Lewis. "Mad Pride members have been right to critique the rigid way we define mental states, and hopefully we can begin to treat people from a variety of angles." But Lewis is quick to add that while support groups can provide the sort of help doctors often lack the time or experience to offer, they are only part of the solution to helping the mentally ill lead stable, fulfilling lives.

Yet peer-led groups may be the wave of the future, given the prohibitive cost of comprehensive psychological treatment. The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's annual survey on drug use and mental health estimates that 4.9 million adults who believed they needed mental health care did not receive any (half said they couldn't afford it). "We want to offer people who have given up on traditional treatment, or don't have access to it, an opportunity to find support without feeling ashamed or judged," says McNamara. "We struggle with some hard stuff, but we also have the chance to be wounded healers—and that's a gift."

Adapted from Alissa Quart's new book, *Republic of Outsiders: The Power of Amateurs, Dreamers, and Rebels* (The New Press).

#### More on Mental Health

The difference between mental illness and enlightenment  
Breakthroughs that may change how we treat depression  
A new way of approaching psychiatric health

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