

General Meeting



**100 S. San Mateo Drive
San Mateo**

Hendrickson Aud. / Mills Health Center
Free evening parking in front

Wednesday, Mar 23

6:30pm Reception
7:00pm Program

CIT and PERT

Jason Albertson,
LCSW San Mateo County BHRS
and
Jim Coffman,
Detective, San Mateo County Sheriff

The Psychiatric Emergency Response Team is an innovative, cooperative approach to provide followup and a linkage to care for people who come to attention of law enforcement in unincorporated San Mateo County and areas that contract with the Sheriff for police services. One of the first cop/clinician teams in Northern California, PERT goals include attempting to reduce risk in order to prevent tragic outcomes. Jason and Jim will detail their program and explain how CIT in San Mateo County evolved into PERT.



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.

General Meeting Review – Thanksgiving!

On Wednesday, November 18th, we celebrated Thanksgiving with our traditional Pie General Meeting! It was a fun time for all – connecting with old friends, and meeting new ones – over plentiful helpings of pie and whipped cream!!

Attendees were encouraged to participate in the Be the One Campaign to help fight stigma surrounding mental illness (<http://smcbhrsblog.org/betheonesmc/>); James Hsiao was given an appreciation award for 25 years of offering his home, Perpetual Hope House, as a home to individuals with mental illness; Terry Walker was recognized for her contributions to NAMI SMC and was presented with a photo from her 90th birthday celebration; Diane Warner recognized for her birthday; and friends and family members who are no longer with us were remembered by name, and by a recitation of a special poem, “We Remember Them.”

This year’s live music was delightful and most impressive. The Friction Quartet (www.friction-quartet.com), under the auspices of the St. Lawrence String Quartet, played selections from Haydn, Benjamin Brittan and others, including an encore of Michael Jackson’s Thriller!



Following the music, the evening continued with the main theme of Thanksgiving, Thankfulness and Gratitude. Participants reflected on the many things they were grateful for, in spite of the difficulties in their lives. Amongst the many statements made were: how grateful people were to have found NAMI; how supportive the staff were when they needed help; they were grateful to have been educated and for the friends they have made, and how each new day is a new opportunity. To everyone who made this event possible – from volunteers to pie makers and everyone in-between – a big thank you! It was a fun, relaxing, and rewarding evening. Hope to see you next year!



Holiday Blues

NAMI.org

The Holiday Blues refer to feelings of anxiety or depression during the period between Thanksgiving and New Year’s. They may be associated with extra stress, unrealistic expectations or even sentimental memories that accompany the season. They may include: Loneliness and isolation • Fatigue • Sadness • Tension • A sense of loss • Frustration.

The difference between the holiday blues and clinical anxiety or depression is that the feelings are temporary. They may come and go around specific holiday activities. However, if they are present for more than two weeks, especially every day, the mental health problem may be more serious.

It’s also important to understand that people already diagnosed with a mental illness can feel the holiday blues—and need to take extra care of themselves.

What Causes the Holiday Blues?

Many factors can someone’s mood over the holidays, including:

- Less sunlight (October –March).
- Changes in diet or routines.
- Alcohol is a depressant. Too much alcohol can create or intensify depressive moods, and the holiday season is filled with parties.

(Continued on page 7)



Webinar: Better Care for Women with Maternity-related Mental Health Needs —California Improvement Network

Thursday, December 10, 2015
12:30 - 1:30 PM Pacific

REGISTER NOW!

About 10% to 20% of women experience depression and/or anxiety either during pregnancy or in the first 12 months after delivering. Untreated, these mood and anxiety disorders can lead to long-term impacts on the mother, fetus, newborn, developing child, and family. Yet too often, primary care providers do not feel equipped to treat these mental health needs.

To bridge this gap, the Los Angeles-based Maternal Mental Health NOW (MMHN) trained primary care providers at the USC-Eisner Family Medicine Center to recognize and treat perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. The initial experience with this clinic generated a network of informed providers who are now spreading the integrated perinatal mental health model through Los Angeles County. MMHN supports the spread strategy by certifying providers in perinatal mental health, through both in-person and online training, and by advocating for improved care for new mothers and mothers-to-be.

Learn more about the problem of under-recognized and under-treated perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, the successes and challenges of the pilot program, and how your organization can connect with resources and expertise on this important topic. Hear from:

- Johanna Bloomfield, policy director, MMHN
- Caron Post, PhD, executive director, MMHN
- Robyn Shultz, program coordinator, MMHN
- Camilo Zaks, MD, medical director and CMO, USC-Eisner Family Medicine Clinic

REGISTER NOW by visiting the <http://maternalmental-healthnow.org/> website.

FAST: Family Assertive Support Team

650-368-3178 or 650-371-7416 (pager)
24-hours, 7 days-a-week

Call FAST when you are concerned about a family member who may be showing signs or symptoms of serious emotional distress - FAST for prompt and caring support!
We Come to You!

See a full article about FAST in our November 2013 web version newsletter at www.namisanmateo.org.



NARSAD Artworks

Our office carries a supply of cards for birthdays, holidays and all occasions – stop by and pick up a pack - and another for a friend!

Visit NARSAD Artworks for their beautiful holiday cards, notecards, calendars and gifts online at www.narsadartworks.org or call 800-607-2599 or 714-529-5571.

NARSAD Artworks showcases museum-quality art products by and on behalf of mentally ill persons. All proceeds support the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation and NAMI SMC.

The Silicon Valley Suicides

Why are so many kids with bright prospects killing themselves in Palo Alto?

See the full article at: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/12/the-silicon-valley-suicides/413140/?utm_campaign=KHN%3A+Daily+Health+Policy+Report&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=23891635&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8VSpI4oao-FSAf3mbdT6VmLMT6eXD12MmfdgQqWMI3UNSIHVq_jEI83QBf5W-eraKluIavQNc_EW1xf-oFTx-4hScwpA&hsmi=23891635

A few students had gotten in early to take some photos dressed as *Scooby-Doo* characters, part of an annual volleyball-team tradition. Now one of them, Alyssa See-Tho, was waiting outside the choir room for first period to start. Slowly, classmates began to join her. Through the windows, they could spy the teachers packed in there. In the other classrooms of Henry M. Gunn High School, about 1,900 kids waited. After a few minutes the teachers filed out, each holding a sheet of paper, none talking. Alyssa took her seat inside. It was November 4, 2014, a few days after homecoming and maybe a month before college applications would start making everyone crazy. The teacher read a statement containing the words *took his own life last night*, and then a name, Cameron Lee. Alyssa's first thought: *Is there another Cameron Lee at our school?*, because the one she knew was popular and athletic and seemingly unbothered by schoolwork, an avid practitioner of the annoying prank of turning people's backpacks inside out.

Alex Gil got to school a little late that day and saw people crying in the hallways. The principal, Denise Herrmann, stopped him and told him, because she knew he was one of Cameron's best friends, and he fell to his knees. He thought about a text Cameron had sent him the day before. Cameron had gone to tryouts for varsity basketball but hadn't yet gotten his required physical, so he had asked whether Alex thought he could get in to see the doctor the next day. He must have sent the text only a few hours before he died. ...

Stanford Creates Center For Youth Well-being

Stanford Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences has consolidated all of its existing youth mental health efforts – as well as some new ones – under one roof and a new name: the Stanford Center for Youth mental health and Well-being.

For more information, see the full article on the NAMI SMC website: www.namisanmateo.org.



Our Condolences

It is with deep sorrow that we share the news that NAMI SMC member and long time consumer advocate **George Culores** has passed away on November 6. George shared many insightful opinions at the NAMI SMC General Meetings. He was an extremely nice and thoughtful person and will be missed.

Our sincere condolences to the Culores Family.

George was an active member on the Heart and Soul Board of Directors. I first met George in a peer counseling class at College of San Mateo. He helped me to discover my love of public speaking. He volunteered me to do a role play one day. It was the first time I ever stood up in front of a group and spoke.

—*Christopher Jump, NAMI SMC board member*

*We are grateful for donations in memory of:
Ted Mitchell*

from the Mitchell-Ardwan Family

Pat Henneberry, sister of Maureen Sinnott, board member and advocate of NAMI SMC, from Pat and Steve Way and all of us at NAMI SMC.

NAMI San Mateo County appreciates those who send donations that honor loved ones.

Our heartfelt gratitude!

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

We appreciate your participation in advocacy!

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



Welcome to Research Weekly, a new educational service of the Treatment Advocacy Center. Beginning December 1 and publishing most Tuesdays, Research Weekly will provide regular, reader-friendly reports on scientific or scholarly studies of brain, behavior and public policy involving severe mental illness.

Subjects will be varied but always relevant: brain research into the causes of severe mental illnesses, studies of treatment modalities and their effectiveness, findings about individual and social outcomes when individuals with psychiatric disease are untreated and evidence-based results from public policies among them.

"Much of the research that would help individuals, families and professionals be better informed about the psychiatric diseases they live or work with is hard to locate or inaccessible," said Doris A. Fuller, chief of Research & Public Affairs and editor of the new publication. "Research Weekly will digest and report in everyday language on the most relevant and useful of these studies."

If you already receive the Treatment Advocacy Center's News Roundup, you will automatically receive Research Weekly beginning December 1. Please visit the Office of Research & Public Affairs for more information: orpa@treatmentadvocacycenter.org.

Membership Time!

Please renew your membership with NAMI San Mateo County - we value your support! If you haven't yet joined the 2016 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. Or check our website! www.namisanmateo.org.



By joining *at this local affiliate level (preferred)* you will receive the local San Mateo County monthly newsletter promptly, which highlights local news and general information, advocacy activities, and support meetings. You will also receive 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!





Family to Family Teachers: Ann Baker, Ruan Frenette, Penney Mitchell, Pat Way, Patricia Urbina, Inge Greenwood & Tad Randall.

Newsletter Delivery Team: Edna & Ryan Daga, Diane Warner, Jean Chen, Vivien Duering & Tom Curran, Silvana Garetz and Monique Baurly.

Warm Line Dream Team – Cammie Forchione, Diane Warner, Diana Casey and Hilary R. Randall.

General Meeting – Jean Chen, Zena Tarasena, Karen Snyders, Lisa Kenney, Sophia Garetz, Patricia Michel, and Lily Arapeles.

Graphic Design Work for Business Cards - Gregg Hardin

Internet Research & Excel List: Joelle Brinkley

**To all our volunteers, THANK YOU.
We couldn't do it without you!**

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Debi at nami@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800.

Shopping Supports NAMI SMC

Please sign up!

Together, shopping through any of these mediums makes a real difference. Last year, NAMI SCC received over \$3,000 in merchant rebates! For more information, contact the office at 650-638-0800 or nami@namisanmateo.org.

The **S.H.A.R.E.S. card** will donate 3% of your grocery purchases to NAMI SMC at all SAVEMART, LUCKY, SMART FOODS & FOODMAXX stores! To request a S.H.A.R.E.S card please call our office at (650) 638-0800 or email us at education@namisanmateo.org. Tell a friend!



Remember, 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!

escrip is is easy, quick & secure! Let's get started! Go to www.escrip.com, click on "sign up," follow the instructions to register your grocery cards and your existing credit/debit cards and start earning for NAMI SAN MATEO COUNTY! Tell a friend!



Psychiatric Grand Rounds Programs *Open to the Public*

Mills-Peninsula Health Services

Hendrickson Auditorium, Ground Floor
100 South San Mateo Drive, San Mateo / 650-696-5813
12:15–1:45pm **BRING LUNCH**

Dec 1 Exploring Dual Diagnosis: What Came First, The Substance Use Disorder Or The Psychiatric Disorder, And Does It Even Matter?

Dec 15 No Meeting

County of San Mateo BHRS Health Services Building

225 West 37th Avenue - Multipurpose Room 100
San Mateo, CA 94403 / 650-573-2530
12:15–1:30 pm

Dec 8 Increased Cardiometabolic Risk In The Severely Mentally Ill: Why Is This Population Especially Vulnerable And What Can Clinicians Do About It?

MHSARC Meetings - open to the public

Wednesday, Dec. 2 & Jan. 6 • 3:00 - 5:00pm
(first Wednesday of every month)

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

AGED-FOCUSED COMMITTEES:

Call for location: 650-573-2544

- Older Adult Services Committee** • 10:30am - 12:00
- Adult Services Committee (combined with former CRC)** • 10:30pm - 11:30, 3rd Wednesdays
- Children and Youth Services Committee** • 4pm - 5:00

Board of Supervisors Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 1 & Jan 5 • 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>

Jail Chaplain

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

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS (for information on NAMI Support Groups call 650-638-0800)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAMI Cordilleras MHR Center Family Group, 1ST Mondays (2ND Monday if 1st is a holiday), 6:30-8pm, 200 Edmonds Road, Redwood City, 650-367-1890. Penney Mitchell & Julie Curry, NAMI SMC co-facilitators • NAMI Parents of Youth & Young Adults (ages 6–26), 2ND Mondays, 7-8:30pm. 222 W. 39th Ave. & Edison, Board Room (main entrance elevator to 2nd floor, left to the end of hall). San Mateo, 638-0800. Kristy Manuel and Ginny Traub, facilitators. • Dual Diagnosis Group for Consumers, Mondays, 2:30pm. 210 Industrial Rd. Bldg. 210, Room 160, info: 650-393-8604. 	MONDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAMI Spanish-Speaking Support Group for family members. 2ND Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm. South County BHRS, 802 Brewster Ave, Redwood City. Contact Claudia Saggese at 573-2189. • NAMI Coastside Support Meeting for family members, 2ND Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm. Coastside MH Cntr, 225 S. Cabrillo Hwy, #200A, Half Moon Bay, 650-726-6369. Karina Marwan, NAMI facilitator • NAMI Jewish Family & Children's Services, family and friends are welcome. 4TH Tuesdays, 7:00pm. 200 Channing Ave., Palo Alto, 650-688-3097. Sharon & Ron Roth, NAMI SMC facilitators; John Bisenivis, LCSW. • NAMI San Mateo Medical Center for family members. 1st and 3RD Tuesdays, 6:30-8pm. 222 W. 39th Ave. & Edison, San Mateo. Board Room (main entrance elevator to 2nd floor, left to the end of the hall). Terry & Polly Flinn, Carol Metzler & Judy Singer, NAMI facilitators. • NAMI South County Support Meeting for family members, 2ND Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm. Mental Health Clinic, 802 Brewster, Redwood City, 650-363-4111. Pat Way, NAMI SMC facilitator; Liz Downard RN, MSN. Park behind building and knock loudly on door. • NAMI Connection for persons with mental illness. 2ND Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm. 1650 Borel Place #130, San Mateo. Call NAMI SMC 650-638-0800 for information. • DBSA Mood Disorder Support Group 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 DBSASanMateo@um.att.com or 650-299-8880; leave a message. • HOPE (Hope, Offering, Prayer and Education), for those with mental illness and/or in supporting roles. 1ST and 3RD Tuesdays, 6:30pm, First Presbyterian Church, 1500 Easton Dr., Burlingame. Call 355-5352 or 347-9268 for info. • Korean Support Group, a family/consumer group. 4TH Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm. Full Gospel Mission Church, 20920 McClellan Rd. (opp. De Anza College), Cupertino. Info: Kyo, 408-253-9733. • Women Living With Their Own Mental Illness, Tuesdays, 1-2:30pm. Redwood City - sliding scale fees apply for this meeting. Contact Deborah at 650-363-0249, x111. 	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAMI Stanford for family & friends. 2nd Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm. 401 Quarry Road #1206, Stanford. Dept. of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences (parking is between Vineyard & Quarry). Info: 650-862-2886 or pamelapolos@comcast.net • DBSA Mood Disorder Support Group 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. • Jewish Support Group (open to all denominations), for those with mental illness and families and friends. 2nd Wednesdays, 6:15-8:30pm. For info, call Carol Irwin 408-858-1372. Beit Kehillah, 26790 Arastradero Rd., Los Altos • Telecare for family and friends of residents. 2nd Wednesdays, 5:30-7pm. 855 Veterans Blvd, Redwood City. 650-817-9070 	WEDNESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Language Family Support Group Last Thursdays (but Dec 17, not 24 or 31), 6-7:30 pm, Cantonese/Mandarin. 1950 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo. BHRS main entrance. Info: 650-261-3704 (Maureen) or 650-573-3571 (Alice). • Coastside Dual Diagnosis Group, development for clients in all stages of recovery. Thursdays at 4-5pm. 225 S. Cabrillo Hwy #200A, Half Moon Bay. 726-6369 for information. • Body Image & Eating Disorders, Thursdays, 6:30-8pm, 1225 Crane St, Ste 205, Menlo Park. Open to family and friends. <i>RSVP required: emlycaruthersmft@gmail.com</i>. More info: 408-356-1212 or e-mail: info@edrcsv.org. • H.E.L.P. for those with a mental illness and/or in a supporting role, 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 Contact Jane Clark 650-464-9033 • North County Support Group for clients, family and friends. 2ND and 4TH Thursdays, 5:45-7pm, 375 89th Street, Community Room, Daly City. Co-facilitators: Linda Hildreth and Adam Harrison LCSW More info: 650-301-8650. 	THURSDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese Education & Support Group, call (415) 474-7310 for information. • Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation of SF Bay Area, 3RD Saturdays, 1:30-3:30pm, Seton Medical Center, 1900 Sullivan Ave., 2nd Fl. Conf room near cafeteria, Daly City. For more information: 415-273-7273; www.ocd-bayarea.com. • Consumer Support Groups, Heart and Soul, Call 650-343-8760 for address. 	SATURDAY

Cluttering & Hoarding Support Groups, Workshops, and Private Consultations - Groups/programs change, contact Emily Farber, MSW, 650-289-5417, efarber@avenidas.org.

NAMI Education Programs

Call to be added to the Wait List - 650-638-0800

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. Pre-registration is required.

- **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**—An overview program 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 call to set up an in-house program for your organization.

Teachers/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.

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

Suzanne Aubry, Dir. Family Service & Support: 650-573-2673
Claudia Saggese, Family Liaison (habla Español): 573-2189

PLAN of California

Planned Lifetime Assistance Network offers two Master **Special Needs trust** plans for California families with funds to bequeath (minimums \$150,000 and \$300,000). These trusts provide for contract with PLAN for oversight (both fiduciary and personal support services) without endangering public entitlements.

San Francisco contact: Baron Miller 415-522-0500
Los Angeles contact: Carla Jacobs 888-574-1258

San Mateo County Mental Health Emergency Numbers

Police: 911

Tell the dispatcher you are calling regarding a person who has a mental illness. Request a CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) trained officer and/or someone who has experience in dealing with the mentally ill. For non-emergency situations, call your local police department.

HELPFUL: Tips to prepare yourself for a 911 call are available on the BHRS website. Download "Mental Health Emergency" at www.smchealth.org/MH911 or visit the blog: <http://smcbhrsblog.org/2015/03/30/mental-health-emergency-materials-aka-family-script/>.

24 Hour Crisis Line & Support Help: 650-579-0350 / 800-784-2433

Calling the local number will get you someone in San Mateo County. Calling the 800 number will get you the first person available. This person may not be in San Mateo County.

Psych Emergency: San Mateo Medical Center: 650-573-2662
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. Available 24x7.

For additional non-emergency numbers relating to Mental Health issues, access www.namisanmateo.org.

(Holiday Blues from page 1)

- Extra stress comes from holiday preparations or family demands. Buying presents, hosting events, preparing meals and even the pressure of getting holiday cards in the mail on time can wear a person down.
- Unrealistic expectations, such as wanting to attend every gathering you're invited to or wanting to spend more than your budget allows on gifts.
- Over-commercialization of the season through advertising and store sales.
- Inability to travel or attend family gatherings.
- Feeling a difference between past holidays and the present one—sometimes because of the loss of a loved one or change in your living or work situation.

Children and the Blues

Child and adolescent psychiatric hospitalizations peak during winter months, including the holiday season.

Children are perceptive. They pick up on the mood of parents and other family members. They also feel the loss of close family members who may have died with whom they have celebrated in the past, such as grandparents. They can feel loss from other changes, such as a deployed parent or family upheavals such as moving, divorce, etc.

It's important to keep in mind that children and teenagers also aren't limited to simply feeling "blue:" 50% of lifetime cases of mental illness appear by age 14 and 75% by age 24.

Does the Suicide Rate Rise During the Holidays?

It's a myth. In fact, the suicide rate tends to be lowest in winter. Suicides increase in the spring. But symptoms of depression and thoughts of suicide must be taken seriously any time of the year, including the holidays.

Avoiding the Holiday Blues

- Stick to normal routines as much as possible.
- Get enough sleep or rest.
- Take time for yourself, but don't isolate yourself. Spend time with supportive, caring people.
- Eat and drink in moderation. Don't drink alcohol if you are feeling down.
- Get exercise—even if it's only taking a short walk.
- Make a to-do list. Keep things simple.
- Set reasonable expectations and goals for holiday activities such as shopping, cooking, entertaining, attending parties or sending holiday cards.
- Set a budget for holiday activities. Don't overextend yourself financially with buying presents.
- Listen to music.
- Remember that holiday blues are short-term. Be patient. Take things week by week and day by day.

Beyond the Blues: When It Becomes Mental Illness

If symptoms of depression or anxiety last more than 2 or 3 weeks, it could indicate a more serious mental health problem. There are basic steps that a person experiencing symptoms or family members and friends can take. These are steps that can be taken any time of the year.

- Talk with your doctor (or pediatrician). A comprehensive physical exam needs to be part of assessment to rule out some physical causes.
- Get a referral to a mental health professional; a call from your doctor may help you to avoid a long waiting list.
- Educate yourself or recommend a resource to a person. Someone may know that something is off, but not recognize or understand symptoms or how to find help.
- If a friend or relative is showing symptoms, ask them privately how things are going. If needed, use a prompt like "You seem a little sad or frustrated. What's been going on lately?" Don't be judgmental or trivialize what they may be feeling.
- Offer to make the appointment for the person and accompany them to the doctor's office or mental health clinic for moral support. It can make a big difference.
- Local NAMI affiliates can offer resources.

Recent Research Findings On The Genetic Basis Of Schizophrenia, Psychosis As A Learning And Memory Disorder, And Best Practices For Interventions

—Sent from Carol Lamont, member

Check out this New York Times article on how biology, psychology and social forces can all affect mental health and the best practice for intervention is not just medication, but also therapy: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/11/opinion/psychiatrys-mind-brain-problem.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad>

Finding a qualified therapist who is willing and able to work with those who have severe mental illness is a huge challenge. Many therapists only want to work with those that I call "the walking wounded," not those who are most seriously injured and who have the greatest need for therapy to help them become and remain stable and to rebuild their lives. Clearly we need more research not just on physical dysfunctionality of the brain, but also on the therapeutic and social interventions that are documented as evidenced based best practices.

I keep searching for answers to help my son and others suffering from severe mental illness. **I recommend a recent webinar offered by the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation on New Insights into the Genetic Basis of Schizophrenia**, that I found to be very informative: <https://bbrfoundation.org/brain-matters-discoveries/new-insights-into-the-genetic-basis-of-schizophrenia>. BBRF offers much info on research findings and studies underway: <https://bbrfoundation.org/discoveries>

On Tuesday I tuned in for another amazing webinar on what scientists are learning about our brains, and how they can become dysfunctional. For too long we focused on investing in what we could learn about outerspace, and finally with Obama's big investment we are learning about our innerspace, how the brain works and what happens when it doesn't work. This is the most recent webinar by the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation on the latest findings of nationally funded research for answers: <https://bbrfoundation.org/meet-the-scientist-november-2015>.

Please Become a Member of NAMI San Mateo County

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

- Regular Member (\$35 to \$99)*
 Sustaining Member (\$100 to \$499)*
 Patron Member (\$500 to \$999)*
 Benefactor Member (\$1,000 or more)*
 Mental Health Individual (\$10)
 Renewal or New Membership Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Change Address (print new address below, include bottom half of page with old address)

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

Pay by: Check Visa MC Credit cards charged to billing address.

Credit Card# _____ Expires _____

Amount \$ _____ Signature _____

How did you hear about NAMI? _____

Please check all that apply: I/we am/are Family Consumer
 MH Professional Business or Agency Friend

Your membership in NAMI San Mateo County is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our Tax ID number is 94-2650681. *Thank you for your support!*

Webinar: Better Care for Women with Maternity-related Mental Health Needs

December 10 - see page 2

General Meeting

March 23 - see page 1

The December and January issues of our newsletter are combined -
Have a wonderful holiday and see you next year!

NAMI Members - are you ready to switch your paper newsletter delivery to email? Please help us be more efficient. Call the office today or email us at nami@namisanmateo.org.

NAMI San Mateo County
1650 Borel Place, Suite 130
San Mateo, CA 94402
650-638-0800 / FAX: 650-638-1475
nami@namismc.org
www.namisanmateo.org
Office open: 9am-3pm, M-F (or by appt.)

Board of Directors

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How to Help Save the Mentally Ill From Themselves

—Sent from Carol Lamont, member

Check out this plea in [Nov 17] New York Times from a father mourning the loss of his son for enactment of Congressman Murphy's bill, The Helping Families In Mental Health Crisis Act, that is intended to fix the nation's broken mental health system by focusing more on those with serious mental illness and funding expanded treatment, including assisted outpatient treatment.

Like this author, my son has a severe mental illness with anosognosia, which means he lacks insight into his own illness even now that he is finally getting treatment again. The inability or unwillingness of some patients to recognize a problem and begin treatment and continue treatment, mental health or otherwise, elevates the importance of an individual's family and friends in any successful effort to obtain care for them. In most states, and in California counties that have yet to adopt Laura's Law, no intervention is possible until someone with severe mental illness is determined to be in imminent danger of harming themselves or others, and too often this means there is no protection available to prevent harm from happening. I support adoption of the The Helping Families In Mental Health Crisis Act and urge others to contact their Congressperson to urge their support so that it can finally be adopted to help and to protect more of our loved ones with severe mental illness. Here is the link to find out more about H.R. 3717: [http://murphy.house.gov/helpingfamiliesinmentalhealthcrisisact#Bill Information](http://murphy.house.gov/helpingfamiliesinmentalhealthcrisisact#Bill%20Information)

The Opinion Pages | Op-Ed Contributor

How to Help Save the Mentally Ill From Themselves
By NORMAN J. ORNSTEIN NOV. 17, 2015

MY older son, Matthew Ornstein, died at age 34 on Jan. 3 from carbon monoxide poisoning. It was accidental — he fell asleep in a tent with a propane lantern — but his death was shaped by a lack of judgment driven by a 10-year struggle with mental illness.

Matthew was a brilliant, warm, funny, compassionate and empathetic person. He was a national champion high school debater and celebrated standup comic who excelled in his studies at Princeton, then moved to Hollywood, where he and his debate partners created a sharp and witty show called "Master Debaters."

At age 24, Matthew had a sudden psychotic break, and that began a difficult decade-long journey for him and for his family and friends. Whatever his illness — his condition was never formally diagnosed, but he probably suffered from bipolar disorder — Matthew was particularly afflicted by one component of his illness: anosognosia, the inability of a person to recognize that he or she is ill. Since Matthew was over 18, neither family members nor professionals had any legal authority to get him treatment for the symptoms that kept him from living a stable life.

Matthew was not violent at all, and largely kept to himself. His appearance could be off-putting — he kept a long beard, did not cut his hair and smoked heavily. We constantly feared that a police officer might misunderstand his condition and that he could end up injured or killed; we also at times prayed that he would get arrested and could have the happy ending that Pete Earley describes in his powerful book "Crazy," when a compassionate judge offered assisted outpatient treatment for his delusional son.

We tried everything to help Matthew, from acceptance and enabling to tough love, but the trajectory was not a good one and its ending has scarred and devastated our lives forever. I cannot say with certainty that if we had been able to force treatment on Matthew, including anti-psychotic medications, that he would have survived. In addition to suffering from anosognosia, Matthew became very religious after his break, embracing his Judaism, keeping kosher, and he was convinced that taking medication was dishonorable and would offend God.

But I do know that for many, treatment saves lives. The true insanity is that our laws leave those who suffer to fend for themselves. But Congress is now ready to grapple with the issue in a bipartisan bill introduced by Tim Murphy, a Republican from Pennsylvania and the only clinical psychologist in the House, and Eddie Bernice Johnson, a Democrat from Texas who is a psychiatric nurse.

The bill is not perfect. But it does many things to improve the financing, treatment and delivery of services across the range of mental illnesses, and in particular it has provisions aimed directly at helping those like my son.

Most critically, the Murphy-Johnson bill provides incentives to fund expanded treatment, called assisted outpatient treatment, or A.O.T., only for those with a long history and pattern of proving a danger to themselves or others. The specifics of A.O.T. vary by state, but judges can order patients to undergo treatment while they live in the community instead of in prison or a hospital. It has been proven to reduce crime by or against those with illnesses, as well as suicide. In some states, the treatment is ordered through the intervention of medical professionals or law enforcement; families do have to be involved. In many states, families can petition the court directly based on the likelihood that their loved one has a grave disability or condition.

But A.O.T. is not *carte blanche*: It still requires court action and has strict criteria to limit treatment to the most seriously ill. Five states, including Maryland, where my son spent most of his life, currently do not have such treatment; in those states that do, the options are often limited. The bill's provision is a carrot, not a stick, to encourage states to create or expand A.O.T. by providing bonus money in block grants for those that do.

The bill would also create a new position at the Department of Health and Human Services, an assistant secretary for mental health and substance abuse, and put the existing dysfunctional agency, known as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), under his

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or her supervision. Samhsa has used much of its budget to deal with less pernicious conditions like trauma and stress. It has also funded activist groups that oppose medication and mainstream psychiatric care for the seriously mentally ill.

The bill, which will soon be taken up by the full Energy and Commerce Committee, has broad support — but not broad enough. A majority of the Democrats on the committee oppose the changes to Samhsa and vigorously oppose any move to assisted outpatient treatment. Their concerns are focused on civil liberties and are sincere but they come from failure to grasp the deeper traumas that can destroy lives. This bill does not return us to the time when we could easily lock someone up in a horrific asylum, and it balances the rights of patients with an opportunity for loved ones and professionals to help those incapable of helping themselves. The bill tries carefully to avoid coercive means and leaves protection to the courts to prevent or minimize abuses.

Nothing will bring back my son, and nothing can erase the pain of his loss. But action by Congress would help keep other parents and siblings from suffering as we have.

—Norman J. Ornstein is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and co-author of “It’s Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism.”

Status And Prognosis Of Hr 3717, The Helping Families In Mental Health Crisis Act

—Sent from Carol Lamont, member

I checked out the govtrack website for status and prognosis of HR 3717, The Helping Families In Mental Health Crisis Act and found they give it a 1% chance of becoming law – because of how few bills get through this Congress:
<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr2646>
This is sickening! We must push harder and further to get the help our loved ones need.

Yesterday, this bill gained a new Cosponsor: Rep. Jackie Speier [D-CA14] The bill now has 163 cosponsors (117 Republicans, 46 Democrats). Please reach out to other Congresspersons to beg them to cosponsor HR 3717 now.