

Local City Honors NAMI SMC for Mental Health Awareness Month

By Laura Parmer-Lohan

On a proud and meaningful evening, NAMI San Mateo County accepted a proclamation from South San Francisco Mayor Eddie Flores recognizing our work in the community and honoring May as Mental Health Awareness Month. The proclamation acknowledges our continued commitment to supporting individuals and families affected by mental illness through education, advocacy, and compassionate peer support.

This recognition from the City of South San Francisco affirms the importance of talking openly about mental health and building a community where no one feels alone in their struggles. As Mayor Flores shared words of support, we were reminded how vital local partnerships are in breaking stigma and expanding access to care.

At NAMI San Mateo County, we believe that mental health is health — and that recovery is possible. This proclamation not only celebrates the work we've done but also strengthens our resolve to ensure everyone has the support they need to thrive.

If you or someone you love is struggling, please remember: you are not alone. We are here to support you.



Laura accepting the proclamation from the mayor

Team Member Receives Award

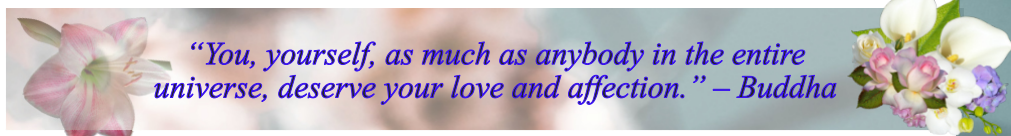


Joana Padilla

Please join us in congratulating our NAMI SMC team member, Joana 'Jo' Padilla on her recognition by the San Mateo County Behavioral Health Commission for her leadership in the community.

She was awarded the George Culores Hall of Fame Award which recognizes consumer/clients who have made contributions to better the lives of other consumer/clients; shown leadership in the consumer movement or have a personal journey of recovery that inspires and gives hope to others.

Jo was lauded for her courage in sharing her story to, in her words, "letting others know that it's OK to not be OK."



"You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection." – Buddha



Tracie Pon and Latona

Breaking the Silence: Bringing Mental Health Awareness to the Community

By Latona Byas

Mental health is often considered a taboo subject—difficult to talk about with family, friends, and even coworkers. At NAMI San Mateo County, we are working to bridge this gap by creating safe spaces for conversation, education, and support through our Mental Health 101 Presentation.

So, what is Mental Health 101? It's a free, community-based presentation designed to raise awareness, provide education, and advocate for those affected by mental health conditions. The presentation includes personal stories, key facts about mental health, and local resources to help individuals and families better understand and navigate mental health challenges.

As we prepared for Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI San Mateo County had the opportunity to present two powerful Mental Health 101 sessions. The first was held at Millbrae Public Library, and the second at the Peninsula Jewish Community Center in Foster City. Both events were met with an eager and engaged audience of community members and staff, ready to learn more about mental health and how they can support themselves or their loved ones.

As the presenter, I had the privilege of sharing my journey with mental health—how I've faced challenges and continue to work through them. It was a deeply moving experience, and I was reminded of the power of storytelling in helping others feel seen, understood, and less alone.

Being part of these presentations offered more than just information—it offered hope. Hope that things can get better, that support is available, and that no one has to go through this alone.

Together, through open dialogue and shared experiences, we are breaking the



Want to stay up to date with all things NAMI SMC?
Scan the QR code to

subscribe to our Tuesday Newsday and get weekly updates on everything happening at NAMI SMC.



NAMI Walks 2025

Seal Point Park, San Mateo
Sat, Oct 4, 2025 9:00a-12:30p

(continued on pg 2)

NAMI SMC Featured on SSF Podcast

By Latona Byas

Some of the staff from NAMI San Mateo County recently had the incredible opportunity to participate in a podcast hosted by the City of South San Francisco. The discussion focused on the history of our organization, the vital mental health programs we offer, and our ongoing commitment to supporting individuals and families affected by mental health conditions in San Mateo County.

Representing our team were Rocío C. Panameño, Education and Volunteer Director; Oliver Heffernan, Communications, Events & Youth Services Manager; and Latona Byas, Education and Staffing Coordinator. Each of them shared insights into their roles, the impact of NAMI programs, and how we collaborate with local schools, community groups, and organizations to promote mental wellness and reduce stigma.



We extend our sincere gratitude to Rich Lee, City Manager of South San Francisco, for inviting us to take part in this meaningful conversation. Opportunities like this allow us to reach more people, raise awareness about mental health challenges, and inform the public about the resources that are available through NAMI San Mateo County—including support groups, educational classes, community presentations, and volunteer opportunities.

We look forward to continuing to build strong partnerships within South San Francisco and beyond. By working together, we can create a more informed, compassionate, and resilient community.

Tune in to the South San Francisco Podcast for local stories and updates:

www.ssf.net/Our-City/South-San-Francisco-Podcast



*"Your value is not reduced by your suffering.
It is revealed through your endurance."*

Mental health training partnership a success

By Verna Barrientos

In March and April of this year NAMI SMC partnered with Kingdom Love and San Mateo County to bring Be Sensitive, Be Brave (for suicide prevention) and Adult Mental Health First Aid to our community. During these trainings attendees learned about mental health and wellness, suicide warning signs and supports, and how to be there for those that are having mental health challenges. When asked how they thought these trainings went, attendees shared that they learned a lot and felt better prepared to support others.

Community members can sign up for these, and other trainings at www.kingdomlove.live/trainings



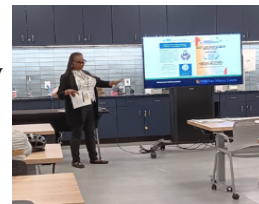
Breaking the Silence (cont. from pg 1)

stigma and building a stronger, more compassionate community.

Interested in hosting a Mental Health 101 presentation? We offer these sessions to schools, community centers, faith groups, and organizations throughout San Mateo County.

To request a presentation, please visit www.namisanmateo.org, call 650-638-0800, or email rocio@namisanmateo.org.

Let's continue to spread awareness and make mental health a conversation we're not afraid to have.



Functional Neurological Disorder (FND):

A condition characterized by neurological symptoms like weakness, paralysis, seizures, or sensory disturbances that are not caused by a physical neurological condition. These symptoms are often triggered by psychological distress or trauma.

Ending the Silence (ETS) - The Numbers Are In!

By Olivia Heffernan & Stacey Holmes

As we wrap up the school year for our Ending the Silence (ETS) program, we're proud of the impact we've made, and we're not done yet! We're hoping to bring ETS to summer camps, clubs, and other youth-focused community organizations in the months ahead.

Highlights from this year include a brave middle school student standing up in front of over 90 peers to share a personal family mental health story. At another school, the wellness counselor told us that several students came forward to talk about their struggles after hearing our presentation, with a few exhibiting high risk behaviors. These moments remind us why ETS matters.

2024–2025 School Year At-A-Glance

- Over 4,000 students, parents, and staff reached
- 51 presentations completed
- 15 schools visited (including 7 new ones)

ETS is a free, impactful mental health presentation designed for middle and high school students. It helps normalize conversations about mental health through awareness, education, and practical tools.

If you're a camp leader or program director, we'd love to connect about summer opportunities. Looking ahead to the next school year? If you're a school administrator, teacher, or parent interested in bringing ETS to your school, please reach out.

Benefits of the ETS program include:

- Easy implementation (the presentation is fully developed)
- Student-focused education
- Peer relatability (a young adult shares their lived experience)
- Credibility (created by a nationally recognized nonprofit)
- No cost to schools or organizations

For more information or to schedule a presentation, scan the QR code or email our Ending the Silence Coordinator at sholmes@namisanmateo.org.



F2F Spring Success: Graduates, Gratitude & Growth Ahead

By Rocio C Panameño

This spring, we proudly concluded two virtual NAMI Family-to-Family (F2F) courses—each a 9-week journey providing education, support, and practical tools to families of loved ones living with mental health conditions.

The first class was led by longtime teacher Ruan Frenette, with new teacher Jan Fisher and resource assistant Angela Castillo, graduating 11 participants. The second class was guided by longtime teacher Jean Perry, alongside new instructors Joana Padilla and Billie Jean Benson, who supported 14 family members in gaining valuable knowledge and confidence.

Participants shared how the course made a difference:

“I spoke to my son about taking the course. I originally thought he'd be uncomfortable about me doing so, but the class and teachers helped me understand he'd be relieved that I was getting assistance understanding his illness.”

“I will use the communication technique the class covered when talking to my sister. I learned that it is ok to self-care and let go.”

“Now armed with a deeper understanding of various aspects of my loved one's mental illness, my communication and reaction responses will be more supportive.”

We are so thankful to our dedicated teachers for creating a supportive learning environment where participants feel heard, understood, and better prepared.

On April 30, our newest hybrid 9-week course began, co-led by Ginny Traub and Ron Dugrenier, with Ruan and Jan stepping in to support as needed. Their teamwork ensures that Family-to-Family continues without interruption, meeting the ongoing demand for this important program.

Ready to join? Scan the QR code to sign up today, or email our Education & Volunteer Director, Rocio C. Panameño, at rocio@namisanmateo.org.



“Let go of who you think you're supposed to be; embrace who you are.” – Brené Brown

SYSLE comes to San Mateo County

By Verna Barrientos

NAMI SMC is excited to announce that we are now offering Sharing Your Story with Law Enforcement (SYSLE) presentations to first responders (e.g., law enforcement, EMTs, dispatchers, and others). SYSLE trained presenters share their stories with first responders with the intention of expanding education about mental health. This education supports first responders in supporting people living with mental health challenges and their family members and caregivers.

We can tailor this presentation to meet the needs of your organization. If you would like to bring a SYSLE presentation to your organization please contact Verna Barrientos (she/her), Lead Clinician, at vbarrientos@namisanmateo.org or 650-260-3787 (text ok).

[See page 21 of this online newsletter](#)



NAMI SMC's Blues Teen Group Expands Statewide!

By Olivia Heffernan & Yvette Morales

We're excited to share the success of our Blues Teen Group, a free 6-week program that empowers youth ages 11-18 with tools to build emotional resilience and reduce symptoms of low mood and anxiety. With support from two young adult peer facilitators, participants learn practical strategies to re-frame negative thoughts and boost their overall well-being.

Since launching in September 2024, we've proudly completed two in-person Blues groups and we're currently running our first-ever virtual session! The impact has been powerful. When asked what they gained from the program, participants shared:

- “I liked the positive counter thoughts. It helped me regulate my feelings before reacting to a situation.”
- “I liked talking to other people and learning how to control [my] emotions.”
- “It taught me how to deal with situations that I might've approached more aggressively and instead have a more calm approach.”
- “The group helped me learn how to think about a situation in a better way so I won't be upset.”

And now we're expanding even more! Our virtual Blues Teen Group is now available to all youth ages 11-18 throughout California. Don't miss this chance to join a supportive space where teens can learn, grow, and connect.

Virtual Blues Teen Group Kicks Off June 21st

Our next Blues Teen Group begins soon, on Saturday, June 21st, and there's still time to join! This free, virtual group is open to all California youth ages 11 to 18 who are looking for support, connection, and tools to manage low mood or anxious thoughts.

Led by trained young adult peer facilitators, Blues offers a welcoming space to build emotional resilience, learn practical life skills, and feel less alone. Whether it's your first time joining or you're returning for another round, we'd love to see you there.

Starts: Saturday, June 21st from 11:00am-12:00pm

Frequency: Every Saturday for 6 Weeks

Location: Virtual on Zoom

Know a teen who might benefit?

Scan the QR code to sign up today!

Questions? Please contact our Youth Services Manager at

olivia@namisanmateo.org



Visit www.namica.org to get the latest update on legislative activity pertaining to Mental Illness.

NAMI SMC's Youth Advisory Council: Empowering Youth Voices in Mental Health

By Olivia Heffernan & Yvette Morales

We're excited to celebrate the incredible accomplishments of NAMI San Mateo County's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) since launching its first year-round cohort in September 2024. Starting with just ten students ages 15 to 21, this group set out with a mission: to create a safe space for youth to express themselves and openly engage in conversations about mental health.

In December, our first cohort planned and hosted their first event, "Arts and Awareness," in partnership with allcove San Mateo, who generously shared their space. The event celebrated live performances such as singing, instrumental music, and dance as a way to explore creative expression as a tool for mental wellness. It was a powerful and successful event.

By January 2025, our YAC had grown to 18 dedicated students, and their impact has continued to build. Their second project has focused on fundraising efforts within their schools and broader communities to support our Blues Teen Group. On May 4, the YAC hosted a bake sale featuring delicious homemade cookies and brownies, raising funds and spreading awareness about NAMI SMC's free mental health services. Their goal: to raise \$1,000 and they're well on their way!

Looking ahead, our YAC has begun working on an exciting new project... a mental health podcast! Set to continue through the summer, this student-led initiative will feature conversations with professionals and individuals with lived experience, offering insight into mental health resources, initiatives, and conditions in an accessible, youth-driven format.

We are now accepting applications for the 2025–2026 YAC cohort, which will run from August through May. If you or someone you know is passionate about mental health and wants to make a difference, scan the QR code on to apply today!



We're giving our NAMI SMC office library a meaningful makeover, and we'd love for you to be part of it.

Our goal? To create a cozy, accessible space filled with books that inspire, educate, and empower readers of all ages on their mental health journey.

Whether it's a heartfelt memoir, a practical resource, or a children's book that starts the conversation early, each book helps us build a collection rooted in hope, healing, and inclusivity.

Want to contribute? Check out our **Library Book Registry**, compliments of Reach & Teach Bookstore in San Carlos, by scanning the QR code.

Thank you for helping us recreate this impactful space.



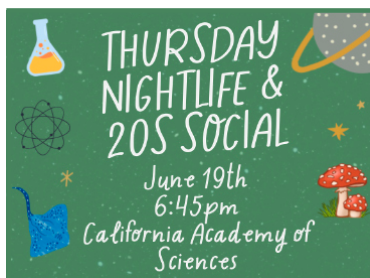
The Connection Collective: Building Community in Our 20s

By Olivia Heffernan

Our 20s social group, The Connection Collective, is off to an amazing start this year! We've been bringing people together each month for fun, casual meetups that make it easier to meet new friends and build real connections. So far in 2025, we've gone to the San Jose Sharks hockey game, Topgolf, Trivia Night, and a beautiful sunset hike. Every event has been a hit, with great turnout, good connections, and plenty of laughs.

We know that making friends as an adult, especially in your 20s, can be tough, but The Connection Collective is all about changing that. Whether you're new to the area or just looking to grow your circle, our monthly events offer something for everyone in a laid-back, welcoming, and inclusive atmosphere.

Want to stay in the loop for upcoming meetups? We've got plenty more planned, and we'd love to see you there. Just scan the QR code to check out our Meetup page. Joining as a member is completely free and will allow you to stay up to date on our events.



To learn more and RSVP please scan the QR code.



Community resource – the CARE Act

By Verna Barrientos

The CARE Act (SB 1338) provides community-based mental health and substance use services and supports to Californians living with schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders who meet health and safety criteria. It allows certain adult people (e.g., family members, first responders, and providers) to ask (i.e., petition) a court to create a voluntary CARE agreement or a court-ordered CARE plan for those needing extra community supports. A CARE agreement or plan may include treatment, housing resources, and other services. All courts accept CARE petitions. The CARE Act provides earlier action, support, and accountability for both the CARE clients and the local governments responsible for providing behavioral health services.

More information about the CARE Act can be found here: <https://sanmateo.courts.ca.gov/self-help/care-court> and <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/CARE-ACT.aspx>

Additionally, Self-Help Centers can provide legal information and resources to people without a lawyer. Help can be in person, over the phone, or online. You can find a local self-help center at: <https://selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/self-help/find-self-help?id=&s=>



Welcome Our New Intern, Jianna Pollack!

We're thrilled to introduce Jianna Pollack, who joins us for the next six weeks as our new intern. Jianna will be a valuable asset, assisting with SYSLE evaluations, data collection, and database management.



Jianna Pollack

A Math and Political Science student at Grinnell College, Jianna is passionate about equitable access to mental health services and its impact on the San Mateo County community. She's eager to gain insight into mental health advocacy through her internship. Outside of her studies, Jianna enjoys improv, hiking, and playing music. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Jianna!

NAMI Provider continues to support service providers

By Verna Barrientos

Earlier this year NAMI SMC held two successful Provider courses after being on hiatus for six years. Provider is an evidence-based staff development program for healthcare providers, administrative staff, operational staff, case managers, peer support specialist, students, trainees, and interns (and others) working directly with people affected by mental health challenges and/or their family members and caregivers. It's an experience that equips participants with a deeper understanding of mental illness and the confidence to serve individuals and families in a collaborative manner.

NAMI SMC will be holding more Provider courses in the coming months. For more information go to <https://namisanmateo.org/support/for-professionals/>. If you are interested in attending this course you can sign up on our interest list at <https://forms.gle/nue1XYUiNxrW5qPFA>

If you want to bring Provider to your organization (either as a full 15 hour course or a 4 hour introductory seminar), you can fill out our interest list and/or contact Verna Barrientos (she/her), Lead Clinician, at vbarrientos@namisanmateo.org or call 650-260-3787 (text ok).



Mental Health Ice Bucket Challenge
Someone's about to get soaked!



Back Row: Rocio, Joana, Debra
Front Row: Olivia, Laura, Latona

Helpline offers connection to community resources

By Verna Barrientos

Did you know that NAMI SMC has a Helpline? Community members can call our Helpline if they are looking for information about NAMI SMC programs and services or want other community supports. The Helpline is staffed by people living with mental health challenges, as well as their family members and caregivers. Helpline Resource Specialists are trained to provide empathetic support and connect callers to the appropriate community resources.

You can reach the Helpline by calling 650-638-0802. The Helpline is available Monday through Friday 9am to 7pm and on Saturday from 9am to 3:00pm. If a Helpline Resource Specialist does not pick up your call, please leave a message and someone will get back to you soon.

Please note that the Helpline is not a crisis line. If you or someone you know is having a mental health crisis, or needs emotional support, call the San Mateo County Crisis Hotline at 650-579-0350, or call 988. Both of these supports are available 24/7. Furthermore, if you are looking for someone to talk to, or to just listen, you can call/text the Mental Health Association of San Francisco's Peer-Run Warmline at 855-600-WARM (9276). They are also available 24/7.

Peer-to-Peer: Building Connection and Confidence Through Shared Experience

By Rocio C Panameño

We're excited to share that our most recent Peer-to-Peer (P2P) course concluded on April 23! This 8-week in-person class was held at our NAMI San Mateo County office and was co-led by Kira Liess and first-time teacher Polina. Polina brought warmth and insight to every session, and we're so grateful to Kira for providing thoughtful guidance and support along the way.

The participants formed a truly special group, and calling it a "great class" would be an understatement. They're eager to keep the connection going—and we're working on forming a monthly group so they can continue meeting and supporting one another.

One participant shared:

"I gained more understanding of myself. Class was so much better learning about things from their experiences. Because both facilitators have lived experiences, it made the teaching authentic."

Ready to join? Scan the QR code to sign up today, or email our Education & Volunteer Director, Rocio C. Panameño, at rocio@namisanmateo.org.



Humans start forming memories before birth—around the third trimester (about 28 weeks into gestation), the fetal brain is developed enough to begin long-term memory formation. Studies show that newborns can recognize their mother's voice and even melodies they heard in the womb!

Looking Ahead: Strengthening Our Impact Through Innovation and Signature Programs

By Rocio C Panameño

At NAMI San Mateo County, we are excited to share some of the powerful ways our affiliate is growing, innovating, and expanding mental health support throughout our community. Guided by our commitment to NAMI Signature Programs and collaborative partnerships, we're building momentum toward a more connected and accessible future.

This year, we've continued to align closely with both NAMI California and NAMI National, leveraging their expertise and resources to strengthen our local programming. These partnerships have created new opportunities for training, advocacy, and collaboration, ensuring we bring the highest quality mental health education and support to San Mateo County.

A recent highlight is our Ending the Silence (ETS) presentation at a local high school. The results were both immediate and meaningful: 12 students self-identified as needing support, with three considered high-risk. This underscores the vital importance of early intervention and the role we play in creating safe spaces where young people can reach out and be heard.

For the Family-to-Family program, we will provide more classes this year than in recent years with our first in-person program since the pandemic. We are also looking to host a Family-to-Family participant meet up sometime in the near future.

We're also excited to announce the first-ever Barbara Mouton Multicultural Mental Health Community Event on May 8. This evening will bring together the community for a cultural celebration, connection, and an important dialogue on mental health equity. Attendees will enjoy dinner from a local Mexican restaurant as we gather feedback from the community about the programs and services they most need, helping us tailor our future offerings to better serve them.

Meanwhile, we recently hosted an Adult Mental Health First Aid training at our NAMI office, in collaboration with San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and Kingdom Love, LLC. This partnership allowed us to provide community members with valuable skills to recognize and respond to signs of mental health challenges early on. To enhance the experience, we also offered lunch, creating a welcoming and collaborative environment for all participants.

Looking ahead, we're launching several exciting initiatives that reflect our commitment to inclusion and community-based care. These include offering programming in Mandarin, developing a drop-in space for peer connection and wellness, and establishing a mental health resource library. Each of these efforts is designed to meet people where they are and increase access to vital mental health resources.

We're also proud to have re-launched the Provider Education Program, bringing together families, peers and mental health professionals to learn from one another and deepen mutual understanding. In addition, we've introduced two new NAMI Signature Programs that reflect our dedication to culturally responsive education and advocacy:

- **Sharing Your Story with Law Enforcement (SYSLE)** – empowering individuals with lived experience to share their stories and build empathy with law enforcement professionals.
- **Compartiendo Esperanza** – a Spanish-language program designed to reduce stigma and open up conversations about mental health within Latinx communities.
- These developments are more than just program milestones—they are meaningful steps forward in our mission to provide education, support, and advocacy for all. We're proud of the progress we've made and the new opportunities on the horizon.

Thank you for being part of the NAMI SMC community. Together, we're building a more inclusive, accessible, and hopeful future for mental health.

Join the 2025 NAMIWalks Committee — We Need You!

By Olivia Heffernan

Are you passionate about mental health and excited to make a difference in your community? We're building our 2025 NAMIWalks San Mateo County Committee, and we'd love for you to be part of the team! Whether you've walked with us before or are brand new to NAMIWalks, this is your opportunity to shape an unforgettable event and help spread mental health awareness across the county.

Our committee is made up of dedicated volunteers who meet regularly in the months leading up to the walk to bring the event to life. You can lend your voice and skills by joining one (or more!) of our six key committees:

1. **Logistics Committee** – Help plan event-day setup, signage, staging, and route.
2. **Community Partner Committee** – Build relationships with schools, community groups, and more.
3. **Sponsorship Committee** – Help us connect with local businesses and corporations.
4. **Walk Teams Committee** – Support team captains and encourage new teams to register.
5. **Marketing & Social Media Committee** – Spread the word through flyers, newsletters, and social media.
6. **Volunteer Committee** – Recruit and coordinate the amazing people who make Walk Day run smoothly.

Whether you're a behind-the-scenes planner, a creative promoter, or a community connector, there's a place for you here.

Interested? Reach out to our 2025 NAMIWalks Manager, Olivia Heffernan, at olivia@namisanmateo.org or scan the QR code to learn more. Let's make 2025 our biggest and best NAMIWalks yet—together!



Mitochondria, often called the "powerhouses" of the cell, are tiny organelles found in human brain neurons. They're crucial for brain function because they generate adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the primary energy currency cells use to carry out essential processes like sending signals and maintaining neuron health. Without healthy mitochondria, neurons can't function properly, impacting everything from thought to memory.

Partner With Us: Become a Sponsor of NAMIWalks San Mateo County

By Olivia Heffernan

Each year, hundreds of people come together at NAMIWalks San Mateo County to raise awareness, celebrate recovery, and support mental health services for our community. This event is powered by the community, and that includes the support of local businesses and organizations like yours.

When you sponsor NAMIWalks, you're doing more than putting your logo on a banner. You're demonstrating your commitment to mental health, employee well-being, and positive change. You're showing our county that you care, and that you're invested in building a healthier, more compassionate future.

Sponsorship opportunities begin at just \$1,000, and each level comes with meaningful benefits, such as:

- On-site visibility at the walk (tabling opportunities, signage, etc.)
- Recognition in newsletters, social media, and press releases.
- Team-building opportunities for your staff.
- Association with a trusted nonprofit and beloved annual event

Whether you're an individual, small business or a large corporation, there's a way to get involved. Many sponsors also form walk teams, bring volunteers, and make it a full community day!

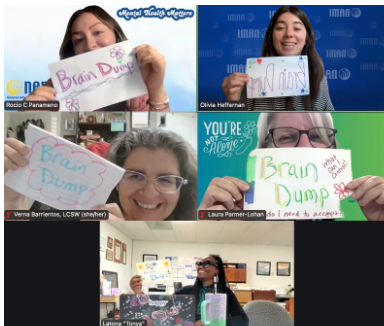
Ready to learn more? Scan the QR code to check out the sponsorship brochure and then contact our 2025 NAMIWalks Manager, Olivia Heffernan, at olivia@namisanmateo.org to discuss it further.



A recent tabling event



Our John Butler promoting NAMI SMC at his "Double Dream" comic book table.



By my calculations that's 500 billion neurons we're talking about!



Our NAMI SMC gang stuck in the elevator? Nope! Just letting you know they're here when you need them!

Community Presence During Mental Health Awareness Month

By Latona Byas

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and the NAMI San Mateo County Education Staff hit the ground running! Throughout the month, we've been busy connecting with the community, sharing resources, and creating safe spaces for open conversations about mental health and wellness. Our goal is to break the stigma and ensure everyone feels seen, heard, and supported.

On May 8, NAMI San Mateo County hosted a community-centered event at the Barbara A. Mouton Multicultural Wellness Center in East Palo Alto. This event was a tremendous success, bringing together residents, families, and community partners for an evening focused on connection, education, and empowerment. Attendees enjoyed a warm, nutritious meal as they gathered in a welcoming space. The evening featured a Mental Health 101 mini-presentation, which offered an accessible introduction to mental health, common conditions, and the importance of early intervention and support.

The interactive breakout session that followed made the evening especially impactful. Community members were invited to reflect on what they learned, share personal insights, and express how it felt to be part of a supportive conversation about mental health. Many shared that this was the first time they had participated in such a discussion, and several expressed interest in becoming more involved in NAMI's work. The event highlighted how education and dialogue can inspire healing and community growth.

Later in the month, NAMI San Mateo County participated in the Second Annual Community Learning Exchange (CLE) hosted by the South San Francisco Unified School District. This well-attended event brought together students, families, educators, and community organizations in a collaborative space dedicated to learning and sharing. NAMI SMC hosted a resource table filled with materials about our signature programs, support groups, and education classes. Our staff and volunteers were on hand to engage with attendees, answer questions, and offer guidance about how to access services.

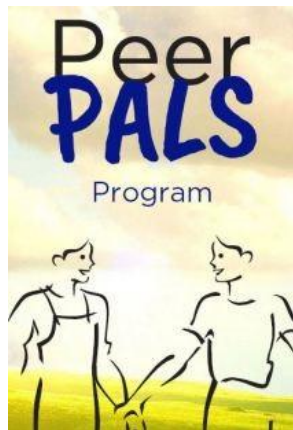


Angela, Latona, Jo

In addition to the tabling, a passionate NAMI volunteer delivered a Mental Health 101 presentation to attendees. The presentation sparked thoughtful conversations and helped normalize mental health discussions in educational spaces. Many participants walked away with a better understanding of how mental health impacts all of us and what resources are available in San Mateo County.

We are proud to be out in the community, especially during this important month, working to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and bring mental health education directly to where people live, learn, and gather. These events are reminders that mental health is a community effort, and with continued outreach and support, we can create a more informed, compassionate, and resilient San Mateo County.

"Nothing fixes a thing so intensely in the memory as the wish to forget it." - Michel de Montaigne



Honoring the Legacy of Peer PALS: Empowering Wellness Through Connection

By Rocio C Panameño

It is with deep appreciation and a heavy heart that we announce the conclusion of NAMI San Mateo County's Peer PALS Program, effective April 30, 2025. This decision comes as a result of federal budget cuts and financial constraints, which have prompted us to reassess our priorities. While it is a difficult choice, it allows us to redirect our resources toward strengthening and expanding NAMI's core programs, ensuring we continue to make a meaningful impact in our community.

Peer PALS began in 2017, and for many of us—including myself—it holds deep personal meaning. It was through this program that I first became part of the NAMI SMC team, and it has remained one of the most impactful, peer-centered initiatives I've had the privilege of supporting.

At its core, Peer PALS was about fostering connection, empowerment, and recovery. By matching individuals in recovery (PALS) with Peers who were newer to their journey, the program created a space for authentic relationships to blossom and for healing to take place. Over the years, we were fortunate to witness countless inspiring stories—Peers who re-engaged with life after years of isolation, mentors who found renewed purpose by giving back, and friendships that endured across time and even continents.

Though I had the honor of coordinating the program in its first five years, Peer PALS thrived because of the incredible people who carried it forward. Audrey Kemp stepped in during my first maternity leave, bringing her warmth and dedication to the role. Then, Tracie Pon took the helm, and her leadership transformed the program in ways that far exceeded expectations.

Under Tracie's vision, Peer PALS grew not only in numbers but in depth. She expanded our community partnerships, strengthened the program's foundation, and elevated the overall experience for participants. Thanks to Tracie's efforts, we can end this chapter on a high note, proud of the tremendous impact we've made and the lasting legacy the program leaves behind.

We are deeply grateful to the clinicians who supported us along the way, including Dr. Jennifer Harrison, Stacy Duffy, and Verna Barrientos, LCSW, whose expert guidance and unwavering support made all the difference.

We'll fondly remember the Peer PALS picnics in Central Park, where participants gathered to connect, share, and celebrate their journeys. While the pandemic presented challenges and shifted the format to virtual, the heart and spirit of Peer PALS endured thanks to the dedication of our team and the resilience of our participants.



As we bring this beloved program to a close, we do so with immense gratitude for all those who made it possible. To every PAL, Peer, staff member, clinician, and partner—thank you for helping create something truly extraordinary. Although Peer PALS is ending, the core values it embodied—hope, connection, and peer-led healing—will continue to inspire and shape NAMI SMC's work. **We remain committed to ensuring that no one walks their mental health journey alone.**

Grounded Healing: How Horticultural Therapy Supports EMDR in Trauma Work

By April Ellis, LCSW, HTR - Ellie Mental Health Clinic, Redwood City



Although Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) has been around since the 1980s and horticultural therapy (HT) was formalized even earlier in the 1970s, I didn't encounter either until the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped my personal and professional world. That turning point not only introduced me to these powerful healing modalities—it led me to build a new career around them. Today, as the director of Ellie Mental Health Clinic, I integrate EMDR and horticultural therapy into daily client work, witnessing how each can uniquely support emotional regulation, trauma processing, and meaningful growth.

EMDR, developed by Francine Shapiro, is best known for its effectiveness in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Through bilateral stimulation—often in the form of guided eye movements, tapping, or vibrating paddles—EMDR helps clients reprocess distressing memories and reduce their emotional intensity. By targeting how traumatic memories are stored in the brain, EMDR enables individuals to integrate those experiences in a healthier, more adaptive way.

Horticultural Therapy, by contrast, is grounded in nature-based interventions. Clients engage in planting, harvesting, or simply observing natural cycles to regulate emotions, foster mindfulness, and build a sense of purpose. HT is especially effective in reducing stress, enhancing mood, and improving sensory integration. It offers clients tangible, grounding experiences that reconnect them with the present moment—an essential part of trauma recovery.

What connects EMDR and HT is their shared emphasis on mindfulness, somatic awareness, and neurobiological regulation. For many trauma survivors, accessing a felt sense of safety in the body is a critical step in healing. Horticultural Therapy helps establish that foundation through rhythmic, tactile, and calming activities. Simple acts like planting seeds or holding a stone can become effective grounding tools before, during, or after EMDR sessions.

HT also enhances the preparation and closure phases of EMDR. In the prep phase, clients develop self-soothing strategies and internal resources; creating a sensory garden or visualizing a natural "safe place" can deepen this work. In closure, contemplative activities such as nature journaling or arranging flowers can support emotional integration and reflection.

Therapists trained in both modalities can tailor treatment to meet individual needs, using nature-based practices to regulate the nervous system and create a healing environment for trauma processing. Even when not used simultaneously, incorporating elements of HT into a broader treatment plan with EMDR can significantly improve therapeutic outcomes.

EMDR and horticultural therapy are powerful, complementary tools that continue to transform lives—and their potential is only growing. Both modalities encourage presence, emotional regulation, and deeper self-awareness, working toward a greater sense of mindfulness and healing.

If you're curious to learn more or explore how these practices could benefit you or your clients, I'd love to connect. elliementalhealth.com/locations/redwood-city-ca



My Brother's Keeper - The Untold Stories Behind the Business of Mental Health and How to Stop the Abandonment of the Mentally Ill

By Dr. Nicholas Rosenlicht M.D.

Is mental health care in the US failing? Are you unhappy with care you or someone you know received? Is insurance coverage provided comprehensive?

Psychiatrist and author Dr. Nicholas Rosenlicht, M.D., a clinical professor at UCSF School of Medicine, details reasons—mental health care has become big business focused on profits not wellness—leaving countless people stranded instead of recovering with a medical support system. My Brother's Keeper describes and proposes a better system that is compassionate and effective.

Dr. Rosenlicht states, "It is estimated that health insurers allocate little more than 4% of health care dollars to the treatment of mental illness and addiction." Bottom line: This must change!



"The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it." - Carl Jung



May 20th Speaker Series

By Olivia Heffernan

Our May 20th Speaker Series event, "Parenting with Cultural Wisdom" with Ed Center, was a great success! We had an engaged group of community members who came together in person and online for a meaningful evening of reflection, connection, and discovery.

Through storytelling, guided discussion, and shared insights, Ed led us on a deep exploration of how our upbringing, family history, and cultural identity shape our present-day experiences—and how we can harness that understanding to build a healthier future.

Attendees walked away with practical tools and new perspectives on:

- Distinguishing cultural strengths from generational trauma
- Supporting mental health while honoring their heritage
- Creating space for healing within families and communities

Whether they came as parents, educators, caregivers, or adult children, everyone left with a renewed sense of awareness, compassion, and empowerment.

A huge thank you to Ed Center for sharing his wisdom, and to all who joined us for this impactful evening. If you missed the event, you can view the recording by scanning the QR code.

Our next Speaker Series will take place on July 22nd from 6:30-8pm hybrid. Subscribe to our Tuesday Newsday email list to stay up to date with information about our guest speaker and other NAMI SMC events.





Bee-ing Thankful



To our very generous **Donors** (of 🕒 and 💵) who, along with the **Members, Volunteers, and Staff of NAMI SMC**, are the ❤️ of this organization.

In Memory of Donations

Sam Anagnostou from Felicia Karbo
Max Heffernan from Andy Leventhal
Jane & Charles Bush from Mary Knopf
Teddy Smith from Bob & Marge Crocco,
 from Damien Fatongia
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Eva Chen from Chelsea Bonini
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Consider NAMI-SMC as your donation destination!

Careasy offers a free, convenient service for converting your extra or unwanted car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting NAMI San Mateo County.

Just go to:

careasy.org/nonprofit/NAMI-San-Mateo-County

or call 877-999-8322 to make your donation. *Thank you!*

Thank you to our Volunteers, Collaborators, Associates and Friends

Blues Teen Group: Sanum Jami, Yvette Morales, Alys Orillaza, Trinity Rushing

Connection Group Facilitators: Amy Garcia, Elaine Ryan

Family Support Group Facilitators:

Christine Abrahams, Joan Dower, Liz Downard, Karina Marwan, Yahaira Ortega, Yolanda Ramirez, Claudia Sageese, Ginny Traub, Pat Way

Family-to-Family Teachers: Billie Jean Benson, Ron Dugrenier, Jan Fisher, Ruan Frenette, Joana Padilla, Jean Perry, Ginny Traub

Outreach: John Butler, Latona Byas, Angela Castillo, Genesis Contreras-Chavez, Yaneth Chavez, Jo Padilla

Ending the Silence & Youth Services: Alina Aupatham, Angelina Heller, Alys Orillaza, Rocio C. Panameño, Diane Russell, Ginny Traub, Lindsey Wade, Molly Wolfe

Mental Health 101 Presenters: Alice Li, Devin Dohrmann

A BIG Thanks to **First Impressions Printing** for printing our class materials, brochures and newsletters.

Didn't get a chance to join our last informative NAMI SMC General Meeting?



Recordings for past General Meetings can be found online at:

namisanmateo.org/news-events/speaker-series



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 smchealth.org/mh911 or visit the blog: smcbhbsblog.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

NAMI Connections for Adults 18+, meets every Monday & Thursday on Zoom from 7-8:30pm. To register, email nami@namisanmateo.org or call 650-638-0800. NAMI Connections for Adults 55+, meets every 1st & 3rd Monday of the month in-person from 4-5:30pm. Roberta Cerri Teglia Center. 601 Grand Ave, 3rd fl, SSF. To register, email rocio@namisanmateo.org NAMI Cordilleras MHR Center Family Group, meets 1st Monday of the month (2nd Monday if 1st is on a holiday) on Zoom from 6:30-8pm. Facilitators: Karina & Joan. To register, email: cordilleras6765@gmail.com NAMI Parents of Youth & Young Adults, (ages 6-26) meets 2nd Monday of the month on Zoom from 7-8:30pm. Facilitators: Ginny Traub & Christine Abraham. To register, email: Parentsofyouth@namisanmateo.org	MON
NAMI Connections We Heal Better Together (WHBT) African Ancestry/Black Connection Recovery Support Group 18+, meets 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month on Zoom from 6:00-7:30p. To register, email: nami@namisanmateo.org Facilitators: Tamara & Latona. To register email: tsmithjones@namisanmateo.org or lbyas@namisanmateo.org. NAMI Central County Family Support Group, meets 2nd Tuesday of the month in-person from 6-7:30pm. Drop ins welcome! NAMI SMC office, 1730 South Amphlett Blvd, Ste 308, San Mateo, 650-638-0800 Pat Way & Liz Downard, RN MSN. email: southcountyNFSG@gmail.com. NAMI Spanish Speaking Family Support Group, meets 2nd Tuesday of the month in-person from 6-7:30pm. Mental Health Clinic, 802 Brewster Ave, Redwood City, To register, email: yramirez@smcgov.org or call 650-573-2673. NAMI Jewish Family & Services Support Group, meets 2nd Tuesday of the month on Zoom from 7:30-9pm. To register please complete this form: https://bit.ly/NAMI-JFSG NAMI Spanish Speaking Family Support Group, meets 4th Tuesday of the month in-person from 6-7:35pm. Barbara Mouton Center, 903 Weeks St, East Palo Alto To register, email: cisaggese@smcgov.org NAMI Stanford Family Support Group, meets the 4th Tuesday the month on Zoom from 7:30-9pm. To register please complete this form: https://bit.ly/StanfordFSG DBSA Mood Disorder Support Group, for persons with uni- and bi-polar disorders, mania, depression, or anxiety; family members welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday on Zoom from 7-9pm. Contact at 650-299-8880 (leave a message) or email: info@dbsaSanMateo.org www.dbsaSanMateo.org	TUES
NAMI Connection for Older Adults 55+, meets 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month on Zoom from 7-8:30pm. To register, email: nami@namisanmateo.org or call 650-638-0802 NAMI Connection for Peers 18 & Over, meets 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month in-person from 3-4:30pm. Roberta Cerri Teglia Center. 601 Grand Ave, 3rd fl, SSF. To register, email rocio@namisanmateo.org NAMI Connection for Peers 18 & Over, meets 2nd, 3rd & 4th Wednesday of the month in-person from 4-5:30pm. BurlPres Church. 1500 Easton Drive, Burlingame. Office door via Parking Lot. Walk Ins Welcome!	WED
NAMI Connection for Adults 18+, meets every Monday & Thursday on Zoom from 7-8:30pm. To register, email: nami@namisanmateo.org or call 650-638-0800. Korean Support Group, for family members. Meets last Thursday of the month on Zoom at 7:30pm. Call Kyo at 408-712-1149 for more info.	THURS
NAMI Connection for Adults 18+, meets 4th Saturday of the month on Zoom from 1-2:30pm. To register, email: nami@namisanmateo.org or call 650-638-0800. NAMI Spanish Speaking Family Support Group, meets every Friday of the month on Zoom from 7-8:30pm. To register, email: grupoapoyovirtual@namisanmateo.org	FRI/SAT
NAMI Blues Teen Support Group meets once a week for 6 weeks in-person and on Zoom For teens ages 11-18. Contact olivia@namisanmateo.org or call 650-677-1275 for more details.	OTHER



North County Satellite groups QR code



"Essentially, NAMI SMC, is largely driven by its dedicated volunteers, and serves as a critical hub for support, education, advocacy, and community building, all of which are essential for improving the lives of those affected by mental illness in San Mateo County."

Scan to see
Volunteer
Opportunities





San Mateo County



- Breaking News
- General Meetings
- Newsletters
- Upcoming Events

www.namisanmateo.org/news-events

Like us on Facebook



www.facebook.com/namismc

and follow us on Twitter



www.twitter.com/NAMISMC

NAMI San Mateo County
1730 S. Amphlett Blvd., #308
San Mateo, CA 94402

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Time Value

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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PERMIT NO. 887

NAMI SMC HelpLine: 650-638-0802



Monday to Friday 9 am - 7 pm
Saturday to Sunday 9 am - 3 pm



Jun 13 - Allcove - Summer Bash

Jun 19 - 20s Connections Meetup (pg 6)

Jun 21 - Blues Teen Group class begins (pg 3)

Jun 25 - Allcove - Keychain-Making Workshop

Jul 22 - NAMI SMC Speaker Event

Oct 4 - NAMI Walks 2025, Seal Point, San Mateo

Stay up-to-date, subscribe to our Tuesday Newsday.

Membership / Donation Form

You can also donate, renew or join NAMI SMC at:

namisanmateo.org/get-involved/how-to-donate

☐ Individual Member (\$40)*

☐ Household Member (\$60)*

☐ Open Door Member (\$5)*

I would like to donate:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250

Other \$ _____

In ☐ Honor of ☐ Memory of

☐ Renewal or ☐ New Membership Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

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

Credit Card# _____ Expires _____ 3 Digit code _____

Amount \$ _____ Signature _____

How did you hear about NAMI? _____

Please check all that apply: I/we am/are ☐ Family ☐ Individual ☐ Friend

☐ MH Professional ☐ Business or Agency

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

1730 S. Amphlett Blvd, Suite 308
San Mateo, CA 94402

650-638-0800 / e-Fax: 650-240-3804

nami@namisanmateo.org

www.namisanmateo.org

Office Hours: *currently by appt only.*

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Tamara Smith-Jones - HCAI Mgr.



Crisis support expands with Mobile Response Team in San Mateo County

From The Daily Journal Apr 25, 2025

San Mateo County residents experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis can now call for 24/7 in-person support from a mobile response team of mental health clinicians able to connect them to appropriate services. Callers to the San Mateo County Crisis Line at (650) 579-0350 can request help for a family member, friend or anyone (including themselves) experiencing or at risk of a behavioral health crisis. Once calls are screened, the hotline will dispatch behavioral health care professionals trained in crisis assessment, de-escalation and intervention.

They will arrive in nondescript vehicles — no lights and sirens — around-the-clock, any day of the year with the goal of stabilizing situations and, if necessary, taking individuals or arranging transportation to the appropriate level of care. Follow-up support is provided within 24 hours of the initial response, facilitating connections to short- and long-term treatment options and assisting in the development of a safety plan to prevent future crises.

Read more at: www.smdailyjournal.com

SAVE THE DATE

2025 NAMI California Annual Conference

☐ October 16 & 17, 2025
 ☑ Sheraton Grand Hotel
 Sacramento, CA



NAMI California invites you to our 2025 in-person Annual Conference! This year, join us and hundreds of family members, educators, mental health professionals and advocates in Sacramento, California at the Sheraton Grand Hotel on October 16 and 17. Listen, learn, network and be united under our goal of reducing the stigma of mental illness. Early Bird Registration ends on July 31 at 11:59 PM.

For more info go to: namica.org

“For a long time it seemed to me that life was about to begin -- real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be got through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life.” - Alfred D'Souza



Q: Does caffeine affects your brain during sleep, even if you fall asleep after consuming it.

A: Yes. And here's how:

1) Reduced Deep Sleep:

Caffeine blocks adenosine receptors. Adenosine is a neurotransmitter that promotes sleep pressure. Even if you sleep, caffeine can reduce slow-wave (deep) sleep, which is critical for physical and mental recovery.

2) Fragmented Sleep:

You may wake up more often during the night or shift between lighter stages of sleep, especially if caffeine was consumed within 6–8 hours before bedtime.

3) Altered Sleep Architecture:

Caffeine can shorten total sleep time and delay REM sleep onset, which may affect memory consolidation and emotional regulation.

Bottom line: Even if you don't feel it, caffeine can silently degrade sleep quality and impair next-day cognitive and physical performance.



Summer Fun with allcove San Mateo!

Allcove San Mateo has been a trusted community partner of ours since they opened over a year ago. They're an incredible resource for youth and their families—and this summer, they've got a fun and diverse lineup of events!

Check them all out below, and click the button to sign up:

- **Summer Bash** – Friday, 6/13 from 3:30 PM – 6:30 PM
- **Sonny Angel Keychain-Making Workshop** – Wednesday, 6/25 from 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
- **Open House** – Monday, 6/30 from 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM & Wednesday, 7/30 from 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM
- **Ice Cream Social** – Wednesday, 7/9 from 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
- **Flea Market** – Friday, 7/18 from 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

To signup
please scan
the QR code





San Mateo County

FREE PEER CERTIFICATION TRAINING



- FREE JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE
- FREE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES
- PER DIEM, PART TIME & FULL TIME OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

**REACH OUT TO US - WE ARE NAMI
SAN MATEO COUNTY!**

**FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE EMAIL:
TAMARA SMITH-JONES AT
TSMITHJONES@NAMISANMATEO.ORG
OR CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE -
NAMISANMATEO.ORG**

Scan the QR code
to fill out the Peer
Support Specialist
Training Interest
Form.



MENTAL HEALTH FOR ALL OF US

DO ANY OF FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU:

- 18 - 25 YEARS OF AGE?
- ARE A FAMILY MEMBER, PAID CAREGIVER, VOLUNTEER OR AN EMPLOYEE WORKING WITH THIS AGE GROUP?
- HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS OR ARE A FAMILY MEMBER OF SOMEONE WHO IS?

IF SO, YOU NEED TO CONTACT US!!!



The Connections Collective
By NAMI SMC

20s Social Group

Welcome to The Connections Collective (TCC) by NAMI SMC, a supportive social group for 20-somethings navigating mental health challenges and seeking friendships.

Join our monthly meet-ups for fun activities like bowling, game nights, and more. Connect in a safe space with friends who get you and foster belonging, support, and genuine connections.



Check out
our next
event



CONNECT, MEET FRIENDS, HAVE FUN!

- Game Nights
- Mini Golf
- Sports Games
- Bowling
- Movie Nights
- Cooking Classes



Blues Teen Group

Blues Teen Group is a **free**, interactive 6-week support program that teaches youth emotional resilience, helping them reduce low mood and anxious thoughts. Each session includes practical coping skills and at-home activities to reinforce learning.

Start Date: Saturday, June 21st

Time: 11am-12pm

Frequency: Every Saturday for 6 Weeks

Ages: Youth ages 11-18

Who: Open to all California residents looking for more emotional skills and support

Cost: Free

Where: Virtual

FREE!



If interested, please scan the QR code to fill out the interest form!



Contact us if you have any questions:

events@namisanmateo.org

650-667-1275

Blues Group Schedule



Week 1

THE TRIANGLE OF FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, AND BEHAVIORS

Understand how our emotions, thoughts and behaviors are connected.

Week 2

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

Explore different ways to reframe negative thoughts by considering alternative perspectives.

Week 3

WHERE'S THE EVIDENCE?

Challenge our negative thoughts by looking for evidence of its likelihood.

Week 4

WHAT IF IT'S TRUE?

Evaluate our negative thoughts by exploring what to do if they are true.

Week 5

PLANNING AHEAD

Discuss daily challenges and develop strategies for managing them effectively.

Week 6

POSITIVE EMOTIONS TOOLBOX

Build a toolkit of strategies to expand on what we've learned and prepare for major life events.

¡Nuevo recurso de salud mental en español!
New Spanish-Language Mental Health Resource!

NAMI San Mateo County ahora ofrece *Compartiendo Esperanza* — un taller gratuito y culturalmente relevante creado para las mujeres de la Comunidad Latinx/Hispana. Este taller consiste en 3 conversaciones sobre salud mental, historias personales y herramientas para el bienestar, todo en un espacio seguro y de apoyo. Contamos también con la participación de una psicóloga que habla español para guiar y apoyar a los participantes.

¿Le interesa traer este taller a su grupo o participar en uno?

Comuníquese con Rocio C Panameno al rocio@namisanmateo.org para más información.

*NAMI San Mateo County is now offering **Compartiendo Esperanza** — a free, culturally responsive workshop created for the Latinx/Hispanic female community. This 3-part series includes open conversations on mental health, personal stories, and tools for wellness, all led in a safe, supportive environment. A Spanish-speaking psychologist also joins us to guide and support participants.*

Interested in bringing this to your group or joining a workshop?

Contact Rocio C Panameno at rocio@namisanmateo.org for more information.



San Mateo
County

Join NAMI's Youth Advisory Council (YAC)

Fill out the
application



We are looking for youth who are:

- Ages 15-21 and San Mateo County residents
- Available to meet once every other week
- Innovative and passionate about mental health

What does NAMI's YAC do?

- Organize new events
- Destigmatize mental health conditions
- Promote existing support programs for youth

Why you should join NAMI's YAC?

- Gain leadership and advocacy experience
- Meet local youth passionate about mental health
- Engage with local community

Questions? Email olivia@namisanmateo.org

SIGN-UP FOR NAMI PROVIDER

This **staff development program** targets healthcare providers, administrative and operational staff, peer support specialists, case managers, and students/interns working with individuals affected by mental health challenges. It aims to enhance participants' understanding of mental illness and build confidence in serving individuals and families collaboratively.

What you will gain:

- ✓ • An understanding of lived experience paired with an evidence-based curriculum
- ✓ • A deeper knowledge of the recovery and medical models for empathetic, compassionate care for people affected by mental challenges
- ✓ • Deeper insights into individual and family member perspectives

Limited
Seats Available!

Register Now!



For more information
please contact:

Website: namisanmateo.org

Helpline: 650-638-0802

(Mon-Fri 9 am-7 pm)

(Sat-Sun 9 am-3 pm)

Verna at 650-260-3787 (text ok)
vbarrientos@namisanmateo.org

Helping First Responders Better Understand Mental Health Challenges



SHARING YOUR STORY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT (SYSLE)

offers trained presenters sharing their first-hand knowledge of mental illness with first responders to expand awareness of mental health challenges.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, San Mateo County (NAMI SMC)

connects individuals who have experienced mental health challenges, as well as their family members and caregivers, with first responders. Our goals are to:

- Enhance empathy between first responders and the mental health community
- Improve crisis response by providing education, support, and real human stories behind mental health challenges

SYSLE presenters receive training to effectively share their stories in a way that fosters learning and meaningful conversation.

*Let's work together to build stronger, more compassionate communities –
we'd love to bring a SYSLE presentation to your organization!*

Email Verna at vbarrientos@namisanmateo.org or call/text 650-260-3787

ENDING THE SILENCE

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL
MENTAL HEALTH
PRESENTATION

1 HOUR
IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL



NAMI's 'Ending the Silence' presentation educates middle and high school students about the warning signs of mental health conditions and appropriate steps to take when someone is displaying symptoms.

The presentation features:

- A young adult with personal experience living with a mental health condition who shares their recovery journey
- An adult who shows a slide show with videos to raise awareness about mental health conditions, support resources, and to provide reassurance

The interactive format encourages students to ask questions, fostering understanding of this often-misunderstood topic and contributing to the movement to end the silence.

INTERESTED? CONTACT US:

sholmes@namisanmateo.org

650-667-1275

www.namisanmateo.org

OR SCAN HERE!



nAmiWalks

San Mateo County

Join NAMI

San Mateo County's Free
Annual Mental Health Walk!

Saturday, October 4, 2025
9AM - 12:30PM

5k Walk - Wellness Program

Food - Resource Fair

Music - Kids' Zone

*The walk raises funds for
NAMI's free mental health
support groups, education
programs & advocacy.*

Seal Point Park

1901 J Hart Clinton Dr.
San Mateo, CA 94401

Learn more at

namiwalks.org/sanmateo





San Mateo
County

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application



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- Promote existing support programs for youth

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- Gain leadership and advocacy experience
- Meet local youth passionate about mental health
- Engage with local community

Questions? Email olivia@namisanmateo.org

What is the NAMI Peer-to-Peer Education Program?

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free, 8-session course for adults living with mental health challenges. NAMI Peer-to-Peer provides an educational setting focused on recovery that offers respect, understanding, encouragement and hope. The NAMI Peer-to-Peer education program is:

- Free and confidential
- Held {once} a week for two hours
- Taught by trained Peer Mentors living in recovery themselves
- A great resource for information on mental health and recovery

NAMI San Mateo County, the local organization of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, offers its NAMI Peer-to-Peer Education Program year round. Please call our office at **650-638-0800** for dates and times to register.



Participant Perspectives

"This course has literally been a life saver. It has opened my eyes to better understanding my illness and methods of recovery I did not know about before taking NAMI Peer-to-Peer."

"Since taking the course I have gained employment and committed to my recovery."

"NAMI Peer-to-Peer gave me a better understanding of the mental illness I have and how to manage it."

Contact us to register for this NAMI SMC Peer-to-Peer class!

About NAMI

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI San Mateo County is an affiliate of NAMI California. NAMI San Mateo County and dedicated volunteer members and leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy and support group programs for people in our community living with mental illness and their loved ones.



NAMI Connection Support Group

**2nd & 4th
Wednesdays of
the month. 3-
4:30pm**



**Roberta Cerri Teglia
Center
601 Grand Ave., 3rd Floor
South San Francisco,
CA94080**

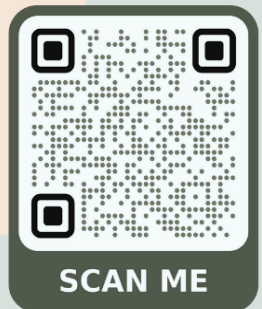
A peer-led support group
for adults (18+) who
experience mental health
challenges.

A confidential safe space for
individual and group sharing,
learning from other's
experiences and building
community.

*We aim for
better coping
skills.*

*We forgive
ourselves
and reject
guilt.*

*We will
never give
up hope.*



**Scan the QR Code, call us, or drop by to
join!**





nami Connection **55+**

National Alliance on Mental Illness **RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP**

A peer-led support group designed for adults 55 and older who are navigating mental health challenges. This group provides a safe and confidential space to share personal experiences, engage in meaningful discussions, learn from others, and foster a sense of community and support.



Join us **in person** on the **1st & 3rd Monday**
of the month from 4-:5:30pm at our
North County Satellite Program Center.
Scan this QR code, call us, or drop by to
join!



SCAN ME

 650-638-0800

 lbyas@namisanmateo.org

 Roberta Cerri Teglia Center
601 Grand Ave., 3rd Floor
South San Francisco, CA
94080



nami
National Alliance on Mental Illness

San Mateo County

For Participant's rights questions, contact 1-866-680-2906. For general information regarding questions, concerns, or complaints about research related injury or the rights of research participants, please call 650-723-5244 or toll free 1-866-680-2906 or write to the Administrative Panel on Human Subjects in Medical Research, Administrative Panels Office, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-5401.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY IS CONDUCTING A STUDY ON VIRTUAL TREATMENTS FOR ANOREXIA NERVOSA IN ADOLESCENTS.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Adolescents living with their families between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age with DSM-5 AN
- Adolescent lives with at least one family member
- Parents are able to read and speak fluent English
- Access to a computer with a reliable internet connection
- Adolescent is medically stable for remote, outpatient treatment

THE STUDY WILL CONSIST OF...

Randomization to either:

- Virtual family-based treatment (FBT-V)
- Online guided self-help family-based treatment (GSH-FBT)

In addition to treatment, participants will complete assessments and questionnaires throughout the course of the study



Stanford
MEDICINE

Eating Disorders Research Program
In the Department of Psychiatry

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, OR ARE INTERESTED IN SIGNING UP FOR THE STUDY, PLEASE EMAIL HAZAL GURCAN AT FAMILYTREATMENT@STANFORD.EDU. ALTERNATIVELY, CALL (650) 723- 9182.



QR CODE LINKS TO EMAIL



Hazal Gurcan
(familytreatment@stanford.edu)



(650) 723 - 9182



<https://med.stanford.edu/edresearch.html>

Dominican University Thesis Research

Participants Wanted

Seeking adult siblings of people with schizophrenia

ART
THERAPY
STUDY

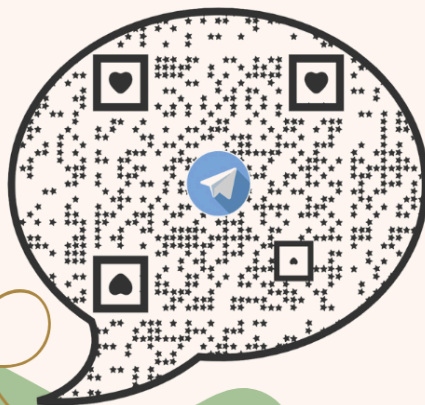
I am looking for siblings of people with schizophrenia who are interested in learning more about schizophrenia and participating in art therapy relating to their relationship with their sibling. The proposed study will be held in three parts. An initial virtual interview, to meet with the researcher, talk about informed consent, and answer some questions about your sibling and family. The second part will be in the form of a seminar, taking up one full day (about 8 hours) of participants time and will be split up into a psychoeducational workshop and art process group.

Art materials will be provided, in addition to a light lunch and refreshments. Any art made during the study will be the property of the artist, and I will take digital photographs for documentation of the artwork.

If you think you would like to participate or just want more information, email Anna-Marie at:

Anna-Marie.Vargas@Students.Dominican.Edu

SCAN TO
EMAIL



Research Opportunities

To increase awareness of ongoing mental health research, NAMI National creates “Research Opportunity Announcements” to ensure our grassroots leaders are aware of both clinical trials and social sciences research relevant to the mental health community. Promoted research may be conducted by government, academic or private industry partners, or any other entity that has secured IRB approval/exemption for their study. Researchers who have secured IRB approval/exemption for their studies may submit an application requesting a partnership with NAMI.

As we take our role in sharing this information very seriously, all studies selected for promotion have been thoroughly reviewed to ensure the safety of those involved. If you have any questions about Research Opportunity Announcements or a study that has been shared by NAMI, please contact us at research@nami.org.

For more information or to enroll in studies and trials below go to:
www.nami.org/NAMInet/Education/Research-Opportunities

Current Studies & Trials (more online)

Survey Study: Individual and Caregiver Experiences with Schizophrenia

This study is an online survey of individuals with schizophrenia and caregivers of individuals with schizophrenia to better understand experiences and needs related to care and daily life. The survey will take 20-25 minutes to complete.

Participants will have the option to provide their name and email address to **receive a \$30 Amazon gift card** for completing the survey. All responses will be analyzed anonymously. The goal of this study is to develop educational resources and other information for individuals affected by schizophrenia. .

Clinical Trial: Juniper Study

The Juniper study is a clinical trial to test the safety, efficacy and tolerability of centanafadine to treat major depressive disorder (MDD) in adults who have not responded to other treatment options. The study is currently seeking participants across the United States. For more information, please see the NAMI Research Opportunity Announcement and study poster.

“No matter how plain a woman may be, if truth and honesty are written across her face, she will be beautiful..” - Eleanor Roosevelt

ClinicalTrials.gov is a place to learn about clinical studies from around the world.

Free Teen Psychiatric Services Available

Allcove-San Mateo, a welcoming drop-in center for teens, now offers free psychiatric services! This safe space provides youth with mental health support in a relaxed setting, and now offers the exciting new addition of Dr. Baker, a new psychiatrist at the center.

Dr. Baker will be available every Tuesday from 1:00 PM to 6:30 PM to provide support at no cost. For teens under 18, parental involvement is required for medication-related treatment plans.

Explore allcove and learn more about their services:
Allcove, 2600 South El Camino Drive, Suite 300 San Mateo, CA 94403
<https://allcove.org/centers/san-mateo>

Visit www.namica.org to get the latest update on legislative activity pertaining to Mental Illness.

CalAble - a savings and investment plan offered by the state of California to individuals with disabilities.
calable.ca.gov

About Us

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. What started in 1974 in San Mateo County as a response to a newspaper ad placed by Eve Oliphant to meet at her home and share concerns regarding mentally ill family members, has blossomed into the nation's leading non-profit 501(c)(3) voice on mental health. The outcome of the 1974 meetings was the formation of PAS (Parents of Adult Schizophrenics) founded by three key people: Tony and Fran Hoffman and Eve Oliphant. The organization was subsequently renamed the Alliance for the Mentally Ill of San Mateo County, until it's reformation in 1979 as the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Today, The National Alliance on Mental Illness of San Mateo County or NAMI SMC is part of an alliance of more than 650 local Affiliates and State Organizations who work in your community to raise awareness and provide support, education and advocacy that was not previously available to those in need. We do not offer any treatment or therapy - instead we provide peer support from individuals and family members of those who suffer from a diagnosed mental illness and learn how to live a better life in recovery.

