



# San Mateo County

Dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with mental illness and their families through support, education and advocacy.

## September is Suicide Prevention Month

Each September, NAMI recognizes Suicide Prevention Month as a time to raise awareness, spread hope, and spark meaningful action around one of the most urgent mental health issues of our time.

Our goal is to ensure that individuals, friends, and families have access to the tools, resources, and support they need to talk openly about suicide prevention, recognize warning signs, and seek help.

[nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-month](https://nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-month)



*"In the landscape of human suffering, empathy plants seeds of connection where hopelessness once grew."*

NAMI San Mateo County

## SPEAKER SERIES

### September Suicide Prevention Month Speaker Series

Building Hope Together:  
Community Conversations on  
Suicide Prevention & Mental  
Health with Walter Ng

Tuesday, September 16th  
6:30 - 8:00pm  
Hybrid

See pg 7



## Upcoming EVENTS

- Sept 1-31 → Suicide Prevention Month
- Sept 16 → Speaker Series Presentation
- Sept 22 → Mental Health 101
- Sept 27 → Uplift Teen Group class begins
- Oct 4 → NAMIWalks 2025
- Oct 10-12 → Family-to-Family Training
- Oct 16-17 → NAMI CA Annual Conference
- Oct 23-24 → BHRS ASIST Training



Subscribe to our Tuesday Newsday email by scanning the QR code.

You'll get weekly updates on everything happening at NAMI SMC.



## Walk with Us

*Because No One Should Walk Alone*

Every year, I am moved beyond words when I stand among hundreds of people who gather for our annual NAMIWalks event. Some walk to honor a loved one. Others come in celebration of their own journey. Many join because they care deeply and want to be part of a movement that is changing lives.

What brings us together is mental illness—but what keeps us walking is hope.

I invite you to be part of this powerful experience by signing up as a Team Captain or joining a team for NAMIWalks San Mateo County on Saturday, October 4, at Seal Point Park in San Mateo. Whether you're walking for a family member, a friend, or yourself, you'll be surrounded by people who understand, people who have felt the heartbreak, found their strength, and are choosing connection over silence.

This is more than just a walk. It's a day of community, where we laugh, cry, share stories, and stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight to end stigma.

Your steps, and your fundraising, support free, programs and support groups that have been shown to really work right here in San Mateo County. These services change lives, and your participation makes them possible. Please join us. Form a team. Invite your friends and family. Together, we can show our community that mental health matters, and that no one is alone.

Sign up today at [namiwalks.org/sanmateo](https://namiwalks.org/sanmateo). We'll be stronger with you there.

With gratitude, Laura Parmer-Lohan, Executive Director, NAMI SMC



*P.S. Be sure to sign your pet up for our first-ever Pet Power for Mental Health contest! Please see page 2 for the details.*

## NAMI SMARTS for Advocacy Training - 15 New Graduates!

Advocacy starts with your story, and our most recent NAMI SMARTS for Advocacy training gave 15 passionate individuals the tools to share theirs with purpose and clarity. Led by the incredible Anita Fisher, this hybrid-format workshop offered practical guidance on how to speak with legislators, write impactful emails, and communicate the importance of mental health through personal experience.

Many of our own NAMI San Mateo County staff and program leaders participated in this training, eager to strengthen their advocacy skills and elevate



(continued on pg 2)

the voices of the communities we serve.

One of the most valuable tools participants walked away with was the 90-second “elevator pitch,” a concise and powerful way to share your story and make a clear ask. Whether in a meeting or during public comment, this skill helps make advocacy more impactful and moving.

We’re so proud of our graduates and grateful to Anita for leading such an engaging and empowering session. With every story shared, we bring more awareness, urgency, and heart to the mental health movement.

Stay tuned for future SMARTS workshops—we’d love to have you join us. For more information, contact Rocio C. Panameno at [rocio@namisanmateo.org](mailto:rocio@namisanmateo.org).



## Pet Power is On!

Join Our New Mental Health-Inspired NAMIWalks Contest. We are excited to officially announce our first ever Pet Power for Mental Health NAMIWalks Contest!

At NAMIWalks SMC, we know that pets do more than keep us company, they help us cope, comfort us through difficult days, and remind us to keep going. Whether they have fur, feathers, scales, or tiny paws, pets play a powerful role in our mental health journey.

Pet Power for Mental Health is designed to bring awareness to the extra friends that often play a big, behind-the-scenes role in our mental health, happiness and wellbeing.

All pets are welcome - from dogs and cats to reptiles, rabbits, stuffed animals and everything in between. If your pet has helped you through tough times, brought joy to your life or simply been there when you needed them, this contest is for you!



Entering your pet is simple and free. For all the details you need to get started go to [namisanmateo.org/pet-power-for-mental-health](https://namisanmateo.org/pet-power-for-mental-health) or scan the QR code. Have more questions? Please contact [ymorales@namisanmateo.org](mailto:ymorales@namisanmateo.org).

***“Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.” - Buddha***

## NAMIWalks Funding Approved

At the August 25, 2025, meeting of the San Carlos City Council, Paula Ebejer-Moffit, a member of the NAMI San Mateo County NAMIWalks Sponsorship Committee, presented a request for funding in support of our upcoming event. The Council, led by Mayor McDowell, approved the resolution.



Paula Ebejer-Moffit

## New NAMI SMC Summer Interns

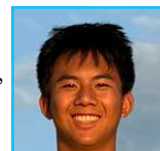
By Olivia Heffernan

I am excited to introduce our 4 new high school summer interns that will be joining us for walk season.

These 4 interns are a part of a youth internship program put on by the Child Mind Institute called Youth Mental Health Academy (YMHA). They are dedicating their summer and part of the school year to help us put on a successful NAMIWalks event. They have already been immensely helpful and we are very excited to have them on our team!

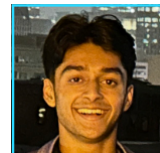
Below is a little bio from each of them so you can get to know them more.

My name is Andre Lee. I’m a senior attending Gunn High School in Palo Alto. I wanted to help with NAMIWalks, because I’ve had previous experience organizing mental health events. I also want to continue advocating for mental health and reducing the stigma surrounding it. So far I’ve helped with Team Captains and Facebook (fundraising, groups). I look forward to working with all of you!



Andre Lee

My name is Ativ Mathur. I’m a senior at Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco. I’m passionate about psychology and mental health, and I recently completed a research project on how hope shapes motivation and performance in athletes. I’ve also co-led my school’s Philosophy and Well-being Club, where we explore topics like happiness, resilience, and identity. Outside of school, I’ve volunteered with youth tutoring programs and participated in internships focused on healthcare and biotech.



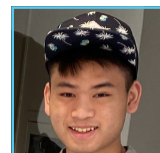
Ativ Mathur

My name is Baani Gupta. I’m a junior at Dublin High School. I chose to intern with NAMI because I value the strong sense of community they foster and I’ve seen the positive impact of the NAMI club at my school in helping teens manage stress through meaningful activities. This summer, I am supporting NAMI San Mateo by encouraging community members to volunteer for the NAMIWalks event through creating sign-up pages and promoting upcoming events. I also love sharing stories from NAMI members about various mental health disorders in our Tuesday Newsday newsletter to help educate and raise awareness in the community!



Baani Gupta

My name is Deron Lew. I’m a current senior of Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory in San Francisco. I chose NAMI San Mateo as my internship choice, so I can have a direct impact in raising awareness and funds for mental health programs and services for the community. In my internship so far, I have been researching to try and find potential sponsors and religious centers in San Mateo County to help expand the amount of sponsors. I look forward to representing NAMI San Mateo and making NAMIWalks 2025 a successful one.



Deron Lew

## Ending the Silence (ETS) - Ending the School Year on a High Note

By Stacey Holmes

Another successful school year has wrapped up. We are excited by how many schools, staff, parents, and students we reached.

- Over 4,000 students, parents, staff reached
- 52 presentations completed
- 15 schools visited (7 new ones)
- 2 community-based organizations

For the upcoming school year, we already have six organizations on the calendar. Two of them are schools, one of which plan to present to all 1,100 students.

ETS is a free impactful mental health presentation designed for middle and high school students, staff, and parents, helping them to normalize mental health through awareness, education, and tools.

If you are interested in ETS, we'd love to connect and get it scheduled. Thinking about the next school year? If you're a school administrator, teacher, or parent interested in bringing ETS to your middle or high school, please let us know.

### Benefits of the program include:

- Ease of implementation (the presentation is already developed)
- Student education
- Relatability (a young adult shares their mental health journey)
- Credibility (created by a nationally recognized non-profit)
- No cost to you

### ETS accomplishments as of August 2025:

- 17 presentations scheduled
- Over 2,500 students, staff, families
- 9 of the presentations are to new schools and organizations

And this is just the beginning!

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



On August 28<sup>th</sup>  
Rocio Panameño  
presented Ending  
the Silence  
to LifeMoves  
clients  
(in Spanish)



"After hearing your presentation, I realize that my daughter is displaying some of the signs you mentioned. I think she may be experiencing depression and I would like to get her help." – shared one participant

## Summer Adventures with The Connections Collective

By Olivia Heffernan

This summer has been full of connection, adventure, and great memories for The Connections Collective! Our 20s meetup group kicked off the summer season with a scenic hike, where we enjoyed fresh air, stunning views, and plenty of time to chat along the trail. It was the perfect mix of movement and conversation, and we loved seeing both new and familiar faces join in.

More recently, we switched gears from the outdoors to a fun evening in the city for "NightLife at the California Academy of Sciences". Between the glowing aquarium tanks, fascinating exhibits, and lively music, the night was packed with both learning and fun.

These events are exactly what The Connections Collective is all about, bringing people in their 20s together to make genuine friendships while discovering cool places and experiences in the Bay Area. We've had such a great turnout and energy at our meetups, and it's exciting to see our community growing.

We can't wait to keep the momentum going with more events ahead. If you've been thinking about joining, now's the perfect time! Please scan the QR code →



*"All knowledge is experience, everything else is just information." - Albert Einstein*

## UPLIFT TEEN GROUP



feeling overwhelmed?

got stress?

got burnout?

feeling tired?

**6-WEEK SUPPORT GROUP TO LEARN  
COPING SKILLS AND HOW TO UPLIFT YOUR  
WELLBEING**

**When: Saturday, September 27th  
11am-12pm**

**Frequency: Every Saturday**

**Grades: 9th-12th**

**Who: Open to ALL California residents**

**Where: Virtual on Zoom**



## Celebrating Our Newest Family-to-Family Graduates!

This spring, we were proud to host another successful session of NAMI's Family-to-Family class from April 30 to June 25, 2025. Held in person at the NAMI San Mateo County office, with one online session in Week 7, the course was led by our dedicated teaching team: Ron Dugrenier, Ginny Traub, Jan Fisher, and Ruan Frenette.

Nineteen participants completed the nine-week class, gaining tools, insight, and community along the way. Family-to-Family continues to be a life-changing experience for those supporting loved ones living with mental health conditions. We're so proud of our graduates and deeply grateful to our incredible volunteers who make this work possible.

Want to sign up for a Family-to-Family class just scan the QR code, or email our Education & Volunteer Director, Rocío C. Panameño, at [rocio@namisanmateo.org](mailto:rocio@namisanmateo.org).



## Family-to-Family Class Reunion Brings Alumni Together

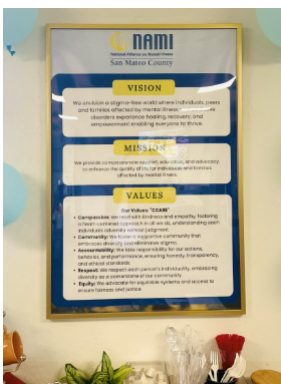
On July 16, we hosted our first Family-to-Family Reunion in many years—and it was a meaningful and moving evening. Held in a hybrid format at the NAMI San Mateo County office, the event brought together more than 20 past participants, including graduates from our June 2025 class and families who completed the program nearly a decade ago.

The gathering offered space for heartfelt conversation and reflection. Participants shared personal updates, revisited the tools they continue to use, and spoke about how the class has impacted their lives. One attendee shared that, as a result of taking the Family-to-Family class, she now better understands her sister's behavior and diagnosis. It was a powerful reminder of how education and connection can shift family dynamics and bring healing.

Thank you to Ron Dugrenier, Ruan Frenette, and Jan Fisher for facilitating the reunion and for their years of dedication to leading Family-to-Family. Like most of our programs today, the reunion was offered in a hybrid format to ensure broader access and participation.

We are grateful to continue offering meaningful opportunities for families to reconnect, meet new people, and carry on the tradition of support and education that Family

to Family represents. Having graduates from multiple class years in the room made the evening even more special. It was a chance to reflect, connect across generations of the program, and strengthen the community we have built together.



## Coloring & Coffee – A Creative Monthly Meet-Up for Peer-to-Peer Graduates

We're excited to invite our Peer-to-Peer graduates to a new space designed just for you. Coloring & Coffee is a relaxed, in-person group where you can reconnect with fellow graduates, reflect on your mental health journey, and recharge through creativity.



**We meet on the first Monday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the NAMI San Mateo County office.** Coffee and art supplies are provided—just come as you are.

Whether you're an experienced artist or just want a calming space to color and connect, this group offers a supportive environment to unwind and build community. It's a natural extension of the Peer-to-Peer experience and a meaningful way to stay engaged.

Thank you to Polina and Kira for generously volunteering their time and energy to lead this space.

If you're a Peer-to-Peer graduate and would like to join, please reach out to Rocío C. Panameño at [rocio@namisanmateo.org](mailto:rocio@namisanmateo.org) for more information. We'd love to see you there!



The **gut-brain axis** is a bidirectional communication network that connects your digestive system and central nervous system, allowing your gut microbiota to influence brain function through neural, immune, hormonal, and metabolic pathways. Enabling your gut bacteria to directly affect your mood, cognition, and mental health.



## MENTAL HEALTH 101



### Join Us for Mental Health 101

In recognition of **Suicide Prevention Month**, NAMI San Mateo County is partnering with San Mateo County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS) to present Mental Health 101 at CoastPride

This free program is open to all and offers an overview of common mental health conditions, warning signs, and resources available in San Mateo County. Learn how to support yourself or others and help reduce stigma.

**Date:** Monday, September 22nd

**Time:** 5-6pm

**Location:** CoastPride 711 Main St, Half Moon Bay

**Questions?** Contact [lparkerlohan@namisanmateo.org](mailto:lparkerlohan@namisanmateo.org)

## Building Cultural Connection, Reducing Stigma: Compartiendo Esperanza

By Rocio C Panameño

Over the past few months, NAMI San Mateo County has had the privilege of launching and expanding Compartiendo Esperanza, a new NAMI program made possible through a grant from NAMI National. This three-part mental health conversation series is designed specifically for the Hispanic/Latinx community and focuses on reducing stigma, increasing awareness, and fostering healing through culturally responsive dialogue.



*Coastside Hope Compartiendo Esperanza Graduation*

Thanks to this opportunity, we hosted six series across San Mateo County, in trusted spaces like Centro de Libertad, Coastside Hope, the Barbara A. Mouton Multicultural Wellness Center, our NAMI SMC office, and in collaboration with both our Spanish-language Family Support Group and a virtual support group.

Each series created a warm and welcoming space where participants could reflect, connect, and ask questions—many for the first time. Sessions featured activities like guided meditation and art, as well as engaging talks from Dr. Nancy Rodríguez, a licensed psychologist whose presence and insight helped build trust and encourage dialogue.

“I’ve been to many groups before, but this is the first time I felt like I could really talk openly,” one participant shared.

“As soon as I saw the flyer, I knew I had to be here,” said another.

The impact has gone beyond the conversations themselves. Several participants were so inspired that they’ve signed up to become facilitators—ensuring these healing spaces continue to grow in our community.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this possible. Compartiendo Esperanza is a beautiful reminder that when we lead with culture, care, and connection, we help open doors for healing and hope.

## Compartiendo Esperanza: Espacios de Sanación para Nuestra Comunidad

Por Rocio C Panameño

En NAMI San Mateo County, lanzamos con mucha ilusión Compartiendo Esperanza, un nuevo programa creado por NAMI Nacional para nuestra comunidad latina. Gracias a este esfuerzo, ofrecimos seis series de conversaciones en todo el condado, incluyendo en espacios comunitarios como Centro de Libertad, Coastside Hope, el Centro Multicultural Barbara A. Mouton, nuestra oficina de NAMI y con dos grupos de apoyo: uno virtual y otro en persona en colaboración con la Oficina de Asuntos de Familias y Consumidores de BHRS.

Cada serie consistió en tres conversaciones diseñadas para hablar con honestidad sobre la salud mental, compartir

experiencias, y brindar herramientas útiles. Contamos con la participación especial de la Dra. Nancy Rodríguez, psicóloga con licencia, quien ayudó a crear un ambiente de confianza, apoyo y reflexión. También realizamos actividades como meditación, arte y ejercicios de autocuidado.

Lo más hermoso fue ver cómo los participantes se abrieron poco a poco. Una persona comentó: “He asistido a muchos grupos y entrenamientos, pero este ha sido mi favorito.” Otra pidió un abrazo al final del taller, diciendo que solo da abrazos cuando realmente se siente feliz.



Muchos se sintieron tan conectados con el programa que decidieron capacitarse como futuros facilitadores de Compartiendo Esperanza. Ver ese compromiso fue muy inspirador.

Gracias a todos quienes participaron y apoyaron este trabajo. Crear espacios seguros y culturalmente sensibles puede hacer toda la diferencia en la vida de alguien, y estamos comprometidos a seguir caminando junto a nuestra comunidad.

## ¡Nueva clase de Familia a Familia en español comenzó el 6 de agosto!

Con gran entusiasmo dimos inicio el 6 de agosto a una nueva clase presencial de Familia a Familia en español, en colaboración con JobTrain en Menlo Park. Esta clase, que se extiende por nueve semanas consecutivas, ofrece a familiares y personas que apoyan a un ser querido con una condición de salud mental un espacio seguro para aprender, compartir y fortalecerse.



El curso es completamente gratuito y está diseñado para brindar información práctica, herramientas útiles y apoyo emocional. Las sesiones se llevan a cabo todos los miércoles de 5:30 a 8:00 p.m. y están siendo facilitadas por nuestras dedicadas maestras voluntarias: Claudia Sagesse, Yrene Orue y Cynthia Castro, quienes han sido capacitadas por NAMI y están comprometidas a acompañar a las familias con calidez, empatía y respeto.

Agradecemos profundamente a cada participante por dar este importante paso. Sabemos que el camino de acompañar a un ser querido no es fácil, pero creemos en el poder de la información, la comunidad y el apoyo mutuo para transformar vidas.

Si estás interesado/a en futuras clases o deseas más información sobre nuestros programas en español, no dudes en escribirnos a [rocio@namisanmateo.org](mailto:rocio@namisanmateo.org).

*“No hay tesoros mayores que las más altas cualidades humanas, como la compasión, el coraje y la esperanza. Ni siquiera un accidente o desastre trágico puede destruir estos tesoros del corazón.”*

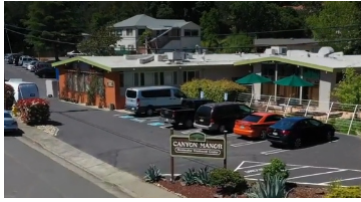
- Daisaku Ikeda

## Sharing Lived Experience: NAMI SMC Staff Present at Canyon Manor

By Latona Byas

At the beginning of the summer, NAMI San Mateo County staff were given a meaningful opportunity to share their lived experiences by presenting the In Our Own Voice (IOOV)

presentation at Canyon Manor Mental Rehabilitation Center in Novato, CA.



This presentation was made possible through a partnership and grant from NAMI California, which supports community-based storytelling efforts designed to reduce stigma and foster healing through lived experience.

This initiative was part of our ongoing efforts to increase visibility, promote mental health awareness, and create spaces for hope and connection through the power of personal storytelling. By engaging directly with residents and staff in a long-term care setting, our team was able to spark important conversations around recovery, resilience, and understanding.

In Our Own Voice (IOOV) is a signature NAMI presentation led by individuals living with mental health conditions. Presenters guide the audience through their journeys using a thoughtful and empowering model:

**What Happened** – An honest look into the onset of their mental health condition and early challenges.

**What Helped** – A reflection on the people, resources, and practices that supported their healing and recovery.

**What's Next** – A message of hope that focuses on future goals, continued wellness, and breaking down stigma.

This presentation is designed to humanize mental health conditions and educate audiences on the lived reality of navigating them. Each session includes space for Q&A, encouraging open, respectful dialogue that deepens understanding and compassion.

For many of our staff, this was their first time presenting IOOV. It was both a brave and healing experience—standing in front of others to share deeply personal stories required courage, vulnerability, and a strong belief in the impact of peer-led advocacy. The team at Canyon Manor was welcoming, attentive, and engaged, creating a space where meaningful conversations and connections could flourish.

We're deeply grateful to NAMI California for supporting this opportunity and to Canyon Manor for opening their doors to this powerful experience. As we continue to live through and manage our own mental health journeys, we are reminded of the importance of being seen, heard, and understood.

Storytelling through IOOV helps break the silence and stigma surrounding mental illness while inspiring others to seek support, find community, and believe in the possibility of recovery. We are incredibly proud of our staff for representing NAMI San Mateo County with heart, strength, and authenticity—and for reminding us that lived experience is one of the most powerful tools in the mental health movement.

Visit [www.namica.org](http://www.namica.org) to get the latest update on legislative activity pertaining to Mental Illness.

## Community Connection: Expanding Access at East Palo Alto Library

By Latona Byas

This summer, NAMI San Mateo County had the privilege of conducting outreach and tabling at the East Palo Alto Library, where we shared essential mental health information, resources, and support opportunities with residents and staff. The event presented a significant opportunity to enhance our presence in a community that has historically faced disparities in access to mental health services.



*Jo, Latona and Angela*

East Palo Alto is home to a richly diverse population, and we recognize that systemic barriers have too often left individuals and families without the tools or support they need to navigate mental health challenges. Outreach efforts like this are a critical part of NAMI SMC's mission to ensure equity, inclusion, and access for all, especially for those who are often underrepresented in the mental health system.

During the tabling event, our team engaged with community members in both English and Spanish, providing information on NAMI San Mateo County's Signature Programs, including:

**Family-to-Family** – A free, evidence-based education program for family members, partners, and friends of individuals living with mental health conditions.

**Peer-to-Peer** – A peer-led course for adults living with a mental health condition, offering tools for recovery and wellness.

**Ending the Silence** – A youth-focused presentation that increases mental health awareness and reduces stigma in schools.

We also introduced our Connection Support Groups, peer-led support groups for individuals living with mental health conditions. These groups offer a compassionate space for participants to share their experiences, gain encouragement, and find strength in community.

Visitors to our table expressed appreciation for the resources, with many noting they had not been aware such support existed in their area. These moments of connection reinforce why community outreach is so vital: it brings information directly to where people are, in trusted, accessible spaces.

We are grateful to the East Palo Alto Library for opening its doors and creating a welcoming environment for outreach and education. The event served as a poignant reminder that proper mental health advocacy begins with listening, showing up, and being present for all members of our community.

As we look ahead, NAMI San Mateo County remains committed to continuing our outreach efforts in East Palo Alto and other underserved areas, because mental health support should never be out of reach. Questions? Please contact Latona Byas at [lbyas@namisanmateo.org](mailto:lbyas@namisanmateo.org)

**Please join NAMI San Mateo County at the East Palo Alto Library on the 1st Thursday of each month from 11:00am-12:00pm, now through December 2025.**

## The System is Broken - A Message for Caregivers

By Annie DiTiberio

Too often we hear people blame the lack of care for our loved ones on the fact that “the system is broken.” Let me break this down for what I believe this means in practical terms for those who care for someone with mental health issues.

Every chance the system has to break down, it will. You finally manage to get your loved one placed on a 5150 hold only to have them released from the ER, or you finally convince your loved one to call for a referral only to have the intake appointment scheduled two weeks out, losing the momentum you worked so hard to build.

As a result, the only way to navigate this broken system is if the caregivers are willing and able to fill the cracks that their loved ones might otherwise slip through. The ask is great: it means refusing to be sidelined in 5150 evaluations; it means calling the hospital social worker immediately upon admission to inform them of the need for residential treatment and refusal of immediate discharge; it means calling the intake person back on the phone and insisting on a sooner ability to engage, even if it isn't with a clinician, so that the momentum towards treatment and change isn't lost.

If this kind of instantaneous follow up and hand holding is done, there is a chance that the system will work as it was intended. There still is no guarantee. But without these inputs, the system is likely to fail, again and again.

Annie DiTiberio, LCSW is a social worker in private practice in Los Altos who helps families navigate the system. You can find her sharing tips & resources for families on Instagram at [@youneedasocialworker](https://www.instagram.com/youneedasocialworker) or [anneditiberio.com](https://www.anneditiberio.com).



*"Our relationships with one another are not a casual part of our lives; they are fundamental to how our minds function and are an essential aspect of brain health. Our social connections with one another shape our neural connections that form the structure of the brain." - Daniel J. Siegel MD : from the book "Buddha's Brain"*

**NAMI**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Virtual Town Hall**

**Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges**

Part 2 - Breaking the Silence: Suicide Awareness in Black/African Ancestry Communities

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

3-4 p.m. ET

**CHEA**  
COMMUNITY HEALTH EQUITY ALLIANCE

**Date:** Tuesday, Sept 23, 2025

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET

**Time:** 12:00-1:00pm PST

**Location:** on Zoom

Scan the QR code to register.



## Building Hope Together: Community Conversations on Suicide Prevention & Mental Health

Join us for our special edition Suicide Prevention Month September Speaker Series

as we are joined by Walter Ng from Felton Institute's San Mateo Suicide Prevention Program! Walter will lead us in a conversation designed to equip community members with essential knowledge and tools for mental health support and suicide prevention.

At this talk, Walter Ng will cover:

- Understanding the impact of common mental health challenges.
- Recognizing the warning signs of distress.
- Fostering a safe and inclusive environment.
- How to encourage open discussions with those you care about.
- Q&A session at the end to enable conversations around this important topic.

### Details:

Date: Tuesday, September 16th

Time: 6:30pm-8:00pm

Location: Hybrid

Virtual: Zoom

In Person: NAMI SMC San Mateo Office

1730 South Amphlett Blvd., Ste. 308, San Mateo,

### Agenda:

6:30pm-6:50pm: Light Snacks & Mingling

6:50pm-7:50pm: Presentation with Walter Ng

7:50pm-8:00pm: Closing and Q&A

For questions, please contact [olivia@namisanmateo.org](mailto:olivia@namisanmateo.org).

To RSVP go to:

[namisanmateo.org/event/september-speaker-series](https://namisanmateo.org/event/september-speaker-series)

or click the QR code.



## Speaker Series Presentation from July 22, 2025

### Navigating a Crisis – Understanding Levels of Care and Treatment Options with Annie DiTiberio

In our hybrid July Speaker Series, we were joined by Annie DiTiberio for an impactful and educational session on how to support your loved one through a crisis and understand the different levels of care. Annie walked us through the various treatment levels, sharing the benefits and draw backs from each. She also helped us see them from the perspectives of insurance, accessibility, and priority.

Attendees left with a clearer sense of how to navigate the healthcare system and what steps they can take to advocate for their loved one.

To listen to the meeting recording go to:

[namisanmateo.org/news-events/speaker-series](https://namisanmateo.org/news-events/speaker-series) or scan the QR code.

From there you can also access the recordings from our past Speaker Series Presentations with important information and links.





# FAMILY-TO- FAMILY VIRTUAL TEACHER TRAINING

## Help Families Find Hope

Are you a family member or caregiver supporting a loved one with a mental health condition? Join us for a Family-to-Family Leader Training and learn how to bring this life-changing program to others in your community.

This training will prepare you to co-teach the NAMI Family-to-Family class, an evidence-based 9-session course that provides education, skills, and support to families navigating mental health challenges.

**SCAN THE QR CODE OR EMAIL  
ROCIO@NAMISANMATEO.ORG FOR  
MORE INFORMATION!**

## DATES/TIMES

10/10- 5 PM to 9 PM  
10/11- 9 AM to 5 PM  
10/12- 9 AM to 5 PM

## What you'll gain:

- Tools and confidence to lead classes
- Connection with other dedicated family leaders
- The opportunity to make a lasting impact for families in need
- Open to volunteers who have personal experience as a family member or caregiver.



*Space is limited  
to 10 participants.  
Register today!*



## **Crazy or Something Else Entirely: A (Mostly) Secret Journey with Bipolar Disorder** By Jillian Dumond

This 2023 memoir chronicles experiences that a young woman encountered with her bipolar diagnosis without being clinical or too dark. She includes extensive comments by her family and friends. Whether living with a mental illness, being a caregiver for someone else, or just generally interested in psychology, this book has a compelling story. 332 pages



### **Explore Our NAMI SMC Resource Center**



Stop by and find information on mental health conditions, local resources, and books to read or borrow in our welcoming space.

Help us grow our library, donate from your library or our Reach & Teach Registry. Click the link or scan the QR code.

[shop.reachandteach.com/wishlist/huwrislerejod](https://shop.reachandteach.com/wishlist/huwrislerejod)



## **See how our NAMI community celebrates summer!**

We asked our NAMI community to share their favorite summer self-care activity — and we got some great videos! Check them out below. Maybe you'll even get a new idea to include in your summer self-care routine!

[supportnami.org/video-album-2025](https://supportnami.org/video-album-2025)

## **— Programs Offered by NAMI SMC —**

### **For Families**

#### **Family-to-Family**

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a free, 8-week course for family caregivers of individuals with severe mental illnesses.

#### **NAMI Basics**

The NAMI Basics Program is a free, 6-week course designed for parents and other family caregivers of children and adolescents (prior to age 17), with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

### **For Individuals**

#### **Peer-to-Peer**

NAMI SMC offers Peer to Peer classes 3 – 4 times a year. Peer to Peer is a free 10-week course for individuals with any serious mental illness who are interested in establishing and maintaining their wellness and recovery. Those wishing to participate will be matched with an individual with a mental health diagnosis who has been trained to be a peer-to-peer teacher/mentor.

#### **In Our Own Voice**

NAMI SMC also offers In Our Own Voice Presentations. In Our Own Voice (IOOV) is a unique public education program developed by NAMI, in which two trained individual speakers share compelling personal stories about living with mental illness and achieving recovery.

### **For Professionals**

#### **Crisis Intervention Training**

A mandatory program designed to help law enforcement deal with people with mental illness in our community. This is a collaborative effort with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and NAMI San Mateo County.

#### **Provider Education**

The NAMI Provider Education Program is a 5-week course that presents a penetrating, subjective view of family and consumer experiences with serious mental illness to line staff at public agencies who work directly with people experiencing severe and persistent mental illnesses.

### **For Teens and Young Adults**

#### **Uplift Teen Group**

NAMI SMC's teen support group is designed to provide youth a safe space to talk with peers about the challenges they are facing in their lives. The group equips teens with emotional and life skills to work through their struggles.

#### **Ending the Silence**

NAMI SMC offers Ending the Silence Presentations throughout San Mateo County. Helping middle and high schoolers understand mental illness makes a big difference. We can teach them about the warning signs for themselves and their friends. NAMI Ending the Silence helps raise awareness and change perceptions around mental health conditions.



# 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

**Gustavo Alfonso Morales Rivera**

## Thank you to our Volunteers, Collaborators, Associates and Friends

**Uplift Teen Group:** Alysia Orillaza, Kassandra Chavez, Mia Tolentino, Trinity Rushing, Yuuki Hosokawa

**Connection Group Facilitators:** Amy Garcia, Elaine Ryan

### **Family Support Group Facilitators:**

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

### **Family-to-Family Teachers:**

Claudia Saggese, Cynthia Castro, Ginny Traub, Jan Fisher, Ron Dugrenier, Ruan Frenette, Yrene Orue

### **General Volunteer & Office Support:**

Alexis Gruszczynski, Anya Gupta, Audriana Perez, Kira Liess, Martha Elderon, Pablo S. Torralba, Polina Freeman, Prishel Maharaj

**Compartiendo Esperanza:** Cynthia Castro, Maria Castellanos Corredor, Miriam Taracena Hernandez

**Connections:** Amy Garcia, Elaine Ryan, Vivian Nguyen

**NAMIWalks:** Abby Gorin, Alex Weiskopf, Andrea Sobel, Barbara Patterson, Becky Liu, Caitlyn Liang, Cynthia Wiggan, Deb Heffernan, Diane Russell, Elsie Cheang, Emily Ruiz, Faith Lee, Genevieve Fong, Ginny Traub, Laisha Mae, Paula Ebejer-Moffitt, Saumya Gupta, Whitney Murphy

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

**Ending the Silence (ETS):** Alina Aupatham, Angelina Xiao, Diane Russell, Ginny Traub, Lindsey Wade, Molly Wolfe, Peter Hwang, Stacey Holmes, Tiffany Liang

**Mental Health 101 Presenters:** Alice Li, Devin Dohrmann, Pablo S. Torralba

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



## **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](http://careasy.org/nonprofit/NAMI-San-Mateo-County)

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

## **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](http://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](http://smchealth.org/mh911) or visit the blog: [smcbhbsblog.org](http://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](http://www.namisanmateo.org)

## SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

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



North County  
Satellite Groups  
QR code



Like what we're doing?  
Please **spread the word**  
by writing a review!



"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."

Become a  
NAMI SMC  
Volunteer

Scan to see the  
Opportunities





**San Mateo County**



- Breaking News
- General Meetings
- Newsletters
- Upcoming Events

[www.namisanmateo.org/news-events](http://www.namisanmateo.org/news-events)

Like us on Facebook



[www.facebook.com/namismc](http://www.facebook.com/namismc)

and follow us on Twitter



[www.twitter.com/NAMISMC](http://www.twitter.com/NAMISMC)

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

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**NAMI SMC HelpLine: 650-638-0802**



Monday to Friday 9 am - 7 pm  
Saturday 9 am - 11 am

**nami Walks**  
San Mateo County  
Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025 - 9AM  
Seal Point Park, 1901 J Hart  
Clinton Dr., San Mateo, CA  
[namiwalks.org/sanmateo](http://namiwalks.org/sanmateo)

## Membership / Donation Form

You can also donate, renew or join NAMI SMC at:  
[namisanmateo.org/get-involved/how-to-donate](http://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 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ In 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](mailto:nami@namisanmateo.org)  
**www.namisanmateo.org**  
Office Hours: *currently by appt only.*

### Board of Directors:

**Lisa Fuchs** - President  
**Elyse Brummer** - Secretary  
**Ellie Byrd** - Treasurer  
**Kate Phillips** - Member-at-Large  
**Dr. Jennifer Harrison** - Member-at-Large  
**Yoko Ng** - Member-at-Large

### Advisory Council:

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**Dr. Cameron Quanbeck MD, Pat Way**

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**Olivia Heffernan** - Comms., Events & Youth Serv Mgr.  
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**John Butler** - Senior Peer Facilitator & Instr.  
**Calvin Shelton** - Senior Peer Facilitator & Instr.  
**Yvette Morales** - Youth Outreach Assoc.



## Revolutionary Nasal Ketamine Therapy Advances Mental Health Treatment in 2025

In March 2025, significant advancements in nasal ketamine therapy emerged as a breakthrough treatment for various mental health disorders, offering new hope for patients with treatment-resistant conditions. This innovative therapy has gained attention as an effective treatment for depression, anxiety, PTSD, and other mental health conditions, representing a major leap forward in psychiatric care.

The 2025 developments focus on refined delivery methods and enhanced safety protocols for ketamine administration. Unlike traditional intravenous ketamine treatments, the nasal formulation provides a more accessible and less invasive option for patients. Research indicates that ketamine possesses the unique capability to stimulate neuron development in the brain remarkably swiftly, often within an hour, making it particularly valuable for treating severe depression and suicidal ideation.

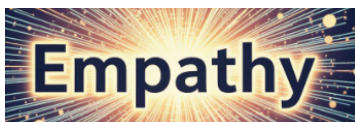
This advancement addresses critical gaps in mental healthcare by offering rapid-acting relief for patients who haven't responded to conventional antidepressants. The improved nasal delivery system enhances patient comfort while maintaining therapeutic effectiveness, potentially revolutionizing how mental health professionals approach treatment-resistant psychiatric conditions and providing faster intervention for crisis situations.

(s): Vekhova, E., et al. (2025). "Ketamine and Esketamine in Clinical Trials: FDA-Approved and Emerging Indications, Trial Trends With Putative Mechanistic Explanations." Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics. Wiley Online Library. [ascpt.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cpt.3478](https://ascpt.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cpt.3478)

## Gov Pritzker Signs Legislation Prohibiting AI Therapy in Illinois

Building on efforts to ensure quality healthcare accessibility for the people of Illinois, Governor JB Pritzker signed legislation on Friday that protects patients by limiting the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in therapy and psychotherapy services. The Wellness and Oversight for Psychological Resources Act prohibits anyone from using AI to provide mental health and therapeutic decision-making, while allowing the use of AI for administrative and supplementary support services for licensed behavioral health professionals. This will protect patients from unregulated and unqualified AI products, while also protecting the jobs of Illinois' thousands of qualified behavioral health providers. This will also protect vulnerable children amid the rising concerns over AI chatbot use in youth mental health services.

(s): [idfpr.illinois.gov/news/2025/gov-pritzker-signs-state-leg-prohibiting-ai-therapy-in-il.html](https://idfpr.illinois.gov/news/2025/gov-pritzker-signs-state-leg-prohibiting-ai-therapy-in-il.html)



## Stanford Develops AI "Virtual Scientist" Team to Accelerate Biological Research

Stanford Medicine researchers have built a "virtual lab", an AI-powered ensemble of virtual scientists that includes a principal investigator (AI PI), specialist agents (e.g., immunology, computational biology, machine learning), and a critic agent to challenge hypotheses.

These AI agents collaborate, holding rapid, multi-threaded meetings, generating ideas, critiquing one another, to solve research problems. Their first major test involved designing nanobody-based strategies against SARS-CoV-2 variants.

The AI's proposals were validated in the lab, demonstrating promising binding to the virus and stability. The virtual lab operates with minimal human intervention and could accelerate scientific discovery across biomedical domains.

(s): [med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2025/07/virtual-scientist.html](https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2025/07/virtual-scientist.html)



**Brain Fog** is a common but often misunderstood condition, and is characterized by difficulties with focus, memory, and mental clarity, frequently linked to mental health challenges like anxiety, depression, or chronic stress. Unlike typical forgetfulness, brain fog can feel like a persistent mental haze, making tasks like decision-making or concentration feel overwhelming. It's often triggered or worsened by factors like poor sleep, nutritional deficiencies, or emotional strain, and research suggests it may involve inflammation or disrupted neural communication in the brain. This information is for educational purposes only.



For more info go to: [namica.org](https://namica.org)



**Alice in Wonderland Syndrome** (aka: Todd's Syndrome) : A neurological condition that distorts perception, causing individuals to see objects, body parts, or spaces as dramatically smaller or larger than they actually are. People may feel their own hands are giant or perceive rooms as tiny dollhouses. These episodes typically last about 30 minutes and are often triggered by migraines, epilepsy, or brain trauma, creating a disorienting experience similar to the famous literary character's adventures.



## Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

### Learn the skills. Help save a life.

#### ABOUT THIS TRAINING

ASIST is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first-aid. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may be at risk of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. Although ASIST is widely used by healthcare providers, participants don't need any formal training to attend the workshop—ASIST can be learned and used by anyone. (\*14 CEs available, more information below)

#### Features:

- + Small group learning, including live instruction, audiovisuals and practice
- + Reliable, proven model
- + Direct talk about suicide

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

This training is open to all community members, age 16+, in San Mateo County. The following people/professionals often find ASIST useful:

- Counselors/Therapists
- Police and Firefighters
- School employees and volunteers
- Clergy/ Youth group leaders
- Security guards
- Anyone who lends an ear to their friends, family and neighbors.
- Healthcare workers
- Peer support workers

#### Fall/Winter Sessions:

*(Please register to only one session  
Must be able to attend both dates  
for registered session)*

**October 23-24, 2025**

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

College of San Mateo

**December 4-5, 2025**

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

College of San Mateo

#### REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Pre-registration is REQUIRED and is limited to the first 30 registered participants for each session.

To access the registration page, you can either scan the QR code or visit:



<https://tinyurl.com/ASISTFY25-26>



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
& RECOVERY SERVICES**



If you require accommodation for a disability, have any questions or concerns, or need instructions for addressing grievances, please contact the BHRS Workforce and Education Training Team  
[BHRs-WorkforceDev@smcgov.org](mailto:BHRs-WorkforceDev@smcgov.org)

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.

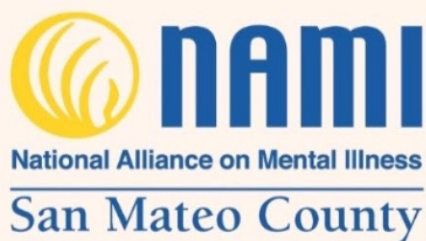


Check out  
our next  
event



**CONNECT, MEET FRIENDS, HAVE FUN!**

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



# COMPARTIENDO ESPERANZA

**TALLER PARA MUJERES**

## **¡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](mailto:rocio@namisanmateo.org) para más información.

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*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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:vbarrientos@namisanmateo.org)

# Support Parents and Caregivers as Children Return to Classrooms

## NAMI's Back-to-School Toolkit: Tips for Parents, Caregivers & Educators

NAMI's back-to-school resources are here to support parents and caregivers with tips, tools, and guidance to help children thrive during this season of change! Many of these resources are also available in Spanish, with even more coming this September.

Highlights include *A Week of Wellness* for building daily routines, *Bullying Warning Signs* for having tough conversations, and *Suicide Warning Signs* to recognize when a child may need urgent help. Caregivers can also explore *NAMI Basics OnDemand*, *The Three C's*, and planning tools for crisis and relapse.

Plus, don't miss NAMI National's new podcast featuring NAMI CEO Daniel H. Gillison, Jr. and Reading Is Fundamental CEO Alicia Levi, exploring how literacy and mental health go hand-in-hand.

### A Guide for Working Caregivers During the Back to School Transition

It's hard to manage changing schedules for a new school year. Offer caregivers this resource for tips on managing stress and more.

### 10 Questions on a Tuesday

The questions in this resource help caregivers talk about mental health with their children, learning how they de-stress, what hobbies they enjoy, and what makes them feel anxious.

### Bullying Warning Signs

It's important for caregivers to know the signs of bullying. This resource provides tips on how to talk with children about bullying.

### The Three C's for Parents and Guardians

The Three C's helps parents and caregivers talk about mental health and wellness and connect at home.

### A Week of Wellness

This resource contains activities to help parents connect with their child(ren) every day and build wellness time into a daily routine.

### Suicide Warning Signs

In 2024, over 10 percent of teens reported having serious thoughts of suicide. This resource helps parents spot the signs, have a conversation, and get help for their child.

### NAMI Basics

If you offer NAMI Basics in your community, share opportunities to register for upcoming classes or let caregivers know about NAMI Basics OnDemand, available online 24/7 for self-paced learning.

### Crisis and Relapse Plan

It's helpful for caregivers to have a plan before a crisis begins. Share this resource to help parents explore how to safely navigate a crisis or relapse.



[mailchi.mp/nami/for-parents-and-caregivers-8-back-to-school-resources](mailto:mailchi.mp/nami/for-parents-and-caregivers-8-back-to-school-resources)

# 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](https://namiwalks.org/sanmateo)





National Alliance on Mental Illness

San Mateo County

**PRESENTS**



## MENTAL HEALTH

### 101

SPEAKING OUR MINDS



#### PURPOSE AND MISSION

The goal of our Mental Health 101 presentation is to educate, provide resources, and end the stigma around mental health in all types of community spaces. This presentation is geared toward audiences who don't necessarily have a baseline understanding of mental health conditions, but are open to learning more about them and how to provide support for their communities.



#### ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH 101

This program is devoted to giving individuals an opportunity to learn more about mental illness through an informative presentation and personal testimonies that represent a variety of cultures, beliefs, and values. The goal of this program is to create a multi-generation of culturally diverse individuals that can help address the stigma associated with mental illness through education, support, and advocacy.

#### TOPICS COVERED

- Mental Health Diversity
- Prevalence of mental health conditions
- Warnings signs to look for
- Self care strategies
- Mental health impact in multicultural communities
- Reducing stigma
- Information about mental health resources provided by NAMI

#### STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

- Presented by individuals with lived experience and/or family members of loved ones with a mental health diagnosis.
- NAMI slideshow including personal stories (35-40min)
- Q&A (5-10min)
- Wrap-up (5min)

**TO SCHEDULE A  
PRESENTATION PLEASE  
CONTACT US**

 **650-638-0800**

 **[nami@namisanmateo.org](mailto:nami@namisanmateo.org)**

 **[namisanmateo.org](http://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.



Young Adults:

# Jumpstart Your Career!

Our individual career coaches help you explore career paths, build in-demand skills, and find work – all completely free of charge to you.

**Through one-on-one coaching,  
we'll help you:**

- ◆ get paid to learn through internships
- ◆ discover careers with expert guidance
- ◆ find a job that's right for you
- ◆ level up your skills for work
- ◆ train for the career you want
- ◆ get ready for college & learn about financial aid
- ◆ earn cash rewards & get extra support along the way



**Are you 17-24 and living in San Mateo or Santa Clara County? We're here for you—online or in-person, whenever you're ready to take the next step.**

**Let's get started!**

Call or text: 408-568-7776 (TTY: 711)

Email: [youngadults@novaworks.org](mailto:youngadults@novaworks.org)

Address: 456 W. Olive Ave, Sunnyvale, CA



*NOVAworks is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. NOVAworks services are 100 percent funded by the U.S. Department of Labor through awards totaling \$6,434,937.*

# 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](mailto:research@nami.org).

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

NIH National Library of Medicine



[medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov)

MedlinePlus is an online health information resource for patients and their families and friends. It is a service of the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the world's largest medical library, which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

[ClinicalTrials.gov](http://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](http://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](http://calable.ca.gov)

## Federal Resources

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#): For general information on mental health and to locate treatment services in your area, call the SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). SAMHSA also has a [Behavioral Health Treatment Locator](#) on its website that can be searched by location.
- [Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#): HRSA works to improve access to health care. The HRSA website has information on finding affordable healthcare, including health centers that offer care on a sliding fee scale.
- [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#): CMS has information on its website about benefits and eligibility for mental health programs and how to enroll.
- [The National Library of Medicine \(NLM\) MedlinePlus](#): NLM's website has [directories](#) lists of [organizations](#) can help in identifying a health practitioner.

## 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 its 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.