



San Mateo County

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

Hope starts
with you!

NAMIWalks 2025
- Thank You! -



Thank You for
a Wonderful
Giving
Tuesday!



Let's Keep
the
Momentum
Going!

As we reflect on this season of generosity, we are filled with deep gratitude. Thanks to the incredible support we received during Giving Tuesday, we are closer than ever to reaching our annual fundraising goal. Your kindness has already made a meaningful impact, and we couldn't be more thankful.

As we approach the end of the year, your continued support ensures that individuals and families in San Mateo County can access free mental health education, support, and resources when they need them most.

Maximize Your Impact: Many companies offer employer-matching programs, allowing you to multiply the power of your gift. A quick check with your HR department could double your contribution and impact.

Year-End Tax Benefits: All donations made before December 31 are tax-deductible for the 2025 tax year. It's a wonderful way to support your community while also receiving potential tax savings. We are truly grateful for every person who has given, shared, or advocated for NAMI San Mateo County this season. With your compassion and generosity, we can continue ensuring no one in our community walks the mental health journey alone.

Please make your tax-deductible gift today and multiply your impact.

Support Our Cause: <https://namisanmateo.org/donate>



JANUARY SPEAKER SERIES

Optimizing Maintenance
Treatment: Comparing
Long-Acting Injectable
and Oral Antipsychotic
Options

Tuesday, January 27 | 6:30-8:00pm
Hybrid



Lynnea Harris-
Muñoz, PhD

See page 9 for more information.

*"Your mind may argue for your
limitations with great logic,
but your actions are the rebuttal that
proves your potential."*



- Jan 1 → NAMI SMC moves to new location
- Jan 24 → NAMI Smarts for Advocacy
- Jan 27 → Speaker Series Presentation



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



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

NAMI SMC Relocates to the Sobrato Center for Nonprofits.



We are delighted to share exciting news about the future of NAMI San Mateo County. After a thorough application and review process, we are honored to have been accepted into the Sobrato Center for Nonprofits—an important milestone that will support our continued growth and service to the community.

This move will allow us to expand our reach, collaborate even more effectively with partner organizations, and enhance the welcoming, accessible environment we strive to offer individuals and families impacted by mental health conditions.

NAMI San Mateo County will be relocating at the end of the year, with operations officially transitioning to our new home on **January 1, 2026**. Our new address will be:

NAMI San Mateo County
c/o Sobrato Center for Nonprofits
350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 115
Redwood City, CA 94065

We look forward to welcoming you into our new offices in the new year. Thank you for your ongoing support as we continue strengthening our programs, advocacy, and community connections from this wonderful new space.

Congratulations to Our New State Trainers!

Over the weekend of November 1st and 2nd, two of NAMI San Mateo County's own — Latona Byas and Kira Liess — proudly completed the NAMI Train-the-Trainer program, earning their certification as State Trainers for the NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group.



Latona Byas



Kira Liess

This comprehensive training prepares seasoned facilitators to guide and inspire the next generation of Connection Group leaders throughout California. Latona and Kira demonstrated outstanding dedication, leadership, and empathy—reflecting NAMI's mission to provide support, education, and advocacy for all who are affected by mental health conditions.

Their achievement enhances NAMI San Mateo County's capacity to strengthen peer-led programming and foster supportive, recovery-centered communities.

Please join us in celebrating Latona Byas and Kira Liess for this meaningful accomplishment and their continued dedication to building connection, hope, and recovery throughout San Mateo County and the state of California.

Refining Our Focus: Strengthening NAMI's Impact in San Mateo County

By Laura Parmer-Lohan, Executive Director

As NAMI San Mateo County continues to grow, we are refining our strategic focus to strengthen our impact and ensure that every program and service we offer is rooted in evidence-based, proven approaches.

Our priorities center on three core goals:

- Expanding the reach of NAMI Signature Programming to underserved communities
- Strengthening NAMI's presence throughout San Mateo County
- Prioritizing advocacy for supportive housing, safety in jails, and increased access to clinical treatment

To align our efforts with these goals, we will begin implementing several important updates:

Beginning January 1, 2026, NAMI SMC will leverage the NAMI National HelpLine 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. PT. This national helpline is supported by hundreds of trained volunteers and staff, ensuring timely, high-quality assistance. Help requests requiring local support will continue to be directed to our San Mateo County office.

Additionally, we will sunset the Youth Advisory Committee at the end of 2025. We deeply value the contributions of our youth volunteers and will continue to engage young people in meaningful ways through other volunteer opportunities that align with our mission and core programming.

These changes will allow us to focus our resources on what works, NAMI Signature Programs that educate, support, and advocate for individuals and families affected by mental illness. Together, we are building a stronger, more sustainable NAMI San Mateo County for the years ahead.

NAMI San Mateo County Launches Training to Empower Local Mental Health Advocates

NAMI San Mateo County is inviting community members to take part in NAMI Smarts for Advocacy, a hands-on training designed to help individuals affected by mental health conditions transform their lived experiences into meaningful grassroots advocacy. **The workshop will be held on Saturday, January 24, from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM via Zoom.**

NAMI Smarts is a nationally recognized program that guides participants through the essentials of effective advocacy, from understanding how policy is made to shaping personal stories that resonate with legislators. Whether someone is new to advocacy or already has experience speaking with policymakers, the training provides practical tools, step-by-step guidance, and confidence-building exercises to help people make their voices heard.

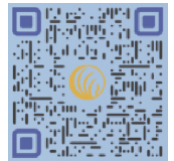
The training includes several modules focused on the skills most needed to influence change:

- Telling Your Story
- Policymaking 101
- Contacting Your Policymaker
- Meeting with Your Policymaker

Participants will leave with clear messages, refined narratives, and the practical know-how to build relationships with decision-makers at every level of government.

This event is offered in partnership with the San Mateo County Pride Center, Coast Pride, Outlet (a program of Adolescent Counseling Services), and TAJA Co. An access link will be sent to registered participants before the event.

To register, community members can email lparkerlohan@namisanmateo.org, call 650-638-0800, or scan the QR code



"Don't explain your philosophy. Embody it." - Epictetus

NAMI's The Connections Collective: Building Friendships in Our 20s

By Olivia Heffernan

Our 20s Meetup Group, The Connections Collective, has been thriving! Over the past few months, we've teamed up at trivia night, soaked up the sunshine on a group hike, and cheered on the Giants at the ballpark. Each event has brought together people in their 20s who are looking to make new friends and share meaningful experiences.

Whether we're teaming up for a game, exploring the outdoors, or just hanging out, every gathering offers a fun and welcoming space to connect, unwind, and be yourself. If you've been looking for a community where you can feel included and meet others who get what it's like to navigate your 20s, this is it! We host one meet up every month. Scan the QR to check out our meetup page and stay in the loop!



NAMI SMC Selected as a New Sol Mateo Community Partner



By Laura Parmer-Lohan

We are honored to share that NAMI San Mateo County has been selected as one of Sol Mateo's new community partners**, following a thoughtful and highly competitive review process led by their Nonprofit Selection Committee and affirmed by their full membership.

Sol Mateo (solmateo.org) has a long and meaningful history of investing in mental health services across our county. This year, they expanded their grant-making strategy to strengthen the full continuum of care in San Mateo County. As part of this vision, they will continue their longstanding support for the Mental Health Association (MHA) and are welcoming NAMI SMC as one of two new partners, including Family Connections.

We are deeply grateful for this opportunity and look forward to building a strong, collaborative partnership with Sol Mateo. Their support will help us enhance advocacy, peer support, family education, and community engagement for those impacted by mental health conditions.

Sol Mateo's expanded approach will:

Deepen support for individuals living with serious mental illness through MHA

Expand early intervention and prevention for families through Family Connections

Strengthen advocacy and peer support countywide through NAMI SMC

Together, these partnerships help create a more comprehensive system of mental health support from early childhood through adulthood.

We'll keep our community updated on fun and meaningful events hosted by Sol Mateo, including opportunities to get involved and support mental health initiatives that make a real difference in San Mateo County.

We are truly honored to walk alongside Sol Mateo in this work and are excited for what we will accomplish together.

NAMI SMARTS for Advocacy: Empowering Voices for Change

By Latona Byas

On October 24, 2025, several members of the NAMI San Mateo County team completed the NAMI SMARTS for Advocacy Teacher Training—a powerful program designed to equip individuals with the tools to share their mental health stories with policymakers effectively.

NAMI SMARTS for Advocacy is an interactive, skill-building training that helps participants transform their personal experiences into effective advocacy messages. It teaches how to prepare and deliver a concise, heartfelt story that connects personal experience to policy issues, inspiring decision-makers to take meaningful action.

Becoming certified teachers enables NAMI San Mateo County to bring this valuable program to our local community—empowering peers, families, and advocates to share their stories and confidently influence positive change.

Sharing our experiences helps humanize mental health challenges and reminds policymakers that every decision impacts real people. Through NAMI SMARTS for Advocacy, we are amplifying voices that deserve to be

heard—working together to build a more compassionate and responsive mental health system.



Ending the Silence: Our Reach is Far and Wide

By Stacey Holmes

This fall has been our most impactful fall yet! Our reach has been one of breadth and depth, including:

- Middle schools, high schools, and colleges.
- Organizations including [LifeMoves](#), [Allcove's Youth Advisory Council](#), and the [California Department of Education](#).
- Students, parents, and teachers
- In person and online
- Various other presenters including our Executive Director, Laura Parmer-Lohan.

Here are the numbers from August through the end of the year:

- 32 presentations
- Over 3,200 people served

The participation and level of engagement were strong. One of the wrap-up questions we typically ask is:

"What are some ways you (students) can communicate with your parents if you aren't comfortable talking to them?"

Students had creative answers including writing them a letter, asking them to read an article, or joining them in a support class.

Ending the Silence (ETS) is a free impactful mental health presentation designed for middle and high school students, staff, and parents, helping them understand mental health through awareness, education, and tools.

If you are interested in ETS, we'd love to connect!

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 (evidence-based presentation created by a nationally recognized non-profit)
- No cost to you

For more information or to schedule a presentation, please reach out to our Ending the Silence Coordinator, at sholmes@namisanmateo.org.



Serra High School, October 10th
Young Adult, Lindsey Wade, sharing her lived mental health journey.

Family-to-Family: Our First Hybrid Class Begins with 22 Participants

By Rocio C Panameño

We're excited to share that our Family-to-Family course kicked off on October 22 with 22 dedicated participants ready to learn, connect, and support one another. It's also our **first-ever hybrid class**, blending in-person sessions at the NAMI SMC office with live participation on Zoom.

Putting on a Family-to-Family class is truly a labor of love – requiring time, teamwork, and a shared passion for helping families/caregivers heal together. This fall, we are fortunate to have an incredible team of volunteer teachers: **Jan Fisher, Ron Dugrenier, Ginny Traub, Kathy Parmer-Lohan, Ruan Frenette, and our very own Laura Parmer-Lohan.**

We're also deeply grateful to our volunteer **Zoom producer, Ana Carney**, and our in-person support volunteer, **Mary Sun**, whose dedication ensures that both in-person and virtual participants have a seamless and engaging experience.



Ron & Jan getting ready to teach F2F, while Ana, our Zoom Producer does a tech check.

Mary, our volunteer, stands outside of our building ready to greet F2F participants as they arrive.

As we continue expanding our educational offerings, this hybrid model allows us to meet families where they are, creating flexibility, accessibility, and the same heart-centered learning that defines every NAMI class.

Want to sign up for a Family-to-Family class just scan the QR code, or email our Education & Volunteer Director, Rocio C. Panameño, at rocio@namisanmateo.org.



Emergency Rental Assistance Program: City of San Mateo and Samaritan House

The City of San Mateo has partnered with Samaritan House to launch a new Emergency Rental Assistance Program supporting residents facing financial hardship.

Now through July 31, 2026, eligible households can receive up to \$4,000 per year in rental or utility assistance to help prevent displacement and promote housing stability.

Applicants must live within San Mateo, meet income requirements, have a signed lease, not be related to their landlord, and have a utility bill in their name.

Residents interested in applying can contact Samaritan House at 650-347-3648 or visit their office at 4031 Pacific Boulevard, San Mateo. More details are available online through Samaritan House's Housing & Shelter webpage.

samaritanhousesanmateo.org/service/housing-services



**A little
hope can
go a long
way**

NAMI National Debuts New Caregiver HelpLine as Families Come Together for the Holidays

The need for mental health support is real: the NAMI HelpLine has seen a 70% increase in the past year in people reaching out, many of whom are family caregivers. And these unsung heroes' own mental health often takes a backseat to caring for their loved ones. Most are unpaid, which can add financial strain to the emotional stress and isolation that can come with caregiving.

To address this growing need, NAMI created the Family Caregiver HelpLine. It is staffed by well-trained volunteers who themselves have cared for someone with a serious mental illness. At no cost, it provides a judgment-free space where caregivers can find reassurance, resources, and practical guidance from people who understand the specific needs and challenges of caring for a loved one with a mental health condition.

The NAMI Family Caregiver HelpLine offers:

- A safe place to talk with someone who understands caregiving and truly listens.
- Realistic hope, validation, and reassurance that small steps forward matter and that help is available for caregivers and their loved ones.
- Clear guidance, resources, practical next steps, and connections to local programs.

To be a caregiver is to practice resilience, strength, and compassion, braving challenge after challenge. With the new NAMI Family Caregiver HelpLine, you can find support rooted in lived experience and designed to help you access resources and find hope.

If nothing else feels easy, finding experienced support can be. Take a moment today to connect with the NAMI Family Caregiver HelpLine. [Learn More](#)

Call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) and Press "4" to connect with a skilled Family Caregiver HelpLine Specialist.

Text "Family" to 62640

Email: Send a message to helpline@nami.org.

The Family Caregiver HelpLine is available Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 10p.m. ET. More resources for family caregivers can be found at nami.org/family.

"Caregiving can be extremely challenging, but getting support through the Family Caregiver HelpLine is easy," said Susan Caban, NAMI's chief program officer. "Our trained volunteers can offer caregivers permission for self-care, reframing it as important in itself — and even essential to caring for their loved ones."

This important new service builds on the support available through the [NAMI HelpLine](#) and its specialty helpline services, [línea de ayuda de NAMI](#) (NAMI's Spanish Language HelpLine) and [NAMI Teen and Young Adult HelpLine](#).

The Return of Printed Newsletters: Staying Connected Beyond the Screen

By Rocio C Panameño

In an age of overflowing inboxes and endless notifications, there's something refreshingly personal about receiving a newsletter in the mail. At NAMI San Mateo County, we've brought back our printed newsletter, not only as a way to share updates and upcoming events, but as a reminder that connection doesn't always have to happen online.

Since COVID-19, we shifted entirely to digital and lost this print format for a while. Bringing it back means more than paper, it reflects our commitment to accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that everyone in our community can stay informed and connected to NAMI's mission of education, support, and advocacy.

For many of our members, holding something tangible brings a sense of familiarity and care. A printed newsletter can be shared with a neighbor, pinned to a community board, or passed along to a loved one who may not check email often. It's one more way we can reach individuals where they are, especially those who prefer or rely on traditional communication.

This project came to life thanks to our volunteers, who met at the NAMI SMC office to fold, mail, and bundle newsletters, proof that simple acts of service ripple far and wide. We also want to express our appreciation to First Impressions, whose beautiful printing brings each issue to life.

If you'd like to receive the next edition by mail, please let me us know. And if you'd like to volunteer by picking up newsletters and delivering them to community centers, libraries, clinics, or hospitals, we'd love your help. Contact: rocio@namisanmateo.org, (650) 918-0293.



Volunteers meet at the NAMI SMC office to prepare newsletters for mailing. We couldn't do it without you!

NAMI SMC's Uplift Teen Group

By Olivia Heffernan

The NAMI SMC Uplift Teen Group has officially reached its one year anniversary!

This free, six-week group empowers youth ages 11-18 with tools to reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety. With support from two young adult peer facilitators, participants learn practical strategies to reframe negative thoughts and boost their overall wellbeing.

Since its beginning in September 2024, NAMI San Mateo County has completed two in-person groups, three virtual groups, and currently has one group in session, reaching over 50 students across California! At the end of the six-week session, we ask our students what they thought of the experience and what stood out the most to them; here is what they had to say:

"When I did the home exercises they were helpful because they allowed me to change my thinking and reflect

on my day.."

"I liked talking to other people and learning how to control [my] emotions."

"I found thinking of alternatives and finding proof most helpful to cope with things in my daily life. I also enjoyed doing fun activities every week as it reminded me to have fun in life."

"The group helped me learn how to think about a situation in a better way so I won't be upset."

We are currently working to bring the Uplift Teen Group directly to middle school and high school campuses in San Mateo County and we look forward to implementing these school groups in 2026!

Stay tuned for the confirmation of the dates and times for our next Uplift Teen Group!

Looking for Young Adult Facilitators and Presenters! Make a Difference in Your Community.

We are looking for young adult volunteer facilitators and presenters for two of our youth focused programs!

Uplift Teen Group Facilitator:

NAMI SMC's Uplift Teen Group is a 6-week support group for youth ages 11-18 that helps participants develop healthier thinking patterns. We are seeking young adult peer facilitators who can use their lived experience to create a safe, supportive space for teens to grow and connect.

Ending the Silence Presenter:

Ending the Silence (ETS) is a 1-hour presentation that goes into middle and high schools to break the stigma surrounding mental health, educate youth on mental health warning signs, and bring awareness to the resources available to them. We are seeking a young adult presenter who shares their personal experience with mental health struggles to inspire and educate youth.

We are looking for young adults that:

- Are between 18-28 years old
- Have lived experience with mental health struggles
- Flexible availability Monday - Friday anytime between 8 am - 3 pm
- Have reliable transportation to schools in San Mateo County

The roles entail:

- 2-5 hours a week as needed
- Flexible schedule
- Volunteer position
- 4-5 hour required training

If this opportunity resonates with you and you're passionate about supporting youth mental health, we'd love to hear from you! Please email olivia@namisanmateo.org for more information and to apply!



Epigenetics controls how neurons turn genes on or off without changing the DNA itself. These chemical switches respond to life experiences, shaping memory, mood, learning, and stress resilience. Epigenetic changes can strengthen or weaken neural pathways, helping explain why environment and biology work together in mental health.

Familia-a-Familia Graduation – Uniting Stories, Strengthening Families

By Rocio C Panameño

We're proud to celebrate the graduation of our Familia a Familia class, an eight-week journey of learning, reflection, and connection. Held at JobTrain in Menlo Park, this class was made possible through a strong partnership and collaboration that provided a trusted space for our community.



Our latest group of Familia-a-Familia Graduates!

Our class graduated on October 1 with a warm potluck celebration. Families brought delicious cultural dishes to share, filling the room with food, laughter, and care. It was a beautiful way to honor everyone's journey and the community we built together.

Taught by our endlessly dedicated volunteer teachers, Claudia Saggese, Yrene Orue, and Cynthia Castro, the class brought together 19 participants who showed up with courage, curiosity, and love for their families. We presented each participant with their certificate one by one, taking a moment to recognize their commitment and make the milestone feel special.

Two participants shared reflections that capture the spirit of the class: *"I'm leaving with a deeper sense of empathy for people living with mental health conditions and for anyone whose circumstances are different from mine,"* and *"An exercise we did in class was powerful in helping me understand what people living with schizophrenia experience; it also showed me how hard it is for our loved ones."* (Both quotes are translated from Spanish.)

Congratulations to our graduates, and a heartfelt thank you to our teachers and to our partners at **JobTrain** (jobtrainworks.org) for helping create a trusted, welcoming space where families can learn and grow together.

Compartiendo Esperanza: Building Trust, Connection, and Healing

By Rocio C Panameño

We're happy to share that NAMI National has awarded us another grant to continue Compartiendo Esperanza (Sharing Hope), a program that offers spaces of healing, connection, and hope for our Latinx community. Our most recent series met over three weeks and concluded on Thursday, October 23. We created a safe, culturally responsive space where we spoke openly not only about stress and anxiety, but also about other mental health challenges many families face—such as grief, depression, trauma, insomnia, and the emotional weight that often comes with change and uncertainty. We also shared practical strategies for self-care and family support, and local

resources in Spanish. Short meditation exercises were incorporated to build calm and a sense of community connection.

One participant, who had become isolated after her husband's death, told us:

"During the meditation I felt the weight on my chest begin to lift and I stopped feeling that tightness. I'm grateful for the support and for being able to talk about what I feel."

We know our Latinx community is going through trying times, with concerns about immigration, the economy, and mental health affecting many families' well-being. That's why maintaining these trusted spaces is more important than ever: they help reduce stigma, encourage timely help-seeking, and remind us that we are not alone.

Upcoming conversations are already scheduled: December at the Calvary Baptist Church in Redwood City and January with Puente de la Costa Sur in Pescadero. In both series, we'll share resources, build personal wellness plans, and maintain a confidential, respectful space.

If you're interested in participating or referring someone, please contact me by email, call, or text: rocio@namisanmateo.org, (650) 918-0293



Our hybrid Compartiendo Esperanza group meditate together.

Para beneficio de nuestros lectores hispanohablantes, tanto "Familia-a-Familia" como "Compartiendo Esperanza" aparecen en español en la página 14 de la versión en línea de este boletín.



Coloring & Coffee: A Creative Space for Connection and Creativity

Looking for a gentle way to stay connected after Peer-to-Peer? Coloring & Coffee offers an easygoing evening to unwind, create, and spend time with fellow graduates. Hosted by Kira and Polina, it's a low-pressure space to refill your cup.

We gather at the NAMI San Mateo County office on the first Monday of every month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Coffee, tea, and all necessary art supplies are provided—just bring yourself.

From our November group, Polina shared a highlight: *"We shifted a bit from the art that day and played a board game. It was so fun! We laughed so much."* Moments like these remind us that connection can take many forms, whether through coloring, conversation, or a spontaneous game night.

Come color quietly, connect with fellow peers, or simply enjoy some "me time" in community. Questions? Email rocio@namisanmateo.org

NAMI California Annual Conference 2025: Building Connection, Community, and Change

By Latona Byas

From October 16 to 17, NAMI San Mateo County staff traveled to the State Capitol in Sacramento to participate in the NAMI California Annual Conference 2025. The event brought together hundreds of advocates, peers, families, and professionals from across the state—each united by a shared commitment to improving mental health systems, advancing equity, and fostering hope for individuals and families affected by mental illness.



This year's theme, "Building Connection, Community, and Change," perfectly reflected the conference's purpose: to create space for meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and learning. Over two transformative days, attendees gained insight into emerging research, community-driven practices, and legislative priorities shaping the future of mental health care in California.

Day One: The Power of Storytelling and Connection

The conference opened with an emotional and deeply inspiring keynote address by Drew Robinson, a former Major League Baseball player and mental health advocate. Drew courageously shared his personal journey of living with mental health challenges and the life-changing moment that led him to become a passionate voice for suicide prevention and mental wellness.

His story reminded attendees that even in moments of darkness, there is power in speaking up, seeking help, and using one's experience to inspire others. Drew's central message—"Sharing your story can benefit another person"—captured the heart of NAMI's mission to turn lived experience into connection and advocacy. His openness encouraged participants to continue creating safe spaces where others feel empowered to share their own journeys without fear or shame.

Throughout the day, participants attended breakout sessions and workshops on culturally responsive care, youth engagement, leadership development, peer support innovation, and community-based crisis response models. Each session emphasized the importance of accessibility, inclusivity, and cultural humility in mental health programming. Attendees also connected with fellow affiliates to exchange best practices and learn how other counties are enhancing community outreach and engagement.

Day Two: Prioritizing Mental Health and Systemic Change

Day Two began with an impactful keynote address from Patrick J. Kennedy, former U.S. Representative and renowned author of several influential books on mental health and addiction, including *A Common Struggle*. Kennedy, a longtime advocate for mental health parity and policy reform, delivered a powerful call to action centered around one key takeaway: individuals must prioritize their mental health as an essential part of overall well-being.

He spoke candidly about his family's legacy, his own lived experiences, and the urgent need to continue addressing the mental health crisis through compassion, advocacy, and

policy change. Kennedy emphasized that mental health is not a partisan issue—it is a human one—and urged attendees to work together to ensure equitable access to care for all.

Following his keynote, the conference continued with a series of engaging panels and networking opportunities focused on storytelling as advocacy, system transformation, cultural humility, and collaborative leadership. These sessions provided tangible tools to help affiliates strengthen their community partnerships, develop peer-led programs, and influence local policy efforts.

Bringing the Learning Home

Our NAMI San Mateo County team returned home inspired, energized, and eager to put new ideas into action. The lessons learned at the conference will directly enhance our support for peers, training of facilitators, and collaboration with community partners. Whether through Connection Groups, Family-to-Family classes, or outreach events, we remain dedicated to fostering inclusion, breaking down stigma, and amplifying the voices of those with lived experience.

Attending the NAMI California Conference reaffirmed the importance of connection—not only between individuals, but also between affiliates, advocates, and policymakers. It reminded us that real change begins with relationships and that every conversation, every shared story, and every act of compassion contributes to a stronger and more resilient community.

Reflections from NAMI San Mateo County

Our team shared that the conference was not only educational but also deeply motivating. "Hearing Drew Robinson's and Patrick Kennedy's stories reminded me that every person's journey matters," one staff member reflected. "It encouraged me to bring that same compassion and openness back to the people we serve." Another attendee



The NAMI SMC Team: Latona, Laura, Rocio, Olivia

noted, "The sessions offered practical ideas for improving cultural responsiveness and peer engagement—tools we can immediately put into practice at NAMI SMC."

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to NAMI California for hosting such a transformative and empowering event, and to all the presenters, advocates, and attendees who contributed their time, energy, and expertise. Together, we are building a statewide network grounded in empathy, advocacy, and shared purpose—ensuring that mental health remains a priority and that no one walks alone.

"To care for a mind in crisis is to hold hope steady when the person you love cannot yet hold it themselves."



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

A Beautiful Day of Hope and Community: NAMIWalks San Mateo County 2025

By Laura Parmer-Lohan

On October 4th at Seal Point Park in San Mateo and under bright blue skies and a feeling of shared purpose, more than 1,000 participants came together for the 2025 NAMIWalks San Mateo County, a day that celebrated community, connection, and the power of collective action for mental health.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our walkers, donors, sponsors, and community partners, we raised over \$225,000 to support NAMI SMC's free programs, support groups, classes, and advocacy efforts for individuals and families affected by mental illness.

The morning began with inspiring words from Lisa Fuchs, NAMI SMC Board President, who reminded us of how far we've come as a community and the impact of showing up for one another. Angela Castillo, a NAMI Connections facilitator and devoted family member, shared her powerful story of hope and resilience, reminding everyone why NAMI's work matters so deeply. We were also moved by a thoughtful poem shared by [NAME], whose words captured the heart of the day—compassion, courage, and connection.

Dozens of volunteers, community partners and sponsors joined us at the event, offering resources, support, and energy that made this year's Walk especially memorable. The sense of unity and purpose could be felt in every conversation, cheer, and step taken.

As the crowd set off under the sunshine, it was clear: together, we are breaking the stigma, building understanding, and ensuring that no one in San Mateo County walks alone on their mental health journey.

Thank you to all our awesome sponsors, supporters and participants who made NAMIWalks 2025 such a success. We can't wait to see you next year!



Presenting: Kate Phillips

Premier: The Teddy Fund

Gold: Sequoia Healthcare District

Silver: Bristol Myers Squibb, City of San Carlos, EastWest Bank, Kaiser Permanente, Peninsula Health Care District, Teva

Bronze: American Medical Response (AMR), Bodin Consulting & Mentoring, DHW Insurance Brokers, Fusion Academy, Heritage Bank of Commerce, Neumora, Planet Fitness, Putnam Automotive, SamTrans, San Mateo County Transportation Authority, Stanford Medicine Health Care, Star One Credit Union, Telecare Corporation, The Healthy Teen Project

Supporter: AFSCME Local 829, Beem Light Sauna, Hurrica Restaurant, John Shroyer, Mike & Cathy Aydelott, Mike Ross, Peace of Mind Structural, David Young

In-Kind Donors: B Street Music & Sound, Costco Wholesale, Epic Limousine, First Impressions Printing, J8 Hot Pilates & Yoga, Peet's Coffee & Tea, Piazza's, ProBonoPhoto, Recology San Mateo County, Sensor E, Trader Joe's

Thank you to Alfred Leung, Rachel Podlishevsky, Rocio C. Panameno for providing the NAMIWalks 2025 photos.



January 27th, 2026 Speaker Series

Join us for our January Speaker Series as we're joined by Lynnea Harris-Muñoz, PhD, to learn about long-acting injectables and oral antipsychotic formulas for the maintenance treatment of Bipolar-I Disorder. This interactive presentation will provide an overview of Bipolar Disorder and compare and contrast oral antipsychotics to long-acting injectables. Join us for an open conversation to get your questions answered and learn more about the important research Otsuka Pharmaceuticals is doing.

The presentation will be broken up into 3 parts:

- Part 1 will provide an overview of Bipolar Disorder, including impact on patient life, clinical progression, disease burden, and treatment guidelines.
- Part 2 will compare and contrast oral antipsychotics and long-acting injectables, and discuss the importance of early intervention in treating BP-I.
- Part 3 will discuss treatment considerations among patients, caregivers and physicians.

Q&A session at the end to enable conversations around this important topic

Join us in person or online to connect with fellow community members in a warm and welcoming space. In-person guests can enjoy light snacks, everyone is welcome, and we can't wait to see you there!

Date: Tuesday, January 27

Time: 6:30pm-8:00pm

Location: Hybrid (on Zoom & in person)

In Person: NAMI San Mateo County Office
350 Twin Dolphin Drive
Ste. 115, Redwood City, CA

Register here → <https://bit.ly/48cLTzk>



Profiles in Mental Health Courage

by Patrick J. Kennedy & Stephen Fried.

This book makes aspects of dealing with illnesses more understandable - how much courage it takes to endure the daily struggles for continued or improved mental health. Twelve peoples' true stories of addiction, mental illness and treatment in the U.S. 310 pages.

Profiles in
Mental
Health
Courage

*
PATRICK J.
KENNEDY
& STEPHEN FRIED

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/huwrslerejod



— 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.

Thank you to our Volunteers, Collaborators, Associates and Friends

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

Connection Group Facilitators: Amy Garcia, Elaine Ryan, Gene Suarez

Family Support Group Facilitators:

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

Family-to-Family Teachers:

Ron Dugrenier, Ginny Traub, Ruan Frenette, Jan Fisher, Kathy Parmer-Lohan, Claudia Saggese, Cynthia Castro, Yrene Orue

General Volunteer & Office Support:

Kira Liess, Polina Freeman, Ana Carney, Sonja Zechner, Nikki Hennessy, Karen M., Mary Sun, Melissa Rios, Stephanie Lim, Margaret Marshall, Audrey Perez



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!*

Compartiendo Esperanza: Lourdes Briseño, Moises Martinez, Cynthia Castro

NAMIWalks: Abby Gorin, Alex Weiskopf, Andre Lee, Andrea Sobel, Ativ Mathur, Baani Gupta, Barbara Patterson, Becky Liu, Caitlyn Liang, Cynthia Wiggan, Debbie Heffernan, Deron Lew, Diane Russell, Emily Ruiz, Ginny Traub, Jackelyn Lange, Paula Ebejer-Moffitt, Saumya Gupta, Soren Segre, Whitney Murphy

Ending the Silence (ETS): Alysa Orillaza, Diane Russell, Ginny Traub, Laura Parmer-Lohan, Lindsey Wade, Marilyn Wen, Rocio C. Panameno, Stacey Holmes

Mental Health 101 Presenters: Nir Salinas

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



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



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 nonemergency 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.

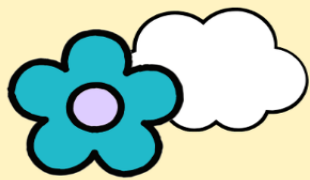
Psych Emergency: San Mateo Medical Center: 650-573-2662
Mills Peninsula Hospital: 650-696-5915

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



Peer Support Groups



Support Group	Day of week/ month	Time	Format/ Location	To Register Email or Call
NAMI Connections 18+	Monday & Thursday	7:00-8:30 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	nami@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800
DBSA Mood Disorders	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday	7:00-9:00 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	info@dbsasanmateo.org or 650-299-8880
NAMI Connections 55+	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday	7:00-8:30 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	nami@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800
NAMI Connections 18+	2 nd , 3 rd , & 4 th Wednesday	3:30-5:00 PM	In-Person @ BurlPres Church	Walk-Ins Welcome @ BurlPres Church, 1500 Easton, B'game. Office door via parking lot
NAMI Connections 18+	Monday & Thursday	7:00-8:30 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	nami@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800
NAMI Connections 18+	4 th Saturday	1:00-2:30 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	nami@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800



Family Support Groups



Support Group	Day of week/ month	Time	Format/ Location	To Register Email or Call
NAMI Cordillera MHR Ctr Family Support Group	1 st Monday (2 nd Monday if 1 st is a holiday)	6:30-8:00 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	cordilleras6765@gmail.com
NAMI Parents of Youth & Young Adults (ages 6-26)	2 nd Monday	7:00-8:30 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	ParentsofYouth@namisanmateo.org
NAMI Central County Family Support Group	2 nd Tuesday	6:00-7:30 PM	In-Person (call for address)	SouthCountyNFSG@gmail.com or 650-638-0800
NAMI Spanish Speaking Family Support Group	2 nd Tuesday	6:00-7:30 PM	In Person (MHC, 802 Brewster, RWC)	yramirez@smcgov.org or 650-573-2673
NAMI Stanford Family Support Group	2 nd Tuesday	7:30-9:00 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	https://bit.ly/NAMI-JFSG
Korean Support Group	Last Thursday	7:30 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	408-712-1149
NAMI Spanish Speaking Family Support Group	Friday	7:00-8:30 PM	Virtual (Zoom)	grupoapayovirtual@namisanmateo.org



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
c/o Sobrato Center for Nonprofits
350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 115
Redwood City, CA 94065

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NAMI HelpLine

Available M-F, 10am-10pm ET.

Call **800-950-6264**,

or text "NAMI" to **62640**,

or email to helpline@nami.org

In a crisis, call or text **988** (24/7)

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 _____ ☐ 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

c/o Sobrato Center for Nonprofits
350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 115
Redwood City, CA 94065
650-638-0800 / e-Fax: 650-240-3804

nami@namisanmateo.org

www.namisanmateo.org

Office Hours: *currently by appt only.*

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The Importance of Self-Care

By Latona Byas

Self-care has become a popular term, often seen on social media or in wellness circles, but its meaning runs much deeper than a trending hashtag. Proper self-care is not a luxury or an indulgence—it's a necessity. It's the practice of tending to your physical, emotional, and mental well-being so that you can sustain yourself and continue showing up for your life, your loved ones, and your community.

In a world that moves at an overwhelming pace, taking care of ourselves can sometimes feel like one more thing on our to-do list. Many of us are caregivers, advocates, parents, partners, or friends, constantly focused on meeting the needs of others. When unexpected challenges arise—such as loss, illness, conflict, or change—we often internalize stress or blame ourselves for things beyond our control. Yet, self-care reminds us to step back, take a deep breath, and remember: not everything is ours to fix.

Self-care at its core, means honoring your humanity. It's recognizing that you are worthy of the same kindness, patience, and compassion that you extend to others. It doesn't always look like bubble baths or vacations (though those can be helpful); sometimes it's simply getting enough sleep, saying no when your plate is complete, or allowing yourself to take a break without guilt.

Self-care is also about understanding your limits and listening to your body and mind. It's the courage to pause when your inner voice says, "I need rest," and the strength to prioritize your peace even when life feels chaotic.

Practice Self-Care When Life Feels Out of Control?

Life will always present moments we can't predict or prevent. The key is learning to respond, not react. Here are some small yet meaningful ways to nurture yourself during those times:

- **Pause and breathe.** When you feel overwhelmed, grounding yourself through slow, intentional breaths can calm your nervous system and bring you back to the present.
- **Give yourself grace.** You don't have to have all the answers. It's okay to make mistakes, to feel tired, or to take a step back. Healing is not linear.
- **Set healthy boundaries.** Protecting your time and energy is an act of respect for yourself. Boundaries allow you to give from a place of wholeness, not depletion.
- **Seek connection.** Reaching out to someone who understands—whether it's a friend, a counselor, or a NAMI support group—can ease the sense of isolation that often comes with stress or emotional pain.
- **Prioritize rest and joy.** Sleep, laughter, creativity, and movement all contribute to your overall well-being. These are not rewards for productivity—they are part of your foundation.
- **Reflect and recharge.** Journaling, prayer, mindfulness, or simply spending time in nature can help you process emotions and find clarity amid uncertainty.

Self-care is not selfish—it's self-preservation. When we care for ourselves, we strengthen our ability to care for others. We build resilience, deepen our empathy, and sustain the energy needed to make a difference in our communities.

Remember, you are doing the best you can. You deserve compassion, rest, and space to grow and thrive. Start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can. Each small act of care you give yourself today is a step toward greater balance, healing, and hope tomorrow.

Don't wait, call 988.

By Walter Ng, Community Engagement
Supervisor of Felton Institute



The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a free, confidential, and 24/7 connection to trained crisis counselors who can provide support in times of great need. Whether you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, substance abuse struggles, emotional distress, or simply need a safe space to talk, 988 is a direct pathway to human connection and professional help.

This summer, San Mateo Crisis Lifeline proudly joined the Felton Institute to continue its vital mission as Felton's San Mateo Suicide Prevention, ensuring uninterrupted, local crisis care for all San Mateo county residents. San Mateo Suicide Prevention is so proud to share that the same trusted Crisis Counselors who have supported San Mateo for decades remain here for you, bringing expertise and compassion.

San Mateo Suicide Prevention also support residents through community engagement. We achieve this through trainings, tabling at community events, and networking with county agencies and local nonprofits. All of these actions empower individuals to learn how to recognize warning signs, offer non-judgmental support, become more aware of local resources and, crucially, know when and how to connect someone to professional help.

Every 988 call, text, or chat is answered with care, respect, and connection. Visit www.felton.org/smsp to learn more.



Speaker Series Presentation from Nov 19, 2025

Estate Planning for Families with Mental Health Challenges with Ellen Cookman

In our hybrid November Speaker Series & Annual General Meeting we were joined Ellen Cookman from Cookman Law (cookmanlaw.com) who dove into special needs planning options for families with loved ones with mental health conditions. Ellen covered trusts, ABLE accounts, successors, public benefits and much more!

We also heard from our Board President, Lisa Fuchs, and Executive Director, Laura Parmer-Lohan, who led our Annual General Meeting sharing updates about NAMI and goals for 2026.

To listen to the meeting recording go to: 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.



Compartiendo Esperanza: ¡Seguimos Adelante!

Por Rocio C Panameño

Nos alegra anunciar que NAMI Nacional nos otorgó una nueva subvención para continuar con Compartiendo Esperanza, un programa que ofrece espacios de sanación, conexión y esperanza a nuestra comunidad latina. La serie más reciente se reunió durante tres semanas y concluyó el jueves 23 de octubre. Creamos un espacio seguro y culturalmente receptivo donde hablamos abiertamente no solo de estrés y ansiedad, sino también de otras luchas de salud mental que muchas familias enfrentan, como duelo, depresión, trauma, insomnio, agotamiento y la carga emocional que acompaña los cambios y la incertidumbre. También compartimos estrategias prácticas de autocuidado y apoyo familiar, y recursos locales en español. Integramos ejercicios breves de respiración y meditación para fortalecer la calma y la conexión comunitaria.



Nuestro grupo híbrido de Compartiendo Esperanza comparte momentos de meditación juntos.

Una participante, quien se había aislado tras la muerte de su esposo, nos dijo:

“Durante la meditación sentí que el peso en mi pecho empezaba a levantarse y deje de sentir esa opresión. Estoy agradecida por el apoyo y por poder hablar de lo que siento.”

Sabemos que nuestra comunidad latina está atravesando momentos difíciles—con preocupaciones sobre inmigración, economía y salud mental que impactan el bienestar de muchas familias. Por eso, mantener estos espacios de confianza es más importante que nunca: nos ayuda a reducir el estigma, pedir ayuda a tiempo y recordar que no estamos solos.

Las próximas conversaciones ya están programadas: en diciembre con la Iglesia Bautista El Calvario en Redwood City y en enero con Puente de la Costa Sur en Pescadero. En ambas series compartiremos recursos, elaboraremos planes de bienestar y mantendremos un espacio confidencial y respetuoso.

Si te interesa participar o referir a alguien, contáctame por correo, llamada o texto: rocio@namisanmateo.org, (650) 918-0293

Celebrando la Graduación de Familia-a-Familia: Corazones Unidos, Familias Más Fuertes

Por Rocio C Panameño

Estamos muy orgullosos de celebrar la graduación de nuestra clase de Familia-a-Familia, un recorrido de ocho semanas lleno de aprendizaje, reflexión y conexión. La clase se llevó a cabo en JobTrain en Menlo Park, gracias a una valiosa colaboración que ofreció un espacio de confianza para nuestra comunidad.

Nuestra clase se graduó el 1 de octubre con una cálida celebración. Las familias trajeron deliciosos platillos típicos para compartir, llenando la sala de comida, risas y cariño. Fue una hermosa manera de honrar el camino recorrido y la comunidad que construimos juntos.



¡Nuestro último grupo de Familia-a-Familia Graduados!

Facilitada por nuestras dedicadas maestras voluntarias, Claudia Saggese, Yrene Orue y Cynthia Castro. La clase reunió a 19 participantes que asistieron con valentía, curiosidad y amor por sus familias. Entregamos los certificados uno por uno, reconociendo su compromiso y haciendo que este logro se sintiera verdaderamente especial.

Dos participantes compartieron reflexiones que reflejan el espíritu de la clase: *“Me quedo con una empatía más profunda hacia las personas que viven con condiciones de salud mental y hacia cualquiera que esté pasando por algo diferente a lo mío,”* y *“El ejercicio que hicimos para entender lo que viven las personas con esquizofrenia me impactó mucho; me ayudó a ver lo difícil que puede ser para nuestros seres queridos.”*

Felicitamos de todo corazón a nuestras familias graduadas y agradecemos sinceramente a nuestras maestras y a nuestros aliados en JobTrain (jobtrainworks.org) por ayudarnos a crear un espacio de confianza y bienvenida donde las familias puedan aprender y crecer juntas.



“En las turbulentas aguas de las enfermedades mentales graves, los cuidadores familiares se convierten al mismo tiempo en ancla y faro: anclando con su presencia y guiando con una esperanza persistente.”

✨ Join Our Volunteer Community at NAMI San Mateo County!

Your compassion, skills, and lived experience can change lives.

NAMI San Mateo County is expanding our programs and impact—and we need community members like you to help us reach more individuals, families, and youth affected by mental health conditions. Whether you enjoy teaching, sharing your story, organizing logistics, or supporting behind the scenes, there is a meaningful role waiting for you.

Below are our current volunteer opportunities:

- 🌸 **Family to Family Facilitators**
Guide families through our signature 8-week education program and help them find understanding, community, and hope.
- 🎓 **MH 101 Presenters**
Bring foundational mental health education to schools, workplaces, and community groups.
- 🗣️ **In Our Own Voice Presenters**
Use your lived experience to reduce stigma and inspire others through powerful personal storytelling.
- 🌱 **Teen Uplift Facilitators**
Support youth well-being by leading interactive, strengths-based workshops for teens.
- 👤 **Ending the Silence Presenters (Adult & Youth)**
Help young people recognize mental health warning signs, seek help early, and support one another.
- 📄 **Newsletter Distribution & Mailing Volunteers**
Assist with assembling and distributing printed materials that keep our Community informed and connected.
- 💻 **Virtual Meeting Producers**
Support our virtual programs by managing Zoom logistics, chat, and smooth session flow.
- 🚶 **NAMIWalks Volunteers**
Help make our largest community event a success—assist with setup, registration, cheering teams, and more.
- 📢 **Advocates (Training Provided!)**
If you want to speak up for mental health reform, we'll train you to share your story and engage policymakers with confidence.

Ready to Get Involved?

Fill out the volunteer form here:

👉 <https://namisanmateo.org/get-involved/become-a-volunteer>

Or contact us directly at nami@namisanmateo.org or 650-638-0800.

**Together, we can build a more compassionate,
informed, and empowered San Mateo County.**

Join us at NAMI Smarts for Advocacy

A skill-building training that helps individuals affected by mental health conditions transform their passion and lived experiences into effective grassroots advocacy.

Engage in hands-on learning to build and strengthen skills for issue advocacy. Whether someone is new to advocacy or has years of experience, people will leave the workshop with messages, step-by-step tools, and the practice they need to feel ready to make a difference.

Once advocates have their story, it's time to use it. NAMI Smarts for Advocacy includes several different modules:

- Policymaking 101
- Telling Your Story
- Contacting Your Policymaker
- Meeting with Your Policymaker

To register:

*email lparkerlohan@namisanmateo.org or
call 650-638-0800 or scan the qr code:*

Saturday, January 24, 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM via Zoom.

Access link will be sent before the event.



Partner organizations:



Participate in the National Survey of Mobile Crisis Programs! Open from December 1st to January 31st!

National Survey of Mobile Crisis, Co-Responder, and Alternative Response Programs

You are invited to participate in a national survey to build the evidence base for mobile crisis programs across the United States.



[Click here or scan
above to respond](#)

The survey is live from December 1st to January 31st, 2026.

Respond now to ensure that your program is represented in the updated national landscape of mobile crisis!

**Enter to win a
\$50 gift card
raffle!**

Who are we surveying?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavioral health provider mobile crisis programs• Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law Enforcement Based Co-Responder Programs• Alternative/Community Response Programs |
|--|---|

What do we want to know?

- Service type/area
- Partnerships
- Program/team structure
- Training
- Technology
- Financing
- Data collection

Who from my program should respond?

- Executive Director/CEO
- Program Director or Manager
- Clinical Supervisor
- Other supervisory staff



Matei Vohr, Project Manager

MobileCrisisSurvey@nyspi.columbia.edu
(929) 335-4712



New York State
Psychiatric Institute



COLUMBIA

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IRVING MEDICAL CENTER



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

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.

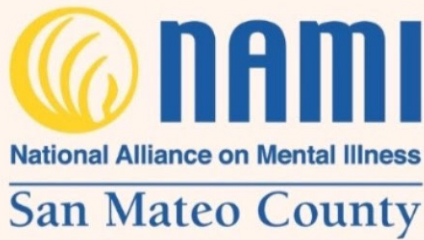


Check out
our next
event



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 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.



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
- Warning 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**

 **namisanmateo.org**

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!





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

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.

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

NIH National Library of Medicine



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 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

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.