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NAMI-Santa Clara County

May 2020



nami
National Alliance on Mental Illness

NEWS

May Mental Health Month

NAMI-SCC is spreading the message: **You are Not Alone.**

Mental Health is an important part of the national conversation and NAMI is needed more than ever. In May, please join us in ensuring that those who most need us know that NAMI is here for them. NAMI-SCC is raising awareness and highlighting that no one experiencing a mental health condition should feel alone. Now more than ever, in this time of anxiety and isolation, it is important for the mental health movement to come together. NAMI's You Are Not Alone campaign focuses on the power of connection for those affected by mental illness.

This campaign features the lived experience of people affected by mental illness to reduce stigma, inspire others, and educate the public on available online resources. NAMI is asking the public to share their own lived experience with mental health conditions by submitting their stories at www.NAMI.org/YourStory. The campaign builds connection and increases awareness through digital tools, such as our social media platforms and online support groups and the NAMI COVID-19 Information and Resource Guide on the NAMI National website (www.nami.org). These resources make connection possible despite the current climate.

"We've experienced an unprecedented effort to support one another through this time by staying connected remotely," said Kathy Forward.

During Mental Health Month, and especially in times of uncertainty, the NAMI community is here to help and here for you. Together, we can realize our shared vision of a nation where everyone affected by mental illness can

get the support and help to live healthier, fulfilling lives—a nation where no one feels alone in their struggle.

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New Executive Director Comes to NAMI-SCC



My name is **Rovina Nimbalkar** and I am incredibly honored to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of NAMI-SCC. I am excited to have the opportunity to advance NAMI-SCC's mission of providing advocacy, education, support, and public awareness of mental health issues so that all individuals and families affected by them can build better lives.

I come to NAMI-SCC with over ten years of experience leading diverse nonprofit organizations and helping vulnerable women, children, and families from different religious, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds.

My career focus has been around issues concerning the impact of trauma on women, children, and young adults from underserved communities. I also bring deep experience in fundraising, community relations, marketing, outreach, financial management, and strategic planning.

My passion for mental health issues gives me a great appreciation for NAMI's purpose and will inspire me to be a vocal advocate for its mission. I am proud of what NAMI-SCC has achieved in the last 45 years, and I am grateful for the dedication and commitment of our staff, board members, volunteers, and donors whose support and encouragement make our work possible.

I appreciate your continued support of NAMI-SCC and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Rovina

Office/Covid-19

The NAMI-SCC Warmline is a lifeline—and especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Although the office is closed to the public, our Warmline is open regular hours, M–F, 10 am–6 pm, and afterhours support evenings and weekends. Most staff are working remotely from home, but all are available to assist you.

All of our regular support groups are now available either by phone or Zoom videoconferencing. Call our Warmline for information, or visit our website www.namisantaclara.org to find the complete list of support groups along with registration forms. We're proud to let you know that some of our facilitators have added extra groups in order to meet the community's needs.

We are also in the process of completing our education courses—via Zoom—that had to end abruptly with the shelter-in-place order. These courses are Peer-to-Peer, Family-to-Family, and Provider.

Please note that we hope to have new courses starting in mid-May. If you are interested, please contact the Warmline to put your name on the interest list.

Telemental Health

Here are excerpts from recent articles along with information from Santa Clara County.

1. "As the spread of COVID-19 worsens in the U.S., more and more health facilities are moving all patients to using telehealth services.... In a recent...analysis of the availability of telepsychiatry in...mental health facilities, study authors report that availability of telepsychiatry has increased rapidly in recent years, with almost 30% of facilities offering these services in 2017...." (*Spivak, S., et al., "Telepsychiatry use in U.S. mental health facilities, 2010-2017," Psychiatric Services, 2020*)

2. "Telehealth innovation is thought to offer many opportunities, including improvement of the patient's experience, increased health care access, and reduction in health care costs.... Psychotherapy provided by telemental health has demonstrated efficacy in reducing pain, disability, depression, and anxiety comparable to traditional face-to-face encounters and without significant risks or adverse effects...."

"There has been broad bipartisan support to increase access to telehealth at the federal level... On March 6, HB 6074, the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response

Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020... revised regulations that previously limited the patient location during telehealth encounters for Medicare patients.... [The] bill allowed patients to receive services at home using their telephone [and] penalties would be waived for HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) violations against health care providers that serve patients in good faith through everyday communication technologies.... Many states have made legislative or regulatory changes to loosen restrictions and increase telemental health access as well as reimbursement." (*"Expanding Telemental Health in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic," Psychiatric Times, 4/9/20*)

In Santa Clara County, **Todd Landreneau**, with Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System, wrote, "Providers are being empowered to service clients wherever they are.... Reaching those most at risk is a priority and the use of telehealth is one modality to provide this type of outreach. Currently, providers are using Skype and FaceTime...."

General Meeting Updates

April 14 General Meeting Summary Ask a Therapist



April's General Meeting was NAMI-SCC's first virtual meeting, and our featured speaker was **Lesa Pascali**, a marriage and family therapist with extensive experience working with people living with serious mental illness.

Pascali began her career with the SCC Sheriff's Department and often worked with the incarcerated.

She noticed a pattern of recidivism among those with mental illness. "Without treatment many people cycle in and out of the system," Pascali said.

Today, Pascali has a company, Life Skills Planning, and works with people who are new to their diagnosis to develop confidence by mastering life skills. In her talk, Pascali touched on the effects that the shelter-in-place order is having on people's mental health and answered questions on the Zoom platform. She suggested that people take this time to adopt new, healthy habits; embrace self-care; try a new hobby or use the internet to learn a new language. She also recommended that people limit the hours they spend watching or reading the news.

Pascali offered pro bono services during this difficult time and encouraged the audience to contact her directly at **408-660-6038** or lifeskillplan@yahoo.com

Upcoming General Meeting on May 12 Estate Planning & Special Needs Trusts



Special needs families have special considerations when planning for the future of their loved ones with disabilities; for example, which public benefits might my disabled child qualify for, and how do I protect those benefits? How can my child take advantage of the new CalABLE account? How can planning for those with mental health challenges differ from those with

other special needs? Why might I need a stand-alone special needs trust instead of the trust being imbedded into a revocable trust?

In this presentation, attorney **Ellen Cookman** will take a deep dive into these essential planning questions, provide best practices on the intersection between special needs trusts and CalABLE accounts, and more.

Cookman is the owner of Cookman Law, PC in Palo Alto. She is a Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law from the California State Bar Board of Legal Specialization. She received her J.D. from UC Berkeley School of Law and her LLM in Estate Planning, Trusts and Probate from Golden Gate University.

NAMIWalks Update



Dear NAMIWalkers, Volunteers and Supporters,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank every single one of you who have participated in NAMIWalks Silicon Valley. For the past two years I have been the Walk Manager for NAMI National's fifth largest walk event in the country. It has been a wonderful experience managing such an important

event for an incredibly worthy cause.

NAMIWalks Silicon Valley is more than a walk event, it is a chance for us to come together, share our experience, and show up for our cause to fight against stigma associated with mental

illness. Now more than ever we have to rally for the cause to raise awareness about mental health conditions. We need to share our stories with people in the hope of inspiring them to join our cause, and we need to come together to make a difference. I'm asking all of you to register for 2020 NAMIWalks Silicon Valley by visiting www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley, consider starting a family or corporate team, share your personal story of triumph, and ask people to support you in your efforts to raise money for NAMI-Walks Silicon Valley, which supports both NAMI-Santa Clara County and San Mateo County.

I want to close by expressing how each one of you has taught me lessons about living well, embracing my own differences, and leading by example. I will take these lessons with me.

Stay strong, stay well.

Sincerely,

Shanna Webb

NAMI Conferences

NAMI National Convention - July 15-18, 2020

The NAMI National Convention 2020 will be held at the **Atlanta Marriott Marquis at 265 Peachtree Center Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA.**

Attendees must register for the convention before booking their rooms, and the registration fee includes activities beginning the evening of Wednesday, July 15, through the NAMI Closing Night Event on Saturday, July 18.

NAMI is actively monitoring developments surrounding COVID-19. At this time, NAMIcon 2020 is still scheduled for July 15-18 in Atlanta. NAMI is following the advice of the Centers for Disease Control and the federal government and will respond accordingly regarding any event cancellation recommendations for the summer timeframe.

For more information about the convention and registration, go to www.nami.org/convention

NAMI California Conference - October 12-13, 2020

Because of the COVID-19 crisis, the next NAMI California Conference has been rescheduled for Monday, October 12 & Tuesday, October 13, 2020, in Sacramento at the **Hyatt Regency Sacramento, 1209 L Street, Sacramento, CA**

Note about booking hotel rooms: Because of restrictions to protect the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels rooms will not be available for booking before May. Check the NAMI California website for updated information: www.namica.org

Here is the link for registration: <https://namica.org/conference/registration/>

NAMI Spotlight: Rafal Klopotoski

2017 was a pivotal year for **Rafal Klopotoski**. He was in a meaningless job, had an opioid addiction, and he had a mental health breakdown. (Rafal had been prescribed opioids for pain after two surgeries, but found that they also stabilized his mood. After seven years of "managing" his pain and mood, he lost his marriage and almost lost access to his sons.) While in the hospital, he was finally diagnosed with bipolar disorder and began to receive proper treatment. On the last day of 2017, Rafal arrived at NAMI to attend a Connection Recovery Support Group meeting and, pretty much, never left. In August 2018, he started facilitating Connection Group meetings and in October 2019 became the Connection Group Lead Coordinator. Rafal is also part of the Peer Mentoring team and educates people through IOOV presentations and other outreach efforts.

Rafal was born, raised, and educated in Poland. Shortly after graduating from the Polish Film, Television and Theater Academy in 1981, he moved to California where he worked in theater as

an actor and then as a director. Rafal received a Master of Fine Arts degree from UCLA in 1997 and continued working in theater until 2008.

Rafal lives in Palo Alto with his two cats (Perry and Puma) and Fergus, an old yellow lab mix dog. In his free time, he

researches World War I (his favorites are the Western Front and the Battle of Britain); listens to a wide array of music; reads nonfiction mostly related to mental illness, psychology, and history; and also reads fiction, murder mysteries being his preferred genre.



Stimulus Checks for SSI

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS), working in partnership with the Treasury Department and the Social Security Administration (SSA), announced that recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) will automatically receive Economic Impact Payments, i.e., stimulus checks, with no further action needed on their part. The \$1,200 checks are likely to go out in early May. These checks will not affect benefits. (This also applies to recipients of SSDI.)

Note that checks will be sent out by IRS, not SSA. You should receive payments by direct deposit, Direct Express debit card, or paper check, just as you usually receive your SSI benefits.

Those senior citizens who rely on Social Security and do not file a tax return will have their checks deposited directly to their bank account.

Visit the IRS website, [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov), if you have questions.

Mental Health Month

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Dates to Note

- **National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day, May 7:** NAMI joins communities around the country in raising awareness of the mental health needs of America’s youth.
- **National Anxiety and Depression Awareness Week, May 11–19.**
- **NAMI Day of Hope / May 30:** Stay tuned for details in the coming weeks.
- **El Camino Hospital** will host a conference via Zoom in early June. Stay tuned for details.

Thank You, Dan Werder



Dan Werder, our IT contractor, joined NAMI-SCC’s team as a volunteer around 5½ years ago when he and his wife arrived from Canada. Dan had worked with nonprofits in Canada helping

them to set up and integrate their computer systems. Within a year of his arrival, our IT team was able to do this for us as well.

In the last month during the COVID-19 crisis, Dan has dedicated time and effort to make it possible to move our services to remote access and Zoom technology! We can’t thank Dan enough.

Membership/Donation Form

Donate, renew, or join NAMI-SCC (also at www.namisantaclara.org)

Individual (\$40)

Household (\$60)

Open Door (\$5)

Renewal Membership

New Membership

I would like to donate:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$250

Other \$ _____

In Honor of In Memory of _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

My company has a Matching Gift Program: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

To pay online, go to www.namisantaclara.org and click on “Join NAMI.”

Learn how to include NAMI-SCC in your estate plan. On our website go to “Get Involved/Planned Giving.”

NAMI-SCC welcomes your membership. Memberships are valid for one year. Part of the membership dues enrolls you at NAMI State and NAMI National, which in turn automatically registers you as a member at all levels. Your additional donation helps ensure that we are able to maintain our office, as well as our educational programs. Your membership and donations are tax deductible. **Tax# 94-2430956**

NAMI-Santa Clara County Community Resource & Support Center

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Phone: 408-453-0400

Fax: 408-453-2100

www.namisantaclara.org

office@namisantaclara.org

Office Hours: 10 A.M.-6 P.M. M-F

To reach our Warmline, call 408-453-0400 Option 1; after hours, press Option 4.

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