

DEAR FRIENDS & FAMILY OF NAMI-SANTA CLARA COUNTY

November, 2020



In the face of COVID-19, many people are asking the question, "How can we best help those with mental health conditions?" This is important but there is another question that almost no one is asking: "What can those with mental health challenges teach us?"

A pandemic has brought anxiety, paranoia, obsessive compulsive behaviors, and isolation to all of our doors. There are those among us who dealt with such things and offer rich insight and skills born from their ongoing struggles. Here is something you can do for your own mental health (and for theirs): ask for their wisdom.

This year, we bring you inspirational stories from Santa Clara County community members who have managed mental health issues during COVID-19 with the support of NAMI-SCC.

Escucha, Pero Escucha Bien

This pandemic paired with depression and anxiety did not bode well for me. Thanks to NAMI-Santa Clara County, I have been able to deal with my ups and downs. I'm concerned for my family in Mexico, especially my mother. For a culture that will always have large get-togethers with family, isolating is very difficult.

Although there is so much stigma around mental health in the Latino community, my family and friends know they can turn to me as they deal with isolation and anxiety (or nerves as they call it).

The education I have received regarding mental health has been helpful in talking to my loved ones in Mexico. I don't really talk though. I just listen. I can empathize with them and help them to see there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

What can we do to help one another cope with this coronavirus? Escucha, Pero Escucha Bien. Listen, just listen.



Organize Your Day

I organize my days to be productive and give myself a sense of achievement. Most mornings I begin the day with a cup of coffee in the living room, take my pre-breakfast meds, and write a "to-do" list for the day.

I start with easy, short-term goals such as making my bed. Next I proceed to somewhat more complicated tasks, such as starting a load of laundry or mowing the lawn. Last, I add relatively long-term goals, such as managing my bank account or changing the oil in my car.

Because I take so many meds—both prescribed and over-the-counter, vitamins and other supplements-- I made a weekly timetable have all my meds and supplements listed.

All of this still leaves me "wiggle room," or freedom, to walk around the block, listen to music, or watch TV.

Use Imagination

My grandson thinks he's a dragon. At 2½, he stomps around the house breathing his fiery breath on his parents and his sister. During a global pandemic, a two-year-old spewing imaginary flames—and untold aerosols—into the air is an epidemiologist's nightmare but for me, it's a reminder of how to survive.

I battle OCD. Now with COVID-19, I vacillate between wanting to shout, "See, I knew the door knobs were a problem" to being worn out by taking groceries into the house. My dragon grandson, however, dismisses every threat with a roar.

Maybe someday I'll work up to seeing myself as something other than a person plagued by fear. A dragon? No, that's not really my style. I'll be a fairy who meets the coronavirus with glitter-gold dust—and a mask.

With help from friends like **YOU**, NAMI-SCC has been dedicated to serving the community through education, support, and advocacy for **45 years**.

Research shows that **1 in 5 people** are currently living with a serious mental health condition and it is likely that you have a friend, family member, or colleague who is experiencing it. Show them you care by donating to NAMI-SCC.

Last year, NAMI-SCC served **10,100** people through educational courses, community presentations, warm line assistance, peer support, and support groups with **zero fees**, but we cannot do it alone. Your donation is appreciated, and will be used to support people in Santa Clara County find wellness and recovery.

Any amount will help.

With Deep Gratitude: **Beverly Lozoff** Co-President **Vic Ojakian** Co-President **Rovina Nimbalkar** Executive Director

NAMI-Santa Clara County 1150 S. Bascom Ave. Suite 24 San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 453-0400 www.namisantaclara.org EIN 94-2430946