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NAMI Santa Clara County

April 2021



nami
National Alliance on Mental Illness

NEWS

NAMI-SCC Family Jail Support Group Helps Families Advocate for Loved Ones

By Moryt Milo

It's 6 P.M. on the first Wednesday of the month and families and friends sign on to Zoom in the age of COVID. Fear and desperation can be seen on their faces. They need help. Their child or other family member is in jail.

Kathy B. and Carol, the facilitators of the group, feel their fright. They understand it intimately. Both their sons have been in jail and gone through the court system. Both their sons have underlying mental health issues that led to their arrests. And at the time neither Kathy B. nor Carol knew how to navigate the criminal justice system to help their child. They scrambled, persisted, and figured it out. Their experience birthed the NAMI-SCC Family Jail Support Group.

Prior to 2017, frantic calls to the NAMI Warmline steered families to support group meetings. But there were no specific tools targeted for families with loved ones in jail. That has changed. When Kathy B.

and Carol receive a Warmline referral, they quickly reach out to the families with a wealth of information that includes direct contacts at the jail and paperwork to advocate for their family member.

"Our first goal is to support and help them navigate the complex system," Carol said. The women want families to know they can be part of the solution. "We are not completely powerless in what we can do," Kathy B. added.

The first family action is to complete Form AB 1424, which identifies the family member as having a mental illness, substance use problem, or dual diagnosis. This form can impact how a person's arrest is handled, diverting it from the criminal court to the behavioral health or drug court.

The completed form goes to Olivia Fojas, a licensed clinical social worker at Custody Health Services in the SCC Main Jail. She serves as liaison between family members

and advocacy groups like NAMI. Kathy B. and Carol also provide families with a detailed Jail/Court Contact Sheet outlining the navigation system.

In addition to the quantifiable tools, the Family Jail Support Group gives families a place "to tell their stories. A place where you can go and not be judged. Where you have people who understand what you are going through. This is so powerful and healing," Carol said.

To read the full article about the Family Jail Support Group, go to <https://namisantaclara.org/nami-santa-clara-blogs/>

The NAMI-SCC Family Jail Support Group meets the first Wednesday of the month from 6–7:30 P.M. For more information, email jcs@namisantaclara.org or visit www.namisantaclara.org

Installation of NAMI-SCC Board Officers 2021–2022

NAMI-Santa Clara County's annual election of officers for 2021–2022 was held at the March general meeting. Installation of officers will take place at the general meeting on April 13.

Please note that our Board of Directors consists of officers and members at large. Our officers are listed at the right. The members at large, appointed by the board presidents, are **Karen Deloumi**, **Frank Alioto**, and **Moryt Milo**. One additional position rounds out the Board: past president, **Navah Statman**.

NAMI-Santa Clara County board officers are:

Victor Ojakian, Beverly Lozoff—Co-Presidents
Juan Perez, Harold Brown, Uday Kapoor—VPs
Steve Wade—Treasurer
Peter Newman—Secretary

Eating Disorders Are on the Rise as the Pandemic Continues

By Regina Barhydt

It's been over a year since the COVID-19 virus came to the United States. While we are now getting closer to the end of this pandemic, it comes as no surprise that mental health problems are skyrocketing.

EDRC, the Eating Disorders Resource Center, has seen a huge increase in the number of clients and families who contact us for help. The isolation, the daily onslaught of negative news, and a sense of hopelessness can trigger disordered eating behaviors. And they don't just affect young women. Eating disorders occur across all genders, ages, races, and socio-economic statuses. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses and they are often co-morbid with anxiety, depression, and OCD. Genetics, environment, and personality are all factors that can trigger an eating disorder. As with all mental and physical illnesses, early intervention is key to recovery.

If you or a loved one shows [signs](#) of an eating disorder, we are here for you. You can reach us at **408-356-1212** or at info@edrcsv.org. Our website—<https://edrcsv.org>—has a wealth of resources including an extensive directory of professionals who treat eating disorders. EDRC also offers [free support groups](#) for those with eating disorders and their families.

Have you experienced an eating disorder in the past? Researchers at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are looking for volunteers with a history of disordered eating to participate in a new research study, the Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI). The goals are to understand how genetics influences these devastating illnesses and to make a genuine contribution to the diagnosis, management, and treatment of eating disorders.

NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2021

By Kyle Galimba, NAMIWalks Manager



Dear NAMI-Santa Clara County,

My name is **Kyle Galimba** and I am NAMI-SCC's Walk manager. I'm supposed to tell you about this year's Walk, but first I want to personally thank you. Last year was my very first Walk. I started at NAMI last June in the heat of the pandemic when virtual events were still a new thing, if you can believe that! NAMIWalks managers across

the country have a very supportive community and everyone told me that the first Walk is the hardest. But despite everything we persevered and pulled off an amazing event.

NAMIWalks Silicon Valley has its second virtual event on October 9, 2021, the National Day of Unity! Our Rally and Kick-Off Event will take place on Saturday, June 5.

Our NAMIWalks Silicon Valley website is officially live! Please visit www.namiwalks.org/siliconvalley to register, make your teams, donate, sponsor, and connect with your NAMI-SCC family. Please continue to check our website and social media for updates.

If you have questions about our upcoming events, please email kgalimba@namisantaclara.org

General Meeting News

March 9 General Meeting Summary "Ask the Doctor"

At our March 9 general meeting, **Brandon Bentzley**, MD, PhD, joined us for "Ask the Doctor." Most of the evening provided an opportunity for audience members to ask questions on topics such as medications and treatments.

Dr. Bentzley is a psychiatrist and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Stanford's School of Medicine. His current research focuses on the role of dopamine in economic decisions and developing neuro-stimulation-based treatments for severe depression and suicidality.

Dr. Bentzley began by addressing some common themes used on questions he received in advance, e.g., books (*An Unquiet Mind* by Kay Redfield Jamison, PhD; *The Center Cannot Hold* by Elyn Saks; *Feeling Good* and *When Panic Attacks* by David Burns, MD); bipolar anxiety and depression; intramuscular meds; meds for suicidality.

For the remainder of the evening, Dr. Bentzley answered a variety of questions posed by audience members.

NOTE: You can watch this presentation as well as past ones by going to our website—www.namisantaclara.org—under News and Events and clicking on "General Meetings."

Upcoming April 13 General Meeting "Falling into the Housing Gap"



Nowhere in Santa Clara County are mental health needs more prevalent than among those with severe mental illness. Compound these health challenges with a lack of housing, and those who suffer from severe mental illness become homeless or land in jail.

Even those who do stabilize through hospitalization or residential treatment facilities fall into the housing gap dilemma once discharged. They often don't have the means or cannot find an affordable room or apartment to rent. Those who need supportive housing or have developmental disabilities and mental illness fare no better. If families cannot take in their family members, the cycle of homelessness and illness persists. Everyone suffers.

At the April 13th general meeting from 7–8:30 P.M., we will explore the housing gap problem and some solutions. Former **Sen. Jim Beall** will explain where mental health dollars come from to support housing needs and how we might leverage state funds for counties to enhance subsidies. Sen. Beall's remarks will be followed by a panel with Momentum for Health's President/CEO **David Mineta**, Deputy County Executive **Ky Le**, NAMI peer mentor **John Duckworth**, and NAMI family member **Matt Jacobsen** exploring ways to change the narrative.

Upcoming Events at NAMI-Santa Clara County

By Kyle Galimba

A New Kind of Warrior

We have been teasing it for a while, but we are proud to officially say that NAMI-Santa Clara County is preparing an event with the Golden State Warriors! The Bay Area's favorite team has expressed concern for mental health in 2020 and since then we have been carefully constructing a wonderful event for you. In the month of May, NAMI-SCC will participate in the Warriors' "Mind, Body, and Spirit" series. This is a week-long event that focuses on self-care and mental wellness. Different mental health organizations from around the Bay have joined forces to make this a fun and helpful experience. It's not just activities. The Warriors will top off the series with a basketball game against another official NBA team, and a mental health panel discussion to see how our community takes action to defend our brothers and sisters afflicted by mental health issues.

We are tremendously grateful for this opportunity and proud of the Warriors for starting the conversation of mental health and professional athleticism. Our favorite players are as much human beings as they are heroes. There's so much more to say and we're excited to share it with you! For now, please keep a lookout for updates on this fantastic event in our emails, social media, newsletter, website, and more!

Understanding Unity with NAMI-SCC

There is beauty and power in unity. We must be united in heart and mind. One world, one people.

— Lailah Gifty Akita

NAMI-Santa Clara County introduces "Understanding Unity," a three-part diversity campaign designed to explore the relationship between mental health and racial identity.

This project is already underway. From now on, you will find mental health resources related to race and identity on our website. (Please visit <https://namisantaclara.org/resources>) Here is an example of how one might use the resources: If an Asian-American friend reached out to me for help, I might say, "Check out NAMI-Santa Clara County. If you scroll down the resource page on the website, you'll find new resources for AAPI-related mental health concerns."

We will also release surveys to give participants the opportunity to voice their opinion about their cultural experiences with NAMI-SCC. All data collected will be used to improve the experience at NAMI and ensure that we are in synch with the community. Participants will choose surveys with which they identify; for example, if I am a person of African ancestry, I would fill out the African Ancestry/BIPOC survey. The surveys will soon be available on the resource page as well.

Finally, it isn't all reading and surveys. The third part of "Understanding Unity" is a multimedia event series that will take place in May. Without giving too much away, we will have an amazing musical showcase and panel discussion with local and national diversity influencers. This will be like nothing we've done before, so please stay tuned!

NAMI-SCC Legislative Updates: SB 1976 & AB 988

SB 1976, Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) in Santa Clara County

A special meeting of the Health and Hospital Committee of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors was held on March 24 to consider implementing Laura's Law in our County. The meeting ended with Supervisor **Joe Simitian** making the following motion: "I will turn to the clerk to indicate there is a motion on the floor to forward this item to the board [of supervisors] for consideration and action on the 25th of May and that goes with a favorable recommendation for an opt-in position by our board. May I ask the clerk to take the roll."

Our Board of Directors and Executive Director submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors urging them to vote to implement AOT, Laura's Law, in our County and not to opt out.

Wherever implemented in California, the AOT program has shown widespread success in providing needed treatment, reducing hospitalizations, homelessness, and incarceration, and with significant cost savings.

Information about AOT appears on our website, www.namisantaclara.org, along with a sample letter. We encourage you to personalize the sample letter and send it to the Board of Supervisors before May 25 when they will vote to implement Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) or opt out.

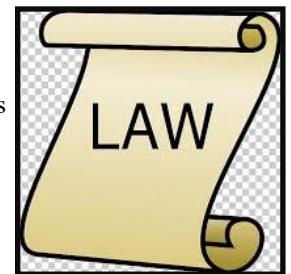
AB 988

Proposed legislation AB 988 will transform the way California responds to mental health emergencies to ensure those in crisis receive the urgent care they need. The system uses an easy-to-remember 3-digit phone number—988—as an alternative to 911 so individuals and their families know and can trust that help is only one call away.

Assembly Bill 988 will implement the new nationwide 988 Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Hotline that all states must implement by July 2022. It replaces an under-utilized, hard-to-remember 10-digit number.

Call centers will connect people calling or texting 988 with trained counselors and dispatch mobile crisis support teams staffed by mental health professionals and trained peers rather than police officers. The bill mandates that calls to 911 reporting a mental health crisis are to be transferred to 988.

"Our nation's response to mental health emergencies must no longer be led by police, but rather by mental health professionals who can stabilize individuals and connect them to appropriate treatment," said former U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy. "AB 988 will facilitate development of a robust mental health crisis response system in California—one that puts people on the road to recovery, instead of behind bars."



Youth Mental Health First Aid



www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders in youth. This 6-hour training gives adults who work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to adolescents (ages

6-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

Who should take the course?

Teachers, School Staff, Coaches, Camp counselors, Youth Group Leaders, Parents, People who work with youth

What does the course cover?

- ♦ Common signs and symptoms of mental illness in this age group, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- ♦ Common signs and symptoms of substance abuse
- ♦ How to interact with a child or adolescent in crisis
- ♦ How to connect the adolescent with help
- ♦ **NEW:** Expanded content on trauma, addiction, self-care, and the impact of social media and bullying

There are three learning options: virtual, in-person, and blended learning (a combination of virtual and in-person).

Training will be held on the following days/times via Zoom:

Thursday or Friday, Apr. 15, 16, 30 ~ 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.

Thursday or Friday May 6, 14, 28 ~ 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.

To be registered for a training course, you must be 18 years of age or older. Please email LMena@MomentumMH.org with your name/email/phone number/training date you would like to attend. There is no charge for this training.

Vacancy on Behavioral Health Board (BHB)

Currently there is one vacancy on the Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Board (BHB) and we encourage NAMI members, family members, and clients to apply. It is a rare opportunity to have your say!

The BHB is comprised of members of the community at large, clients, and family members of clients of the behavioral health system. The Board's duties include reviewing and evaluating the community's behavioral health needs, facilities, and special problems, as well as advising the Board of Supervisors and County Behavioral Health Director.

To learn more about the Board and to apply, go to:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/cob/bnc/Documents/Behavioral%20Health%20Board%20Application.pdf>

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

Join, renew, and/or donate to NAMI-SCC

I would like to join:

☐ Individual (\$40)

☐ Household (\$60)

☐ Open Door (\$5)

☐ New Membership

☐ Renewal Membership

☐ My company has a Matching Gift Program: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

I would like to donate:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250

Other _____

☐ In Honor of: ☐ In Memory of

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

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

Learn how to include NAMI-SCC in your estate plan by going to "Get Involved/Planned Giving" on our website.

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 ID #94-2430956**

NAMI-Santa Clara County Community Resource &

Support Center

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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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