

*I wish I had had someone who understood and could help me learn how to cope and manage my illness. You can overcome your illness and be aware of what's going on within you.*

– Peer Mentor and NAMI-SCC  
Assistant Program Coordinator

### **Our Vision for the Program**

Our vision for this program is to increase mental wellness and encourage independence for persons with a diagnosed mental health condition through the support of their peers. The Community Peer Program was created for those with a mental illness (Participant) who are motivated to establish stability, the capacity to maintain wellness, and the practice of self-care through mentorship from someone who has lived experience (Peer).

### **What Mentors Are Saying...**

*When I first meet someone, I only have a first name and phone number. I like that. I don't want to know any more about them until I meet them. This way there are no preconceived notions. No bias. We all start from the same place. I want to get to know the person, and I am sure they feel the same.*

*I wanted to advocate for others with mental illness. This helped me to stay well and I enjoyed the work.*

*I want them to know they are not alone. That you are not a misfit. What motivates me so much is knowing I didn't have this program. The work pays me back in infinite ways.*

### **What People Are Saying...**

*The direct integration of a peer (NAMI Mentor) during a person's recovery has been instrumental in providing hope to individuals we provide with treatment in our Continuing Care Program.*

– El Camino Hospital Mental  
Health & Addiction Services

*Peers have been on the journey that patients are now struggling with. They can form rare bonds and break down barriers and help our patients open up. They usually get information we can't from the patient, information that can provide valuable insight and can help the medical team assess the patient's needs.*

– Stanford Addiction Medicine  
Dual Diagnosis Clinic

*The peer mentor experience was a 'gift,' and I would tell others, 'It's a free program. You have nothing to lose, give it a try.'*

– Participant, NAMI-SCC  
Community Peer Program



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## COMMUNITY PEER PROGRAM



National Alliance on Mental Illness

## Santa Clara County



Learn to maintain wellness  
in your mental health journey  
from someone who has  
lived experience.

## What Can I Expect From This Program?

The peers in this program are NOT counselors or therapists. They do not fix, save, give advice, or set a participant straight in their time together. Instead, peers help establish S.M.A.R.T. goals, recommend resources that may assist the participant, suggest opportunities for social engagement, encourage self-advocacy with the participant's providers, and outline potential areas for lifestyle adjustments. They share the journey of living with a mental health condition and work with the participant in taking steps towards their wellness and independence.

For up to four (4) months a Peer will provide support and encouragement to the Participant in the following ways:

- **Two (2) calls per week from a Peer, lasting 15 – 30 minutes**
- **One (1) visit per week, lasting 1-3 hours within the local community (Santa Clara County).**

The Participant will set goals, practice self-care techniques, and become more independent. The Peer will share resources, promote self-advocacy, and present options for growth.

After receiving treatment and following their doctor's directions, the Participant will remain open to:

- Attendance at **support and/or recovery groups** suggested by the Peer.
- Identify and **practice coping skills** with the Peer that work best for the Participant.
- Practice **social engagement** by meeting outside their home or occasionally for coffee/snack.
- **Adopt self-care routines** that promote wellness and instill confidence in this Participant.

