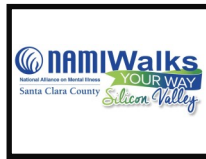




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NAMI-Santa Clara County

June 2022



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National Alliance on Mental Illness

NEWS

May 10 General Meeting Summary Attorney Explains Importance of Public Benefits

By Moryt Milo

Ellen Cookman is an attorney whose practice specializes in Estate Planning and Special Needs Trusts. Five years ago, Cookman's profession touched her directly when her older son, now nine, was diagnosed with autism.

"I went from being an advocate to a parent," said Cookman.

Cookman describes the disabled population as an invisible group, and why understanding public benefits and how to obtain them is critical for individuals with severe mental illnesses.

Yet, the road to public benefits—health care and income streams—is no simple task. Families need to know how to navigate the system. Even then "it depends" on each person's situation, Cookman said.

Individuals with severe mental illness may qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) depending on the circumstances. In both cases, however, the disability definition is the same.

The key is knowing that the definition is more than just a diagnosis. Individuals must have a diagnosis and also be "physically and mentally impaired for 12 months or longer that prevents the person from engaging in substantial gainful employment" to meet the definition of being disabled. The person is then deemed eligible for public benefits, Cookman said.

In the case of SSI, the benefits are needs based. The person must be poor with resources no greater than \$2,000. Assets such as a home, car, and life insurance do not count toward the \$2,000 limit. Bank accounts and receiving an allowance do and can't exceed \$2,000. If the person qualifies, the individual could receive up to \$1,040 a month as of 2022. The individual will also qualify for Medi-Cal—the state's public healthcare program—and may qualify for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS).

Medi-Cal eligibility requirements are going to change from the \$2,000 cap to \$130,000 as of July 2022 and resource caps go away completely in 2024. But the SSI cap of \$2,000 will stay the same.

There are other individuals who may qualify for SSDI. This benefit is considered an entitlement, which is based on the amount of time a person has worked. These benefits can also be received through a parent's work history. If a parent is collecting social security benefits as of age 62 or older and the child was disabled before age 22, that child can receive 50% of the parent's social security benefits. That increases to 75% upon the parent's death.

Cookman is candid about the public benefits system—no matter which benefits one applies for. It's complex work, she said. The first time around most people are denied, but she encourages everyone not to give up. "If at first you don't qualify, appeal and appeal again," she said.

To read the full article, go to [NAMI blogs](#) on our website.

To watch Ellen Cookman's full presentation on public benefits and income streams, click on the [NAMI Santa Clara YouTube Channel](#).

NAMI National Convention (NAMICon): June 14-16, 2022



NAMICon is just around the corner, on June 14-16, and once again, NAMI National's annual convention will take place **virtually**. The full schedule of workshops, plenaries, and special events is available. Don't miss this opportunity to hear inspiring speakers and learn from mental health leaders and experts at the largest community gathering of mental health advocates in the U.S. NAMICon will offer more than 30 workshops dedicated to mental health research, crisis response systems, promoting equitable care and support for underserved communities, and youth-focused programming. For more information and to register (\$10 for students and peers, \$15 for NAMI members, \$25 for nonmembers), go to <https://nami.org/Get-Involved/Attend-the-NAMI-National-Convention>

At the Helpline Desk the Phone Rings...

By Nicole Wiltshire

The NAMI-SCC Helpline (408-453-0400, Opt 1) is often the first place people call to find mental health information, support, and/or resources. Helpline staff provide a vital service to the community. Helpline Specialist Nicole Wiltshire shares her perspective on working on the Helpline.

The phone rings at the Helpline desk, and we respond.

For me, this is the most important aspect of the work I do on the NAMI Helpline: to make that initial human connection. Everything else follows.

A family member on the line may never have called us before; in distress, not knowing where to turn, they hear a voice on the line. Their loved one is in deep psychosis and unable to recognize a need for care. We can't provide clinical direction, but what we can provide is a listening ear, compassion, and a sense of hope and guidance. We are able to make suggestions and connect them to family support, education, and resources.

Another call comes to us from someone just out of the hospital. Their whole world completely rocked by a new diagnosis. Life is no longer what they thought it would be. They are feeling shat-tered. Reaching out to the Helpline is a very courageous call to make during such a difficult time.

We listen, provide compassion, validation, and encouragement, and connect them to the fellowship of other peers. We want them to know that NAMI is a safe place to come to.

A third caller may request therapy. We are not therapists but will try and find the best resources available. These are just a few examples of the calls received on the Helpline each day.

I am very grateful as a family member to be just one small part of a cohesive team of family members and peers responding to calls five days a week. I think of the Helpline as one collective voice. I am present and alone with each person who calls, but I also recognize in that moment I have a team walking beside me. I know that I can call upon my manager and any one of my Helpline colleagues for support after an especially painful call.

When a call comes to a close and the caller asks, "May I talk with you again?" we are able to say, "The next time you call you will be able to talk with a different Helpline member who may be able to provide a different perspective as well as new ideas and resources." That's the beauty of the Helpline for me. When I think of the NAMI Helpline and the calls we receive, I think of Rumi: "*Out beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there.*"

We are all in this journey together meeting each other in that field with no judgment, doing what we can to leave no stone unturned.

Upcoming June 14 General Meeting The Social Work Law Enforcement (SWLE) Project

The Social Work Law Enforcement (SWLE) Project, a pilot program launched in August 2020, was created by **Dr. Isabel Logan**, an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Eastern Connecticut State University, and **Lt. Matthew Solak** of the Willimantic (Connecticut) Police Department. The project has evolved into a statewide collaboration that may serve as a national model for the emerging field of police social work. It was recently featured during a NAMI Conference on Crisis Response Solutions.



Co-founder and Executive Director Logan, a licensed clinical social worker, said the program may likely be one of the first specialized training programs in the country to prepare social workers and police officers to work alongside each other. "Despite police social work being around for decades, this is still a very new area," Logan said. "There has been limited specialized training in this field."



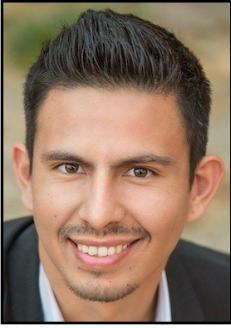
Dr. Logan along with co-founder and Law Enforcement Director Lt. Solak will talk about how the program started, how it has grown, and how it has helped improve service for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

Dr. Isabel Logan, Ed.D., LCSW earned a BSW from Saint Joseph College (presently the University of Saint Joseph), an MSW from Fordham University, and a Doctorate of Education from the University of Hartford. Before joining the faculty at Eastern Connecticut State University in 2016, she worked for 20 years as a social worker for the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services. In 2001, Dr. Logan was selected to assist with developing the Cultural Proficiency in Drug Court Practice: Training of Trainers Manual for drug court professionals. Dr. Logan has received many awards for her work.

Lt. Matthew Solak is a 17-year veteran of the Willimantic Police Department, presently serving in the Administration Division. In 2021, Lt. Solak testified before the Connecticut General Assembly on topics pertaining to Police and Social Work Partnerships and was a panel presenter at the first annual National Conference on Police Social Work. Lt. Solak is a graduate of Eastern Connecticut State University and is presently pursuing his Master's Degree in English from Trinity College.

NOTE: Past General Meeting presentations can be viewed by going to our website, www.namisantaclara.org, under News & Events and clicking "General Meetings."

Introducing Andres Florez, NAMIWalks SV Coordinator



Dear NAMI-SCC Supporters,

It is with great excitement that I introduce myself as the new NAMIWalks Silicon Valley Coordinator. I want to tell you a little about myself and what NAMI-SCC means to me.

Almost a decade ago, I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. While in the hospital, I saw a presentation by NAMI-SCC about mental health. During that presentation, I experienced hope for the first time since

my diagnosis. I promised myself that I would recover and I would do presentations like that one. A few years later but still struggling, I started doing presentations for NAMI-SCC. It was my only income at the time. During those first, decisive years of my recovery, NAMI asked only one thing: Come as you are.

While at NAMI-SCC, I started making friends and found an ally and a second mom in Kathy Forward. Kathy and the people who worked at NAMI were not only kind but relentless in their fight for mental health. Kathy and her team secured a grant that paid for a program where people like me, coming out of the hospital, could have a mentor—someone farther along in their recovery—to help them. Later on, I became one of those mentors and once again the financial support, significance, and purpose it gave me to help others in need made my life worth living. Many people have since benefited from this program.

I'm being 100% candid when I say that I don't know where I'd be without the help and support NAMI-SCC gave me and my

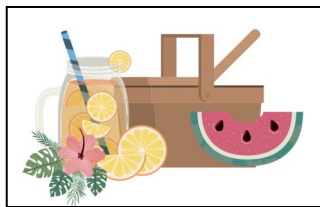
family. My relationship with NAMI-SCC and its people has lasted over a decade and I'm happy to report that I'm doing much better. I have a strong family support system, I have a girlfriend, my daughter, and my dog who look after me. I have since been able to leverage my studies at San Jose State University where I received a Bachelor's Degree in business management to start a life coaching business. Most importantly, I'm happy and complete with what happened. I believe that my mental illness was a test of endurance and patience. It taught me fortitude and perseverance. It taught me to be humble and to listen, but most importantly, it taught me that love can be found in the most unexpected places.

I leave this heartfelt message with you and end with a huge thanks for your contribution. Without your support, the resources available to me might not have been possible and that would have had a serious impact on my life. I want to invite you again this year to join us as a team, individual, or sponsor for our NAMIWalks Silicon Valley, which I'm excited to announce will take place in person this year. Please save the date, **October 1, 2022**. The location of the walk is History Park at 1650 Senter Rd. in San Jose. To register for the Walk, go to namiwalks.org/siliconvalley

Once again, thank you for all your support, and let's make the world a better place for mental health.



NAMI-SCC Annual Picnic and NAMIWalks Kickoff Event



Save the Date: Saturday July 9, 2022 ~ Noon-3 P.M.

Almaden Lake Park
6099 Winfield Blvd, San Jose
Arroyo Picnic Area

Volunteers are needed.

https://namiscc.ivolunteer.com/picnic_002

Families Can Help

By Frank Alioto

Research overwhelmingly shows that when families take an active part in treatment of family members with mental health challenges, patient outcomes are better.

The family's knowledge of the patient and the patient's history are important. NAMI believes that the presence of a loved one should never be a substitute for medical delivery systems that provide for a person's treatment, but that treatment should be client and family oriented.

Family participation with the patient should be encouraged. The family can certainly help plan, monitor, and assist in treatment. They can also be helpful in evaluating the success of the administered therapies.

Family advocacy should always be encouraged. In many places, the mental health system is understaffed, underfinanced, stressed, and uncoordinated. Families can help fill in the care gaps.

Family members can become educated and helpful.

There may be situations in which patients do not want their families involved in their care at all. In such situations, their requests should be honored.

If possible, families should have a primary decision-making role in the care of their children.

Parents should be proactive on behalf of all children suffering from mental challenges. Such parents should be welcomed by those professionals treating their children.

Lastly, any family under stress from having a loved one suffering from a mental illness should have a caseworker or guide to ensure that their child or loved one is receiving the care and therapy they need. Families should not be expected to be able to navigate complex medical systems alone while under extreme duress.

NAMI CA Conference August 25-26, 2022

The 2022 NAMI California Annual State Conference will take place on Thursday & Friday, August 25-26, at the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa in Newport Beach, California.

To register, click here: <https://41339.thankyou4caring.org/2022-nami-california-annual-conference>

For info on booking a reservation at the Newport Beach Marriott, click here: <https://book.passkey.com/event/50318922/owner/24805/home>



Vincent Ngo Receives Community Hero Award

By Cindy McCalmont



Vincent Ngo, Coordinator for NAMI-SCC's FaithNet Vietnamese Team, received the 2022 Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Board Hero Educator Award.

As a family member and consumer, Vincent has worked tirelessly to combat the silence and stigma around mental health in the Vietnamese community, leading presentations such as MH 101;

How to Listen and Connect; The Model Minority Myth; and Intergenerational Trauma. Having just completed a Masters of Counseling and Psychology degree at Santa Clara University, Vincent will continue to be a Mental Health Hero in his work as a therapist.

Congratulations, Vincent, on your award and graduation!

Charitable Remainder Trusts

With a Charitable Remainder Trust, you can leave assets to care for yourself and loved ones with the remainder donated to a charity. For information, please go to:

<https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/guidance/philanthropy/charitable-remainder-trusts.html>

FaithNet Korean Team

By Michelle Joo

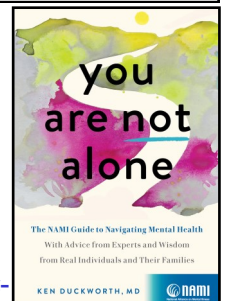


NAMI-SCC FaithNet Korean Team was recently awarded a generous two-year grant by KACF-SF Korean American Community Foundation of San Francisco (kacfsf.org) and was invited to attend their annual fundraising gala in May. A longtime volunteer, **Kyo Phu**, and a FaithNet Coordinator, **Michelle Joo**, attended the event where over \$1.1 million was raised, a record for their organization. It was a wonderful experience to represent NAMI and network with

other people working and supporting the Korean Community.

NAMI Book to Be Published

NAMI's first-ever book will be released this fall! **You Are Not Alone: The NAMI Guide to Navigating Mental Health** is now available to preorder. Written by NAMI Chief Medical Officer **Dr. Ken Duckworth**, the book is the essential resource for individuals and families seeking expert guidance on diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. All proceeds benefit NAMI and its mission. To preorder, visit www.zandoprojects.com/books/you-are-not-alone



NAMI-Santa Clara County Community Resource & Support Center

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Ph: 408-453-0400 Fax: 408-453-2100

Website: www.namisanclaara.org

Email: office@namisanclaara.org

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

To reach our Helpline, call 408-453-0400, Opt 1;
After hours, press Opt 4.

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JOIN AND BECOME A NAMI MEMBER NOW!

NAMI membership enables you to subscribe to the latest mental health updates, participate in online discussion groups, learn how to advocate in your community and add your voice to the mental health movement.

JOIN NAMI NOW!

