
NAMI EAST BAY NEWSLETTER

A local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

November-December 2018

Hearing the Consumer Voice

Wednesday, November 28

As family members, we experience our own lived experience as we watch the relatives we love struggle with mental illness. Many of our loved ones have difficulty sharing what they're going through, but if we understand their struggles, we may be able to support them better.

Towards that goal, we are so pleased to offer family members the opportunity to hear from some of our folks who carry a diagnosis of mental illness and who are articulate in being able to describe their perspective. Two of our board members will speak: one describing his ongoing process as he moved from being an individual with a high-level business position to being an individual with a mental illness; the other describing the issues he and fellow UC Berkeley students face as they deal with both academic and psychological issues. We will also be hearing from a participant in the Hearing Voices Network and someone from the PEERS (Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery) organization.

Please join us for an interesting conversation.

Speaker Meeting starts at 7:30 pm

Albany United Methodist Church

980 Stannage Avenue, Albany

Corner of Stannage and Marin

Meeting is free and open to the public.

Support Meetings

NAMI East Bay offers the following monthly support meetings:

- **Support and Share Group for Families of Adults** is held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. The next meetings are November 14, December 12, and January 9.

- **Support and Share Group for Families of Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults** is held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month: November 20, December 18, and January 15.

- **Connections Support Groups**—see the accompanying article on page 4.

Support Group Meetings are held at the Albany United Methodist Church, 7-9 pm. Enter through the gates to the right of the door on Stannage Avenue, turn left through the large room, go down the hall, and come up the stairs. Signs will be posted.

All support meetings are free to NAMI members and non-members, offering a chance to talk with others who understand, give emotional support, and share ways they have found to cope.

Family to Family Class

Our annual 12-week winter Family to Family Class will be held Thursday evenings, 6:30-9, January 17-April 4 at our Albany location. In this class, which is didactic with discussions and sharing, we cover diagnoses, communication, medications, brain function, research, problem solving, empathy, consumer perspective, and advocacy. It is an invaluable experience for families both new and old to this arena of mental illness. The class is free but we will only have materials and space for a certain number of participants; so we will need to have you contact our office by phone or email to register.

TMS Therapy Video

The presentation that Dr. Rick Trautner made to our NAMI group in July on Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for treating patients with depression has been recorded and is now available on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/oU6v21LQpIU>.

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SPEAKER NOTES

Options in Outpatient Treatment

Summarized by Thomas T. Thomas

Several local organizations in Alameda County offer programs known as Outpatient Treatment Services (OTS), Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP), and Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOT). Since we last checked in with these providers, their programs have expanded the range of services available to consumers seeking skills to function at a higher level of recovery. The panel of speakers at the September 26 meeting included:

- **Luana Shiba Harris, OTR/L, MPA/HAS**, Director of Outpatient Behavioral Services at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, located on the Herrick Campus (www.altabatesummit.org) in Berkeley. The campus offers two levels of intensive day treatment, an adolescent program, an eating disorder program, and a DBT program for patients with borderline personality.
- **Roslyn Head-Lyons, LCSW, ACSW**, who is Senior Admissions Coordinator for the Highland Campus of the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care System (www.alamedahealthsystem.org) in Oakland. The campus offers an outpatient medication clinic and counseling services for MediCal-eligible patients. Similar outpatient programs are offered at the Fairmont Campus in San Leandro.
- **Lenore Schuh, MFT**, representing the La Cheim PHP in Oakland (www.lacheim.org/php-iop), with groups on Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Schuh herself conducts programs on paranoia, hearing voices, intrusive thoughts; mindfulness; and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Other programs include Trauma and the Body; Expressive Arts; and men's, women's, and LGBT groups.

Alta Bates Sutter Medical Center

The Herrick Campus program started 26 years ago with Adult Day Hospitalization. The current program is for people with Medicare or MediCal insurance, with a sliding scale for private insurance.

This partial hospitalization program is for people with acute symptoms of severe psychiatric illness, including suicidality. The treatment is based on skills

development, patterned after several programs offered by the Veterans Administration. The therapies focus on symptom reduction, stabilization, social and functional skills, and preparation for vocational rehabilitation.

A second program, the Adult Intensive Program, is for working adults experiencing emotional difficulties at work and at home. This program offers structured groups based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy; teaching life skills; relationship management; reduction of disabling symptoms; and coping with anxiety, depression, and loss.

The Adolescent Day Program provides short-term treatment for those transitioning from inpatient care or experiencing an acute crisis at home. It offers Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to focus on peer relations, family difficulties, and education related to the patient's specific psychiatric disorder. This is the only local adolescent PHP program, other than at John Muir in Contra Costa County, and is designed so that patients can go to school.

An Eating Disorders Program includes work with dietitians and CBT/DBT group therapies designed to teach skills and provide insights into managing relationships and practical daily living.

The Herrick Campus offers four inpatient units: two adult, one adolescent, and one general psychiatric. The campus then offers outpatient services on two tracks, both designed to follow inpatient hospitalization: partial hospitalization with sessions five days a week, and intensive outpatient with sessions three days a week.

Three years ago the campus began offering a program of DBT for people with borderline personality disorder, including impetuosity and self-destructiveness. This program focuses on mindfulness and emotional regulation.

Luana Shiba Harris noted that the Alta Bates Sutter organization is looking into expanding into a young adult program for ages 19 to 26, which will teach functional skills and vocational rehabilitation. "We have to learn what people are struggling with in the community," she said.

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care

Roslyn Head-Lyons said she has been with the program for 16 years. They offer partial hospitalization for five days a week with four group sessions a

day, and intensive outpatient treatment for three days a week with three groups a day. The topics include symptom and medication management; communication skills; Cognitive and Dialectical Behavioral Therapies; relaxation, stress, and anger management; and art, music, drama, and activity therapy. The programs are designed as a step down from inpatient hospitalization at the John George Pavilion or Villa Fairmont.

The county serves patients with diagnoses across the board: depression, bipolar, schizo-affective, and schizophrenia if the patient is stable on medication, as well as dual diagnosis. The outpatient clinic has a doctor on staff, can prescribe medication, and can offer the patient a therapist. The programs serve a diverse population but are now English only, although planning on expansion to Spanish language.

A year ago the campus began offering patients with mild to moderate symptoms and MediCal as their only insurance access to one-on-one therapy for up to a year. Other programs serve Medicare patients, Kaiser referrals, and other insurance by arrangement.

Alameda County's outpatient programs offer van transportation—which is not wheelchair accessible, although the facility is—and a hot lunch with the option of a brown-bag lunch. The Highland Campus in Oakland serves north county patients from Hercules to Alameda, and the Fairmont Campus serves south county from San Leandro to Dublin.

La Cheim Partial Hospitalization Program

Lenore Schuh has been with the organization 18 years. Their Valfer Life Renewal Program of outpatient services offers three groups a day, mostly process oriented, on a variety of topics including Cognitive and Dialectical Behavioral Therapies, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, mindfulness, anger management, expressive therapies, hearing voices and intrusive thoughts, yoga, transition planning, and on Fridays a group on weekend planning. They also offer a recovery group that meets twice a week for people with addictive behaviors.

Each patient gets a counselor to monitor his or her progress, and the staff meets once a day to discuss their patients. La Cheim also offers intern and training programs for psychiatric professionals.

“We're very community oriented,” Schuh said. “And we offer a warm, supportive environment.”

The facility, at 3031 Telegraph Avenue in Oakland, has the advantage of not being in a hospital setting, although the treatment team includes psychiatrists, licensed psychologists and therapists, and nurse practitioners.

Three years ago, La Cheim also started the Paroutaud Suicide Loss Program with specialized group and individual therapy services for those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

Le Cheim has a contract with Kaiser and accepts commercial insurance and Medicare for up to six months. Fees are on a sliding scale based on financial need.

Q. What is the enrollment process?

At the Highland or Fairmont campuses, a person calls, meets with an admissions coordinator such as Roslyn Head-Lyons, and gets a psychiatric assessment. The criteria are that the patient must have severe mental illness and be eligible or at risk for inpatient hospitalization, such as being a danger to self or others or gravely disabled. The patient is then placed in a group if he or she is mild to moderately ill and can function in a group setting.

Q. How does a young person get on Medicare?

A person with the onset of a mental illness before age 21 can get Medicare coverage from a parent who is qualified in the system, or if he or she has worked enough quarters to qualify. MediCal—the California Medicaid program—is based on demonstrated disability and financial need.

Q. My son is functional but doesn't do groups. What is available for him?

Alta Bates Sutter can help the family find the right program for a person from among partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient treatment. “Sometimes,” Lenore Schuh of La Cheim said, “the person is depressed and not motivated; so the main treatment goal may be just showing up.” There are ways to get around group anxiety, such as getting the patient to just go and sit for a limited time.

“People can visit the Highland or Fairmont campus to see if the group fits them and they can tolerate it,” said Roslyn Head-Lyons. “Our programs have great peer support and encouragement.”

Past articles in the Speaker Notes series are available online at www.thomasthomas.com under “NAMI East Bay.” Also available is a copy of the brochure “Medications for Mental Illness.”

Musings

Oh no, she's going to talk about herself again and try to elicit a talking point for families. Yep, you got it. So I very recently had knee replacement surgery—and that's enough said about that experience. In the weeks since, I've been getting copious attention, services, gifts, flowers—all the while entertaining visitors with gory details about me, my aches and pains, my recovery, my problem solving with limited mobility, me, me, me, etc. It's been a total indulgence in self-absorption.

Sigmund Freud has, over the years, fallen off his pedestal as the Father of Psychiatry. When I read his works in college, one of his tenets always seemed to ring true to me: A person has X amount of psychological energy, and when one issue takes up a lot of such energy, other areas are consequently deprived. We see that all the time, particularly with the neurotics among us, the “worried well.” My period of self-absorption—not completely over yet, I might add—is a good example. And, only as I move through rehab and physical recovery, am I turning my attention to those parts of my life I've put on a back burner.

When we talk about our relatives with serious mental illness, we know that their connections with the real world are often severely hampered by the interference from voices, hallucinations, perceptual distortions, poor figure-ground differentiation, etc. But I watch my son who has, besides a sweet nature and gentle spirit, diagnoses of schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder. I see him heroically struggle with a disordered brain function. At times all of his energy and attention are being drawn upon to deal with the “dictates” of his OCD. He is so intent on dealing with his internal processing—and recovering from his attempts to counter the compulsions and obsessions—that the term self-absorption, petty and judgmental as it sounds, fits like a glove.

So many of us, reacting to and planning for and dealing with the real world, don't have the energy to observe and figure out how our brains are working. It may be only a passing fancy when a specific memory eludes us. But if one's brain has no “Velcro,” this results in thoughts not attaching but rather slipping and sliding in and out of focus, and it's an all-consuming practice to keep track and rein them in.

This may not be the experience of all individuals with a thought disorder, but it sure helps me understand my son more when I try to engage him all the while he is trying to control his brain.

—Liz Rebensdorf, President, NAMI East Bay

Two Reminders

- As noted in our last newsletter, in January we will be cutting back on our paper mailing list due to costs associated with printing and mailing. We will be looking at our list and deleting recipients who were entered onto the computer list some time ago and from whom we've not heard. We have no problem with continuing you on our electronic list; so send us your email address if you'd like to keep receiving our newsletter and alerts.
- Generally, at this time of year, with holiday spirits and enthusiasm for giving, we hustle around, write a jolly letter regarding donations, print and mail it out. Quite frankly, we are too exhausted from the re-affiliation work we've been doing all year to get mobilized for that process. However, most importantly, we still encourage your donations to keep our work going. So please feel inspired to send us a donation along with a membership application or renewal—or just send us a donation with no ties to membership.

We are an all-volunteer organization and your donations go towards rent and utility payments, office equipment and hospitality materials, special events, books and publications for our library, etc. Thank you in advance.

Connections and Consumer Groups

We are very sorry that at the last minute we had to cancel our fall Connections group, a consumer-led group held simultaneously with the family support groups upstairs. Life happens ... the pending relocation of a facilitator and the unavailability of the backup personnel caused us to cancel.

In the meantime, here are other countywide Connections groups of support for those folks with a mental illness:

- Hayward - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7-8:30. For information, Kathryn, 408-422-3831.
 - Union City - Wednesdays, 7-8:30. For information, Mary, 510-329-8499.
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- Pleasanton - Wednesdays, 7:15-8:45. For information, Kelly, 714-296-3444.
- Fremont - 2nd Saturdays, 11:00-12:30, for Asians/Pacific Islanders. Elaine, 510-362-1456.

For our readers who live in West Contra Costa County, there is a Wednesday night class in Concord, 7-9pm. Check out www.be-connected.org, or call 925-380-1372.

Other group options for consumers:

- WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) workshops can be found at peersnet.org.
- Wellness Centers - Bay Area Community Services offers day programs in Oakland, Hayward, Alameda, Fremont, and Pleasanton. Go to www.bayareacs.org and search for Wellness Centers.
- Hearing Voices Network - see the article immediately below.

Hearing Voices Group for Consumers

Do you experience voices, visions, special messages, unusual beliefs, or extreme states of consciousness? What do these experiences mean? How can you decrease distress from these experiences?

Please join us for a free, drop-in, weekly Voices, Visions, and Different Realities group every Monday 6-8 pm at the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley. The Berkeley group is a 10-minute walk from the North Berkeley or Downtown Berkeley BART stations.

The support groups are co-facilitated by people who have lived experience with the mental health system. More importantly, we are counting on you to shape the direction the group takes in providing support for each other.

The Hearing Voices Network is comprised of people who see, hear, feel, and think things that others may not experience, along with members of their families and support network. For more information about the Bay Area Hearing Voices Network, check out our website at: www.bayareahearingvoices.org. Email us at bayareahearingvoices@gmail.com or find us at facebook.com/bayareahearingvoices.

Another similar group, Special Messages Support Group, is available for consumers on Thursdays 5-7 pm at PEERS (Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery) at 333 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250,

Oakland. For information, contact Heather at 510-832-7337x205 or hriemer@peersnet.org or Tim at special.messages7@gmail.com.

Advocacy Opportunities

Much of this last year has been consumed by the need for all NAMI affiliates in the country to go through a legal process of reaffiliation with the national organization. After spending excessive time securing, voting on, writing, downloading, and uploading bylaws, board minutes, Articles of Incorporation, 501(c)(3) filings, board policies, etc., we seem to be near the end—with one outstanding area where we are asking for your help.

In the effort to have us all more standardized, the position of Advocacy Representative for the affiliate has been created by the national organization. We have that person—Margot Dashiell, our wonderful Vice President—whose credentials in advocacy efforts are well established, long standing, and well respected. But she is so busy with these efforts that we need folks to step up and take on some of the roles and duties that constitute this position. So if anything here sounds like something you'd like to do, please let us know:

- Participate in State Advocacy Network conference calls.
- Recruit local grassroots advocates.
- Participate in and assist with advocacy trainings.
- Disseminate NAMI's state legislative agenda.
- Promote awareness of NAMI's policy priorities.
- Forward action alerts and generate responses.
- Bring local advocacy issues to the attention of the State Network.
- Assist in nurturing local legislative champions.
- Cultivate relationships with local stakeholders, media, and government officials.

Some of us also participate in local advocacy efforts with the county, where the issues are more immediate and concrete since they deal with our relatives. We also have an ongoing Family Dialog group with county administrators and local efforts to secure more and better resources including beds, crisis options, and longer care facilities. We welcome everyone's participation, and we'll provide a crash course on the current situations.



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NAMI EAST BAY 2018 MEMBERSHIP

Please check your mailing label. If the code "18" is over your name on the right side of the label, your dues are current through 2018. If your mailing label indicates a previous year, or nothing at all, your dues are not current.

We urge you to mail your 2018 dues now. And if you can afford to add a bit more, please do so. Your \$40 NAMI East Bay membership gives you our newsletter six times a year, the quarterly "Connection" from NAMI-California, and the NAMI-National "Advocate." NAMI East Bay is nonprofit [501(c)3] and your dues and contributions are tax deductible.

Family Membership, \$60 per year Open Door Membership, \$5 per year

Make checks payable to "NAMI EAST BAY" and mail to NAMI East Bay, 980 Stannage Avenue, Albany, California 94706

Contact me for Family to Family Education Class

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