



831.427.8020
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NAMI SANTA CRUZ PRESENTS

Discrimination and Mental Health Parity Workshop

Lack of mental health parity in private health insurance coverage is a form of discrimination that persons with mental health challenges have long experienced. There are little known laws that require insurance companies to provide mental health benefits at the same level as physical health benefits.

This workshop will inform people about these laws and provide them the knowledge, skills and tools to work with their insurance companies so that they receive the mental health care benefits that are comparable to their physical health care benefits.

A toolkit and other materials will be provided that can guide people through the process of appealing a denial from their insurance company and the skills to use the toolkit effectively.

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Weds. March 18, 2015
 6:30 Social Networking
 7:00 PM to 8:30 Program & Q/A
Live Oak Senior Center
 1777 Capitola Rd. near 17th Ave.
 Santa Cruz, CA 95062
 Refreshments will be served !

Presented By:

Laura Reich has spent her last eight years working for Disability Rights California, California's protection and advocacy system. Her current position is Attorney, where she has been working on discrimination issues, both in housing and employment. She is currently focused on reducing stigma and discrimination in the medical community by developing tools and strategies to support mental health parity. She's presented on parity at both large conferences and smaller trainings, including the Tools for Change Conference and the Pools for Consumer Champions conference. Ms. Reich's past experiences include representing children in dependency hearings and tutoring students with disabilities at New Mexico State University.

Family Support Groups

THURSDAY NIGHT SUPPORT GROUP FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

NAMI's Family Support Group provides opportunities for family and friends of people living with mental illness to explore ideas and support one another. Every Thursday 7-8:30 PM * Live Oak Family Resource Center 1740 17th Avenue, SC • 427.8020

PARENTS OF YOUTH

For caregivers of youth 17 & under. 1st Friday at 12:30 PM
 3rd Thursday at 6:30-8:00PM
 Old Sashmill in Santa Cruz
 303 Potrero St., Suite 42, Rm 103 For more info, contact Emily ebc73@comcast.net or 476.1020 youth.namisc.org

HOPE Bipolar Disorder & Depression Support

For individuals with Bipolar or Depression and their family and/or friends. Christian Based.
 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:15 PM
 Santa Cruz Bible Church • 440 Frederick St. Room #20 • 336.5740

Parents with Hope - Al-Anon

For parents or relatives of individuals with addiction & mental health issues. Sundays from 6:30-7:45PM at the Inner Light Center, 5630 Soquel Drive in Soquel. For info, contact Rachel at 688.1792

ADHD Group

Parents Meeting: 6:30-8 PM the second Wednesday.
 Adults with ADHD meet: 6:30-8 PM the fourth Wednesday. For information: Judy Brenis jbbrenis@comcast.net • 684-0590

Client Support Groups

■ NAMI Peer Connections Recovery Support Group

NAMI Connection is a weekly recovery support group for people living with mental illness in which people learn from each others' experiences, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding.

Every Wednesday 1:00-2:30 pm
MHCAN: 1051 Cayuga St., Santa Cruz

■ HOPE Bipolar Disorder & Depression Support

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■ Women with Mood Disorders

Connect with other women living with bipolar disorder, depression and/or anxiety (and who choose to treat it with psychiatric medication).
<http://www.meetup.com/Medicated-Moms-with-Mood-Disorders-Support-Group/>

■ See full calendar of MHCAN Support Groups

831.469.0462 or www.mhcan.org

■ ADHD Group

Adults with ADHD meet:

6:30-8 PM the fourth Wednesday. For information: Judy Brenis jbbrenis@comcast.net • 684.0590



Share your superpowers!

A MESSAGE FROM MELISSA WATROUS, OUR FUNDRAISING MANAGER

This year, we are walking in Santa Cruz instead of taking the bus to the NAMI Walk in San Francisco. NAMI Santa Cruz will be participating in the Human Race in Santa Cruz on Saturday, May 9, 2015.

This event will be NAMI Santa Cruz's major fundraiser for the year. Donations and/or registration fees will support our mission to provide help and hope to those in need. It will help support our education programs, outreach programs and support groups. Funds raised also allow NAMI Santa Cruz County to have a stronger presence in our community and to advocate in greater ways at the local, state and national level on behalf of the millions affected by mental illness.

So what can you do to help? Our biggest success is with individual donors. We need to rally our community and ourselves to ask for donations. My

friends, family and colleagues support me on the walk because I am open about the journey my family is on and they want to support us and those on a similar journey. They understand how important the work is that NAMI

Santa Cruz is doing, but also that we are a nonprofit run by volunteers. Fundraising is critical to our success.

Let's walk together to celebrate all that NAMI Santa Cruz does and have

some fun along the way! We will gather at our banner and table.

Who can recruit the most walkers? In 2014 we raised, \$15,457 and had over 50 walkers. This year our goal is to raise \$20,000. To add to the fun, we will be giving prizes to the teams and individuals who raise the most money or get the most walkers. I am confident we can exceed our goal with your help! ■

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Human Race
Saturday, May 9, 2015 - 8 am.
The 5 mile course goes from
2300 Delaware Ave. along
West Cliff Drive to Lighthouse
Park and back. (or walk as far
as you like)

To join the NAMI Santa Cruz team:

1 Goto www.humanracesc.org/goto/NAMISantaCruz1

2 Click the "Join Team" button in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

3 Enter your information, follow the steps to create your walker page and start fundraising!

You can also download our pledge form at

www.namiscc.org/human-race.html



Feel free to contact Melissa Watrous at 408-834-3113 or melissawatrous@pacbell.net if you need help setting up your walker page.



MEMO
March Family to Family Registration is about to close.
Register TODAY!

Wednesdays, March 11 - May 27

6:00 - 8:30 pm

Old Sashmill, 303 Potrero, Bldg 42, Suite 103, Santa Cruz
Contact Joanne Yoblansky, 831-684-1432, joannecy@aol.com or signup at:

namiscc.org/family-to-family.html

This 12 week, free course provides insight into, and resolution of, the profound concerns experienced by families, relatives, and friends as they strive to effectively cope with the realities of serious mental health challenges. Many graduates describe the experience as life-changing.

de Familia a Familia

Thursday, April 9 - June 4

6:00-8:30 p.m.

340 E Beach St, Watsonville, CA 95076

Between Blackburn St and Lincoln St

Registration is required.

Contact: Jorge Mendez, 831-521-1657, info@namiscc.org, or
signup online at: namiscc.org/de-familia-a-familia.html

Please help NAMI get the word out about this class for mono-lingual Spanish Speakers. Download the flyer at www.namiscc.org/de-familia-a-familia.html

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a free 12-week course for family members of individuals with severe mental illnesses that discusses the clinical treatment of these illnesses and teaches the knowledge and skills that family members need to cope more effectively.



Tuesdays, March 31 - June 2

6-8:30 pm

Old Sashmill, 303 Potrero, Bldg 42, Suite 103

Santa Cruz, CA

Registration is required. Contact Loren at lorencrabb27@gmail.com or leave a message at 427-8020.

This 10 week free course is a unique, experiential learning program for people with any serious mental illness who are interested in establishing and maintaining their wellness and recovery. For more information visit:

www.namiscc.org/peer-to-peer.html



April 3 - May 1, mid day.

Alto/Encompass 716 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz

Contact Carol Williamson at:

cwilliamson@namiscc.org
831-229-2675



This 5 week free course provides a fresh, innovative approach to mental health treatment using a dynamic interactive format specially developed for providers.

"The program has given us essential insight to view individuals with mental illness and their families as partners in the treatment process."

For more information visit, www.namiscc.org/provider-education.html

Education Classes

■ NAMI Family to Family

This 12 week educational program helps friends and families to understand and help their loved ones. Contact Joanne Yablonsky, 831-684-1432, joannecy@aol.com, or signup online at: namiscc.org/family-to-family.html Also offered in spanish. Contact Jorge Mendez, 831-521-1657, info@namiscc.org, or signup online at: namiscc.org/de-familia-a-familia.html

■ NAMI Peer to Peer

The Peer to Peer class is a 10 week series taught by individuals who are experienced at living well with a mental illness. Contact Loren at lorencrabb27@gmail.com or 427.8020

■ NAMI BASICS

This 10 week educational program is designed for parents and caregivers of youth (10-17) to understand and help their loved ones. Contact Emily at ebc73@comcast.net or 427.8020

■ NAMI Provider Education Program

For all professionals who want to understand more about serious mental illnesses. Taught by a panel of a professional therapists, providers, people living with a mental illness, and family members. Call 427.8020 to be put onto wait list for notification of dates.

Presentations

■ In Our Own Voice

Community presentation designed to create understanding and compassion. NAMI 427.8020.

■ Ending the Silence and Parents and Teachers as Allies

Middle and High School presentations for students, teachers and parents. Call Sheryl at 331.9084

NAMI Santa Cruz County talks...



When my son was first diagnosed with schizophrenia, I felt so alone. Friends and family were sympathetic but their suggestions were so far removed from our situation that I began to feel like I was living on a different planet. I couldn't relate to what my son was experiencing and didn't know how to help him. When we received the diagnosis of schizophrenia, I thought, "That couldn't be true." I was sure that the doctor was mistaken. I sought confirmation from another doctor who was so kind and helpful. The diagnosis remained the same but it was tempered with these few words; "Why don't you connect with NAMI?"

This was the start of my journey to understanding and compassion. I attended the very first Family to Family class and loved it. I learned that I was not to blame - and neither was my son. It was the first time that I could honestly talk about what it was like, to connect with others who really understood. I found that same comradery at the support groups. Suggestions given were helpful, realistic and many times hopeful. Eventually I became a Family to Family teacher and even joined the NAMI Board.

My son is about to turn 50 and is doing well. This spring I will be releasing a book that chronicles the decades since his diagnosis. I am very grateful to this community and all the support and guidance I received. I view my book as a gift to others who may be on the same journey. To me, NAMI means community, comfort, inspiration and support.

- Louise Loots, retired teacher and local author

I was 19 when I started to hear voices. I went through many hospitalizations and forced to attend over 905 groups over the years. It was a time full of fear and anger. Listening to music is what got me through. One day, someone from my Transition Age Group told me about a NAMI class called Peer to Peer and this was the first thing I made my own choice to go to. I learned that mental illness had a genetic component and that recovery was actually possible. Through those 905 groups, nobody mentioned the word "recovery". It was NAMI who put recovery on the table and changed my life. After taking that 10 week Peer to Peer class I was on a mission that I was going to get better. That was 10 years ago. It wasn't easy but I'm here today and I feel like I'm in recovery right now and I'm really happy to be here.

- Hugh McCormick is Peer to Peer Mentor teacher and In Our Own Voice Presenter and one of the facilitators for the NAMI Peer Connection group that meets Wednesdays at 1:00-2:30 pm Mental Health Client Action Network, 1051 Cayuga St, Santa Cruz.

SUPPORT OR WALK WITH US IN THE HUMAN RACE:
WWW.HUMANRACESC.ORG/GOTO/NAMISANTACRUZI

I am a proud mother of 2 sons, one of whom lives with a Bipolar Disorder diagnosis. I'd like to share my story and ask you to think about how mental illness affects you, how NAMI has helped and ask for your support in the Human Race.

My son has always been very sensitive and observant to the point where his environment would overwhelm him. When he was quite young, he had trouble interacting and engaging. An abundance of love, structure and support helped but his reactions to the world were usually out of proportion; crying for long hours and frequent explosions after school. We struggled to find him the help he needed and many years later, when Justin was in middle school, we finally found a treatment plan that was working. Things improved for a while. But in high school the shame and blame he felt from comments his friends and even some family members made resulted in him rejecting this help.

As I tried to understand what was happening, I had a sense of urgency and struggled unsuccessfully to "fix" it. I remember the feeling of receiving a lifeline when I first attended the Parents of Youth Support group. The stories shared were very similar to my own situation. Some kids were doing well, others were struggling but there was no judgement, only compassion and support. I took BASICS and learned how to not overreact when something happened, how to work with schools, talk to providers, the importance of taking care of myself and most importantly how to recognize and praise his accomplishments. I am still learning, pulling wisdom from both the families and peers. Before I was filled with fear and foreboding and now I have so much appreciation and respect for Justin.

Today, as a young adult, Justin still struggles, but with the compassion and acceptance he receives from his family and county healthcare providers he is making progress. He exercises everyday, gets plenty of sleep and spends time doing what he loves. Building a community of support was critical to getting to this point and it wouldn't have been possible without NAMI. I am excited to walk in the Human Race for NAMI. I know that without the financial support of community members like myself, NAMI would not be able to reach so many people. I know that without this support and education, our lives could have taken a very different trajectory. ~ Thank you NAMI!

- Name withheld to protect "Justin's" privacy

Upcoming Events

1 Mental Health Advisory Board Meeting invites you to attend their monthly meetings. Meetings are held every 3rd Thursday, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. (Usually at the Live Oak Senior Center)

2 The Mental Health Coalition Meetings take place at MHCAN every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:30. Contact Adrian for more information. adrian.camp@encompascs.org

3 Online Workshop: Disability Discrimination Lawsuits: Ensuring Equal Access to Advocacy for Clients with Mental and/or Developmental Disabilities

Thursday, March 12, 2015; 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. PST

This event will be live streamed: <http://youtu.be/Yb1XlaX2A-A>

A plaintiff with a psychiatric and/or developmental disability may have more difficulties pursuing discrimination litigation than someone with a physical or intellectual disability. This program will discuss ways to over-

come barriers to litigating on behalf of this population. These solutions will include strategies for different pathologies. Learn more at <http://www.pwdf.org/category/events/>

4 Caregiver University-A Day of Learning and Sharing; March 21; 9:00 am to 2:30 pm

3 Workshops include: Understanding the Aging Process; Stress on Caregivers and How it Affects Their Mind, Body and Soul; and Legal Issues and Ethics of End of Life Choices. To register call 831-459- 6639 or register online at <http://www.delmarcaregiver.org/registration-form.html>.

5 The Homeless Persons Panel Presentation

Tuesday, March 24, 2015; 8:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.; 1080 Emeline Ave., Large Auditorium, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

The homeless person's panel presenters will share with participants their personal perspective about their social, emotional, and everyday challenges of being homeless, they will provide insight about what

is working and what are their personal and collective obstacles in accessing support, health and/or social services.

RSVP to: mhsastraining@health.co.santa-cruz.ca.us

6 Essay Contest for Middle and High school students.

This contest encourages students to write essays that educate others about bipolar disorder. A student chooses a topic from the list of suggestions, researches it, and then writes an essay of 500-800 words. The winner earns a cash prize of \$500, with smaller cash prizes for second and third places.

<http://www.ibpf.org/blog/write-essay-change-world>

7 NAMI National Convention San Francisco, July 6-9 2015

NAMI National's annual conventions are huge affairs, packed with dozens of workshops, keynote speakers, films, exhibits, and special interest sessions. Registration is now open. Individuals living with mental illness may also register with reduced fees. <http://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Attend-NAMI-National-Convention>

8 NAMI California Convention

NAMI California is currently recruiting volunteers for the conference on August 21st - 22nd at the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel and Spa! Volunteering for one time block per day, allows free entry into workshops on the same day. Please contact Kelly Boyles at 916-567-0163 or kelly@namica.org with questions or inquiries.

Have you been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and would you be interested in helping other mothers like you?

Would you be willing to have a conversation about your experience?

Seeking moms who:

- Are over the age of 18
- Have given birth in the past 10 years
- Are interested in helping psychologists learn about the experience of mothers with bipolar disorder

Thank you!
I look forward to hearing from you.

If you are interested or would like more information please contact:
Rebecca Gitenstein at
rgitenstein@wi.edu,
415-295-2562

CPHS Approved
Doctoral Research
The Wright Institute, Berkeley, CA
Dr. Ellen Balis, Dissertation Chair,
ebalis@wi.edu