



NAMI

Sacramento Newsletter

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Sacramento's Voice on Mental Illness

March 2013 Issue No. 11.1

General Meeting

Monday, March 11, 7:00 pm—Farewell My Friend

Beatrice Toney Bailey, author and lecturer presents "Farewell My Friend," a presentation about caregiving, death, and grieving. She is a co-facilitator of a national GriefShare Support Group and writes for Senior Magazine of Northern California and a monthly newspaper column entitled, "Uniquely Bea" for the 50+ Newspaper, Denver, Colorado:

Refreshments will be served.

NAMI Sacramento General Meetings are free and open to the public.

Next Month:

Monday, April 14, 7:00–8:30 pm — Special Needs Trusts and Conservatorship Law

Attorney Brian Wyatt will speak about Special Needs Trusts and updates to Conservatorship Law. Mr. Wyatt's law practice focuses on trust and estate planning, probate and special needs planning. He is a member of WealthCounsel and received his law degree from University of California, Berkeley, and a B.A. in Economics from UCLA. He was formerly a senior associate attorney at Convington and Burling LLP and now has his own legal practice. Mr. Wyatt is a frequent speaker on a variety of topics, including estate planning, Medi-Cal planning, special needs planning and charitable planning.

Meetings are held at

Conference Room 1B
Sacramento County Division of Mental Health Building
(building with the clock tower)
3331 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, CA

Contact Us

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3440 Viking Drive, Suite 104A
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When Depression Drugs Don't Help, Talking Might

Rachael Rettner
MyHealthNewsDaily

Talk therapy may be a helpful supplemental treatment for people with depression who have not responded to medication, a new study from the United Kingdom suggests.

Researchers found that people with depression who had not improved despite taking antidepressants were three times more likely to experience a reduction in their depression symptoms if talk therapy was added to their treatment regimen compared with those who continued to take only antidepressants.

The study is one of the first large trials to test the effectiveness of talk therapy given in tandem with antidepressants, the researchers said.

Up to two-thirds of people with depression don't respond fully to antidepressant treatment, and the findings suggest a way to help this group, the researchers said.

"Until now, there was little evidence to help clinicians choose the best next step treatment for those patients whose symptoms do not respond to standard drug treatments," study researcher Nicola Wiles of the University of Bristol's Centre for Mental Health, Addiction and Suicide Research said in a statement.

The study followed patients for one year. Future studies should examine the

effectiveness of this treatment combination over the long term, as patients with depression can relapse after treatment, the researchers said.

In addition, because some patients did not improve substantially when talk therapy was added, further research is needed to find alternative treatments for this group, Wiles added.

The study included about 470 people with depression who had not responded to antidepressants after six weeks of treatment. About half received cognitive behavioral therapy—a type of talk therapy—in addition to their usual antidepressant treatment, and half continued antidepressants without the addition of talk therapy.

After six months, about 46 percent of patients in the talk therapy group experienced at least a 50 percent reduction in their depressive symptoms. By contrast, 22 percent of people in the antidepressant group improved by the same amount. By the 12-month mark, both groups experienced similar rates of improvement.

Often, talk therapy is more difficult to access than medication, the researchers said. And people may not be able to afford the treatment if their health insurance does not cover it. Only about 25 percent of Americans with depression have received talk therapy during the past year, they said.

Northern California NAMIWalk—Saturday, April 27, 2013

Get ready to put on your walking shoes and join us for our 4th Annual NAMIWalk on Saturday, April 27 in William Land Park! With limited grant funding to support our programs, the NAMIWalk pays for the majority of our free, year-round support services. We can't do it without your help and participation. If NAMI has helped you, please pay it forward by walking with us in April. We hope you'll join us in this fun, awareness raising and fund raising event. See page 4 for more information on the NAMIWalk.

For information or to sign up visit www.namiwalk.org/NorthernCalifornia. You can also find our event on facebook at www.facebook.com/NorCalNAMIWalk.





NAMI Support Groups

NAMI Connection Support Group

A support group for adults with mental illness regardless of diagnosis. Held Sundays from 7:00–8:30 p.m. at Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento. No pre-registration.

NAMI Family Support Group—North

Second Thursday of each month from 6:30–8:00 p.m. **Heritage Oaks***, 4300 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento CA 95841. Call facilitator Pat Pavone at (916) 397-7831 for more information.

NAMI Family Support Group—South

Fourth Wednesday of each month from 7:00–8:30 p.m. Sierra Vista Hospital, 8001 Bruceville Road, Sacramento 95823. Call facilitator Caroline Caton at (916) 204-4512 for more information.

NAMI Family Support Group—El Dorado Hills

Second Thursday of every month from 6:00–7:30 p.m. Raley's Supermarket Event Center, 3935 Park Dr., El Dorado Hills CA 95762. Call facilitators Jackie Gutierrez (530) 626-7939 or Jannell Clanton (530) 676-2616 for more information.

NAMI Military Veterans Group

A support group for military veterans with PTSD, TBI or any mental health diagnosis. **Beginning on Sunday, September 30**, the group will meet every Sunday from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at **Heritage Oaks***, 4300 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95841. Call NAMI Sacramento at (916) 364-1642 for more info.

*Groups at **Heritage Oaks** meet in the building to the left of the hospital, not in the hospital itself. The meeting room is the first door to the right in the main hallway.

NAMI Educational Classes

NAMI Peer-to-Peer Classes

A free 10-week, recovery-oriented course for people with mental illness. Pre-registration required. For info or to register, call (916) 364-1642 or email p2p@namisacramento.org.

NAMI Family-to-Family Classes

This free 12-week course for family members and caregivers of individuals with mental illness is offered in both English and Spanish. For info or to register, call (916) 364-1642 or email office@namisacramento.org.

NAMI Basics Classes

A free six-week course for parents and caregivers of young children and teens with mental illness. Call (916) 364-1642 for info.

NAMI Meetings

NAMI Sacramento Board Meeting

Usually the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. conference Room 1A, 3331 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, 95826.

General Interest Meetings

See page 1 for details

Non-NAMI Support Groups

NAMI Sacramento does not necessarily endorse the non-NAMI organizations and groups listed here. This information is offered as a convenience to our members. Go to NAMI Sacramento's web site at www.namisacramento.org for an extensive list of resources and crisis help available in the Sacramento area.

Balanced—A Bipolar Support Group

Every Wednesday from 7:00–8:30 p.m. Trinity Lutheran Church, 1500 27th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816
Call Joe Long at (916) 834-0004.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month from 7:30–9:00 p.m. Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento

See: www.dbsasacramento.org. Contact: Andrea Hillerman-Crook at hillerman-crooka@sacounty.net or (916) 875-4710; or Marilyn Hillerman at marilynhillerman@yahoo.com or (916) 648-1358.

Early Psychosis Family Support Group

For families with a member who has a newly diagnosed brain disease.

Note that this is a program UCD offers. Group participants need to be enrolled in the program.

Imaging and Research Center Conference Room, UCD Med, Center, 4701 X Street, Sacramento.

Call Jane Du Bet at (916) 734-2964.

Emotions Anonymous

For people working toward recovery from emotional difficulties. Tuesdays 6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. 890 Morse Ave. (corner of Morse and Northrop.) Thursdays 7:00–8:30 p.m. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 1615 Morse Ave., Sacramento. Meet in the choir room. Newcomer Orientation: Saturdays 1:00–1:30 p.m., followed by a Topic/ Discussion Meeting from 1:30–2:30 p.m. Wellness and Recovery Center, 3815 Marconi Ave, Sacramento.

Contact (916) 366-0699 or allone.com/12/ea/

Obsessive-Compulsive Support

Meeting Every Monday from 7:00–9:00 p.m. Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento.

Call Jim (916) 223-6541 or Steve at (916) 456-8239.

OCD Kids Sacramento

For kids 18 and under and their families. Meetings also attended by a therapist experienced in treating OCD. Second Sunday of every-other month (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov) 2:00–4:00 p.m. at Kaiser Permanente Point West Clinic, 1650 Response Road, Sacramento 95815.

See: www.ocdkids.com.

Recovery, Inc., Self-Help Mental Health Meetings

Promotes a cognitive-behavioral approach to managing symptoms and changing attitudes and behavior. Groups meet weekly.

Contact: www.recovery-inc.com or call (916) 483-5616 for meeting locations.

Sacramento Borderline Personality Disorder Non-BP Support Group

For people who have a family member or friend who suffers from Borderline Personality Disorder. Second Tuesday of each month from 7:00–9:00 p.m. Call Lee Gassaway at (916) 421-7354 or contact www.meetup.com.

Social Skills Group

For teens and adults who feel socially awkward or shy. Sponsored by Fall Creek Counseling, 5900 Coyle Ave. suite D, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Contact: www.sacramentopsychology.com Call Dr. Debra Moore at (916) 344-0900

Women's PTSD and Anxiety Support Group

contact: 916 498-8494.

Sacramento County Mental Health Board Meeting

Held the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Sacramento Mental Health Treatment Center (Media Room), 2150 Stockton Blvd., Sacramento.

Important Notice

NAMI programs should not be used to replace the specialized training and professional judgment of mental health professionals. We cannot, and will not, assume the role of a physician or therapist.

NAMI cannot be held responsible for the use of the information we provide. Please always consult a trained mental health professional before making any decision regarding treatment of yourself or others.



From The President

We were overjoyed recently to be included as one of the recipients to receive part of a grant, which will provide some funding for our Family-to-Family and Peer-to-Peer courses!

Turning Point Community Programs, Welcome Home Housing, and NAMI Sacramento have been selected to partner in a collaborative relationship to provide mental health services for residents of Sacramento County beginning in mid-March. The project is called Abiding Hope Respite House. Turning Point CEO John Buck has said, "Sacramento County has a pressing need for a respite care facility to alleviate the overflow of adults with psychiatric issues at local emergency rooms. Together with our partners Welcome Home Housing and NAMI Sacramento, we will offer a much needed alternative."



Abiding Hope Respite House will be a combination of both a crisis respite and a peer-directed facility for adults age 18 and over. This supported housing includes five beds with a communal kitchen and living area. A psych tech/registered nurse, therapist, and psychiatrist are available to meet the psychiatric and medical needs of each client at a nearby location. The program will serve between 300 and 400 clients per year, and individuals and their caregivers will develop new skills to help cope with future mental crises and avoid relapse.

NAMI Sacramento will support family and community members who come through the Abiding Hope Respite House by welcoming them as participants in our Family-to-Family and Peer-to-Peer health education courses. Welcome Home Housing will provide a therapist and manage the Room and Board aspects of

the Respite House while Turning Point, as the lead grant recipient, will provide the rest.

We were delighted to be invited to partner with Turning Point and Welcome Home Housing to work with them to apply for the grant funds, and we're extremely proud to now be involved in this important endeavor.

We were selected to provide these services by the Respite Partnership Collaborative. The collaborative, which was formed last April to support the development and provision of a continuum of respite services in Sacramento County, is a public-private partnership of the County of Sacramento Division of Behavioral Health Services, Sierra Health Foundation: Center for Health Program Management, and selected stakeholders and community members.

Four grants were awarded in total with a goal of increasing local mental health respite service options to offer alternatives to hospitalization for community members experiencing a crisis in Sacramento County. The four organizations who received respite care grants were:

- 1) Capital Family Adoptive Alliance
- 2) United lu-Mien Community, Inc.
- 3) Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center
- 4) Turning Point Community Programs (with partners Welcome Home Housing and NAMI Sacramento)

Financing for these grants is provided by the Mental Health Services Act Sacramento County Innovation funds and managed by Sierra Health Foundation: Center for Health Program Management.

News of this grant and what it will do for our community rounded out a very busy 2012 for NAMI Sacramento. We had a successful Walk last year along with other fundraising through the year, which gave us the means to support increases in our programs and classes. We offered our first Family-to-Family class (Familia a Familia) last fall in a partnership with NAMI-Yolo and started our Connection Support Group for Military Veterans. In addition, we recognized the need to improve our infrastructure, like more office space and additional staff, and again with ample and prudent use of our funds, we were able to put these improvements in-place. But, time does not stand still, as they say, and this year brings new challenges for us.

Please consider serving on our board of directors by making application to our office...we dearly need help. Our board is too small to effectively continue with the energy and the knowledge necessary to

allow us to function smoothly and to grow with our community's needs. Also, please consider being a volunteer in one of the many positions listed on our website at www.namisacramento.org/volunteer. We request you submit a Volunteer Interest Form, which you will find on the website.

Lastly, please remember, we want you to celebrate with us on April 27, 2013 at our 4th Annual Northern California NAMIWalk in William Land Park. Despite our grant funding success, it is the NAMIWalk revenue that pays for the vast majority of our programs and services. Our executive director, Sontine Kalba, our walk manager, Christine Bonilla, and our NAMIWalk executive and steering committees, including Pat Pavone, Belinda Beckett and myself, have been hard at work since October with the numerous tasks necessary to make our 2013 Walk a success. But all of our planning and preliminary work will be for naught without YOU! Go to our new and improved Walk website at www.namiwalks.org/NorthernCalifornia to participate and get more information. Form a team! Or join a team! Participate!!!!

Larry Liseno
Board President
NAMI Sacramento

Opportunities

We have some fun and important volunteer opportunities available at NAMI Sacramento. For descriptions of over 30 different volunteer positions, please see www.namisacramento.org/volunteer

NAMIWalk: Volunteers can help with activities leading up to the NAMIWalk, including mailings, phone calls and publicity. We're also looking for volunteers to help at the Walk on April 27 with set-up, registration, handing out water bottles and snacks, route monitoring, clean-up and more. For more info, call the NAMI Sacramento office at (916) 364-1642.

Provider Education, Family-to-Family and Peer-to-Peer: We need good candidates to volunteer their time to get trained to teach our courses, including a new course we'll be offering to people who work in hospitals, emergency rooms and mental health clinics. If you've benefited from one of these courses, pay the gift forward by getting trained to teach or assist in our courses. All training costs are paid for by NAMI, including travel and lodging. For more info, contact Sontine Kalba at (916) 364-1642.



Let's Take a NAMIWalk in the Park!

Get Involved!

The 4th Annual Northern California NAMIWalk benefiting NAMI affiliates in Sacramento, Amador, El Dorado, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Yolo Counties is coming soon. It will be held on **Saturday, April 27th** in William Land Park from 9:00 a.m. until noon. **If all NAMI members help this Walk will succeed,** and NAMI will be able provide more help and hope to families and individuals facing mental health challenges throughout our region.

Captain a Team

We hope that every NAMI member will become a Team Captain and put together a team of walkers willing to raise money for NAMI. It is very easy, and we will provide you with all the tools and information you need to have a successful team. To become a Team Captain, please go to the NAMIWalk website at www.namiwalks.org/NorthernCalifornia. The NAMIWalk website is much improved and easier to use this year, and iPhone and Android apps are now available for your smartphone. If you need assistance registering your team or have questions about being a team captain, contact Pat Pavone, NAMIWalk Team Chair, at pat@namisacramento.org or (916) 397-7831.

Volunteer

We need volunteers to help with preparation activities right now, including phone calls and helping with publicity – these activities can be done from home or in our office. We also need volunteers to help on Walk Day (April

27) with set-up, registration, handing out water and snacks, route monitoring, parking, and clean-up. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the NAMI Sacramento office at office@namisacramento.org or (916) 364-1642.

Donate without Even Coming to the Walk

Have H&R Block prepare your taxes:

If you, or someone you know, files their taxes this spring with the help of H&R Block (any H&R Block in the U.S.), and you didn't get your 2011 taxes done at H&R Block last year, then H&R Block will donate \$20 to our NAMIWalk without any additional cost to you. You'll need to give H&R Block the following nonprofit ID number to be sure their donation reaches us: 40010001078891. To find the nearest H&R Block office, go to hrblock.com.

Donate without walking or being part of a team: Donate online at www.namiwalks.org/NorthernCalifornia or mail a check made out to *Northern California NAMIWalk* to 3440 Viking Drive, Suite 104A, Sacramento, CA 95827. Please put on the memo line of your check "Sacramento" if you want the funds to stay with NAMI Sacramento.

Make a memorial contribution: Honor someone you love who has passed away with a \$250 memorial sponsorship and we'll display a sign along the Walk route with your loved one's name. Call Sontine Kalba at (916) 364-1642 if you want more information about this.

Walk News!

We are very happy to announce that **Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg will be the Honorary Chair** of the 2013 Northern California NAMIWalk. **KTXL Fox 40 News** is our official Media Partner. Look for public service announcements about the Walk on Fox 40 in the coming weeks. **The Nickel Slots** will be providing their wonderful live music at the Walk again this year.

We have many generous sponsors (although we can always use more). Among our community partners is **Heritage Oaks Hospital** who has stepped forward again this year to be a Gold Sponsor (\$5,000), Sierra Vista Hospital as our Kick-Off Luncheon Sponsor (\$3,500) and Lela Bayley (Merrill Lynch), Sutter Center for Psychiatry and Turning Point Community Programs as Silver Sponsors (\$2,500). Several companies have joined us as Start-Finish Sponsors (\$1500), including: AstraZeneca, El Hogar Community Services, Pacific Gas & Electric and Telecare Corporation. Our Bronze Sponsors (\$1,000) are E&J Gallo Winery, Janssen, Transitional Living and Community Support, and Vanir Construction Management. For a complete, up to date list of NAMIWalk sponsors so far, please see <http://namiwalks.org/sponsors/northerncalifornia>.

Register or get info at www.namiwalks.org/NorthernCalifornia

Like us on **Facebook** at www.facebook.com/NorCalNAMIWalk to let others know about us!

A National Model for Mental Health Care?

By Thomas D. Elias, sonomanews.com

One of the first bits of advice Vice President Joe Biden received after becoming the point person for shaping new federal gun control and mental health policy, in the wake of December's mass shootings in Newtown, Conn., was to follow the California example.

Darrell Steinberg, Democratic leader of the state Senate, told Biden to copy California's strategy for funding mental health programs. That's one way, he said, to lessen the chance of deranged individuals blasting children and teachers with assault rifles.

The California program was created by the 2004 Proposition 63, which imposes a 1 percent supplemental tax on mental health

care on incomes over \$1 million. So far, this levy has raised over \$8 billion.

Results of a recent audit on effectiveness of the program aren't yet in, but there's no doubt the Proposition 63 money has been helpful in keeping government-funded mental health care alive while other programs, such as in-home care for frail or disabled senior citizens, have been severely cut.

Patricia Ryan, executive director of the California Mental Health Directors Assn., reported in 2011 numerous successes from Proposition 63, including a full service partnership in Santa Clara County, aiming to help Vietnamese adults with serious mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder and

schizophrenia.

Within a year after that program started in 2006, participants were using emergency psychiatric services 28 percent less than before and were hospitalized 65 percent less, while using long-term care facilities 82 percent less than before.

Prop. 63-funded programs in Los Angeles County, Ryan reported, served more than 6,200 persons in 2011, producing a 68 percent reduction in homelessness among those clients and a 53 percent increase in days spent living independently, along with a 46 percent reduction of time spent in jails.

Those programs were designed to fit specific local needs, the result of counties being allowed to choose most uses of Prop. 63 money.



Voices from Solitary: A Mother's Story

By Jean Casella and James Ridgeway

The suffering of solitary confinement extends beyond prisoners, to the families who wait for them outside. The anguish can be particularly keen for the families of inmates with mental illness.

Diana's son, whom we will call A, exhibited signs of mental illness from the time he was a young boy. When he was in his 20s, he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder complicated by drug and alcohol dependencies. In 2005, A was charged with auto theft. He was found not guilty by reason of insanity, and sent to Napa State Hospital for two years. While at Napa, Diana says, "he jumped over an inner courtyard fence because he was hearing voices tell him to hit the psych tech that was walking with him, and A did not want to hit him." A returned to the unit peacefully and voluntarily, but the administration called it an "attempted escape." He was immediately sent to the maximum-security Atascadero State Hospital.

California's Welfare and Institutions Code Section 7301 states that whenever "any person who has been committed to a state hospital pursuant to provisions of the Penal Code" is officially deemed to need placement "under conditions of custodial security," that person can be transferred "from an institution under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Mental Health to an institution under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections." Without a hearing or court order, a resident of a state hospital can be sent to prison instead.

This is what happened to Diana's son. After several years at Atascadero, A, again hearing voices, hit a guard who was making fun of him. No charges were pressed, and A was finally put on a medication that worked for him, and seemed to be making progress. But several months later, A was without warning transferred to Folsom Prison, where he was taken off the medication that worked (because it wasn't allowed at Folsom) and placed in isolation. As Diana describes it:

Their common procedure for any mentally ill inmate sent to Folsom is that they go directly to solitary confinement. It's the Psychiatric Services Unit (PSU); from their very first day there they are in solitary. They

have to work a program and earn points in order to move up to a level where they can have a little more freedom.

A had never been in such an environment—no phone calls, only 1 hour of exercise in an outdoor cage each day, 3 showers a week, and he was in handcuffs and shackles any time he was not in his cell. All meals were taken in the cell. He had to go to groups where he and the other men were placed in "modules" which are actually one-man cages the size of a small phone booth, and the counselor would stand or sit outside the cages to lead their group sessions. All visits were non-contact (behind glass and on the phone, only). No canteen privileges if you could not meet at least 75% of the groups and other requirements they had, but they never told A about that until I complained after I sent him a Christmas package and they refused to give it to him because he had not wanted to go to all of his groups.

He became more and more isolated as he became more depressed. They told me that after one year, he could be eligible to go to the next level and have a little more freedom. I told them that I believed that in a year he would have killed himself already.

Because of Diana's constant advocacy on behalf of A, he was moved to the California Medical Facility in Vacaville. The facility is misleadingly named: it is not a hospital, but a prison for inmates with medical needs. There he is still in solitary; he "has a little more freedom, but not much," says Diana. Last week, Diana drove to Vacaville from her home in Yuba City. Here, she describes the trip.

Today I drove the 75+ miles to the California Medical Facility at Vacaville ready to meet with my son's psychiatrist and social worker, and praying, too, that maybe, just maybe, they might feel some compassion and allow me to see him. I'd had this thought in my head that, somehow, they would let me have a "contact" visit—meaning a person to person visit, not separated by glass from one another.

I had previously expressed how important I felt it was that A receive the warmth and comfort the human touch can bring and that they would see the sense of this and let me hug my son and

hold his hand, touch his face, rub his head like I use to when he was younger. He is nearly 30 now. They have him in solitary all the time now.

I listened to some good old gospel music on the way over there, praising God and asking Him to give me the right words to say to convince the doctor to let me see A. Praying for some miraculous breakthrough by way of our meeting, some way that we could all work together to try to help A. On the phone, the doctor had sounded so compassionate and sounded as though she was crying for A, too, as she told me how very lonely he was and how he was becoming more delusional. This was why we had set up the meeting. I had been told that it was never done; that a parent never came to meetings with the doctor or the treating team; but I had begged through the tears of a mother desperate to do whatever is necessary to bring help and comfort to my son and they had agreed.

I arrived about 11 a.m. It was already very hot...I don't get out much, not with the osteoporosis in my neck and back. Long drives are always very hard on my body, but A is worth all of it—it doesn't matter, if there's a chance that he can get some sort of relief and help.

I sat in the parking lot and called the prison, dialing the extension of the social worker to let her know I was there. I got her answering machine and figured she'd be back to her office soon, so left her a message. Then I called to the unit counselor, who also didn't pick up her phone, and left her the same message. I'd left them both my cell phone number so they could reach me in the parking lot. I had arrived early, so I was not too concerned yet. I then decided to call B, a man who answers the phone for the "acute" psychiatric unit. He is always very nice and tries to get messages to whomever I need to speak to. Since Vacaville actually is a prison, they don't give out direct phone numbers or extensions to the doctors.

It was starting to get too hot in the truck, so I packed up my things, got my I.D. out, and walked over to the lobby to check in and let them know I was there. There was so much activity going on, so many officers walking in and out, others...I looked around and found a

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Doctor's Corner

Dr. Robin Zasio is a local Licensed Clinical Psychologist and owner of the Anxiety Treatment Center at: www.AnxietyTreatmentExperts.com, www.CognitiveBehaviorExperts.com or www.YourGreaterGood.com.

Dr. Zasio is also featured on the A&E television documentary, "Hoarders".

She addresses mental health questions submitted by NAMI Sacramento members and readers.

Submit your questions to: drrubin@sierrabg.com

Dear Dr. Zasio,

I am writing because I want to share my story, and hope that it will inspire others. Two years ago my husband died suddenly of a heart attack. He was my first, and only love. We had three beautiful children together, all of whom are now married and living in other states. When my husband passed, I was devastated. All I knew was gone, and I suddenly felt alone. I decided to retire early because I just couldn't handle the grief, which I now realize was a big mistake. I feel into a deep depression of isolation, loneliness, grief, and incredible pain. I rarely left the house, and when I did, it was to get the basic necessities.

My children became increasingly concerned about my well being, making visits to spend time with me. When they did arrive, I would put on a happy face, hide the piles of dirty laundry, and act like everything was OK. They knew it wasn't and encouraged me to go and talk with someone. I resisted, letting them know I would be fine. They would leave reluctantly every time.

After a year and a half of isolating myself in my cave at home, I woke up one morning to hear a wrestling noise on the porch. I staggered half awake to find a small puppy. I looked around and there was no one in sight. As I opened the door, the puppy came running in, wagging its tail, jumping up to my knees as if we had been buds forever!! "Oh Lord," I thought. "What am I going to do now?"

I gave the puppy some water and he quickly took to it. I then took a piece of meat from leftovers in the refrigerator,

which he anxiously ate. My plan was to let him settle, and muster up the energy to take him to the pound that afternoon.

The day progressed and I engaged in my usual avoidance behaviors, watching TV in my pajamas, while to my surprise, the puppy rested quietly on my lap. I decided that I would give it a day, since he seemed to need some rest. One day turned into two, into three, into weeks, and you can guess where this is going. I now have a dog named Blessing. I know that sounds silly, however I realized that in fact when I said "Oh Lord," I should have said "Thank you Lord."

After Blessing arrived on my doorstep, I checked with the neighbors and animal control website to see if she belonged to anyone. I could find nothing. I believe that Blessing was sent to lift me from my depression, give me some responsibility to care for another, feel hope and happiness, and realize that there is more to life than I'd ever experienced. You see, this was my first pet, ever!

I am writing to you in hope that my story will help inspire others to find ways to not give into their grief, but to face it and not let life stop. I was in a place where I thought I could never recover, and in just an instant, something changed that gave me hope.

So, while I am not saying that a pet is the answer, I am suggesting that giving into the depression and sadness will only make it worse. I have joined a grief support group as well, which has helped me to understand further how to manage my feelings and address them in a healthy manner.

If you are so inclined, please share my story with others and thank you for the time to read my letter.

With gratefulness,

Penny

Dear Penny,

Thank you for your very inspiring story, and desire to help others through your experience. I think I will leave it at that and just say, best wishes to you, and congrats on your new life with Blessing!

Sincerely,

Dr. Robin Zasio, Psy.D. LCSW

Solitary

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female officer standing at a booth where we usually go to check in whenever we visit on the weekends. She was chatting it up with another female officer about switching shifts in the coming week. When she saw me, she asked what I needed; she was very polite. I pulled out my I.D. and let her know that I was there to see A's social worker and psychiatrist. She looked in a large binder to see if my name was written in the schedule for a meeting. She looked at me and asked if I had an appointment and I said yes, we had spoken and I was to meet them around this time, call from the parking lot, then go in for them to come out to meet me at the lobby. She did not find my name anywhere, returned my identification to me and said sorry, there wasn't anything she could do.

It was already almost noon by then and getting hotter by the minute. I walked over to another counter where there were 3 officers sitting around, checking in the arriving employees. One of them asked if I needed assistance and I again told my story; he directed me to a phone on the wall and told me to call the social worker on that phone, which I did. No answer. I tried B's phone but he must have walked away and he didn't answer either, but I left another message anyway.

I looked around at all the activity; people in uniforms and plain clothes walking in and out of the building, talking, joking, some of them looking very serious. None of them seemed to pay any more attention to me. I wasn't sure what to do, so I dialed the social worker's extension again and, again, got no answer. I sat down on a very old-looking sofa that was against a wall and just waited and watched for about an hour.

Finally, my cell phone rang. It was B. He told me that he had looked for the social worker and discovered that she had called in sick. Then he said he had spoken to Dr. G and she had told him to tell me that she could not meet with me unless the social worker could be there with her and that she was very busy! B seemed very apologetic and courteous at the same time. I told him that I had driven from Yuba City, and his voice seemed to make the sound of shrugging shoulders as he told me there was nothing more he could do. He

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NAMI Sacramento Calendar

Sun, March 10, 7–8:30 pm: *NAMI Connection Consumer Support Group, Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento*

Sun, March 10, 7–8:30 pm: *Military Veterans Consumer Support Group, Heritage Oaks Hospital, 4300 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento*

Mon, March 11, 7-8:30 pm: *NAMI Sacramento General Interest Meeting—**Farewell My Friend: Caergiving, Death and Grieving**, Conference Room 1B, Sacramento County Division of Mental Health building, 3331 Power Inn Road, Sacramento*

Thur, March 14, 6–7:30 pm: *NAMI Family Support Group – North Area, Heritage Oaks Hospital, 4300 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento*

Thur, March 14, 6-7:30 pm: *NAMI Family Support Group – El Dorado Hills, Raley’s, 3935 Park Dr., El Dorado Hills*

Sun, March 17, 7–8:30 pm: *NAMI Connection Consumer Support Group, Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento*

Sun, March 17, 7–8:30 pm: *Military Veterans Consumer Support Group, Heritage Oaks Hospital, 4300 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento*

Sun, March 24, 7–8:30 pm: *NAMI Connection Consumer Support Group, Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento*

Sun, March 24, 7–8:30 pm: *Military Veterans Consumer Support Group, Heritage Oaks Hospital, 4300 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento*

Wed, March 27, 7:00–8:30 pm: *NAMI Family Support Group – South Area, Sierra Vista Hospital, 8001 Bruceville Road, Sacramento*

Thurs, March 28, 6:30–8:30 pm: *NAMI Sacramento Board of Directors Meeting, Conference Room 1A, Sacramento County Division of Mental Health building, 3331 Power Inn Road, Sacramento*

Sun, March 31, 7–8:30 pm: *NAMI Connection Consumer Support Group, Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento*

Sun, March 31, 7–8:30 pm: *Military Veterans Consumer Support Group, Heritage Oaks Hospital, 4300 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento*



NAMI Sacramento Board, Staff and Volunteers

Board of Directors

President	Larry Liseno
Treasurer	David Bain
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Board Member	Valerie Ries-Lerman

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Ending the Silence	Nicole Williams
Family-to-Family	Barry Pavan Norm Pobanz Phyllis Green
In Our Own Voice	Doug Smith
NAMI Basics	Lynn Cathy
Parents & Teachers	Nicole Williams
As Allies	
Peer-to-Peer	<i>vacant</i>

Support Group Coordinators

Connection Support	Joe Teixeira
Family Support	Pat Pavone Caroline Caton
Veterans Support	Joe Teixeira

Solitary

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suggested I call back later and reschedule. I felt very helpless and just said ok and hung up. I gathered my things and slowly walked out the front door.

As I walked toward the parking lot where I had parked my car, which was quite a distance, I looked at all the huge, stone buildings. All identical, painted white. Some with a letter of the alphabet painted on the front of it. My son is housed in building P, but I could not see that building. It must be way in the back, I thought. What might he be doing at that very moment? Was he better? Was he acting out? Would we be able to see him this weekend? Did he have a window? Was it hot in there? Had he had his lunch? Had he received our letters and was he able to read them? So many thoughts ran through my mind as I walked slowly

back to my vehicle.

I didn't want to leave. Just knowing that I was so close to him; that he was somewhere nearby. I prayed he would "feel" my presence there and felt so sad and very tired. I had brought with me an envelope with some papers from A's past and a photo of him from 9th grade so the doctor could see how cute he had been. In the photo, he is wearing a hat, slightly slanted to one side like my father used to wear it. He had on only a tank top and jeans, but he looked so happy. His face lit up with that great smile of his. I thought about how it had been so very long since I had seen that smile.

I reached the car, got in and started it to get the a/c going. I made some notations in my journal; it was so hard for me to go. I just wanted to stay on the same property where I knew my son was; to somehow connect to him in some way. To breathe the same air he

was breathing; to see the same sky he might be looking at. Finally, after about 30 minutes, I decided I'd better go before someone kicked me off the property...

I drove home on the highway; I drove too slow because I kept thinking about A and forgetting to step on the gas...I didn't play my music or the radio. Just quiet while I thought and thought. I didn't know whether I believed what B had told me, but there really was nothing else I could do. The place was a fortress and there was no shoving my way in...I thought, that's OK, God. You know what you're doing. Maybe it just wasn't supposed to be yet. I will call and reschedule and discuss whether they really will allow me in. I better make sure this time, before I leave. My whole body is aching from the drive...It's OK, though, there will be another day. Tomorrow I will fax them a letter and call. I pray we will be able to see my son this weekend...I can't give up.

NAMI Sacramento Membership Form

Please join us! Join others in your community dedicated to improving the lives of people with mental illness in the Sacramento area. Become part of our grassroots revolution and make a difference! Either detach and mail in the membership form below, or join online at www.namisacramento.org/membership. Collecting this information helps us to serve our members better. Your information is treated confidentially and will never be shared outside of NAMI. Please print clearly.

Name: _____ Address/City/Zip: _____

(circle one)

Home/Work/Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

(check one)

Your relation to the individual with mental illness: <input type="checkbox"/> I have a mental health challenge <input type="checkbox"/> Family member <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Decline to state	Ethnicity: <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> African/Black <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian/White <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Decline to state	Primary diagnosis of the individual with the mental health challenge: <input type="checkbox"/> ADHD <input type="checkbox"/> Bipolar disorder <input type="checkbox"/> Dual diagnosis <input type="checkbox"/> Major depression <input type="checkbox"/> OCD <input type="checkbox"/> Panic disorder	<input type="checkbox"/> PTSD <input type="checkbox"/> Schizophrenia <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Decline to state
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If you are a family member, please enter your family relation to the individual with mental illness:

Membership type:
 Standard, \$35
 Open Door, \$3 (limited income)

Newsletter preference:
 E-mail
 Postal mail
 Both
 Don't send

You can help! Volunteer with NAMI Sacramento
 Contact me about volunteer opportunities

Please consider an additional donation of:
 \$100 or more \$50-\$99 up to \$50

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