



## The New Parenting Tool Box

- *Managing my Teen-Aged Son's Post-Election Anxiety*

By Suzette Southfox, CYF Liaison Program Manager

When my son was ten-years-old, my family courted a "rule out pediatric bi-polar disorder" diagnosis with a neuropsychologist and a child psychiatrist. The depression and anxiety that prevented my child from getting out of the car and missing 125 days of school began to make sense. At my very best, I felt woefully unequipped to help...but I learned.

"I called the  
NAMI San Diego Helpline.  
I learned a little more.  
Support came more easily.  
Sometimes clumsily,  
sometimes quickly."

- Suzette Southfox

Fast forward to the teen-aged years and a new diagnosis of HFASD - high functioning autism spectrum disorder. While my son's experience continues to be driven by depression and anxiety, today he is a newly made young adult.

Because of this, I have been called to revisit the parenting tool box I have used for many years. Where there used to be a change of socks or a comfort toy are now instructions from the psychiatrist for which medication to increase in the event of unmanageable anxiety. We have downloaded the Tech CAFÉs oscER app and used it recently during a panic attack that landed us in the ER. (Visit page 3)

### IN THIS ISSUE

The New Parenting Tool Box  
Contact Us

1

Children's Mental Health Week  
Coaching Meeting Topics

2

Family Support Meetings  
New! Our Voices Matter Mtg

3

PFYPP -New Class Dates!  
Join Our Forums

4

Advocacy  
Ending The Silence

5

Character Strengths  
by Carolina Moxley

6

Our Voices Matter  
Career Pathways Training

7

Issue Resolution  
Job Postings

8

### CONTACT US

1 (858) 987-2980

1 (800) 523-5933 Helpline

[www.cyfliaison.namisaniego.org](http://www.cyfliaison.namisaniego.org)

[CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org)

[www.namisaniego.org](http://www.namisaniego.org)



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Health & Human Services Agency

# Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

SAVE THE DATE!

May 1 - May 7, 2017



We have **BIG** plans for Children's Mental Health Awareness Week and we want to make sure you are included!

## What is this about?

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is the National Federation of Families yearly event, geared toward raising awareness to the issues and causes integral to the children's mental health field in each community across the country.

It is through our combined efforts that growth, renewal and the promotion of positive mental health will impact the well-being of our children. Our voices carry volumes in bringing about change. Speak out and be heard. Let our message ring in the ears of others: Children's Mental Health Matters!

## How can you get involved?

We would love your help and here are some ideas:

- Join a planning committee and help us bring our ideas to life! Click [Here](#).
- Volunteer to help out on the day of the BIG event. Click [Here](#).

Please join us as we create a national dialogue about the importance of healthy families and resilient children!



## JANUARY REMINDERS

### FYP Coaching Meetings:

Coaching Meetings provide education and support for FYPs, and are held the 4th Friday of the month from 1-3 pm at NAMI SD, 5095 Murphy Canyon Rd, Ste 320, San Diego, 92123. Please RSVP to [cyfliaison@namisd.org](mailto:cyfliaison@namisd.org)

- **Jan. 27, 1-3 PM:** Our presenter for the meeting is Dr. Rachel Robitz, psychiatrist and UCSD researcher, who will present her findings on trauma experienced by women who are sex trafficked, and will discuss new screening tools for trauma in San Diego county.
- **February 24, 1-3 PM:** Darlene Tando, LCSW, therapist and author of *The Conscious Guide to Gender Identity: A Mindful Approach to Embracing Your Child's Authentic Self* will discuss "How to mindfully parent your transgender child." There will also be a youth presentation on how to be an ally to gender non-conforming and transgender youth.

The NAMI San Diego CYFL Team is comprised of:

CEO: Shannon Jaccard, MBA

COO: Sue Skube

Community Development Director: Renee Cookson

CYFL Program Manager: Suzette Southfox

CYFL Program Coordinator: Valerie Hebert

CYFL Program Lead Trainer: Linda Ketterer

CYFL Program Trainers: Kelly Hutton, Carolina

Moxley

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Telephones:

1 (858) 987-2980 OR 1 (800) 523-5933 (NAMISD Helpline)

Email: [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org)

Website: [www.cyfliaison.namisanidiego.org](http://www.cyfliaison.namisanidiego.org)

# The New Parenting Tool Box

- Managing my Teen-Aged Son's Post-Election Anxiety (Continued from page 1)

Today my parenting tool box includes notes on how to manage a bad social media experience (what happens when your son or daughter is devastated when someone posts inflammatory responses on their comment?). And before we leave for a large public event, I make sure that the emergency pastoral cell phone number for my church is written on his skin with indelible ink. I am grateful that NAMI San Diego offers information on peer support, live chat and a Helpline, because all are great ways to start adding to the new parenting tool kit. Who knows what new tools there are still left to discover? I am looking forward to learning more!



## Family Support Meetings

NEW Meeting!

### PARENT-to-PARENT (P2P) SUPPORT COACHING MEETING - OUR VOICES MATTER!

The Children, Youth & Family Liaison announces a New, Open, FREE, monthly coaching support group meeting for parents, caregivers and loved ones of children and youth. This Peer-led meeting is based on the NAMI standard group guidelines and principles of support. Find resources! Learn! Share! Give feedback and develop support systems. Parents ONLY until further notice. RSVP REQUESTED: email [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org) or 858-987-2980.

#### P2P Meeting Dates:

- **February 22, 6-8 PM.** Presenter: Caroline Ridout Stewart, Psychotherapist UCSD Dept. of Psychiatry, with A New Path. **Topic: Addictions as a Mental Illness**
- **March 22, 6-8 PM.** Presenter: TBD

Meeting location: NAMI SD, 5095 Murphy Canyon Rd, Ste 320, San Diego, 92123

#### FAMILY VOICE MEETING -

**Jan 26, 2017**

**6:30 - 8:00 PM**

#### Chula Vista Public Library

South Branch - Room B

389 Orange Ave, Chula Vista, CA

Is your family currently engaged in the Children, Youth & Family Behavioral Health System of Care (CYFBHSOC)? If so, we want to hear your voice! Please join the NAMI SD CYFL team for our quarterly **Family Voice Meeting**. *Children & Youth are welcome. Pizza, Salad & Drinks provided!*

We also want to hear from families who are not receiving services but would like to, as we want to connect you with the resources you need to support your family. Families who were historically engaged in the CYFBHSOC are also encouraged to join our meetings.

Your experience and wisdom are highly valued by our team, and we would love to create a larger network of Family Youth Partners.



For more information on Family Support Meetings, and/or to RSVP, please email [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org) or call (858) 987-2980

#### FAMILY/YOUTH SECTOR MEETING

**In-Person**, Mar 30, 2017, 2:00 - 3:30 pm

South SD area - Location TBD

Our **Family Youth Sector Meetings** are for parents, providers, Family Youth Partners, and anyone who supports families engaged in the Children Youth Families Behavioral Health System of Care (CYFBHSOC). These meetings are dedicated to discussing best practices in the current system of care and how we can continue to improve or develop services to help our families thrive. We want to hear about emerging practices, programs, and policies. Providers are encouraged to bring literature and program updates to share with other providers and Family Youth Partners. These meetings are held quarterly and alternate between in person and online.

**Our next meeting will be online. Please register by emailing us at [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org)**



## New Class Dates: The Principles of Family & Youth Professional Partnerships 1-Hour Online Training

The PFYPP training has been designed to provide all members involved in the care and support of children, youth and families engaged in San Diego's Children, Youth & Families (CYF) Behavioral Health System of Care (BH-SOC) with an introduction to the principles of the family/youth professional partnership. The goal is that by learning these principles, participants will understand and appreciate the value of working effectively with Peer Specialists, known in the children, youth & families sector as "Family Youth Partners," in order to best support and encourage the families in this system of care.

"Family Youth Partners" are a branch of Peer Specialists comprised of parents, caregivers, and youth that work in the behavioral health field as paid or unpaid staff. They have valuable lived experience of either receiving children, youth & family behavioral health services or supporting a young family member receiving these services. FYPs who are living successfully in recovery have added to their lived experience a foundation of additional training in mental health, behavioral health, trauma informed care, communication skills, crisis intervention, and more.

### Principles of Family & Youth Professional Partnerships - ONLINE - Additional Training Dates Announced!

Feb 8, 2017, 10-11 AM  
Feb 23, 2017, 1-2 PM

Family Youth Partners use their lived experience and training to remind parents, families and youth of their innate strengths and draw the family attention to what is working well, inspiring families to find and use appropriate community resources. FYPs also work to empower and encourage families to use their unique voices.

This one hour, on-line interactive learning experience is approved for (1) CE, Continuing Education Hour, and is a very convenient way to add to CEHs or to simply gain training in order to work in the behavioral health field as a Family Youth Partner. Would you like us to bring this training to your organization? **With our online training format, we can schedule a training for your organization on a day and time that works for your company.** Simply email or call us for more information.

**Sign up for this FREE 1-Hour Training by visiting the CYFL website HERE: <https://cyfliaison.namisanidiego.org/online-training/>. Includes 1 CEH (Continuing Education Hour) Learn more by calling (858)987-2980 or email us directly at [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org).**

## "Can you suggest..."

You know those burning questions that come to mind in the middle of the night? The ones that seem to flash in front of your eyes like a neon sign as you lie awake and just... can't. go. back. to. sleep.... Racking your brain and even online searches do not always provide the right answers. Just knowing there is an online community you can



visit whenever the time is right for you can be so reassuring and helpful.

Our Child, Youth and

Family Liaison Online Forums are OPEN and available for your participation. With these electronic Forums, our goal is to:

- form several lively conversations where you can find the answers you are looking for
- encourage a place where your voice can be heard
- allow forum members an online space to develop community and collaborate with each other
- have a landing place where you can get to know others who might be dealing with a similar circumstance

### Q & As:

**What are the Forums about?** We have four subject topics for you to engage with: Parents & Caregivers, Service Providers, Family Youth Partners and TAY (Transitional Aged Youth).

**How do I join in?** Joining in is easy and confidential! Simply scroll to the bottom of our Forums page [here](#), and click on the word Register. Once you register, you will be able to select a secret name. Each time you come back to the Forums, use your personal name to Login. Then, all you need to do is get involved with the conversation.

**What if I have additional questions?** No problem! Simply send us [an email](#) and we will be happy to walk you through the sign in process, or answer any of your additional questions.

# Why I'm Speaking Out About Mental Illness in 2017

By [Cynthia Thelen](#)

### The year 2016 was a year of secrecy.

When my husband and I first met our daughter at 6 weeks of age, we knew her prenatal drug and alcohol exposure was already wreaking havoc in her little body. As the years unfolded, despite stellar early services, the remnants of her early, undeserved chaos showed itself in mental illness, the severity of which became realized in heart-wrenching ways over the last year. As her parents, we worked hard to keep things under wraps as we hoped we could find our way to some normalcy; the kind of normalcy others don't question. Some may call it naive to hope she could somehow walk away from the seriousness of her mental illness and begin to function as a "typical" teen, but I call it hope. It is with hope, that I become brave. It is with hope for her future, my future and the future of others who are tormented by minds that betray them that I come out in 2017. I think there are four good reasons to go public.

**To be a voice.** Our loved ones need their chaos explained through coherent words. Speak what those scars across her arm really say. Speak what was behind his seemingly cruel and hurtful behavior. Describe to those who care to be involved what it feels like to be the one struggling with a specific illness you are well-versed in. Yes, it's OK to confirm acceptance is not the same as understanding. Yet, there are things I will never fully comprehend. I can, however, accept her as she is and do my best to explain her in a way that honors her humanity.

**To remove stigma.** Stigma is defined as a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality or person. Mental illness is not a chosen path no more than cancer would be. Genetics are not chosen. Early-life trauma is not chosen. Continuing to hide our challenges only serves to multiply the stigma as it screams "be ashamed," "be guilty." Look, we are all fallen people, and any of us are but one step away from a diagnosis that would be our "mark of disgrace." Strip stigma of its power!

**To advocate.** When we advocate, we are a champion, a spokesperson and a crusader. When we are the advocate, we are one who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy. Both of these take some education on our part; training, so to speak. Advocating for our loved one runs the whole gamut from teaching other family members all the way to petitioning our legislating bodies. It is impossible to do this well without becoming experts ourselves. It is our responsibility to further the causes that bring hope and help to those fighting the myriad of mental illnesses.

**To receive support.** After months of expending enormous amounts of energy I didn't have trying to carefully guard our secret, I had come to a place of isolation, loneliness and fatigue. After a recent crisis, it became apparent I no longer had the strength or desire to continue battling with no backup. Quite honestly, our life looks very different from those who have typical teens, and there is nothing to be gained by hiding that. Is it hard? Yes! Worth it? Without a doubt. Self-care? At its finest!

**Welcome 2017! May we meet your challenges with renewed strength, goals and the bravery to be bold.**



To read more about advocacy and related topics, please visit our blog at <http://cyfliaison.namisan-diego.org/blog/>

This article was reprinted from [The Mighty](#). Click [here](#) to read the original article.

## Ending The Silence

Ending the Silence (ETS) is a free NAMI classroom program, presented by two volunteers including a young adult with lived experience of a mental health condition. Through ETS, middle and high school students learn indicators of mental

illness, how to find support for themselves, friends and family. ETS raises awareness, changes perceptions, and breaks stigma around mental illness, for students, teachers and staff. To request an ETS presentation, please contact [cyfliaison@namisd.org](mailto:cyfliaison@namisd.org) or call 858-987-2980



In the field of mental health, one often hears the term “strength-based recovery.” The idea is that we empower individuals and families by helping them identify their strengths and encouraging them to draw on these strengths as a source of joy and self-empowerment when confronted with life’s challenges.

Most professionals in the field of mental health now agree on the importance of using client’s strengths to improve their confidence and positive outlook on life. But what if we don’t know all of our strengths or those of our children or clients? When someone asks me about my strengths, I often respond with comments about my passions, such as writing and dancing. However, in 2010, I learned about something called “Character Strengths” after discovering the work of University of Pennsylvania psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman.

According to Seligman, there are three types of happiness: pleasure, engagement, and meaning. He describes happiness that comes from transient pleasures such as food, sex, and luxury experiences as providing the least amount of life satisfaction. Part of the reason for this is that we become accustomed to pleasures, and after some time, we no longer find them satisfying. He gives an example of eating a slice of chocolate cake. The first bite tastes delicious, but as we continue to eat it, our pleasure begins to wane. By the sixth bite, our pleasure may have completely dissipated. We crave novelty, and thus, we find ourselves on a hedonic treadmill, continually seeking out new experiences to bring us happiness.

Seligman explains that in order for us to experience true fulfillment in life, we should seek more engagement and meaning. How do we do this? Seligman points to identifying and employing our primary character strengths as a means of achieving life satisfaction.

To discover my character strengths, I took his free online questionnaire called VIA 24 Character Strengths. It ranks 24 different character strengths to help you identify your top 5, which Seligman calls your Primary Character Strengths.

The results revealed that one of my primary character strengths is “Perspective” or “Wisdom,” which is defined as “being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people” (VIA Institute on Character).

According to Seligman, when we utilize our character strengths, we enter a state of flow where time stands still. We feel so engaged in our activity that we lose track of time. Think of a professional soccer player who is so engaged in the game that nothing else exists around him. He is completely present and immersed in the activity at hand.



Seligman explains that utilizing our primary character strengths as often as possible leads to greater feelings of engagement in our lives. This leads to a greater sense of lasting fulfillment than pursuing transient pleasures, such as delicious meals, a massage, a new outfit, a new car, or a luxury vacation.

He recommends that we recraft our lives so as to use our character strengths as much as possible in our marriages, parenting, work, friendships, and leisure time.

So how does this look in real life? Well, in my leisure time, I love to read books about spirituality, and I find inspiration from the words of wise men and women, such as civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and American Buddhist author and teacher Pema Chodron. In my parenting, I love to read children’s books that teach kindness and compassion and how to deal with difficult experiences as a way to engage in dialogue about these topics with my preschooler.

Finally, Dr. Martin Seligman recommends that we also use our strengths in service of a cause that is larger than our personal lives. Seligman explains that using our strengths to support a cause that is important to us leads to a meaningful life, which according to his research findings is the greatest predictor of life satisfaction.

Wanting to put his theory to the test, I decided to volunteer for a hospice to make calls to grieving families so I could put my character strength of wisdom to use for a cause that was larger than myself. I found it so deeply fulfilling that I knew I wanted to work in a field where I could use my strengths to serve others. Luckily, I had the great fortune of becoming employed at NAMI San Diego, where I can use my perspective to serve families living with mental illness, a cause which is close to my heart.

May you discover, enjoy, and celebrate your own character strengths and those of the families you serve.

*Want to discover your own character strengths or those of your children? Take the free “Via Survey of Character Strengths” questionnaire or the “VIA Strengths Survey for Children” at [www.authenticchappiness.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.authenticchappiness.sas.upenn.edu).*

*To learn more about Character Strengths, read Dr. Martin Seligman’s book *Authentic Happiness* or watch his TED talk “[Martin Seligman: The new era of positive psychology](#).”*

*Works Cited: “The VIA Classification of Character Strengths & Virtues.” VIA Institute on Character. 2004-2017. 25 Jan. 2017. <http://bit.ly/1jXcluD>*



# Mental Health Specialist: Another Point of View

## Our Voices Matter Featuring a Family Youth Partner

**Ian Sheiner**, L.M.F.T. is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with San Diego Youth Services' Prevention and Early Intervention program, also known as the "PEI" program. PEI is a school based program, utilizing *The Incredible Years Curriculum* in addition to supporting the concept of working side by side with those professionals with lived experience, or Family Youth Partners. Ian enjoys taking his professional tool box and applying his skills to each school community which has its own special culture and history, all of which must be assessed in order to best serve the needs of the children, youth and parents. Ian has served three different schools which implement the PEI program during the past four and a half years.



**Do you know a CYF Partner who is making a difference in their community? Nominations are open for a possible feature in a future edition of Our Voices Matter, a column promoting Caring People in the CYFL Newsletter. Send your nomination via email to [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org)**

Ian states his greatest accomplishment is seeing the sheer number of people his programs reach through classroom lessons, after school small groups, and parenting support groups. Ian finds that whole family support is provided to the community when parents engage in the parenting support groups at the same time their children are engaged in the after-school groups. Such family participation helps create productive home environments because everyone is using the same positive reinforcement language and community skills.

When asked what his greatest challenge has been in this role, Ian stated that finding a working balance within the PEI team itself could be difficult. The PEI team includes Mental Health Specialists, Family Youth Partners, educators and program staff all which must learn to embrace the multitude of differences where not only educational variations co-exist, but differences within culture, age, and lived experience can be as diverse as the community they serve. Ian noted that when a new member joins a PEI program, they are immediately assigned to a school and a team. It really depends on the individual team if there is a balanced appreciation

of professional experience and lived experience. He stated ideally you would have a balance of both, and you can never minimize the value of the Family Youth Partner support. When a PEI team meets the challenge of working together effectively, it demonstrates to families that "if they can work together as a team, so can we."

Ian sees great benefits working alongside a Family Youth Partner, individuals with lived experience of mental illness. The blend of lived experience and wisdom, paired with the clinical scientific knowledge and evidence based practices provide rich and broad support for children, youth and families within the behavioral health system of care.

When asked what benefit Ian receives from collaborating with Family Youth Partners he is quick to respond, "I get to absorb some of that wisdom! The greatest teacher is one who comes from experience... I learn so much by just seeing how [Family Youth Partners] relate to others in the community, one on one, and in every other arena we serve." Ian continued, "I absorb and in turn get my own experiences serving side by side with them... this might mean I have to drop my ego, and look at it from another perspective. But as long as we approach it as a 'team' and come together, we will hit our stride and reach our goals more quickly. This collaboration has taught me how to navigate through conflict resolution in a positive and constructive manner."

When asked how organizations that work with Family Youth Partners and Mental Health Specialists best support and strengthen the importance of this working relationship? Ian explained "You have to acknowledge what strengths this unit brings to the table to have honest collaboration. Whenever you have a team, you have to look at who does what best. This takes time and effort, and being open to change."

**To read the rest of this article and see what Ian hopes for the future of Family Youth Partners, as well as a look into Ian's work during his time off, please click [HERE](#) and follow up with Ian Sheiner, LMFT, [on our Blog](#). Thanks for reading!**

### Did you know?

**Are you someone who has experience with mental illness, or assists a family member who lives with mental illness? You may be able to put your Lived Experience to work for you by becoming a Family Youth Partner.**

Family Youth Partners are members of the community who use their knowledge and experience to reach out and help other families who might just be beginning a difficult journey. At NAMI San Diego, we offer Trainings and Learning opportunities so you can determine if becoming a Peer Specialist or Family Youth Partner is right for you. A Free Peer/Youth Partner/Family/Parent Partner 20-hour training course may be just what you're looking for! This free training course is offered by NAMI San Diego's Career Pathways Program. Classes include skills and tips on working with Peers and Families, using effective communications skills, problem solving techniques, modeling how to use them, as well as Ethics/HIPAA, and boundaries. The next 10 week cohort begins Feb 28, 2017. Contact Career Pathways for more information at [Careerpathways@namisd.org](mailto:Careerpathways@namisd.org).

# Issue Resolution



The NAMI San Diego Children Youth & Family Liaison (CYFL) serves as the Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) Resolution Point-of-Contact for issues within the Child Youth & Family Behavioral Health Services System of Care (CYFBHSSOC). We serve the community by facilitating dialogue between families, Family Youth Partners, and providers. Families can attend our Family Voice Meetings to talk about what is working well for them and where they need additional support within the Children's System of Care. If families feel they are not receiving proper care from their providers, have an issue, or if they are struggling to find the services they need, the CYF Liaison provides a safe, trauma informed, judgment free space for families to discuss and resolve these concerns and also provides Behavioral Health Services with community feedback to assist in improving the current system of care.

By creating a welcoming environment where families can express themselves and share their experiences, we honor the truth that they are indeed the experts of their own lives. The CYF Liaison believes that the more opportunities we create for dialogue, the better we will understand the needs of our families. With this increased understanding, we can better serve and empower all of the families engaged in the Children, Youth, and Family Behavioral Health Services System of Care.

**FOR ISSUE RESOLUTION ASSISTANCE: (858) 987-2980**



Your feedback is very important to us! Please call, email or speak to us at a support meeting or Training.

It is our aim to be your resource for feedback, networking, sharing, engagement and support, so San Diego's Children's System of Care is the best it can possibly be!



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# NAMI San Diego

**NAMI SD Children, Youth & Family Liaison**  
**Vol. II, Issue 1, January 2017**  
**5095 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 320**  
**San Diego, CA 92123**

*Return Service Requested*



## Job Postings

- **Case Manager** (Part Time) - Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy / Bi-lingual preferred - Peer Support Certification needed - email resume to [MaricelaW@lassd.org](mailto:MaricelaW@lassd.org)
- **Bilingual Peer Support Specialist** - Peer LINKS Program (Full Time) - Apply to NAMI SD [Here](#)
- **In Our Own Voice, Peer Presenter** - Offsite (Part Time) - Apply to NAMI SD [Here](#)
- **Peer Specialist** - NAMI San Diego Next Steps Program (Part Time) - Apply to NAMI SD [Here](#)
- **Bilingual Parent Partner / Case Manager** - San Diego Center For Children. Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/2gzu6e1>