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Children, Youth & Family LIAISON

How Do We Navigate the Tough Stuff?

By Valerie Hebert

It can be a parent's worst nightmare when the domino effect of wondering *"Is something wrong with my child?"* turns into *"Something is definitely not right with my child."* During these periods of questioning and realization, it is important for parents and caregivers to get necessary supports in place so they can attempt to move through their feelings of worry, disappointment, periods of feeling low, possible isolation from friends and family, and grappling with the stigma associated with behavioral and mental health concerns.

We hope by learning about NAMI San Diego's Children, Youth and Family Liaison (CYFL), families will realize they are not alone, and this is a place where they can find support, hope and encouragement from others who have walked in their shoes. Our "Lived Experience" is what gives us the ability to empathize with family trauma and feelings of isolation. We strive to provide a warm, supportive, and welcoming environment that allows families to know that they are not alone in their family's journey to recovery.

We believe worried parents and caregivers are capable of moving mountains when propelled by concerns surrounding their child. This means families can find strength in the process of navigating through these concerns. When a child's situation feels overwhelming, parents may mobilize in many ways, but learning more about what their child is going through is a top priority. The CYFL offers educational classes to assist families to learn more about their child's challenges. Finding strength in numbers is also key, and is why support meetings or open community forums are vital

(Continued on page 6)

CONTACT US



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The CYFL is funded by The County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency through the Mental Health Services Act

Connect With Us on Facebook Live

We go Live on Facebook the first Tuesday of every month! [Like](#) the NAMI San Diego Facebook page (click [here](#) or visit www.facebook.com/namisaniego and you will receive a notification when we are "on the air."

NEXT ONLINE FAMILY & YOUTH FOCUS GROUP:

Tuesday, May 1, 2018 starting at 2 PM

Tuesday, June 5, 2018 starting at 2 PM

Our Family & Youth Focus Group Meetings are for parents, providers, Family Youth Partners, youth, TAY (Transition Age Youth) and those who support families engaged in the Children, Youth and Families Behavioral Health System of Care. 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 families thrive. We want to talk about emerging practices, programs, and policies. These meetings are held quarterly online via Facebook Live.

*Visit and Like our Facebook Page [Here](#), and Join Us Online!

Family Support Partner Coaching Meetings:

Coaching Meetings provide education and support for Family Support Partners (FSP) and are held the 4th Friday of the month from 1-3 pm at the NAMI San Diego main office, located at 5095 Murphy Canyon Rd, Ste 320, San Diego, 92123. A one-hour coaching presentation relevant to supporting families is followed by a group sharing session. Please RSVP.

- [April 27, 1-3 PM](#)
- [May 25, 1-3 PM](#)
- [June 22, 1-3 PM](#)
- Call / Text (858) 987-2980 for more information or email cyfliaison@namisd.org
- Please RSVP to the Family Support Partner Coaching Meeting by reserving your spot. Click here: <http://bit.ly/FSPc2017>

TAY Troop Meet Up

Finding Community, Making Connections, & Advocating for Mental Wellness for Transitional Age Youth, ages 16 - 25

New Day and Time Coming Soon!

Meet Up Information: **In order to best serve our community, the location and time for meet ups varies. Please follow us at [facebook.com/NAMISanDiego](https://www.facebook.com/NAMISanDiego) or go to bit.ly/TAY-Troop to find the date and time for this month's Meet Up.**

TAY Troop Meet Up is a creative, supportive space for 16-25 year old San Diegans to find community connection. TAY Troop empowers youth to speak up about stigma, discover wellness techniques, receive assistance with finding opportunities and resources for employment, housing, education and volunteering. This is a place of non-judgmental acceptance and all are welcome!

TAY includes individuals (16-25) who experience or at risk of experiencing homelessness, have or have had a mental health diagnosis, or are engaged in substance use.

The NAMI San Diego CYFL Team is comprised of:

CEO: Cathryn Nacario

COO: Sue Skube

Community Development Director: Renee Cookson

CYFL Program Manager:

CYFL Lead Trainer: Linda Ketterer

CYFL Family Specialist Trainer: Valerie Hebert

CYFL Technology Engineer: Leo Pizarro

CYFL Community Developer: Shane Drosi

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SUPPORT MEETINGS for Families

Find Resources! Learn! Share!



WHERE YOU FIND SUPPORT

Parents Empowering Parents support group



NAMI SD PEP Meeting Dates:

Meets 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6-8 pm. Quarterly 2018 meeting dates:

- April 18, 2018
- May 16, 2018
- Jun 20, 2018

Meeting location:

NAMI San Diego,
5095 Murphy Canyon Rd,
Ste 320, San Diego, 92123

PEP: Parents Empowering Parents - SUPPORT GROUP MEETING - #OURVOICESMATTER

The Children, Youth & Family Liaison offers San Diego parents and caregivers a FREE, open, monthly coaching and support group meeting for parents and caregivers of children and youth (through age 25) living with challenging behaviors, mental and behavioral health concerns. This peer-led meeting, called Parents Empowering Parents (PEP), is based on standard group guidelines and principles of support. Join other parents and caregivers to find resources, learn, share, give feedback, and develop support systems. Parents and Caregivers ONLY. RSVP REQUESTED: <http://bit.ly/2017PEP> or call/text 858-987-2980.

Family Voice Town Hall

FAMILY VOICE TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Is your family currently engaged in the Children, Youth & Families 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 Town Hall Meeting. We also want to hear from families who are not receiving services, but would like to, as our mission is 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. Children & youth are welcome. Refreshments provided!

May 10, 2018 - 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Location: NORTH

Oceanside Public Library

330 N. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, CA 92154

May 24, 2018 - 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Location: SOUTH

Chula Vista CIVIC Library

365 F Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910

Jun 7, 2018 - 12:00 - 1:30 pm

Location: EAST

El Cajon Library, Seminar Room

201 E. Douglas Ave, El Cajon, CA 92020

Jun 21, 2018 - 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Location: CENTRAL

NAMI San Diego Main Offices

5095 Murphy Canyon Rd, Ste 320, SD, 92123

Opportunity drawings for families in attendance!

For additional meeting dates, locations and times, or more information on Family Support Meetings, and/or to RSVP, please call/text 858-987-2980 or email CYFLiaison@namisd.org

CYF Liaison Education



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I'm learning new things in this class and I'm applying them, and it's helping me stay calm with my kids. It's working and I love the skills I am gaining in this class!

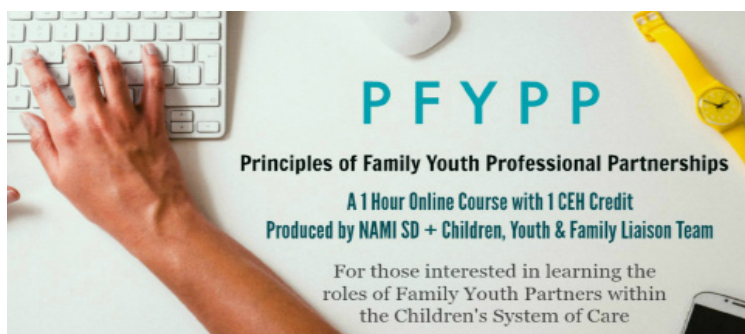
- NAMI Basics Parent

TWO NEW SESSIONS SCHEDULED!

- Beginning May 22, 2018 (Tuesday evenings) 6:00 - 8:30 PM <http://bit.ly/BasicsMay2018>
- Beginning July 21, 2018 (Saturday mornings) 10:00 AM -12:30 PM <http://bit.ly/BasicsJuly2018>

NAMI Basics is a free 6-week class designed for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents under age 18 with emotional and behavioral difficulties. NAMI Basics helps parents and caregivers understand the illnesses that are causing these difficulties, and the critical role families play in the treatment of these illnesses. This program is taught by two trained teachers who are also the parents or caregivers of individuals who experienced emotional or behavioral difficulties prior to age 13. To learn more and sign up for the NAMI Basics for Parents & Caregivers class starting MAY 22, 2018, please visit <http://bit.ly/BasicsMay2018>. To sign up for the Saturday morning class starting July 21, 2018, please visit <http://bit.ly/BasicsJuly2018>.

CYFL Trainings Available Starting July 1, 2018



Mark your calendar for July 1, 2018 because that is when we release new cohorts of two of our most popular trainings. **Principles of Family Youth Professional Partnerships (PFYPP)** is our online 1-hour introduction to Family Support Partners, and **Working Together** is a live 4-hour training. These trainings help peer staff and those with lived experience gain knowledge of the Children's System of Care (CSOC), and learn tools to more effectively work together to support families and help them thrive. Offering CEH credit, these trainings fill up quickly. You don't want to miss out!

Transitional Age Youth: TAY Spotlight

Micaela Cunningham is our TAY Youth Feature

For today's spotlight, we had the pleasure of spending a little time with Micaela Cunningham. Micaela is a recent high school graduate in San Diego County. She is an active volunteer at NAMI San Diego, and is a valuable planning committee member for the Children's Mental Health and Well-being Celebration which will take place on May 2nd, 2018 at Azalea Park in the Middletown area of San Diego.

Here is what being a TAY means to Micaela.

CYFL: In your own words, what does the term "transition age youth" (TAY) mean to you?

Micaela: To me, the term "transition age youth" means people ages 16-25. They're the people who are transitioning into another, more adult stage in their lives. At 17, you're getting ready for whatever is coming after high school and at 25 you're just becoming more of an adult. At every age between those two most people still haven't figured things out and we're all out here trying our best.

CYFL: The phrase TAY implies you're going through a period of change or transition. What are some of the aspects of your life that are currently changing?

Micaela: Currently at the age of 18 I'm becoming more responsible for myself. I'm having to set up my own insurance, I'm finding my own doctors, and I'm applying to school and financial aid for the next semester while also looking for a job and a cheap place to live.

CYFL: What types of programs or services do you wish were available to TAY in San Diego?

Micaela: One program I wish that was available to TAY individuals in San Diego county is a program that helps you "learn to adult." I don't know how to apply for insurance, I don't know how to set a budget, and I don't how to go about getting financial aid for school. You can research these things but it would be nice to be able to learn it all in one place where you can get one-on-one help.

CYFL: Of the programs out there, which do you find most helpful and engaging?

Micaela: I find two of the of the most helpful and engaging programs to be Ending the Silence and QPR.* Ending the Silence (ETS)** is a fantastic program for helping end stigma and QPR gives people the tools they need to help others who are facing a mental health crisis.

CYFL: What are your plans for the next few years?

Micaela: For the next few years I'm going to be focusing on getting myself on my feet. I need to find a stable job, go to school, and get my driver's license. I'm also hoping to get a few road trips out of the way!

CYFL: What role do you play in ending mental health stigma?

Micaela: I try to take an active role in ending the mental health stigma by encouraging people to look after their own mental health, validating negative emotions, and being honest about my own experiences with my mental health.

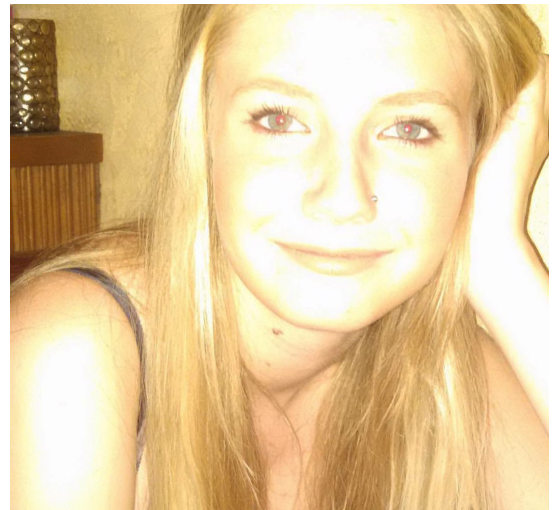
CYFL: Finally, tell us something interesting about yourself?

Micaela: I've been whale watching in Alaska and it was easily the coolest trip I've ever been on. I got to see the humpbacks do their bubble net feeding which only occurs in a few places in the world, it's a method of feeding that's unique to humpback whales alone.

Thank you for sharing a peek into your life with us, Micaela!

**To learn more information about QPR and to sign up for a training, please visit: <http://www.sdchip.org/?s=QPR+Training>*

***For info on ETS, please visit: <https://www.nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-ending-the-silence> or to schedule a presentation in your school, reach out to your local NAMI San Diego ETS Coordinator, Shane Drosi at (858) 634-6580 x135 or shane.drosi@namisd.org*



NAMI San Diego's CYF Liaison provides a platform for the authentic voice of children, youth, and families engaged in the system of care to be heard. One way we accomplish this goal is by connecting emerging young adults or "Transition Age Youth" (TAY age 16-25) to the Behavioral Health Services Children's System of Care Council (and the TAY Council) to become involved voting members, alternates, and supporters.

Take a moment to think about this time of your life, what you experienced being 16 to 25 years old. This period was probably a time of growth, change, and excitement coinciding with a heavy dose of transition, transformation, and all too often fear, depression, and anxiety. Frequently, this age group is left without supportive services and resources, falling between the cracks of two established systems: Children's System of Care and Adult System of Care. Because of this, NAMI San Diego is especially interested in supporting the TAY population. We are establishing inter-organization relationships across San Diego County, and have embarked on a new program we are excited to call TAY Troop Meet Up. TAY Troop is a place for all emerging young adults (aged 16 through 25) to find community, share resources, and ultimately find ways of living well in recovery. For more information and for future meet ups, please read more on page 6, and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/namisandiego

CYFL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

SAVE THE DATE!

APRIL
28

NAMI Walks/Runs at NTC Park Liberty Station
Register Today! www.namiwalks.org/SanDiegoCounty **Free!**



**PARTNERING FOR HEALTH AND HOPE
FOLLOWING TRAUMA**

national children's mental health awareness day

MAY
2

**Children's Mental
Health Well-Being
Celebration 2018**

May 2, 2018 4:30 - 6:30 PM
Azalea Rec Center, 2596 Violet St, SD, 92105
RSVP: bit.ly/CSOCMay2018 **Free!**
More Info: 858-987-2980

How Do We Navigate the Tough Stuff? (Continued from page 1)

concept of self-care. CYFL offers open meetings, and online forums where families can engage with others on a level in which they feel comfortable. Parents who find a way to keep their own self-care at the forefront of their to-do list are those who may realize less stress in navigating through their child's challenges.

Here are a few suggestions for parents in crisis to consider:

- Meditation is proven to be a useful practice. Meditate on the dreams you have for your family and your child(ren) who are struggling. Sitting in silence and stillness may allow answers to gently unfold. Calming meditation allows parents become more centered in their thoughts and actions, which translates to being more present with their children.
- Listen to your children's concerns and help them find a way to verbalize through words, art, play, etc. Consider finding a therapist who will help them find a way to express their struggles. County funded support is available to families with financial needs.
- Parents are encouraged to ask for support when needed. Attending a support group, like the ones available at NAMI San Diego, allow for growing a circle of support and adding supportive tools to one's tool belt. These are some of the most valuable steps a parent or caregiver can take to be able to move out of crisis and into advocating for their child.
- Consider taking an education class, such as NAMI Basics for Parents & Caregivers to learn necessary tools and new support systems for your family. (Learn more about this class on page 4.)

We invite you to connect with the CYF Liaison today and learn new tools to help make life more manageable for you and your family. Visit us at cyfliaison@namisandiego.org or 858-987-2980.

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Just getting through a day successfully, without a crisis, can be a [huge] accomplishment.

- Cindi Kershner

Our Voices Matter

Featuring a Family Support Partner

By Linda Ketterer

Sandy Gutierrez has a heart of gold for families in need of resources. Her always curious nature to learn and her lived experience makes her a perfect role-model for a Family Support Partner (FSP). For close to seven years, Sandy has been employed as a FSP with the Families Forward program. Initially, she went in to apply for a receptionist position, but was told it was filled. They then told her about the FSP position and Sandy knew it was a blessing from God. She got the job and has been there ever since. Sandy firmly believes a FSP is the bridge between mental health services and the family. She explains that families trust an FSP faster than they trust the "system," which allows the family to be open to facing the changes ahead.

Sandy's greatest accomplishment when working as a FSP is to watch the family grow. At first the family might be hesitant, but eventually they begin to do things differently as they become willing to improve themselves and their situation. Family members strive to have healthier relationships with each other, a willingness to grow, and even to fail. But the greatest success in Sandy's eyes is when new skills have been built within the family, they support each other, they see their value, and they find hope for a brighter future.

Sandy states she loves how families look to the FSP for help, but she finds it challenging when they think they do not need any help at all. Because the FSP has lived through similar circumstances, they have the ability to see what the family may need but are often blind to. The worst part is when the children are ready for change, but the parents are not. An FSP cannot do their work effectively without the collaboration of the family. A FSP needs the family to be willing to at least try some different ideas in order to find improvement in their situation.



Sandy Gutierrez

Family Support Partner of the Month

Family Support Partners are members of the community who use their personal lived experience to reach out and help other families who are facing a challenging journey.

“ I learn so much from both the families I work with, and from my co-workers! A lot of my growth and recovery I owe to our facilitators for their caring, knowledge and wisdom. When the shoe fit, I wore it. Using these tools, I continue to grow in the mental health field. With the families I work with, things sometimes don't work out according to how I thought they would, so I learn what not to do with the next family I encounter. Usually it is my own biases that get in my way. I learn to recognize them and move forward regardless of them. The biggest walls I hit are the ones I learn the most from, and for this I am grateful.”

-Sandy Gutierrez

When asking Sandy what a family might gain when working with a FSP, she states, "A family often gains insight and connection faster when working with an FSP than when trying to navigate through the System of Care alone. Often times, services will disqualify a family for not knowing how to represent themselves. Through the help and connections of a FSP, families engage faster and find more success in their recovery."

Sandy's Hispanic heritage means a great deal to her. Her hope is to break the stigma within many different cultures when it comes to talking about mental health. She wants the Hispanic community to know that what "we" go through is real. If we do not talk about it, we won't be able to find solutions. It's time to break the historical stigmas (i.e. shame that has been passed down from generation to generation), to speak out and help ourselves and our families.

In the near future, Sandy hopes to become a supervisor of Family Support Partners. She hopes to teach others what was once

taught to her, so they do not have to go through all the trial and errors she encountered when she first began working in this field. She goes on to say, "One day, I might even have my own non-profit, 'Family Support Partners on the Go.'" She states it would be a program where you could hire an FSP for an hour, a day or longer.

Sandy's message to all is: **"To think is to create."** She states, "I believe in God's mercy, but I still have to work hard at being good. I believe strongly that through our own mental health awareness, a little caring, and getting out of each other's way, we can work together as a team to help families succeed." Sandy has many strengths. She has overcome domestic violence, homelessness, family court involvement and much more, which all make her into the Family Support Partner she is today; strong, self-assured, persistent and resilient!



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI San Diego

From Our Blog...

21 Things I Wish Someone Told Me About Mental Health As A Child

This article originally appeared on The Mighty, <https://themighty.com>

As children, we rely upon others to help us learn about the world around us. We also rely on others to help us make sense of our internal world - and more specifically, our mental health.

But all too often, mental health is overlooked by caregivers for a variety of reasons. Maybe mental health wasn't talked about when they were growing up. Maybe they don't have the experience or the resources to effectively talk about mental illness. Or maybe they feel uncomfortable discussing a topic that is often surrounded by stigma and shame. As children, we rely on others to help us learn about the world around us. We also rely on others to help us make sense of our internal world - and more specifically, our mental health.

That is why we asked our (...) mental health community what things they were told about mental health as a child. Because by opening up the dialogue about mental health and mental illness at a young age, children can feel more comfortable about speaking up when they're struggling, we can get them the help they need as soon as they need it and help them feel less alone.

Here's what our community had to say...

1. "How important it was. That it was ok to choose my own health over other people's wants. Maybe if I would have found out earlier, I wouldn't be in the position I am now." - Sabrae M.
2. "I didn't know I was important. I didn't realize I was valuable." -Amber J.

Read [more here](#) or visit bit.ly/CYFLblog-21Things

NAMI SD Children, Youth & Family Liaison
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5095 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 320
San Diego, CA 92123

Return Service Requested



MHSA Issue Resolution

The NAMI San Diego Children, Youth & Family Liaison (CYFL) serves as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Resolution Point-of-Contact for issues within the Children, Youth & Families Behavioral Health Services System of Care (CYFBHSOC). We serve the community by facilitating dialogue between families, Family Support 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.



MHSA ISSUE RESOLUTION ASSISTANCE: Call (858) 987-2980

or Email CYFLiaison@namisd.org

CYFL is funded by The County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency through the Mental Health Services Act

Job Postings

- **Family Youth Partner Presenter** - To apply visit www.namisandiego.org/category/jobs
- **Family Health Centers is growing!** F/T and P/T Peer Support Specialist openings. To apply visit <http://bit.ly/2GX8PsY>.
- **Several Peer / Family Support Partner openings** - RI International, San Diego office - Apply by clicking [here](#)
- **Peer Support Specialist - Bilingual** Community Research Foundation - Apply to <http://bit.ly/CRFCareers>
- **Peer Family Support Specialist - PEERLinks Program** - Full Time. To apply visit <https://namisandiego.org/about/careers/current-job-postings/>
- **Family Support Partner, Peer Partner** positions- MHS Families Forward - Apply to <https://careers-mhsinc.icims.com/jobs/search?ss=1&hashed=-435746215>

Would you like us to advertise your Family Support Partner related job? We are happy to add your job listing to our next quarterly newsletter. Please direct your submissions to CYFLiaison@namisd.org. All submissions will be reviewed for appropriate content.