

In This Issue

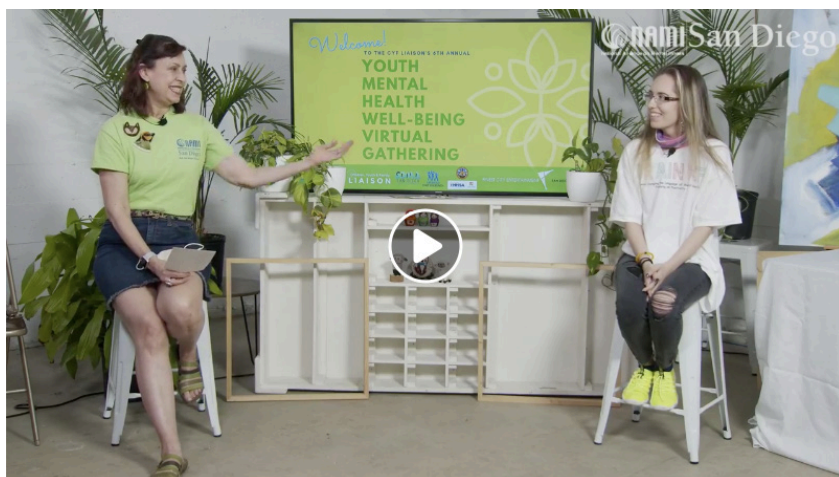
CYFL Hosts Virtual May Gathering Contact Us	1
Virtual Support Meetings Y/FSP Coaching Meeting	2
PEP Meeting: English & Spanish Supporting the Family Voice	3
Community Corner Virtual Gathering, continued	4
#OurVoicesMatter Youth/Family Support Partner Feature	5
TAY Youth Feature Family Mental Health	6
News & Events #OurVoicesMatter, continued	7
Updates to NAMI SD Apps Job Postings & Issue Resolution	8

Children, Youth & Family LIAISON

CYFL Hosts a Virtual Youth Mental Health Well-Being Gathering with Success

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. During May, NAMI joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Each year we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families. NAMI San Diego's Children, Youth & Family Liaison (CYFL) and the County of San Diego bring the focus to youth and families during the first week in May by hosting an annual Youth Mental Health Well-Being Celebration. Though the CYFL team is used to navigating uncharted territory, with the onset of COVID-19, personal distancing and the Stay-at-Home order by the Governor of California, our May Youth Mental Health Well-Being Celebration was unexpectedly derailed mid-March, 2020. Like many in our community, we were faced with uncertainty and the resulting need to find a different way to stay connected during unusual days. Now, more than ever, it is important to find ways to stay connected with our community. A virtual gathering was the answer to this dilemma. CYFL answered the call by engaging community partners and the gathering commenced May 7 on Facebook Live.

Continued on Pg 4



Valerie Hebert (L) and Christine Frey (R), co-host the Virtual Gathering

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

port Partners (Y/FSP), and are designed to support challenges families are facing and renew passion for the work of the Y/FSP. Please visit the NAMI SD Calendar page by clicking this link: <https://namisandiego.org/calendar/>



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

San Diego
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY
LIAISON

PASSION LED US HERE

FAMILY SUPPORT
PARTNER COACHING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9B41GhKnmEIRqUWS827FZrw>

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP SCHEDULE WEEK OF 5/11-5/16

Monday 5/11	Tuesday 5/12	Wednesday 5/13	Thursday 5/14	Friday 5/15
Escondido Family Support 2 - 4 PM	NAMI Family Support 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Wellness Wednesdays 1 - 2:30 PM	Connections (Peer Support) 6:30 - 8 PM	
Clairemont Family Support 4 - 5:30 PM	Family Voice Town Hall 10:00 - 11:00 AM	PEP (Parents Empowering Parents) English 6 - 7:30 PM		
		Connections (Imperial Valley) 6 - 7:30 PM		
		Sibling and Adult Children Family Support 7 - 9 PM		
				Saturday 5/16 NAMI Family Support 10 - 11:30 AM

All meetings and groups will be held online using Zoom. To sign up, visit the NAMI SD Calendar webpage: <https://namisandiego.org/calendar/>

Website: www.cyfliaison.namisaniego.org

PEP - Bilingual Weekly Support for Families

Find Resources!
Learn! Share!



NAMI SD PEP Q4 2020 Meeting News:

Now meeting WEEKLY / Virtually on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 - 7:30 PM and rotating weekly in English and Spanish:

English: May 13 & 27, Jun 10 & 24
Spanish: May 20, June 3 & 17

Meeting Information: Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tJAKde-prz8vHtLhx976hYVUC1DFmzpvJoiz>

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

NAMI SD's CYF Liaison offers San Diego parents and caregivers a FREE, open, weekly support group meeting rotating each week in English and Spanish 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. Parents and Caregivers support group meeting, Coaching support postponed until further notice. Join other parents and caregivers to find resources, learn, share, give feedback, and develop support systems. Register in advance for this meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tJAKde-prz8vHtLhx976hYVUC1DFmzpvJoiz> For info, call/text 858-987-2980.



For additional information on Family Support Meetings, please call/text 858-987-2980 or email CYFLiaison@namisd.org



Family Voice Town Hall Join us at an upcoming meeting!

Meaningful Support. Useful Resources.

Issues Resolved.

Is your family currently engaged in the Children, Youth and Families System of Care (CYFSOC)? If so, we want to hear your voice! Please join the NAMI SD CYFL team for our virtual Family Voice Meeting where we are encouraging a "Deep Dive Dialogue" to provide the best experience for your family. We 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 find necessary support. Families who have previous engagement within the CYFSOC are also encouraged to join our virtual meetings each Tuesday morning from 10-11 am through June 9, 2020.



Deep Dive Dialogue

CREATING CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH
WELL-BEING

Meeting Information: Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZAKcO-urDo-tHgRzQO25dF4yH1xh5trC9YqQ>

CYFL Virtual Youth Mental Health Well-Being Gathering

Continued from page 1

“

Being able to use Facebook Live to connect with our community virtually was an exceptional experience. I appreciate all our community partners who helped make this production possible”

- Valerie Hebert

Gathering a group of dedicated community partners to assist with the virtual event was not too challenging, as CYFL works alongside some amazing people. Christine Frey of Brain XP quickly responded “YES!” when asked to co-host the event. Linda Ketterer from San Diego Mission Academy was happy to provide commentary throughout the production as well as offer giveaways. Community art partners emailed artwork featuring a Power Word that were shown during the production. Local artists, Travis Webster and Jack Medved were featured in two separate segments and discussed how art makes a big difference in their lives as well as keeping them grounded. Christine Frey’s powerful music videos gave voice to teens and TAY youth. Special segments offered poetry and spoken word performances by Cian, Soriya, Ryliegh and Kaydence rounded out a powerful artistic experience. Finally, words of wisdom were provided in English by Wendy Ann Leeds, MA, LMFT and in Spanish by Karen Perez, MA, AMFT. CYFL Community Liaison, Ingrid Alvarez-Ron discussed Resources and how families can find needed assistance during these times.

A special appearance was made by Dina the Dinosaur and Molly, thanks to San Diego Youth Services and the Incredible Years Program.

Community partners, Finest City Entertainment provided the technical know-how to make the virtual gathering shine. The amazing space where the filming took place was donated by San Diego Made Factory in their spacious building, allowing for personal distancing between participants. CYFL would not have been able to bring this level of entertainment value forward without all the incredible partners. A huge round of virtual applause goes out to everyone involved!

To view the Virtual Gathering on NAMI SD’s Facebook page, please visit this link: <https://www.facebook.com/namisandiego/videos/239031747308276/>



Set up for the Virtual Gathering. Image courtesy of San Diego Made.

Our Voices Matter

Coping During COVID-19 from the Viewpoint of the Youth/Family Support Partner Perspective

By Eva Melendez

A brave new world emerges; supporting our youth and families in a new age of social distancing, stay-at-home orders, facial coverings and toilet paper shortages.

It's different, very different.

We understand what needs to be done to minimize illness and death related to the COVID-19 virus. We know what we need to do to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy, so we might have a chance of returning to a state of "normalcy" in the next several months.

We understand it can be difficult, very difficult to:

- stay at home;
- change our daily routines, personal and work schedules;
- up our hygiene game with 20-second hand washing and no-touch faces;
- lose our employment/income even temporarily;
- compete with others to buy toilet paper, hand soap, basic groceries;
- work from home if offered;
- quickly adapt to new technology;
- make our home our school;
- stop our recreational lives and outdoor lifestyles;
- spend more and different time with family or those who are part of our home;
- become savvy with online platforms to maintain our social connections, and our jobs

The list of changes in our lives goes on and on.



John Bucher, LCSW

Regional Manager, East

**WRAPWORKS Program
San Diego Center For Children**

“When one struggles with mental illness, abrupt life changes can amplify symptoms, create new challenges and stunt recovery efforts. During these times, mental health services are perhaps needed more than ever.”

But who can deliver the necessary mental health care and how?

Re-engineered mental health care providers is the **WHO**. Tele-Health is the **HOW**.

Once the seriousness of COVID-19 sank in, with social distancing and stay-at-home orders mandated by the Governor of California, agencies in the County's Children, Youth & Families Behavioral Health System of Care (CY-FBHSOC) providing direct face-to-face mental health supports and services began their internal and external transformation to continue their mission of meeting the mental health needs of their communities.

San Diego Center for Children offers a glimpse into how one mental health provider, deemed an essential service during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to meet the needs of the children, youth and family served by its WRAPWORKS Program. **John Bucher, LCSW**, Regional Manager-East, WRAPWORKS (<https://www.centerforchildren.org/resources/san-diego-center-for-children-wrapworks/>) provided some insight into providing services during these different times.

CYF Liaison: How is service delivery different with the COVID-19 restrictions?

John: We've switched to doing services via telehealth and are no longer seeing clients face to face or visiting family's homes. Many clients have been able to meet using the MS Teams application and others have selected to do strictly telephone contact.

CYF Liaison: Are coaches/youth partners and Family Support Partners (FSPs) working remotely?

John: Yes, all of our team is working remotely. They are able to come into the office if necessary (while practice social distancing and strict sanitization procedures), but most are choosing to work from home.

CYF Liaison: How are youth parents/caregivers reacting to a different way to receiving services?

John: The vast majority parents and caregivers are understanding of the importance of ensuring the safety of themselves, their families, and our staff. Some have been slow to adapt to the telehealth option, but those that are engaging in it find it worthwhile and beneficial to their family.

Please see "Our Voices Matter," Continued on Page 7

Transition Age Youth: TAY Corner

Hadir Abdelrahman is our TAY Youth Feature

by Micaela Cunningham



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. 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 meetups, please follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/namisandiego

Hello, my name is Hadir Abdelrahman. I'm 19 years old and the oldest sibling in my family. I'm currently attending college at Grossmont Community College and pursuing a degree in psychology.

CYF Liaison: In your own words, what does the term "Transition Age Youth" (TAY) mean to you?

Hadir: A Transitional Age Youth is someone from the age of 18 through 24, who is transitioning into adulthood. Being an adult is challenging; it has its ups and downs.

CYF Liaison: 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?

Hadir: This year is my first year of college. I was so overwhelmed because it was nothing like I had expected before. If anyone sincerely asked me how I feel about college, I would say it's like having to juggle very delicate glass plates and hope that they don't fall and break on top of me.

CYF Liaison: What's your greatest accomplishment as a youth?

Hadir: My greatest accomplishment is learning how to love myself. For so many years, I was so ashamed of myself that I would wish to wake up as a different person. This past year I have learned that I need to learn how to love and embrace myself truly.

CYF Liaison: What is the biggest challenge you've faced as a youth?

Hadir: The biggest challenge for me is that I had to let go of the idea of being "perfect." Ever since I was little, all I wanted was to be perfect because somehow, that would prove I was worthy. I wanted to be a perfect student, perfect daughter, perfect big sister, or the perfect friend. I wanted so desperately to fit in, to be liked by others. In all the chaos, I didn't know who I was as a person. I tried so hard to be "normal" because I wanted everybody around me to love me. In my mind, the only way that could happen is if I changed into the person they wanted me to be instead of embracing the person that I was.

CYF Liaison: What does recovery mean to you?

Hadir: Recovery for me is accepting that we are human and we all make mistakes. I shouldn't be upset if something doesn't work my way. I also want to stop freaking out over everything. Being super anxious all the time isn't healthy.

CYF Liaison: What are your goals for the future?

Hadir: My goal in the future is to be financially stable and truly happy in the career that I choose. Right now, I am working on getting a psychology degree.

CYF Liaison: If you had one piece of advice for younger you what would it be?

Hadir: Try not to beat yourself up for things, whether in your control or not. Just give it your best, and if you fall, then get back up and try again. You have to fail a couple of times to learn what you did wrong so you can learn how to succeed. I like to think of it like this, scientists try thousands of times of experiments to get their hypothesis. Your life is your experiment; you have to try until your results fit your hypothesis, and sometimes you will have to alter your hypothesis.

CYF Liaison: Finally, what's a message you have for someone young going through something similar?

Hadir: Stop putting yourself down and stop pretending to be someone that you aren't. Once you accept yourself for who you truly are, you will find the people who will be there for you no matter what because they love the real you, not the person who you are pretending to be.

Thank you so much for your candid answers, Hadir. We wish you the best of luck with getting your psychology degree and moving forward in your life goals!

Community News & Events

2020 CMHACY Announcement: Scholarship Recipients & Event Now a Virtual Conference

This year, the Children, Youth and Families System of Care (CYFSOC) Training Academy provided two scholarships to Peer Support Partners currently employed by a BHS-CYF funded contract to receive a full sponsorship to attend the **California Mental Health Advocates for Children and Youth (CHMACY) Conference** in Asilomar, CA. This year's conference, **CHANGING TIDES: VOICES FOR EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESS** will be held virtually on June 24-25th, 2020.

Congratulations to this year's CYFSOC CMHACY Scholarship recipients! One of the scholarship recipients is **CYFL's Technology Outreach Specialist, Emma Eldredge**. *Big congrats to Emma!*

State of California Announces Warning: Fake COVID-19 Scam Letter Circulating

Be alert to a fake scam letter that is circulating which mandates public assistance benefit recipients get tested for COVID-19 or risk losing their benefits. This letter contains references to Merced County Human Services Agency that is circulating on social media. It includes the faked signature of a state official. The letter tells clients they must get tested for COVID-19 in order to continue their benefits. It also tells clients that if they test positive, their children will be removed into foster care. The letter asks people to visit a website, as well. The letter, its contents, and the website are fake.

If you receive this letter, please disregard it. State departments and county human services departments NEVER will ask about your health status in connection to an application for benefits. Similarly, children must be subject to abuse or neglect to enter foster care. Children cannot be put into foster care just because a parent may be ill.

Additional information regarding this situation can be found here: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/>

Our Voices Matter, cont

Continued from page 5

CYF Liaison: How is privacy and HIPAA compliance being maintained?

John: Currently our program is using MS Teams to facilitate meetings with children and families. The Center's IT (Information Technology) department has made sure that this program follows HIPAA guidelines. Our team continues to be vigilant about ensuring the privacy of families with the increased use of technology and working remotely.

CYF Liaison: From a mental health point of view, how are youth and parents/caregivers "doing" during this "new normal", which includes social distancing and "staying home", when home might be a place of conflict or feel unsafe.

John: Many are feeling overwhelmed and are taking on new and unexpected responsibilities. Families with multiple children have found it difficult to keep a full day of activities in place, while practicing physical distancing and not being able to attend activities in the community. There has been a bit of a honeymoon period with families adapting to the changes, but over the last week we've seen an increase in family conflict.

CYF Liaison: Have there been any specific needs (general and/or mental health) identified by youth and parents/caregivers during this COVID-19 time?

John: Continued access to resources, especially food has been a great need with parents/caregivers having their children home all day without school. Some parents have shared difficulty in helping their youth understand the importance of physical distancing and report them leaving the home without permission to hang out with friends. With the closure of schools many parents have struggled in implementing a full day of structure into their homes to support their children's mental health and educational needs.

CYF Liaison: What do program/service provider need during this time of new service delivery to better support youth and families?

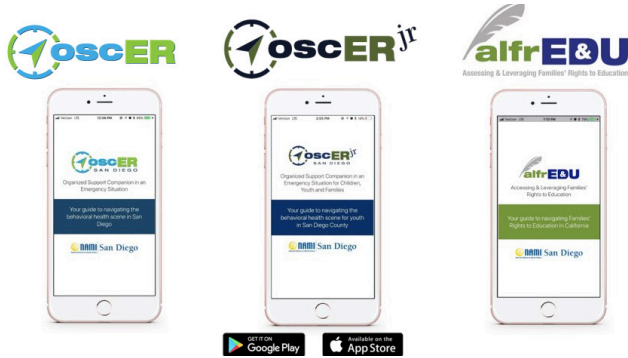
John: We've been fortunate to have access to a lot of trainings to help our staff feel competent in delivering services via telehealth. The more experience our team gets with it the more comfortable they feel. It's also been important to have frequent check-ins with our team members to ensure they're taking care of themselves and are implementing self-care techniques into their day to prevent burnout and create a sustainable culture of working from home.

CYF Liaison: Any other comments or concerns or observations?

John: We're lucky to have such resilient and hard-working team members in our program. They've taken this change and have done a great job of continuing to provide high quality services to our youth and families.

Thank you John Bucher and WRAPWORKS for being transformational in helping our community maintain mental health well-being and meeting the challenges of our "new normal" during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NAMI SD Apps Enhancement



NAMI San Diego's Apps are an incredible resource, especially during COVID-19. With a surge in those reaching out for help or suddenly experiencing concerns with their mental health, oscER and oscER Jr. Apps can help guide San Diegans to supports within the world of mental health. NAMI San Diego's Apps team has been working hard preparing additional content within the Apps with the goal of answering questions that are frequently asked or misunderstood surrounding mental health disorders, crisis, substance use, among others. The team is striving to improve content, making it easy for anyone, any age, or knowledge level to understand.

We also have some exciting news! Soon our three Apps will be available in additional languages. Currently, all three Apps are available in English, while oscER is available in Spanish, and alfrEDU is available in Spanish and Arabic. It is our goal to have all three Apps available in the six threshold languages within two years. We are currently working on adding Arabic and Vietnamese to oscER, Spanish and Arabic to oscER JR., and Vietnamese and Farsi to alfrEDU. Don't forget that all of our Apps are available for free in the Apple Store, Google Play Store, or online!

We Are Here To Help!

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 System of Care (CYFSOC) as related to the MHSA plan. Issues surrounding the MHSA plan are investigated and feedback is given to Behavioral Health Services in order to assist in improving the current system of care.



We also serve the community by facilitating dialogue between families, Youth/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 CYF 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 pro-lies to engage, and will help to find solutions to these concerns.

MHSA ISSUE RESOLUTION ASSISTANCE: Call (858) 987-2980 or Email CYFLiaison@namisd.org



NAMI SD Children, Youth & Family Liaison
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Job Postings

***NOTE: COVID-19 has impacted current hiring efforts for NAMI San Diego and many agencies. Please visit the agencies websites for updates on their hiring practices during this time.**

- **NAMI San Diego:** Several Job Postings at the NAMI Connections to Community Clubhouse including **Peer Support Specialist, Health Navigator, Housing Navigator, Employment Specialist.** To apply visit www.namisandiego.org/category/jobs and apply by sending a cover letter and resume to the email address listed on the job posting.

Would you like us to advertise your Youth/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.

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