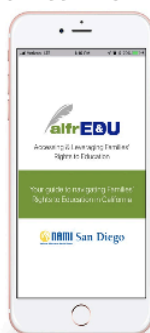


# Children, Youth & Family LIAISON

## NAMI San Diego Apps Help Navigate Mental Health & Educational Challenges

Mental health is an integral part of our overall health and wellbeing. With the adjustments and changes brought about by COVID-19, there has been a rise in mental health and substance use concerns, and even more since March 2020. One of the best ways to tackle mental health challenges is to stay educated. What better way than checking out NAMI San Diego's free mental health and education apps? Whether these concerns are new to you and your loved ones, or have been a part of your life for some time, our apps are available as health navigators to help you and your family on your journey to wellness. "The apps oscER and oscER Jr were created by the people for the people" says Rogena Abdelrahman, the CYFL Technology/Development Specialist, "and help individuals and concerned family members navigate mental health and substance use disorder crises throughout the San Diego County region." Find answers to questions about different diagnoses, symptoms, or even how to talk to a peer or loved ones. The education app, alfrEDU, supports families in several ways as it was designed to help navigate the special education system for all students in California.

*Continued on Pg 4*



### In This Issue

NAMI SD 's Mental Health Apps Contact Us	1
Virtual Support Meetings Y/FSP Coaching Meeting	2
PEP Meeting: English & Spanish Supporting the Family Voice	3
#OurVoicesMatter Youth/Family Support Partner Feature	4
#OurVoicesMatter, cont A Bilingual Perspective on Covid-19	5
TAY Youth Feature Family Mental Health	6
News & Events #TAY Corner, continued	7
Volunteer Opportunity Job Postings & Issue Resolution	8

### CONTACT US



1 (858) 634-6580

MHSA Issue Resolution:  
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)

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

### #GotSupport?

Each week, NAMI San Diego hosts many virtual support groups, which are published on the NAMI SD website as well as the NAMI SD Facebook and Instagram pages. Due to COVID-19, all meetings have gone to a virtual format. The meetings all take place via the Zoom meeting platform, which can be easily accessed by smartphone or computer. These virtual meetings provide education, support and coaching for families, caregivers, parents, youth and young adults, as well as Youth/Family Support Partners.

Please share the word with all needing support. There is a group for you and all the support is free. Visit the NAMI SD Calendar page by clicking this link: <https://namisandiego.org/calendar/>

**Find Support with NAMI San Diego**  
ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP SCHEDULE WEEK OF 8/31-9/5

Monday 9/7	Tuesday 9/8	Wednesday 9/9	Thursday 9/10	Friday 9/11
Holiday	Escondido Family Support 4 - 6 PM	Online NAMI Imperial Valley Connection 6 - 7:30 PM  Sibling and Adult Children's Group 7 - 9 PM	Online NAMI San Diego/Imperial Valley Connections 6:30 - 8 PM	

**Saturday 9/12**  
NAMI Family Support  
10 - 12 PM

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

### Join Us! Y/FSP Coaching Meetings are Now Virtual!



Our monthly Youth/Family Support Partner Coaching meetings offer a one-hour coaching presentation relevant to the work Y/FSPs do supporting families and is followed by a group sharing session. Our Y/FSP meets the 4th Friday monthly from 1:00-3:00 pm via the Zoom meeting platform. Please register in advance for this meeting by signing up using this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwrdumhqDMqH-9B41GhKnwEIRgUWS827FZrw>

The NAMI San Diego CYFL Team is comprised of:

CEO: Cathryn Nacario

COO: Sue Skube

Community Development Director: Renee Cookson

Education Director: Suzette Southfox

CYFL Program Manager: Valerie Hebert

CYFL Lead Trainer:

CYFL Family Specialist: Micaela Cunningham

CYFL Community Developer: Ingrid Alvarez-Ron

CYFL Technology Engineer: Sten Walker

CYFL Tech/Community Development Specialist:

Rogena Abdelrahman

CYFL Tech/Outreach Specialist: Emma Eldredge

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letter is a quarterly publication. CYFL is funded by

The County of San Diego Health & Human Services

Agency through the Mental Health Services Act.

**Telephones:** 1 (858) 987-2980 OR 1(858) 634-6580

1(800) 523-5933 (NAMISD Helpline)

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

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



# PEP - Bilingual Weekly Support for Families

Find Resources!  
Learn! Share!



## NAMI SD PEP

### 2020 Meeting News:

Now meeting BI-MONTHLY / Virtually on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday evenings from 6:00 - 7:30 PM and **Rotating in English and Spanish:**

English: Sept 16, Oct 21, Nov 18  
Spanish: Sept 2, Oct 7, Nov 4

Meeting Information: Register in advance for this meeting:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tJkde-prz8vHtLhx-976hYVUC1DFmzpvJoiz>

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

NAMI SD's CYF Liaison offers San Diego parents and caregivers a FREE, open, support group meeting rotating bi-monthly 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/tJkde-prz8vHtLhx-976hYVUC1DFmzpvJoiz> For info, call/text 858-987-2980.



## Deep Dive Dialogue

CREATING CONVERSATIONS  
ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH  
WELL-BEING



Meaningful Support. Useful Resources.

Issues Resolved.

Is your family currently engaged in the Children, Youth and Families Behavioral Health System of Care (CYFBHSOC)? Need connections to services? If so, we want to hear your voice! Please join the NAMI SD CYFL team for our virtual **3-D Deep Dive Dialogue 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 CYFBHSOC are also encouraged to join our virtual meetings. #YourVoiceMatters

For additional information on Family Support Meetings, please visit the NAMI SD Calendar web page at <https://namisandiego.org/calendar/> or call/text 858-987-2980 or email [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org)

Meeting Information: Register in advance for this meeting:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZctd-yqrDotGdUA-PS1jfxCCClnsBp1HojXQ>

# Our Voices Matter - A Bilingual Perspective

Featuring a Youth/Family Support Partner

## ENTENDER EL IMPACTO DE LA PANDEMIA EN LA SALUD MENTAL PUEDE HACER LA DIFERENCIA

Por Ingrid Alvarez-Ron



Ingrid Alvarez-Ron

### Family Support Partner

Youth/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.

El pasado 3 de julio del presente año, el noticiero **Telemundo20** transmitió la entrevista realizado por su conductora Lizett López, titulado, "Coronavirus y la Salud Mental". El propósito de este reportaje fue exhortar a la comunidad de habla hispana a entender que la pandemia que estamos viviendo nos ha impactado global y colectivamente a todas las personas de una u otra manera en nuestra salud mental.

Estamos viviendo tiempos nunca antes vistos, esto ha detonado e incrementando la ansiedad, estrés y depresión, tanto en niños, jóvenes y adultos que ya viven con retos de salud mental, incluyendo a personas que nunca habían manifestado síntomas.

Si hacemos a un lado el estigma asociado con las enfermedades mentales, es muy posible que podamos reconocer, comprender y aceptar el impacto que tiene en los individuos que están presentando la crisis, así como en su entorno familiar, escolar y/o laboral.

Mi nombre es Ingrid Alvarez-Ron y me enorgullece compartir que NAMI San Diego ha sido en gran parte lo que a mí y a mi familia nos abrió la puerta para poder encontrar ayuda, me brindo educación gratuita y con ello me empoderé, encontré mi misión en la vida y ahora utilizo mi voz y experiencia vivida trabajando en el Departamento Enlace de Niños, Jóvenes y Adultos (CYF Liaison NAMI San Diego) con el firme propósito de que ninguna familia se detenga en buscar ayuda por la barrera cultural, o idioma.

Si crees que tu o algún ser querido tiene una enfermedad mental, da el primer paso y acércate a tu proveedor médico, únete a un grupo de apoyo y sobre todo educa. Juntos podemos hacer la diferencia y romper el estigma sobre la salud mental, una conversación a la vez.

Te invitó a explorar nuestra página y conocer todo lo que actualmente tenemos disponible en línea. ¡Recuerda no estás solo! juntos podemos impactar positivamente nuestra salud mental y hacer la diferencia.

“

*Me enorgullece compartir que NAMI San Diego ha sido en gran parte lo que a mí y a mi familia nos abrió la puerta para poder encontrar ayuda, me brindo educación gratuita y con ello me empoderé, encontré mi misión en la vida*

- Ingrid Alvarez-Ron

## NAMI San Diego Apps Help Navigate Mental Health & SUD

Continued from page 1

"Individuals may initially feel uncomfortable talking openly about mental health. The NAMI SD apps are designed for people to privately and comfortably seek information in the palm of their hands at any time of the day or night." says Abdelrahman. "At NAMI San Diego, we strive to continually refine our apps and are currently working behind the scenes to improve and transform the internal workings. In doing so, we will be able to more readily keep the apps up to date as well as add additional languages. This coming year we will be adding Arabic and Vietnamese to oscER, Spanish and Arabic to oscER JR., and Vietnamese and Farsi to alfrEDU." The apps are available for free in the Apple Store, Google Play Store, and can be used online without a smart device. To access online, type in the following into your web browser: [app.oscer.org](http://app.oscer.org), [app.oscerjr.org](http://app.oscerjr.org), and [app.alfredu.org](http://app.alfredu.org).

“

*The apps oscER and oscER Jr were created by the people for the people. We held community focus groups and people told us what they wanted in a mental health navigation tool. So that's what we built."*

- Rogena Abdelrahman



# Our Voices Matter - A Bilingual Perspective

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON MENTAL HEALTH CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Ingrid Alvarez-Ron

On July 3, 2020, the news channel **Telemundo20** broadcasted an interview conducted by the host, Lizett López, entitled, "Coronavirus and Mental Health." This report urges the Spanish-speaking community to better understand the many ways in which the Covid-19 pandemic has globally and collectively impacted our mental health..

We live in times never seen before; this has increased anxiety, stress, and depression. This can be seen in children, youth, and adults who are already living with mental health challenges, including people who have never experienced symptoms prior to the Pandemic.

If we put aside the stigma associated with mental illness, we may be able to recognize, understand and accept the impact it has on individuals experiencing the crisis and their family, school, social, and work environment.

My name is Ingrid Alvarez-Ron. I am proud to share that NAMI San Diego has helped transformed my life, given me tools to find support and education, and helped me to become empowered to discover my mission in life. Now I use my voice and life experience by working in NAMI San Diego's CYF Liaison with a firm purpose; No family needs to stop seeking help due to cultural or language barriers.

If you think that you or someone you love is struggling and may have a mental illness, take the first step; approach your medical provider, join a support group, and educate yourself.

I encourage you to explore our webpage and learn about everything that we currently have available online. Remember, you are not alone! Together we can make a difference and break the stigma on mental illness, one conversation at a time.

*Please reach out to Ingrid Alvarez-Ron for bi-lingual support and connections to community resources at [IngridAlvarezRon@namisd.org](mailto:IngridAlvarezRon@namisd.org).*



The Telemundo20 broadcast can be viewed on NAMI San Diego's website by visiting <https://namisandiego.org/newsandstories/>

“

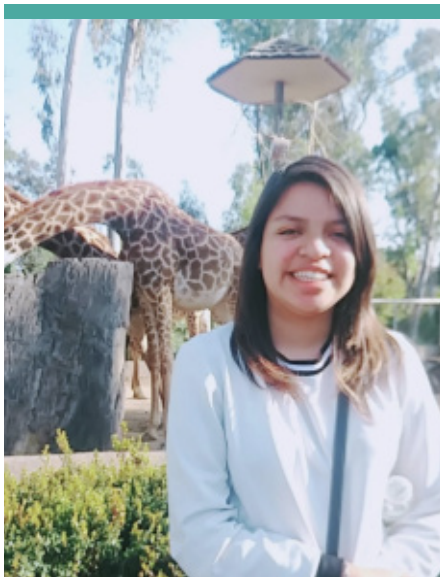
*Remember, you are not alone! Together we can make a difference and break the stigma on mental illness, one conversation at a time.*

- Ingrid Alvarez-Ron

# Transition Age Youth: TAY Corner

Ana Estudillo 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 Youth and Families (CYF) 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: CYF 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/nami-sandiego](https://www.facebook.com/nami-sandiego)

I am Ana Estudillo and I am 19 years old. I am a tomboy and bisexual. I am an introvert and I have a special circle of friends. I love music from all around the world. I believe that people talking to others and listening to others is very important. I love anime, music, writing, and drawing. I have anxiety, trust issues, and mild depression. My family matters to me a lot.

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

**Ana:** Being a Transitional Age Youth is like going through a rollercoaster ride. You have your up and downs. It's people between the ages of 16-25 understanding who they are and experiencing all the changes that are happening to them. Most people will remember these times and they will see how much they have changed.

**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?

**Ana:** Well, I moved to a new state which was the hardest thing to do. I moved from California to Washington, and leaving my whole life behind was hard. I had to adjust to a new lifestyle that I'm still trying to figure out if it is right for me. The changes in my mental health have also become like a rollercoaster. My anxiety that I once had control over was out of control the second I stepped foot into my new home. The day that I started college in a place where no one knows who I am, but will more likely judge me based on small little things, was nerve-wracking. My brain is rewiring to the most absurd situations. My safe zone is gone and I no longer know places to go and relax. It's a big new scary place, but I know that my friends and family back home will always have my back.

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

**Ana:** Learning to accept who I am is the greatest accomplishment of my youth. When I accept those like mini characters inside myself, it opens a new world for me. Loving myself and telling myself that I matter too is amazing. Escaping that world inside my brain that told me I wasn't worth it or that I will be forgotten is beautiful. Being able to go to therapy and knowing how to deal with my depression and anxiety and opening my emotions is something I love. Slowly tearing away that mask that I wore every day and only showing my happy emotions when behind that mask, I was at the brink of crying and giving up and now I look for the positivity in each new day. Being happy with myself as an introvert and telling people I trust I am bisexual and knowing that they accept me is like a gift.

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

**Ana:** Wearing a mask was hard. I didn't want to be happy and smile. It was draining me and it became a routine to put on that fake mask and not let others know what I was truly going through. Divorces are common in modern society, but the effects a divorce has on different family members varies. I think seeing my sister go through suicidal ideation and seeing how my mother wasn't understanding how mental health was a real thing was also challenging. She needed to know it was not a "phase" and my sister was not "being an attention seeker." Spreading awareness about mental health in my family was hard because of my parent's background and the way they were raised. Telling my mom that I had anxiety and I had trouble opening up to people was tough because I had a lot of trust issues and I still do, but learning to working through it helps.

**CYF Liaison:** What does recovery mean to you?

**Ana:** Recovery was finally accepting therapy and having that fake mask torn away. The iron wall that I once built was destroyed little by little. Finally taking that step to truly understand myself was when I saw the light at the end of a nightmare. It's a process that I am going through now, and accomplishing anything now I that I once limited myself to so I can slowly begin to fly.

*Continued on Page 9*



### Directing Change CA Introduces New Hope & Justice Category!

The **Hope & Justice** category is an opportunity for young people living through history to express their feelings, take action, and to inspire others through art. The new category can be used by educators who are looking for smaller and flexible projects to integrate into virtual classrooms while also meeting the academic and mental health needs of their students. It can be shared with young people who are looking for ways to share what they are experiencing, how they are coping, and explore what drives them to stay hopeful for the future.

#### Contest Rules:

Submissions are accepted from youth ages 12-25. Submissions are due at midnight of the last day of the month and winners will be announced by the 15th of the following month and shared via social media and on the website. Participants are eligible to submit one entry per month. Prizes include: First place (\$300), Second Place (\$150), Third Place (\$100), and Honorable Mention (\$25) in Amazon gift cards. Winners will be selected by the Hope and Justice advisory group and the Directing Change Team.

#### How to get involved:

1. View submission details here: <https://www.directingchange.org/submission-categories/#slide7>
2. Select a submission format: Express yourself! Any art form suitable for sharing via social media is acceptable: original music, dance, spoken word, art, poetry, a speech, ANYTHING! This is your chance to tell your story and be creative.
3. Pick a content category: Hope, Justice or Monthly Prompt

**Hope:** What helps you get through tough times?

**Justice:** Create a project that shares a perspective or your personal experience with discrimination or injustice in a way that encourages others to be open to a new point of view.

The monthly prompt for September is "What This Election Means to Me"

**More prompts will be announced for October!**

To learn more about the Directing Change Program & Film Contest and any of other submission categories, visit [www.DirectingChangeCA.org](http://www.DirectingChangeCA.org)

*Directing Change is part of Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement and statewide efforts to prevent suicide, reduce stigma and discrimination related to mental illness, and to promote the mental health and wellness of students. These initiatives are funded by counties through the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) and administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. For more information visit: [www.calmhsa.org](http://www.calmhsa.org)*

## TAY Corner, cont

Continued from page 6

**CYF Liaison:** What are your goals for the future?

**Ana:** I want to become an art therapist because I find it amazing how many possible ways there are to express oneself. I want to use those experiences that I had during my youth to help anyone that might be going through similar or worse things. I want to be a listener, a voice, and a guide to those who think no one is there for them. My goal is to be someone's pit stop so they can be able to fly and truly believe in themselves.

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

**Ana:** Open up a bit, don't carry all the responsibilities yourself. Some people can help you. You don't have to pretend everything is okay. Just be true to yourself and you will be happy.

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

**Ana:** I am not going to sugar coat this because you know how this world is. It will be difficult with this society but it's important to understand that things have changed now. There will be ups and downs, but if you believe in yourself then you can accomplish things. Everything takes time. You should set goals for yourself and how you want to live your life. DON'T GIVE UP JUST BECAUSE ONE THING GOES WRONG. Know that people are there for you even though you do not believe it. It's okay to love what you do and who you are. You are beautiful and your light is so bright if it bothers others then they should put on sunglasses, you are worth it. EVERYONE IS SPECIAL AND SHOULD BE TREATED NICELY AND WITH GREAT MANNERS.

*Thank you so much for your candid answers, Ana. You have really come a long way and the future looks bright for you. We wish you the best of luck with moving forward in your life goals!*



## Sept: National Preparedness Month



September is **National Preparedness Month**, the perfect time to get your household ready in case an emergency should occur. By having an emergency plan and kit, families can react quickly when a disaster strikes. The Red Cross encourages everyone to take three important action steps to get prepared:

- **Build a kit** – Build an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit that you can use at home or take with you if you must evacuate. Include items such as water, non-perishable food, a flashlight and extra batteries, a battery-powered radio, first aid kit and medications.
- **Make a plan** – Talk with members of your household about what to do during emergencies. Plan what to do in case you are separated and choose two places to meet—one right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency such as a fire, and another outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home.
- **Be informed**– Know what kinds of emergency situations may occur where you live, where you work, and where you go to school. Get trained in First Aid and CPR/AED so you'll know what to do in an emergency if help is delayed. Don't forget your pets, plan for them too.

Visit the Red Cross webpage to learn more and get prepared today: <http://bit.ly/SoCApreparedness>

## 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 (CYFBHSC) 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 with-

in 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) 634-6580 or (858) 987-2980 or Email [CYFLiaison@namisd.org](mailto:CYFLiaison@namisd.org)



**NAMI SD Children, Youth & Family Liaison**  
**Vol. V, Issue 3, Sept / Oct 2020**  
**5095 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 320**  
**San Diego, CA 92123**



## Job Postings

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

- **NAMI San Diego:** Several Job Postings at the NAMI Next Steps and Peer Links programs, Connections to Community Clubhouse including **Peer Support Specialist, Health Navigator, Housing Navigator, Employment Specialist**. To apply visit [www.namisd.org/category/jobs](http://www.namisd.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](mailto: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