

In This Issue

Peer Partner Certification Update Contact Us	1
Supporting the Family Voice Y/FSP Coaching Meeting	2
PEP Meeting: English & Spanish Virtual Support for All	3
Virtual Working Together Training Peer Certification, cont.	4
#OurVoicesMatter Youth/Family Support Partner Feature	5
TAY Youth Feature Youth Support Partner	6
Community News #TAY Corner, continued	7
Covid-19 Awareness Job Postings & Issue Resolution	8

Historic Moment for CA: Peer Partner Certification Bill is Signed by Governor Newsom

This past September 25, 2020 we joined the California Alliance of Child and Family Services and others in applauding Governor Gavin Newsom for signing SB 803 (Beall). SB 803 will enable California to expand the behavioral health workforce by allowing certification of Peer Support Specialists. With the passage of SB 803, California will now be in line with the 48 other states that already recognize peers' value.

"The pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on the behavioral health needs of Californians, and we must use every resource we have to address this crisis. With the passage of SB 803, we can focus on diversifying and strengthening our behavioral health workforce," said Christine Stoner-Mertz, CEO of The California Alliance for Child and Family Services. "The California Alliance thanks Senator Jim Beall for his steadfast leadership in working tirelessly to improve the behavioral health system within our state, and we commend Governor Gavin Newsom for signing SB 803."



"With the signing of SB 803, California can engage Peer Support Specialists as a critical part of the behavioral health workforce," said Jessica Cruz, CEO of NAMI California. "As we continue to face the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic,

Continued on Pg 4

CONTACT US



1 (858) 634-6580

1 (858) 987-2980

1 (800) 523-5933 Helpline

MHSA Issue Resolution:

1 (858) 987-2980

www.cyfliaison.namisaniego.org

www.namisaniego.org

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



Deep Dive Dialogue

CREATING CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH
WELL-BEING

Is your family currently engaged in the Children, Youth and Families Behavioral Health System of Care (CYFBHSOC)? Do you 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. See box at right for joining instructions. #YourVoiceMatters

Join Us! Our Monthly 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 12/18/20 from 1-3 pm (THIRD Friday in December due to holiday scheduling). We normally meet the 4th Friday monthly from 1:00-3:00 pm. We meet virtually using the Zoom platform. Please register in advance for this meeting by [clicking here](https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tJwrdumhqD-MqHgB41GhKwEIrgUWS827FZrw) or copying this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tJwrdumhqD-MqHgB41GhKwEIrgUWS827FZrw>

Meeting Information: To register for the 3-D virtual meeting please visit the NAMI San Diego Calendar webpage at <https://namisandiego.org/calendar/>. For more information, call/text 858-987-2980 or email CYFLiaison@namisd.org

Families new to receiving behavioral health services are needed. Share your voice and experiences in an upcoming virtual Focus Group in early Jan 2021. Call/text 858-987-2980 for more information & to reserve your space.

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: Ingrid Alvarez-Ron
- CYFL Family Specialist: Micaela Cunningham
- CYFL Community Developer: Mina Arthman
- CYFL Technology Engineer: Sten Walker
- CYFL Tech/Community Development Specialist: Rogena Abdelrahman
- CYFL Tech/Outreach Specialist: Emma Eldredge

The NAMI San Diego Children, Youth & Family Newsletter 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
Website: www.cyfliaison.namisandiego.org

PEP - Bilingual Monthly 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: Dec 16, Jan 20, 2021
Spanish: Jan 6, 2021, Feb 3

Meeting Information: Register in advance for this meeting:

Spanish Meeting Link: [Click here](#)

English Meeting Link: [Click Here](#)

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. Currently a support group meeting, the Coaching support component of this meeting is 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 by clicking on the links above. For more info, email CYFLiaison@namisd.org or call/text 858-987-2980.

Meaningful Support. Useful Resources.

Issues Resolved.

#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 using the Zoom meeting platform, which can be easily accessed by smartphone or computer. These FREE virtual meetings provide education, support and coaching for families, caregivers, parents, youth and young adults, as well as Youth/Family Support Partners.

A flyer for NAMI San Diego's online support group schedule for the week of December 21-26, 2020. The flyer has a brick wall background and includes the NAMI San Diego logo. It lists the following schedule:

Monday 12/21	Tuesday 12/22	Wednesday 12/23	Thursday 12/24	Friday 12/25
	Online NAMI San Diego Family Support Group 11:30 AM - 1 PM	Online NAMI Imperial Valley Connection 6 - 7:30 PM	Online NAMI San Diego/Imperial Valley Connections 6:30 - 8 PM	Holiday
	Escondido Family Support 4 - 6 PM			Online Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorder Support Group 5- 6:30 PM
				Saturday 12/26 NAMI Family Support 10 - 12 PM

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

The flyer also includes logos for HHS and Live Well.

CYFL Working Together Training Now a Virtual Event!

Training the Children, Youth and Families System of Care on using Lived Experience as a powerful tool for Mental Health Professionals.



NAMI San Diego
National Alliance on Mental Illness

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY LIAISON

Working Together A VIRTUAL TRAINING
Thurs, Jan 28, 2021 9am-1pm

Working Together Virtual Training

Thursday, January 28, 2021
from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Limited Space. RSVP via email CYFLiaison@namisd.org to secure placement and receive Zoom link for training. For additional information, call or text (858) 987-2980



Working Together is a vibrant and meaningful learning experience that builds the foundation for a strong, positive collaboration between clinicians, mental health workers, therapists, program staff and Youth/Family Support Partners, Children, Youth and Families System of Care Peer Staff with Lived Experience. Now reformatted as a virtual training experience.

Working Together, a training of the Children, Youth & Family Liaison, is approved by the CA Board of Registered Nursing, BRN Provider # 16262, for (4) CEH contract hours CFAAP/CAADAC (4) CEH contract hours, California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators (CAADE) (4) contract hours, California Association of DUI Treatment Programs (CADTP) (4) CEH contract hours. For more information and to register, call/text 858-987-2980 or email cyfliaison@namisd.org.

Historic Moment for CA: Peer Partner Certification Bill is Signed by Governor Newsom

Continued
from page 1

California will now be ready to utilize the unique role that peers and families play in our state's behavioral health recovery. NAMI California thanks Governor Gavin Newsom for recognizing the true power of Peer Support Specialists by signing SB 803. "Peer support services are an evidence-based, cost-effective model of care proven to reduce cost and increase participation in treatment. Forty-Eight other states have seen the benefit and value of peer support services; now it is time for California to catch up and establish a peer support specialist certification process," said Senator Jim Beall, author of the bill, in a statement. "I'm thrilled to say that in California, we will have a statewide scope of practice, standardized curriculum, training and supervision standards, and certification protocol for peer support services. Our coalition of advocates and bi-partisan supporters rallied for Peer Support for years. It's time to celebrate our progress and the next generation by continuing to advocate for mental health at the State level... and yes, third time's a charm!" -Reprinted from NAMI CA <https://namica.org/blog/sb-803-signed-into-law-win-for-peer-support/>

“*Peer support services are an evidence-based, cost-effective model of care proven to reduce cost and increase participation in treatment.*”

- Gov. Gavin Newsom

California Senate Bill 803 - A Bright Future Ahead, Peer Support Specialist is a Serious Job

By Ingrid Alvarez-Ron, CYFL Lead Trainer

When providers do not comprehend the role of a Peer Support Specialist, they may only see a person with a mental illness. The new SB 803 Peer Support Certification law will allow Peers to be recognized, respected, and create community awareness surrounding the work of Peer and Family Support Specialists. These changes will take time and effort, but I hope this will change the way professionals view and value this important role.

Bibiana, better known as "Bibi," knows firsthand the value of being a Youth/Family Support Partner. Always willing to help, she was invited to voluntarily co-facilitate the monthly "PEP" (Parent Empowering Parents) support group in Spanish. Bibi responded immediately, "Yes, of course! My mission is to bring hope, education, support, and resources to help other families live in recovery."

Bibi feels proud and blessed to serve other people because she understands how hard it is to face this journey alone. When a person living with a mental illness does not know where to go or how to start receiving services, the journey can be very scary. Bibi learned that people will open up more quickly with someone who has had a similar experience and when she can offer them guidance or provide a sympathetic listening ear. "When people hear my story, they identify with my journey and connect with me, and they begin to better understand the process of recovery."

I asked her to describe barriers that she has encountered by serving as a Peer and Family Support Specialist. She responded that the most significant obstacle was within her professional life. Bibi found that coworkers without lived experience (people who don't interact with or struggle with mental illness) doubt her capabilities and see her only as a person with a mental illness. "In reality, [Peers] have the ability to connect with others with love and compassion in a non-stigmatized approach. With the proper training and support, we can aid others in finding their own path to dealing with their personal mental health struggles."

Bibi is a resident of Imperial Valley who supports a diverse cultural group. She identified a root problem among the Hispanic community as a lack of value for the benefits of available mental health services. She found once her work ethic and personal experiences are recognized by people she supports, it inspires others. When they learn Bibi lives with her own mental health challenges and this has not stopped her seeking help, but instead she uses her lived experience to help and support others, they immediately label her as "a normal person." Bibi responds to such thoughts with, "They realize I walk in their shoes. We may be in different circumstances, but this does not separate us; instead, it unites us and now they see me as a role model."

"My faith has been a big component, keeping a positive attitude, and I always try to think of positive outcomes no matter how hard it seems, because I am confident that my faith always provides me with hope for my journey and learning to live in recovery. I listen to my doctors, recognizing when to ask for help even if I do not feel comfortable. I understand the importance of self-care!"

- Bibiana Fernandez



Bibiana Fernandez

**Peer Support Specialist
Imperial Valley**

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.

We could not end our conversation without addressing the collective impact of COVID-19 in our lives. Bibi shared that it was an adjustment at the beginning, but that she learned to deal with social distancing by keeping busy. She likes to participate in arts and crafts, she paints, and enjoys keeping active.

Continued on Pg 7

Transition Age Youth: TAY Corner

Featuring Rogena Abdelrahman

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/namisandiego

Rogena Abdelrahman is a 24 year old living in San Diego with her parents, siblings, and extended family. A recent biology graduate from UCSD, she spends her time hanging out with her family, walking her dog, and studying for the MCAT. She has worked at NAMI San Diego for almost 2 years in the CYFL program and currently works on the Apps project and Champions for Total Health project.

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

Rogena: TAY really highlights a funky time period in your life. It encompasses the transformation, transition and growth from youth to adult. Turning eighteen does not "poof" magically make you an adult. The change happens over time, not overnight.

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?

Rogena: The list of things that are NOT changing are much shorter than those that ARE changing for me right now. Since graduating from UC San Diego in 2018, I have been riding a self-discovery wave. It wasn't until after college that I found the time to start exploring my passions and interests. Despite obtaining a bachelors in biology, and applying to several lab positions, I landed my first job in mental health advocacy. Although I am still striving to enter the medical field, I am glad I went outside of my comfort zone and took opportunities fueled by my additional passions and interests. I am still learning to balance studying/preparing for graduate school, work, caring for a new puppy (I've had her for 8 months now, but I will consider that new) and practicing self-care during these hectic times. I was told that during my early to mid-20s, a lot will start changing and my mindset each year will be drastically differently. I honestly paid no attention to that thought until recently when I reflected and realized it was true. It's not that I am a new person, or that I have different beliefs. I find that I continue to develop a new lens and discover a different understanding of everything around me. I am interested to see how my insight and perspective will continue to grow as I progress through these TAY years

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

Rogena: When I graduated from high school, I remember getting in an argument with a few of my friends because I thought graduation was not an accomplishment; that it was "just high school". I firmly believed that graduating from UC San Diego with my bachelors would be something to celebrate. Surprise, surprise – 4 years later and once again, I had the same mindset, "it's just college". If it wasn't for my mom, I would not have even attended the ceremony. From these experiences, and many more, I have learned the importance of living in the NOW. The reason I belittled all of the work and progress I made, was because I was looking ahead at what I still needed to accomplish. I really feel my greatest accomplishment is learning how to celebrate and enjoy what is happening today, while still recognizing and reaching for my goals.

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

Rogena: Imposter syndrome is something I struggled with, and continue to find lurking around. As a first-generation college student, I never felt like I belonged at UC San Diego. I honestly believed it was a mistake that the school accepted me. After graduating, self-doubt still engulfed my brain. I spent so much time comparing every aspect of my life to others, that I almost lost sight of why I was aspiring to reach my goals.

CYF Liaison: What does recovery mean to you?

Rogena: Recovery is a very personalized experience. I believe the most accurate depiction is a roller coaster. The first step was accepting I needed help and reaching out to the right people to get me started. After that, it's a journey filled with ups, downs, reverses, and so much more. One of the most valuable lessons I've learned through it all is the importance of flexibility. When one thing doesn't work, there's no need to throw out the full plan or idea. Adjustment and recognition can allow for small adjustments and tweaks to be made that can recreate a healthy healing space.

CYF Liaison: What are your goals for the future?

Rogena: My ultimate goal is to establish a "go with the flow" mentality. There are many things I want to accomplish and experience, but with this mindset, I will gain an important skill set needed to get through any set backs I encounter.

Continued on Page 7

Warm welcome to CYFL Community Developer Mina Arthman!

Hello readers! I am Mina and I am thrilled to be joining the CYFL team here at NAMI San Diego! I avidly share NAMI's mission to educate, support, and advocate for those living with mental illness and their loved ones. I am incredibly passionate about making therapy accessible to everyone, creating safe spaces for members of the LGBTQ community, and helping survivors of sexual trauma. As a graduate of psychological science from Cal State San Marcos, as well as someone who lives with mental health issues and has taken care of others with mental illness, I look forward to adding my perspective to the team. Additionally, I bring with me over a decade worth of experience working with children, youth, and families, across educational, community, and research settings. I am very much excited and honored to be another resource for you and the community! If you would like to contact me, you can send me an email at MinaArthman@namisd.org. Thank you for welcoming me and I look forward to being on this journey with you and NAMI San Diego!



Y/FSP Feature, cont

Continued from page 5

When it comes to dealing with her own stress, Bibi found a solution that suits her lifestyle. Pet therapy is the answer! She is a proud mom of five lovely dogs, they give her immeasurable amounts of love and support which she returns 100%. She ends by saying that there were days when her job was very stressful, and what keeps her motivated was to come home and hug all her dogs.

With the passage of the California Legislative Bill 803, people like Bibi and myself will gain the opportunity to obtain credibility for the important work we do. Bill 803 will aid advocacy efforts towards mental health peer support across the state of California, offering recognition and additional encouragement to those who work tirelessly in this field aiding peers, youth and families in need.

Please reach out to Ingrid Alvarez-Ron for bi-lingual support and connections to community resources at IngridAlvarezRon@namisd.org.

TAY Corner, cont

Continued from page 6

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

Rogena: Do what you love, not what you feel you have to do for what you love. Doing things for yourself is not selfish. Focus on putting yourself first and really listen to what your body is telling you. The opportunities I took that were outside my "projected" path have been the ones that I gained the most experience and knowledge from.

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

Rogena: Advocacy and education are your best friends. It took me a while to stand up for what I felt I needed. Partly because I did not really know what that was. I had taken psychology classes, read a plethora of research articles about mental health, volunteered at several inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services and watched many documentaries. Despite all of that, I never recognized any of the signs and symptoms I was showing. Mental health displays itself in both emotional AND physical symptoms! Do not allow what others project onto you and your journey to prevent you from seeking treatment. Advocacy happens in all environments. This includes during your appointments with mental health professionals. Regardless of who you are talking to, your treatment is about YOU and should be tailored to your specific needs. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable or negative about something you are feeling, do not silence yourself.

Thank you so much for your candid answers, Rogena. We always learn so much from you and are happy to have you as an important member of our Team. We wish you the best of luck moving forward in your life goals!

Prevent & Manage Covid-19

Covid-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus. The virus affects everyone, but is affecting Latinos more than other groups. The risk of infection is based on several factors, including where you live, places you visit and interactions you have at work. Anybody can contract Covid-19.

To help prevent the spread of the virus and to protect yourself, follow these recommendations:



Maintain six feet (2 meters) of distance from others..



Use a facemask if you leave your house.



If you are sick, stay home and isolate yourself from other people. Don't go to work.



Wash your hands or use sanitizer.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth without washing your hands first.



If you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a tissue, throw the tissue away, and wash your hands.



Clean and disinfect household surfaces daily.



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI San Diego

NAMI SD Children, Youth & Family Liaison

Vol. V, Issue 4, December 2020

5095 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 320

San Diego, CA 92123



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 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 provides a safe, trauma-informed, judgment-free space for families 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

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 Next Steps and Peer Links programs, and Connections to Community Clubhouse. To apply visit www.namisaniego.org/category/jobs and apply by sending a cover letter and resume to jobs@namisd.org.
- **San Diego Center for Children:** Opening for a Bilingual Parent Partner <https://www.paycomonline.net/v4/ats/web.php/jobs/ViewJobDetails?job=31493&clientkey=5080E-E0C6804DECAD7208DCD53548F65>
- **Jewish Family Services in partnership with CWS:** Opening for a new program addressing racial disparities and disproportionality within the child welfare system. [Click here](https://www.jfssd.org/jobs/?sft_job-category=family-support-liaison-program) or visit this link https://www.jfssd.org/jobs/?sft_job-category=family-support-liaison-program

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