



The NAMI Contra Costa Newsletter is available on the web at: www.namicontracosta.org -
 You can get a copy of this newsletter and/or the eNews newsletter by e mailing: xnamicc@aol.com
 Email: xnamicc@aol.com Phone Number 24/7: (925) 465-3864 Office Number: (925) 942-0767

Reflections from the Executive Director

By Gigi Crowder, L.E.



As the Executive Director of NAMI CC, I often explore what my primary roles and responsibilities should be. I align my work with the mission of our agency, and prioritize lifting up core objectives. I therefore mostly see myself as an advocate, spending a lot of time focusing on the issues and concerns most important to those in Contra Costa County impacted by mental illness. At the end of each year, I tend to reflect more and ask myself questions. I recognize it is important for me to attend county decision making meetings, lending not just my voice but sharing messages from diverse groups of family members and peers who rely on NAMI CC to ensure they are heard. The first question I ask myself each year is whether I made it to all the critical meetings to voice our common needs. It's critically important for me to share space and have open dialogues with families about challenges and concerns they face as they support and advocate for their loved ones.

I try to carry the compassion and understanding as well as the reality that here at NAMI CC we don't always have all the answers that can support the healing of their loved one and end their pain as they grieve for their loved one living with mental illness. I also ask myself, did I connect with, reach and support as many families from each region of this county as I hoped to? The answer is I did my best and that is what we strive for at NAMI-CC.

A rising concern of mine is making sure that the College Freshman who went off to college in September 2018 and had their educational career interrupted with a first psychotic episode receive the support he or she needed this year? Did I do enough to ensure we addressed this major concern through my hiring and programming decisions?

I ask myself these questions and recognize this load is not mine to carry alone or in fear. I am humble, knowledgeable and open to learning more and will continue to do my best as we end 2019 and move into 2020 as a much more diverse NAMI CC that better reflects the needs of the community and therefore moves forward with 2020 Vision!

Thank you NAMI CC Family for allowing me to see demonstrations of love everyday as I lead this effort with your support.

Blessings,

Gigi R. Crowder, L.E.

December 2019 GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, December 19, 2019

Speaker

Tom Wootton

Author of:

The Bipolar Advantage



Speaker Tom Wootton started Bipolar Advantage in 2003 because the results being offered for his bipolar condition were unacceptable. What started as small gatherings of local bipolar sufferers grew into an international online program that has helped thousands.

Doors open at 6:30 pm
Meeting at 7:00 pm

Location:

John Muir Hospital
Concord Campus
2540 East Street
Concord

Open To The Public-
Free Admission

NAMI-CC Care and Support Groups

Central Contra Costa County

3rd Monday of Each Month, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., John Muir Medical Center, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek Campus, downstairs in the Epstein Conference Room. Park in the FREE public garage on the La Casa Via side of the hospital. The group is facilitated by Sharon Madison and Bob Thigpen. Email: xnamicc@aol.com, or call: (925) 256-9640, (925) 957 5139.

NAMI Contra Costa Writers' Group

All writing levels welcomed. 2nd Saturday of Each Month,
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon
NAMI Office 2151 Salvio St., Suite V
Gigi Crowder 510-990 2670
Margaret Netherby, facilitator, mlnetherby@yahoo.com.

NEW HOPE SUPPORT GROUP

Offering support, education and resources to parents, caregivers of children, teens and young adults diagnosed with a mood disorder. Meets the 2nd Monday of each month
Lafayette/Orinda Presbyterian Church-49 Knox Drive-Rm. 204
7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Christina Mellin 925-899 0862

The Crash Course

A comprehensive orientation to the resources in Contra Costa to help with recovery
EVERY Wednesday night
Doors Open at 5:30 pm
2151 Salvio St. Concord 2nd Floor
dk122932@aol.com 925-676 5771
Free-RSVP NOT Required

NAMI CC Mandarin Program Family Support Group

Language: Mandarin 中文
2nd Saturday of every month
Time 10:00 to 12:00 Noon
Location: DCBC, 2278 Camino Ramon, San Ramon, CA 94583
Contacts: Shelly 925-238-6286;
mandarin@namicontracosta.org

African American Family Support Group Mental Wellness Wise Wednesdays

4th Wednesday Each Month 6:30-8:00 pm
5144 Union Mine Drive, Antioch, CA 94531
Contact: Gigi Crowder E mail: gigi@namicontracosta.org

SPANISH SUPPORT GROUP

3RD Tuesday 6:30-8:30 pm
Salvation Army, 4900 Appian Way, El Sobrante
Alejandra, 510-837 4077

Open Our Hearts Family Member Support Group

For family members of adults with mental illness.
4th Monday of Each Month 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Temple Isaiah

945 Risa Road, Lafayette
(In The Talmud Torah Center, Room E204)
Call Karen at (925) 945-7272 or
email at karen@mmcohen.com
www.openourhearts.net

Support Group for Parents of Adult Children with Mental Illness

Meets the 2nd Sunday 2-3:30 pm
San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
902 Danville Blvd., Alamo, CA 94507
Karen Scalzi: (925) 820-7495 or kscalzi@comcast.net
Marilyn Clarke: (925) 837-5243 Office: (925) 837-5243

NAMI West County Support Group

2nd Wednesday Each Month 6:30—8:00 pm
Richmond Medical Center of Kaiser
901 Nevin Avenue— 3rd Floor Room 317 Conference Rm 1
Richmond Contact Dr. Sumchai 510-237 9277 or
E mail: family2familyrichmond.nami@gamil.com

SPANISH LANGUAGE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP—PITTSBURG

1st Thursday each month 7:00-8:30 pm
Faith Based-ALL are Welcome!
Church of the Living God
1125 Harbor St. Pittsburg
Veronica: 925-250 4032

Brentwood Support Group

Last Tuesday Evening of the Month
Raley's Grocery Store
2400 Sand Creek Road, Brentwood
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Contact: Laurel Howard-Fong 925-437 1751
lphfong19@gmail.com

NAMI CONNECTIONS Support Group for Peers and Invited Family Members

EVERY Wednesday 7 - 9:00 pm,
John Muir Behavioral Health Center
2740 Grant St. Concord, Classroom B
NancyBolcerek@Namicontracosta.org 925-826 8433

NAMI Contra Costa

National Alliance on Mental Illness

OFFICERS:

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(925)-360 3903

Don.green@namicontracosta.org

Susan Norwick Horrocks

First Vice President

susanh@namicontracosta.org

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(925) 567 6109

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Gigi Crowder

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Tuesday 100119 715 P RRRR

Email: xnamicc@aol.com

Website: www.namicontracosta.org

Phone: (925) 676 5771

Newsletter Deadline:

20th of Each Month

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By, Don Green

Thanksgiving is closely upon us, and then December holidays always seem to come at an accelerating pace. So, I wish everyone reading this Happy Holidays.

But, I suppose that everyone reading this knows that "happy" is not always what the holidays bring. Many of us approach the season with memories of warm family experiences, when we made special efforts to appreciate and be appreciated by those we love.



Don Green

If we didn't have those experiences, we are constantly reminded that somehow we should have gotten them. Beginning in early November, stores start decorating to remind us of the coming holidays. All of that can also bring additional tension and stress, which can trigger or worsen episodes of mental illness. The gap between the heightened expectations of happiness and the reality of the whole salad of unhappy emotions that can occur may be especially difficult to accept and handle. This may lead to a downward spiral of depression or anger.

(continue next column)

GENERAL MEETINGS

FUTURE MEETINGS:

December 19: Tom Wootton.

Tom Wootton is the Director of the Bipolar and Depression Outcomes Research Institute. For the past 20 years, his mission has been to find the best outcomes available.

January 16: Chris Celio

Chris Celio will be presenting Self-care for Family Members.

At NAMI-CC, we understand that the holidays guarantee no respite from mental illness. That is why we continue to offer our support services throughout the December holiday season. Especially noteworthy is that our Crash Course is given every Wednesday evening, holidays or not.

With all of that in mind, I urge each of you to do your best to be especially kind and understanding, first, to yourself. You are human, so you have made mistakes, and will make mistakes. You have failed, and will fail, because that is a part of the lives of us humans. I ask that you be especially mindful of the fact that humans are terrible at predicting the future. So, if you see the future as a dark, downward tunnel, I can confidently tell you that it will be different than you expect, and probably better.

Family to Family Education Course 2020

Family to Family Education Course is a free, 12 week course that covers the symptoms and treatment of major mental illness, as well as skills to help family members and friends communicate with, and advocate for, their loved one more effectively.

We strive to present these courses in each quadrant of the county at different times of the year. We are aware that the holidays can cause challenges within families, so we offer courses in January.

The classes fill up quickly. Please register now for our winter 2020 English- speaking Family to Family courses:

2020 Winter Schedule

Antioch:

Starting January 14 , 2020
Tuesdays, 5:00pm - 7:30pm
Location: Kaiser Mental Health
3454 Hillcrest Ave., Room D

Concord:

Starting January 7, 2020
Tuesdays, 6:30pm – 8:45pm
Location: NAMI office
2151 Salvio St., Ste. V

Martinez:

Starting January 15 , 2020
Wednesdays, 6:30- 8:45pm
Location: VA PRRC Classroom

2860 Howe Road

For Information and to Pre Register:

Gloria (925) 244-0873
Namif2fcourse@gmail.com



FUTURE CLASSES

Starting in May 2020

Brentwood
Danville
Walnut Creek

Starting in September 2020

East County, Saturdays
Lafayette
Richmond

ALTERNATIVE TO A 5150 CALL

If the situation is escalating call:
1-833-443 2672

The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) provides professional, same-day intervention for adults who are experiencing mental health crisis.

The team visits clients and their families to prevent acute psychiatric crises from becoming emergencies that require law enforcement involvement or involuntary hospitalization.

MCRT includes licensed mental health clinicians, community and family support workers and a family nurse practitioner employed by Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (BHS).

The goal is to de-escalate the crisis and safely connect the client with care and mental health resources.

WHEN TO CALL 911

- ◆ In the act of committing suicide
- ◆ Physically assaulting Someone
- ◆ Threatening with a weapon
- ◆ Appears to have a medical emergency



CRAB FEED



Pleasant Hill

Community Center

Saturday, March 7, 2020

We are seeking volunteers to lead Crab Feed Committees.

Contact Gigi Crowder at
510-990-2670
or: gigi@namicontracosta.org
to RSVP.

First planning meeting will take place on Friday, December, 20 2018 at the NAMI CC office from 10:30am—12Noon

Raffle tickets go on sale now.

WHO WILL HELP YOUR LOVED ONES WHEN YOU CAN'T?

Planning for the future Committee

NAMI'S group exploring ways to meet the needs of our loved ones when we can't will resume meeting. It will be at the NAMI Office December 20, 2019 10:30am—12Noon.

Contact Gigi Crowder
510-990 2670
gigi@namicontracosta.org

DANVILLE CHILDREN'S GUILD

The Danville Children's Guild held their sold out 15th Annual Fashion Show & Luncheon on November 4, 2019, this year to benefit NAMI CC.

The Danville Children's Guild is a nonprofit dedicated to providing monetary support in the community for children's charities in Contra Costa County.

Thank you to all the donors, vendors and sponsors for your contributions.

Evening Anchor Jessica Aguirre from NBC Bay Area News introduced NAMI Suicide Prevention Specialist Graham Wiseman for the Master of Ceremonies.

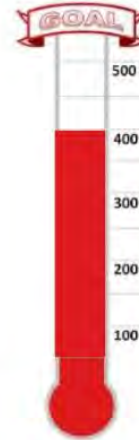
The event had a Vendor Faire, Silent Auction, Jewelry Raffle and Fabulous Finds for Forty, all of which benefitted NAMI CC. The money raised will help NAMI's Programs on Campus, Parent Education, Advocacy Presentations, Support Groups including NAMI Basics for ages 5-22.



From the left: Graham Wiseman, Jessica Aguirre from NBC Bay Area News and Gigi Crowder.



\$2000 Membership Challenge



Help Us Reach 500 NAMI Members by the End of the Year and NAMI Will Receive a \$2000 Donation.

We Are Now Less Than 100 Members Away From Our Goal!

Join online at www.namicontracosta.org or call us at (925) 942-0767 for more information.

\$2000 CHALLENGE

NAMI CC is excited to announce an opportunity for us to be gifted \$2,000 if we reach a total of 500 members by the end of the year. Two of our most dedicated members have made this pledge. We currently are just over 100 members away from achieving this task. We need your support to hit our target and earn the funds that will assist us to have more resources and therefore serve more Peers and Families in Contra Costa County. Please share this opportunity with everyone you know and encourage them to join NAMI CC and do their part to advance our mission to educate, support, and advocate for those impacted by mental illness. Becoming a NAMI CC member is easy.

Go to our website: <http://namicontracosta.org> and click on the: Join Today Button. Remember to check the back of the newsletter for your renewal date. We thank you and ask you to please keep your membership active and current. Dues are \$60 Household; \$40 Individual; \$5 Open Door (No questions asked.) Mail checks to NAMI Contra Costa, 2151 Salvio St., Ste. V, Concord CA 94520, or renew online.

Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping

Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression.

By Mayo Clinic Staff

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few.

But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.

Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to

celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.

Set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

Stick to a budget. Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

Try these alternatives:

Donate to a charity in someone's name.

Give homemade gifts.

Start a family gift exchange.

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.

Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

Try these suggestions:

Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
Get plenty of sleep.

Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.

Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Some options may include:

Taking a walk at night and stargazing.

Listening to soothing music.

Getting a massage.

Reading a book.

Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Take control of the holidays

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

Article from Mayo Clinic Website (2019, November 25) Stress, Depression and the holidays.: Tips for coping , <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544>

If you need additional support, please come by our offices or call our warm line at 925-942-0767

Collaboration with JMH to offer Basics Courses

On November 19, 2019, the first graduating class of Basics, an education program specifically for parents and other family caregivers of children and adolescents experiencing mental health challenges, was held at John Muir Health. The six week course was facilitated by Jo Fetterly and Graham Wiseman and began a collaborative effort with John Muir Health to better serve important age group.

Training Opportunity for Family and Peer Specialist

NAMI Awarded a 2 year, \$20,000 contract through NAMI California to train peers and families specialist through a comprehensive on-line training course. If interested, contact Jess Garcia for more information. Jess@namicontracosta.org

FAMILY ADVOCATE

Bob Thigpen
925-957 5139

robert.thigpen@hsd.cccounty.us,

Bob Thigpen is the County's Family Advocate. You can talk directly with him at the Crash Course. (925-676- 5771) xnamicc@aol.com

NAMI DONATIONS

Donations

William & Suzanne Lingo
Mark & Judith Cohen
Michael Mailer
Michelle Carey

Kathleen Wiegand
Jason Crownholm
Kristine Wurl

Company Donations

John Muir Health
Pampered Chef

In Memory of Jerry M. Laughlin Memorial Fund

Anne M. Chapman
Megan Morsch
Mary E. Jasinski
Mike Stodola
Albert E. Lawrence, JR.
John Crock

In Memory of Michael Thomas D'Ambrosio

Kathryn Cardinale

If you lost a loved one, and would like to direct funds to NAMI Contra Costa, please contact Jo Fetterly at jojac6996@gmail.com



3rd Monday Support Group

December 16, 2019 7:00 p.m.
 John Muir Medical Center
 Walnut Creek
 Epstein Meeting Room
 Basement Area (See page 2)
 Email: xnamicc@aol.com

**Questions About
 Mental Illness?
 Crash Course**
 Every Wednesday
 E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

Stamp

To:**From:**

NAMI Contra Costa
 2151 Salvio Street, Concord, CA., 94520
 Phone: (925) 942 0767 Email: xnamicc@aol.com

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**NAMI CONTRA COSTA**

Make check payable to NAMI Contra Costa
 Complete this information and please return to:

Treasurer
NAMI Contra Costa
 2151 Salvio Street, Suite V
 Concord, CA., 94520

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Email Address: _____

☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

☐ Household \$60 ☐ General Membership \$40 Open Door: \$5
DONATION FORM

Amount _____ Mail to:

Treasurer, **NAMI Contra Costa**
 2151 Salvio Street, Suite V
 Concord, California
 94520

Note: Tax ID #68-0209474
 (No goods or services have been received
 from the following donor or donors)

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