

What We Accomplished in January & February

- 3 NAMI Family to Family classes started
- 1 NAMI Basics class started
- 18 NAMI In Our Own Voice Presentations
- 24 NAMI Family Support Groups held
- 8 NAMI Connection Support Groups held
- 3 Health Fair Events
- 1 NAMI Basics Teacher Training, 10 new teachers

NAMI Valley of the Sun Family Members participated in the Winter Institute at ASU

NAMI Valley of the Sun presented at ASU's Active Minds Mental Health Conference

NAMI Valley of the Sun hosted their first NAMI Ending the Silence program with 3 presentations and had 90 attendees

Loving a son with a mental illness Lessons I've learned

By Evelia Davis

Today my son is in 4th avenue jail in Phoenix, Arizona. He has been arrested for trespassing and is being held for a probation violation. My husband and I met with a lawyer to try to get guardianship before he is released in prayerful hope that we can have him go from jail to a dual diagnosis center to stabilize him and start the journey of coping with schizophrenia and ending self-medication with illegal substances. My son was



diagnosed with schizophrenia about 5 years ago but in hindsight has had symptoms for at least 10 years. The last few years we have been on a cycle of jail, homelessness on streets of Arizona and California, short stints at home and around and around and around again.

Last night I was in the Bay Area (California) with a friend. We were driving to see Sinbad (comedian) when Joshua called. I was happy to talk to him. I hadn't heard his voice in a few days. I always see his face when I talk to him. He sounded so coherent and clear minded today. He is asking about money on his books, excited

about being released in a few weeks and tells me to have fun with my friends. I tell him my sister friend, "Aunt Jet" wants to say hi. I hand her the phone and she says, "Hello," but the call is disconnected. He calls back and said it was nice to hear her voice but he is too embarrassed to talk to her while he is in jail. I didn't think about that. Just thought it would nice for him to get some encouragement from someone he knows loves him and is praying for him continuously. He said to, "Tell her that I love her, mom." Tell all my Auntys I said I love them. He knows if I'm in the bay area, I'll see my sister friends. My circle of friends that I made while Josh and his brother played AAU basketball with their sons. They are his other moms. The prayer warriors and support system that I can call anytime of the day to talk, scream or just cry if I need to. I promise to tell his Auntys that he loves them. My mood shifts, which happens sometimes. Not sure if its sadness or just a

feeling of embarrassment about the situation. This all leads to a controlled cry in the middle of a comedy club. It just may be a release of feelings and stress. God's way of helping me avoid running down the street screaming and ending up in a mental hospital myself. For the next few hours I laugh, probably harder than the comedians are funny but it's good for the spirit.

I have found after over 10 years of being a caregiver, parent, and advocate for my son with mental illness that there are days of highs, lows, stabilization, clarity, confusion, joy, anger, sadness, surrender and some days all of the above. I have learned many lessons, choosing to love a son with mental illness. NAMI's Family-to-Family course has helped.

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"Anxiety List"

1 in 3 people worldwide suffer from an anxiety disorder. These issues are often compounded by depression or other more-serious mental disorders. These can eventually evolve into other symptoms such as insomnia, irritability, or self-harming thoughts.

Every person's situation is unique, requiring differing levels of treatment. But for minor situational anxiety, try this technique. Take a moment to be present and try the following exercise. Close your eyes and...

- ...name 5 things you can SEE
- ...name 4 things you can HEAR
- ...name 3 things you can FEEL
- ...name 2 things you can SMELL
- ...name 1 thing you can TASTE

Anchoring yourself to the space around you can help to reduce feelings of anxiety. Start 2019 off anxiety-free!

If you or someone you know is suffering from extreme anxiety or symptoms of depression, reach out to a professional or call the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Helpline](#): 1-800-950-NAMI (6264).

NAMI Valley of the Sun needs YOUR help



Ending the Silence

needs Young Adult Presenters (*you must be between the ages of 18-35, person with a mental health condition that presented prior to the age 18, in recovery*)

and Lead Presenters (*you must be a family member or person with a mental health condition*) who want to help middle and high school students to learn to talk about their feelings. If you are interested in being trained, please email education@namivalleyofthesun.org

2019

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NAMI Valley of the Sun is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with mental illness and their families through
Support, Education and Advocacy.

Programs offered by NAMI Valley of the Sun



For detailed program descriptions go to NAMI.org

To reach us,

Email: info@namivalleyofthesun.org

Or call: 602-244-8166

The opinions expressed in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of NAMI Valley of the Sun.

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I know many are thinking how could you not love him. He is your son. When that son calls you a bitch and other names besides your God given name, attacks you, pushes you against the wall, puts his hand around your throat and looks at you like he may kill or hurt you, disrespects you and threatens harm it is a choice to continue to love in the midst of that situation. It is a belief that love wins. It will conquer all. It is a daily recommitment to have compassion. It is a daily prayer for forgiveness, guidance, resources, grace, mercy,

safety, patience, joy and sanity in the midst of a web of insanity. It is a firm and unwavering belief that although the situation looks a mess that God is still God and that he is still in charge and that he has rigged life in our favor and that this is not the end of the story. It is a constant march forward, one faith step at a time. It is a commitment to sharing my story in a hope that it will assist and comfort someone else along their journey. It is a choice to love and not let anger, bitterness and shame take root in my mind, spirit or heart. Love wins.



CIRCLE OF CARE GUIDEBOOK

03: Finding the Right Provider

This is a synopsis of a portion of Part 3 of the *Circle of Care Guidebook*, created by the National Alliance on Caregiving (NAC) in partnership with NAMI and Mental Health America (MHA), through the *On Pins and Needles: Caregivers of Adults with Mental Illness* study. The complete guidebook is available at <https://www.caregiving.org/circleofcare/>

“If you are having trouble finding qualified mental health service providers, you are not alone. The mental health workforce shortage in the U.S. has reached a critical point.”

To help our loved ones receive the right care, we need to become informed about effective mental health care and the range of services. Last month we covered who the service providers are and what they do. Even when we feel our loved ones need care for their mental health ¼ to 1/3 of us can't find that care and nearly ½ of us aren't satisfied with what we do find.

Policymakers and insurers have been working to expand and improve the mental health workforce. Some of the efforts include integrating primary and mental health care, mental health cross-training, using allied professionals and peer counselors, providing educational grants to encourage practice in underserved communities and tele-health services.

To find mental health services, ask your primary care/family doctor or a local health clinic for referrals to a specialist. Many primary care doctors can effectively treat mild to moderate mental health conditions. For more severe symptoms, they may refer your care recipient to a specialist for the first phase of the treatment. When the person is stabilized and a treatment regimen established, the primary care physician may continue the care with guidance, as needed.

Consider the following questions when searching for a mental health professional:

- Is your relative comfortable with the provider?
- Are you comfortable with the provider?
- What are the provider's credentials and experience with similar populations?
- How is the provider rated by on-line reviews?
- Does the provider cite research that demonstrates the treatment's effectiveness?
- What can be expected from the treatment?
- How frequent are appointments? Can extra visits be added?
- Will the provider communicate by phone, email or text?
- What should be done in emergencies?
- What should be done between visits by your relative and by you?
- What out of pocket costs will there be and will the provider file insurance claims?

High quality mental health care is a partnership between the provider, the person in care and their close supporters and caregivers. We must learn about mental health conditions, effective models of care and how to support recovery. Help the person receiving care to understand their condition, treatment and recovery skills. Encourage self-reliance when possible. With the provider, develop a “Wellness Recovery Action Plan” or “Psychiatric Advanced Directive”. Build trust through open and respectful communication.

Learn more by taking a NAMI Family-to-Family course, attend a NAMI Family Support Group and encourage your relative to join a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group.