



Autumn 2020

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# nami TALKS Ventura County

## Introducing Community Cares

**Kimberly Quinn**  
Program Coordinator

We are smack dab in the midst of a global pandemic. You've probably noticed. So, it might seem like an unusual time for NAMI Ventura County to launch a new program. Don't get me wrong, I would love to be announcing the launch of Community Cares at a standing-room only general meeting. But, when life starts pitching lemons at your head, it's time to make lemonade. And lemon meringue pie. And lemon curd.

You get the picture.

In the spring of this year, the staff and leadership of NAMI Ventura County spent a lot of time sorting out the 2020 lemons. We have tried to nimbly pivot and flexibly adjust events and programs to keep meeting the needs of our communities.

I don't think it would be talking out of turn to say none of us had ever experienced anything quite like the lingering fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic eclipsed life as we knew it dashing support networks and upsetting comfortable routines. There seemed to be no end in sight. That, in and of itself, has been challenging.

The staff spent a few long meetings brainstorming what NAMI Ventura County could do to ease the obvious stress and distress building in our families, friends, neighbors and communities. As quickly as possible, we began to build a structure around moving all of our programs onto the Zoom platform.

We all knew that wasn't going to be enough. In the beginning of Covid-19, we talked openly about our fears around mental health and wellness. Would folks be able to access treatment? What was happening to families during crises? How soon would we start seeing the effects of lingering stress, confusion and upheaval? It wasn't a stretch to predict a steep increase in rates of depression and anxiety, not to mention other mental health conditions. Historically, it's not uncommon to see suicide rates increase following mass economic and social challenges.

Lemons, lemons everywhere.

During one of these early conversations, we decided we needed a new class that could be useful to everyone and anyone. This class needed to build on the tenants of ongoing wellness as well as NAMI fundamentals: mental health education and stigma reduction. The ultimate goal was a class designed to empower participants to actively address mental health using skills based in awareness, self-care and communication.

In other words: a recipe for lemonade.

NAMI Ventura County Community Cares launches this month.

Community Cares includes information on mental wellness, stigma, diagnoses, treatment, suicide prevention, self-care and communication. Participants receive, electronically, a 34-page participant workbook

*See CARES, Page 9*



### Community Cares Participants Are Saying:

**"Effective communication and taking care of yourself can translate into caring for others."**

**"The information was presented in a relatable way and the presenters incorporated personal information and provided a space for participants to share if they chose."**

**"I don't think I do well in the "Self-Care" area of my life as I am always taking care of others first - so I enjoyed the area in the presentation and workbook on "Self-Care".**

**"I loved it all! Concise and interesting to follow."**

**I intend to more "Self-Care" of myself after hearing that reminder."**

## President's Message

# NAMI Stands Resolute Against Racism

**Shirley Brandon**  
President, Board of Directors

Racism, discrimination and their partner, stigma, have no place in society and no place in the treatment of individuals who suffer with and are in recovery from mental illness.

Sadly, both continue to play a prominent role in the marginalization of individuals who are in most need of mental health care. It is estimated that approximately 43% of individuals in the United States who need mental health treatment receive it. The statistics for people of color are even more dire.

According to the Health and Human Service Office of Minority Health, only one in three

Black or African American adults who need mental health care receive it. The statistics for the Latinx/Hispanic community is very similar. Approximately 33% of Hispanic or Latinx adults with mental illness receive treatment each year.

NAMI Ventura County is committed to supporting, educating and advocating for all individuals with mental illness and denounce racism in the strongest way possible. To that end, the Board of Directors unanimously adopted the following Resolution Against Racism.

## NAMI VC Board of Directors Resolution Against Racism

**WHEREAS** NAMI represents the interests of all people with mental health conditions, regardless of age, gender, race or ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, language, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity;

**WHEREAS** people with mental health conditions frequently encounter attitudinal and policy barriers resulting from negative stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination;

**WHEREAS** NAMI condemns all acts of prejudice and discrimination whether individual, institutional or structural, and regardless of whether by intent, ignorance, or insensitivity;

**WHEREAS** racism and racial discrimination are pervasive and persistent, can result in toxic stress and trauma, negatively impact mental health and lead to mental health disparities;

**WHEREAS** people of color often experience pain, trauma and disrespect at the hands of our nation's health care, criminal justice and other systems that can result in fear and distrust;

**WHEREAS** NAMI is strongly committed to the principle that all individuals, including communities of color and people with mental illness, should be treated with respect and dignity and deserve equitable health outcomes and full inclusion.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that NAMI strongly denounces racism, in all its forms, for its negative psychological, social, educational, economic effects and supports public policy to eliminate the mental health disparities perpetuated by racism and racial discrimination.

*\*Adopted from resolution approved by NAMI National 6/20/2020*



**Ventura County**

### STAFF

**Roberta Griego** *Director of Operations,  
Community Outreach & Development*

**Chris Novak** *Program Administrator*

**Kimberly Quinn** *Program Coordinator*

**Mellanie Temple** *Administrative  
Assistant*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

☐ I have creative fundraising ideas

☐ I enjoy executing fundraising events

☐ I use my spare time to generate positive change

## NAMI VC Needs You!

## Join the Fundraising Team Today!

Contact [Roberta@namiventura.org](mailto:Roberta@namiventura.org) to get started



# Discrimination A Major Issue In The Ventura County Mental Healthcare System

**Mary Haffner**

Right now, American society is focused on inequities and injustices borne from prejudice and discrimination that deny equal rights, equal access to services, and freedoms. One of the most discriminated against groups is the seriously mentally ill.

Having served on Ventura County's Behavioral Health Board for over five years, I have seen firsthand the results of this systemic discrimination. Individuals with severe mental illness are not afforded treatment on par with others who suffer with disease. We make them wait days in hospital emergency rooms, transfer them out of the county, jail them, and allow them to remain untreated cycling through the system with no effective supports — a fate normalized because of the vast discrimination they face.

Approximately 3.3% of the adult population will have a chronic and disabling serious mental illness. The illness is treatable and we know effective best practices. We also know that the longer individuals with serious brain

disorders go untreated, the more uncertain their prospects for long-term recovery become. Conversely, we know that early treatment leads to better clinical outcomes.

Providing effective treatment can be difficult in light of the “gravely disabled” criteria, but it is possible. The high costs of non-treatment render the work required to provide this treatment worth it. All California counties work under the same state and federal law restrictions. With visionary leadership and political will, many of these counties are working to provide an “in the community” continuum of care including acute and sub-acute treatment and support, pre-arrest and pre-trial diversion intercept model programs, effective re-entry programs, and supportive housing.

Unlike other large California counties, however, Ventura County has not assessed what will be needed to treat the roughly 16,000 adults who will have a serious mental illness in our county nor have they articulated any goals or benchmarks (i.e., reducing the jail population of the seriously mentally

ill by 20%, reducing re-hospitalizations by 20%) for this population. You can't manage what you don't measure and there can be no accountability or plans for improvement without clear goals. We do know that the current system is not working for many, and the numbers of seriously mentally ill who are cycling through the system untreated continue to go up.

With one of the worst inpatient psychiatric bed-to-population ratios in the state and a system that warehouses more mentally ill in jail than in all its inpatient acute and sub-acute residential facilities combined, Ventura County's plan does not involve helping people get better. It is a law enforcement and jail-focused system that forces the mentally ill into environments that make their illness much worse — the streets and jails.

The economic costs related to homelessness, incarcerations, suicides, probation and parole, law enforcement, court use, SSI and SSDI benefits, and lawsuits related to incarceration and public safety are staggering. We all pay

*See GUEST, Page 11*

## Memorial Donations 2019-2020

### In Memory of:

#### Alexander Beirne

Christine Beirne  
Kevin Beirne  
Shirley Brandon  
Alfred Contarino  
Patrick Davis

#### Alfred “Al” Contarino

Joanne Kaplan  
William Kearney

#### David Kaplan

Joanne Kaplan

#### George Perry

Karen Portillo

#### Kelsey Burns

Corey Lister

#### Ken McKee

Reiko Osumi

#### Susan Luckey

Reiko Osumi

#### Zack Kanny

Alexander Goland  
Elizabeth Nevins

### In Honor of:

#### Ellery Cushing

David Cushing

#### Carolyn D'Angelo's Birthday

Ruby Hazebrook

#### Fillmore Firefighters

David Gurrola

#### Robert Hurwich's Birthday

Susan Hurwich

Memorial Donations can be made to NAMI Ventura County through trusts, payroll deductions, Paypal, check, and credit card. For more information, please call (805) 641-2426.

# NAMI VC Membership Supports Your Community

**Mellanie Temple**  
**Administrative Assistant**

Did you know that when you join NAMI Ventura County, your membership extends to NAMI California and NAMI National? Through your membership with NAMI VC, you join thousands of Americans who are dedicated to improving the lives of people living with mental illness.

Your membership allows us to continue to offer our classes, support groups and programs for Free to our Ventura County communities. Keeping your membership current affords us the opportunity to stay current.

The bottom line is NAMI VC is a grassroots, non-profit organization and it takes money to stay in operation. One of the ways we generate funds is through membership. Not only are you helping us, you are helping others in the community and essentially helping yourself.

The old saying is still true today. "It takes a village..." We can't make it without YOU.

You might have asked yourself time and time again how you can give back, especially since so much has changed due to COVID-19. One of the major ways is through keeping your membership up to date. We have seen a significant increase in attendance of our support groups, classes and webinars which are all offered for free.

We want to continue to be able to offer our services for FREE. There are so many in need these days. So, we ask you to renew your membership if you haven't done so already. We ask you to become a member if you haven't done so already. We ask you to encourage your family members and friends to become members.

Memberships will be annual from the date you join.

There are a few ways to contribute and become a part of NAMI VC:

**Pay It Forward Membership** - \$100

**Household Membership** (Includes all members of a household living at the same address) - \$60

**Individual Membership** (Regular membership for one person) - \$40

**Open Door Membership** (For individuals with limited resources) - \$5

**Mental Health Hero** - A monthly donation in addition to your membership

**A one-time donation**

Any way you are able to help is a great help to our community. Thank you for supporting NAMI Ventura County!

If you have any questions concerning membership, please feel free to contact Mellanie Temple at [mellanie.temple@namiventura.org](mailto:mellanie.temple@namiventura.org)

## Volunteers: Let's Zoom!

Are you comfortable with the Zoom platform?

NAMI VC has resumed all programs via Zoom. We are recruiting volunteers to act as technical producers for our programs. Technical producers assist teachers during Zoom-based programming to ensure classes and presentations run as smoothly as possible.

No specific technical knowledge or training is needed, just a can-do attitude and desire to learn. NAMI VC will provide training.

To learn more or volunteer as a technical producer, please contact Mellanie Temple at [mellanie.temple@namiventura.org](mailto:mellanie.temple@namiventura.org).



**Not All Heroes  
Wear Capes...**


**But you CAN  
if you want.**

*Mental  
Health*

**Become a Hero today.**

[www.namiventura.org/mentalhealthhero](http://www.namiventura.org/mentalhealthhero)

Thanks  
for NAMI Walking  
in **2020!**



**NAMI VC Walkers raised \$78,266**

# Membership & Membership Renewal Application

Support NAMI by becoming a member. Your membership counts!

Become a NAMI member or renew your membership today to add your name to the list of thousands raising their voices to demand services, support and respect for the millions affected by mental illness. NAMI membership demonstrates your support for the important work being done at NAMI and helps us make our voice heard in our community, in Sacramento, and in the nation's capital.

Members receive NAMI's national news magazine, the Advocate, in addition to local and state newsletters. Members also enjoy reduced costs at conventions, the NAMI Store, and other events, as well as voting privileges to shape the future of America's largest grassroots organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions affected by mental illness. Your membership in NAMI Ventura County supports our programs, increases our ability to help more families and allows us to advocate effectively on behalf of people affected by mental health conditions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*First* *Last*

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Your annual dues include:

- \$10 for membership in NAMI National and the quarterly newsmagazine, The Advocate
- \$10 for membership in NAMI California and the monthly electronic newsletter
- The NAMI Ventura County newsletter

### Choose Your Membership Level:

- ☐ \$60.00 Household Membership ☐ \$40.00 Individual Membership ☐ \$5.00 Open Door Membership

This membership is: ☐ New ☐ Renewal

### Make a Donation:

- ☐ I want to donate \$100.00 to **Pay It Forward**
- ☐ I would like to make a one-time donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in addition to my membership.
- ☐ I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly to become a Mental Health Hero

Please bill my credit card: \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ Master Card \_\_\_\_\_ American Express

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Digit Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Please use this form to renew my membership annually.

### Pay by Check:

Make checks payable to NAMI Ventura County. Mail to NAMI Ventura County, P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011-1613

*NAMI Ventura County is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization and all donations are tax deductible.  
Federal Tax ID #77-0037450*



# Storytelling: Valuable Tool for Creating Change

**Kimberly Quinn**  
**Program Coordinator**

Do you know why stories are powerful?

Human beings are hardwired for connection. Hardwired is not just a buzzword. Literally, our brains are wired to make social connections. When I say social, I don't just mean the biological and logical families and communities we build. I'm talking about our ability and need to create understanding connections through empathy.

That's where stories come into play.

When I tell the story of my mental illness and recovery, there are moments when audience members chuckle or smirk. Some start nodding as I speak. The story creates an instinctive connection and reaction.

Before I became severely ill, I was a storyteller. I loved my career in newspapers. As a news-writer and then editor, I got to witness the impact of telling real stories. Honest stories were invaluable in showing the humanity behind important, and often divisive, social issues.

After my very first In Our Own Voice presentation with NAMI Ventura County, an older gentleman approached me. He wanted to thank me. He told me how surprised he was to hear the details of my story because I didn't look mentally ill.

In my head all I could think was: Yeah, that's kind of the point.

That is the point. My story is important because it shows the reality of mental illness. And your story is important. How are you going to use it?

Your stories are powerful. Advocacy based in facts and statistics falls flat because it relies on intellectual connection rather than instinctive connection.

Here's an example in two different ways to talk about survivors of suicide.

I could tell you that an estimated quarter million people each year become suicide survivors.

Or, I could tell you that my suicide attempt

left me with asthma. Every time I laugh really hard, the inevitable violent coughing fit reminds me of the darkest, most dangerous time of my life.

If I pair those approaches and add a specific call to action, it would create a strong message that uses connection along with fact to motivate the audience.

How do you think about advocacy? What does advocacy look like in your life? I want to encourage you to look at advocacy with flexibility. There is need for family members and peers to advocate publicly in front of local, state and national leadership bodies. But, that's not the only way. Advocacy takes a lot of different forms. No matter how you choose to relay it, your story has the potential to drive change.

There are three things you need to know in order to tell an effective story.

## 1. Know yourself.

Our stories aren't simple. Mental illness is complex and it's a marathon. Our stories often come laced with heartbreak and don't necessarily have a happy ending. And that's okay. What every storyteller has to decide, for themselves, is what they are ready to tell.

Most importantly, never re-traumatize yourself by telling your story. Know your limits and boundaries. Presentation matters. When a speaker becomes overwhelmed with emotion, they run the risk of doing damage to the message. Once the audience is distracted, they are no longer hearing the message.

If you've practiced your story several times and struggle to get through it, it's not time yet.

Another important part of knowing yourself is being honest. Be honest with yourself and your audience. Situations are rarely black and white. It lends credibility if you can admit if you or your loved one could have, or should have, acted/responded differently. Try using it to strengthen your message. What would have helped you act/react differently? What did you need that wasn't available to you?

## 2. Know your purpose

What is your goal? Are you trying to break down stigma? Get specific legislation adopted? Expand a specific resource?

Your story is a specific tool designed to accomplish your specific goal. Keep in mind that you're crafting your story to meet your goal. Stick to the topic at hand.

## 3. Know your audience

When you know who you're speaking to, it lays a groundwork for framing your message.

Ask yourself some questions. Why is this audience listening? What is their experience? What are their beliefs? What are their biases?

Examine your assumptions. What biases do you hold about your audience? Is there something you don't know about them that would be helpful to know?

Lastly, please be a responsible storyteller and advocate. When we're talking about a highly stigmatized subject like mental health, it's important to not inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes and myths. Make sure you are up to date on the current terminology and using person-first language.

## Formating Your Story

The format on page 7 is taken from a class called NAMI Smarts for Advocacy. This storytelling format is one small component of that course.

This format is broken down into seven steps. You can find the steps and explanations on page 9. Here is the breakdown of the steps using my advocacy example.

### Step 1. Introduce yourself:

*I am Kimberly Quinn from Santa Barbara. I'm a member of NAMI Ventura County and I live with severe and chronic mental health conditions. I'm here today to ask you to support establishing 9-8-8 as a nationwide hotline for suicide prevention and mental health crises.*

See **STORY**, Page 9



# Seven Steps to Telling Your Story

The following seven steps will help you craft a succinct and powerful story.

1.	<b>Introduce yourself</b>
	<b>Give your name and city or town.</b> Include your organization. We encourage you to describe yourself as “a member of [NAMI State Org or NAMI Affiliate], part of America’s largest grassroots mental health organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.”
	<b>Share how you are affected by mental illness.</b> Are you living with mental illness, a family member, a caregiver? This brings a "real face" to mental illness.
	<b>State your issue and position.</b> Let your listener know what you want them to support or oppose (or do). This helps your listener focus.
2.	<b>What happened?</b>
	<b>What happened before you received the help you needed?</b> Keep this brief--think about the most important thing you’d like your listener to know.
3.	<b>What helped?</b>
	<b>Describe what helped in your recovery (or would have helped).</b> This adds a hopeful tone and helps show the value of services and supports.
4.	<b>How are you different today?</b>
	<b>Share what is going right in your life or how you are experiencing recovery.</b> This concludes your personal story on a positive note that inspires.
5.	<b>What is the need or problem?</b>
	<b>Mention the problem or need you want addressed.</b> Transition to the challenge(s) faced by people living with mental illness.
6.	<b>What will help others?</b>
	<b>Talk about what will help.</b> Let your listener know what will address the need or problem you described.
7.	<b>Make your "ask"</b>
	<b>Ask your policymaker if you can count on their support (or opposition).</b> Include a bill number, if possible. Thank your policymaker for his or her time.

Excerpted from NAMI Smarts for Advocacy

# All NAMI VC Programs Being Offered On Zoom Platform

**Family to Family Class:** An 8-week education course for families, partners and friends of individuals living with a mental health condition taught by trained family members.

**Familia a Familia Clase:** A 12-week education course for families, partners and friends of individuals living with a mental health condition taught in Spanish by trained family members.

**Family & Friends Webinar:** A 4-hour webinar that informs and supports family members, partners, friends and significant others who have loved ones with a mental health condition. Webinar leaders are family members and know what it is like to have a loved one with a mental

**Family Support Groups:** These groups are for caregivers of individuals living with a mental health condition, including parents, siblings, spouses, partners or friends. Support groups are held in five locations in English and one location in Spanish.

**NAMI Connection:** A twice-monthly recovery support group for people living with mental illness where people learn from each other's experiences, share coping strategies, and offer encouragement and understanding.

**In Our Own Voice:** A unique public education

living with mental illness.

**Community Resource Line:** NAMI Ventura County's Resource Line is staffed by knowledgeable volunteers who answer general questions about mental illness and recovery as well as provide referrals to NAMI programs and other community mental health resources. Call 805-500-NAMI.

**General Meeting & Guest Speakers:** These monthly education and advocacy meetings are free and open to anyone interested in learning about mental illness. Guest speakers address a wide range of topics. Past guest speakers have included psychiatrists, therapists, psychologists, state

Register now at [www.namiventura.org](http://www.namiventura.org)



health condition.

**Community Cares Webinar:** A 2-hour webinar for both peers and family members introduces mental health education with a focus on building resilience with a foundation of self-awareness, self-care and communication.

**Peer to Peer Class:** NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a 8-week education class for adults with mental illness who are looking to better understand their condition and journey toward recovery. Taught by a trained team of peers living in recovery from mental health challenges.

**Provider Education Class:** A 5-week course that presents a penetrating, subjective view of family and consumer experiences with serious mental illness to staff at organizations working directly with people experiencing severe and persistent mental illnesses. (CEUs available)

program developed by NAMI, in which two trained consumer speakers share compelling personal stories about living with mental illness and achieving recovery. IOOV is also an opportunity for those who have struggled with mental illness to gain confidence and to share their individual experiences of recovery and transformation.

**Ending the Silence:** An educational program to lessen stigma and raise awareness about mental illness. ETS for Students is designed for 7th through 12th grade audiences. Ending the Silence also offers presentations specifically for parents and school staff.

**FaithNet:** NAMI FaithNet is an interfaith resource network for faith communities welcoming and supporting persons and families

and local mental health leaders and more.

**NAMIWalks:** Every journey begins with that first step! Join us as NAMIWalks Ventura County celebrates our 15th Anniversary in 2020. Through NAMIWalks' public, active display of support for people affected by mental illness, we are changing communities and ensuring that help and hope are available for those in need.

**Annual Community Christmas Party:** A wonderful tradition where all those in the community involved in mental health issues come together and share in the festivities of the holiday season.

*For more information, schedules and registration, go to [www.namiventura.org/](http://www.namiventura.org/) programs or email [info@namiventura.org](mailto:info@namiventura.org).*

## ARE YOU CONNECTED?



NAMI  
Ventura County



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## Cares from page 1

filled with information building on the course topics as well as exercises aimed at building awareness and practicing useful skills. The workbook even includes a few coloring pages. I'm pretty sure that's a NAMI first.

The two-hour webinar is taught by two volunteer presenters who are either family members or peers living in recovery and trained to share their experiences with participants. Many of our presenters are

both family members and peers, giving them valuable, unique insight into mental health and wellness.

The point of Community Cares is that each and every one of us live with stress and, in order to keep our minds healthy, we've got to develop skills. Self-care is critical. But so is communication and self-advocacy and awareness. That is the recipe that Community Cares brings to the table.

Caring for ourselves is fundamental to caring for our communities. Right now, it seems pretty clear that 2020 is going to continue chucking lemons. Instead of ducking for cover, why not use this time to get together and learn to make lemonade?

Please register for an upcoming Community Cares webinar at [www.namiventura.org/community-cares](http://www.namiventura.org/community-cares).

## Story from page 6

The introduction is pretty straightforward. Keep it short and sweet. This is not the place to get into details. You want to establish who you are and your position. Establishing your position is going to help the audience focus throughout the rest of your story.

### Step 2. What happened?

*In the days leading up to my suicide attempt, I was terrified. I felt out of control and intensely ashamed. As I spiraled deeper into crisis, I had no support and no idea where to turn for help. In my mind, suicide became the only reasonable option.*

*My suicide attempt left me in a medically-induced coma and with severe pneumonia which lead to me developing asthma. Every time I laugh really hard, the inevitable coughing and wheezing reminds me of the darkest, most dangerous time I have ever experienced. I will carry that with me for the rest of my life.*

The What Happened section is important. Remember that humans beings are hardwired for connection. This is the place where you are going to capitalize on that.

This section can be challenging to tackle. Too much detail, or a long, complex story can lose the audience. Keep it focused and to the point.

### Step 3. What helped?

*It could have been prevented. I needed support and understanding. I needed education and resources. I needed to know about the suicide prevention hotline.*

In this section, identified what helped. If nothing helped, that is okay. Identify what would have helped. Be direct. Don't be afraid to say: "I needed..."

### Step 4. How are you different today?

*My experience propelled me to where I am today. Through NAMI, I teach classes for other people living with mental health conditions. I am a vocal advocate and talk openly, both publicly and in my private life, about my suicide attempt. Moving the conversation about suicide from the shadows into the open saves lives.*

This is the place where you are going to

leave your audience with hope. Concluding your story with hope is important. Positive emotions are going to help your audience feel empowered to respond to your ask.

### Step 5. What is the need or problem?

*In 2018, there were approximately 1.4 million suicide attempts in the United States. Right now, across the county, experts are reporting that those numbers are skyrocketing.*

This is the crux of why you're talking. This is the place where you can use a statistic or fact to illustrate your point.

### Step 6. What will help others?

*Help during a mental health crisis needs to be easily accessible. A simple, nationwide three-digit number (9-8-8) puts that access at the fingertips of people who need it, when they need it.*

Going into this process, you know what you are going to ask for. So, how does what you're asking for help others?

### Step 7. Make your Ask:

I'm asking you, today, to support S.2661. Your support of 9-8-8 saves lives. Thank you.

Does your audience have the ability to do what you're asking? If what you're asking for is out of the audience's scope of control, it is not going to matter how compelling your story is. Be realistic in what your audience can do

*\*Adapted from the September general meeting: Storytelling for Advocacy. A recording of the full workshop will be available in November 2020.*



# Upcoming Events

## The Esperanza Project

OPAC received a grant from the California Arts Council to support "The Esperanza Project," a year-long programming series that addresses young Latina mental health through a short documentary, salons and Sin Verguenza Charlas.

The documentary and series are being created/curated by Oxnard filmmaker Arcelia Martinez, and we welcome your participation and support of this project.

**Sat., October 17 | 3 to 5 pm via Zoom | "What is Mental Health?" Salon**

**Wed., October 21 | 7-8:30 pm via Zoom | Sin Verguenza Charla feat. Zine-making with Marie.**

*For more information on The Esperanza Project, visit [www.oxnardperformingarts.com](http://www.oxnardperformingarts.com)*

### Family Support Groups

Ongoing via Zoom (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Tues). Please visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for the full schedule and registration.

### NAMI Connection Support Group

Returning in November via Zoom. Please visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for the full schedule and registration.

### Peer to Peer Class

Oct. 15 (6-8pm) via Zoom. Visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for registration.

### Community Cares Webinar

Oct. 15 (6:30-8:30pm) via Zoom. Visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for registration.

Nov. 12 (6:30-8:30pm) via Zoom. Visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for registration.

Nov. 19 (6:30-8:30pm) via Zoom. Visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for registration.

Dec. 3 (6:30-8:30pm) via Zoom. Visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for registration.

Dec. 17 (6:30-8:30pm) via Zoom. Visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for registration.

### General Meeting

Nov. 12 (6-7:30pm) via Zoom. Topic: Mental Health Diversion Panel. Visit [namiventura.org](http://namiventura.org) for registration.

# Resources

**In an immediate psychiatric and/or medical emergency, please dial 911.  
Request a CIT Officer.**

### Ventura County Behavioral Health

For individuals in need of mental health services or experiencing a mental health crisis, please call:

**Star Program:** (866) 998-2243 Available 24/7 or (805) 981-4233

**Adult Crisis Team:** (877) 327-4747 or 911 (Request a CIT officer)

### Acute Care Psychiatric Hospitals

#### Aurora Vista del Mar

Medicare and private insurance only  
(805) 653-6434  
801 Seneca St, Ventura

#### Hillmont Psychiatric Center

All county residents  
(805) 652-6729  
200 Hillmont Ave, Ventura

### NAMI VC Community Resource Line

(805) 500-NAMI: M-F 9am-5pm

### Treatment Referral

**SAMHSA's National Helpline** is a free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders. 1-800-662-HELP (4357). Also available online at [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

### Reach Out

**California Peer-Run Warm Line** (available 24/7) 855-845-7415 or chat online at [www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline](http://www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (available 24/7) 1-800-273-TALK (8255), by text (text NAMI to 741741), or chat online at [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

**The Trevor Project Lifeline** (LGBTQ+ Youth) (available 24/7) 1-866-488-7386, by text (text START to 678678) or chat online at [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

**The National Domestic Violence Hotline** (available 24/7) 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), by text (text LOVEIS to 22522) or chat online at [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

### Youth Resources

**JedFoundation.org:** The Jed Foundation is committed to the mental and emotional health of college students and preventing suicide. The foundation runs several free online self-assessment and resource programs.

**OktoTalk.org:** It's time we talked about mental health. Share what's on your mind.

### COVID-19 Resources

**2-1-1 Ventura County:** Information and referral service for Ventura County. Call 2-1-1, text COVID19 to 211211 or visit [211ventura.org](http://211ventura.org).

**Coping During Coronavirus: Online Support Groups:** Coronavirus emotional wellness online support groups (English and Spanish) and more. Visit [www.giveanhour.org/initiatives-and-programs/covid19-ca/](http://www.giveanhour.org/initiatives-and-programs/covid19-ca/)

## Behavioral Health Advisory Board

**3rd Monday of each month at 1pm These meetings are open to the public. For more details please call (805) 981-1115.**

During the current emergency, all in-person meetings of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) have been suspended until further notice. Meetings will be conducted online through Zoom. As always, community members are encouraged to attend.

Meeting materials will be posted ([www.vcbh.org/en/behavioral-health-advisory-board-meetings](http://www.vcbh.org/en/behavioral-health-advisory-board-meetings)) and sent by email.

The mission of the BHAB is to advocate for community members living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders and their families. This is accomplished through support, review, and evaluation of treatment services provided and/or coordinated through the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department.



### Guest from page 3

these costs. If we do not focus on effective treatment, many of those afflicted will continue to be re-hospitalized, re-arrested and re-incarcerated, all while continuing to further deteriorate. Ventura County's prejudice-based system creates high-resource utilizers who will be dependent on the system for many years.

The intangible costs incurred by the untreated seriously mentally ill and their families is immeasurably devastating. I have listened to many local families trying to get help for their seriously mentally ill loved ones. Even the most tireless and committed family members have great difficulty accessing best practice services in this county and if they finally do, systemic problems around inappropriate staffing and neglect render the care they receive woefully deficient.

When these stories are brought to light along with a request that the county take a look at this system, county leaders defensively place a firewall between the current system and a much-needed willingness to improve. Family members have been told by county staff to "back off," "you're too involved," or "you're a helicopter mom." These inappropriate admonitions signify bad leadership and a lack of concern for both the patient and the loved one who is trying to support them.

Local governments and healthcare professionals are responsible to help citizens who are unable to care for themselves and to work collaboratively with family. It is inhumane to both allow people to decompensate to the point of being unable to care for themselves and then to require family members to stand by, watch, and be quiet.

County leaders should be willing to look at this system and listen to those most impacted by its deficiencies. It is past time to change a system held up by prejudice and discrimination resulting in grave injustice and inhumane treatment of some of our most vulnerable and marginalized citizens.

*Mary Haffner, a partner in the law firm of Haffner Law Group, has served on the Ventura County Behavioral Health Advisory Board since April 2015. She is the co-chair of the Laura's Law implementation Workgroup and serves on the Board of Directors for the Los Angeles chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility.*

*\*Appeared in the VC Star Sept. 9, 2020*

## Prime Day is here

Shop your favorite deals at  
**smile.amazon.com** or with AmazonSmile  
ON in the app and Amazon donates  
**amazonsmile**



**nami** Ventura County's  
Community Resource Line  
is available during quarantine.



**M-F 9a.m.-5p.m.  
805-500-NAMI**





your mother. tu esposa. your cousin. your son. your fiancé. tu padre. your brother. your grandmother. your partner. your mom. your roommate. your grandfather. your sister. your stepfather. your neighbor. tus padres. your doctor. your grandparent. your girlfriend. tu primo. tu madre. your bestie. your parent. your wife. your student. your scout leader. your hubby. your grandson. your barista. your children. your veterinarian. tu tio. your granddaughter. your physical therapist. your godfather. your nurse. your army buddy. tus parientes. your librarian. your boyfriend. your coach. your daughter. your fraternal brother. your hairdresser. your significant other. your grandchild. your best friend's brother. your banker. your mother-in-law. your classmate. your stepmother. your dentist. tu hija. your waiter. your aunt. your spiritual guru. tu abuelo. your teammate. your uncle. your manicurist. your godmother. your buddy. your niece. your ex-husband. your sorority sister. tu abuela. your co-parent. your pharmacist. tu prima. your teacher. tu nietos. your father. your friend. your stepdaughter. your pastor. your cousin. your masseuse. tu hijo. your husband. your waitress. tu hermano. your accountant. your frienemy. your stepson. tu hijastro. your ex-wife. your boss. your sister-in-law. your babysitter. your dad. your neighbor's kid. tu esposo. your brother-in-law. your nephew. your father-in-law. your partner. your attorney. your fiancée. your yoga instructor. tu bisabuelo. your amazon delivery guy. your mother. your teammate. your uncle. your pastor. your cousin. your neighbor. your wife. your student. your daughter. tu prima. your teacher. your co-parent. your kid's friend. your fiancé. your mother. tu esposa. your cousin. your son. your fiancé. tu padre. your brother. your grandmother. your partner. your mom. your roommate. your grandfather. your sister. your stepfather. your neighbor. tus padres. your doctor. your grandparent. your girlfriend. tu primo. tu madre. your bestie. your parent. your wife. your student. your scout leader. your hubby. your grandson. your barista. your children. your veterinarian. tu tio. your granddaughter. your physical therapist. your godfather. your nurse. your army buddy. tus parientes. your librarian. your boyfriend. your coach. your daughter. your fraternity brother. your hairdresser. your significant other. your grandchild. your best friend's brother. your banker. your mother-in-law. your classmate. your stepmother. your dentist. tu hija. your waiter. your aunt. your spiritual guru. tu abuelo. your teammate. your uncle. your manicurist. your godmother. your buddy. your niece. your ex-husband. your sorority sister. tu abuela. your co-parent. your pharmacist. tu prima. your teacher. tu nietos. your father. your friend. your stepdaughter. your pastor. your cousin. your masseuse. tu hijo. your husband. your waitress. tu hermano. your accountant. your frienemy. your stepson. tu hijastro. your ex-wife. your boss. your sister-in-law. your babysitter. your dad. your neighbor's kid. tu esposo. your brother-in-law. your nephew. your father-in-law. your partner. your attorney. your fiancée. your yoga instructor. tu bisabuelo. your amazon delivery guy. your mother. your teammate. your uncle. your pastor. your cousin. your neighbor. your wife. your student. your daughter. tu prima. your teacher. your co-parent. your kid's friend. your fiancé. your mother. tu esposa. your cousin. your son. your fiancé. tu padre. your brother. your grandmother. your partner. your mom. your roommate. your grandfather. your sister. your stepfather. your neighbor. tus padres. your doctor. your grandparent. your girlfriend. tu primo. tu madre. your bestie. your parent. your wife. your student. your scout leader. your hubby. your grandson. your barista. your children. your veterinarian. tu tio. your granddaughter. your physical therapist. your godfather. your nurse. your army buddy. tus parientes. your librarian. your boyfriend. your coach. your daughter. your fraternity brother. your hairdresser. your significant other. your grandchild. your best friend's brother. your banker. your mother-in-law. your classmate. your stepmother. your dentist. tu hija. your waiter. your aunt. your spiritual guru. tu abuelo. your teammate. your uncle. your manicurist. your godmother. your buddy. your niece. your ex-husband. your sorority sister. tu abuela. your co-parent. your pharmacist. tu prima. your teacher. tu nietos. your father. your friend. your stepdaughter. your pastor. your cousin. your masseuse. tu hijo. your husband. your waitress. tu hermano. your accountant. your frienemy. your stepson. tu hijastro. your ex-wife. your boss. your sister-in-law. your babysitter. your dad. your neighbor's kid. tu esposo. your brother-in-law. your nephew. your father-in-law. your partner. your attorney. your fiancée. your yoga instructor. tu bisabuelo. your amazon delivery guy. your mother. your teammate. your uncle. your pastor. your cousin. your neighbor. your wife. your student. your daughter. tu prima. your teacher. your co-parent. your kid's friend. your fiancé.

**MENTAL  
ILLNESS**

**DOESN'T  
DISCRIMINATE.**

**EDUCATION.**

**SUPPORT.**

**ADVOCACY.**

**START HERE.**



**Ventura County**