



# NAMI Ventura County

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Newsletter

March/April 2014



**Saturday, May 3, 2014**  
Ventura Beach Promenade  
450 E. Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA

NAMI Walks funds support mental health programs offered at no cost in Ventura County.



**Every journey begins with that first step.**

In 2014, thousands of concerned citizens in over 84 communities across the nation will walk together to raise money and awareness about our country's need for a world-class treatment and recovery system for people with mental illness.

## GENERAL MEETING

**Tuesday, April 8, 2014, 6:45 pm**  
Vineyard Community Church  
1320 Flynn Road, Camarillo, CA 93012

### Social Skills Training:

How to enhance communication with your loved one

**Lisa J. Hayden, Ph.D.**

Some of the more devastating effects of mental disorders are their effects on the social aspect of life. When interaction with others is limited, depression and isolation can cause more problems. You can help your loved ones by reinforcing these social and communication skills in the home or in any setting. Come and learn about these psychotherapy intervention techniques and watch a role play demonstration.

*Dr. Lisa Hayden is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice, a clinical research psychologist with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Program Director of the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County.*

**A Family Support Group is held prior to each General Meeting from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm.**

## Join the NAMI Walk!

**SATURDAY MAY 3, 2014**  
Check-in begins 9:00 a.m.

**VENTURA BEACH PROMENADE**  
450 Harbor Blvd, Ventura  
(where California Street meets the Beach)

To register for the walk, start a team, become a business sponsor or donate on-line, visit:

[www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty](http://www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty)

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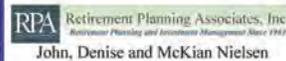


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## Come join us at Ventura County's premier mental health community education event

Mark your calendar and make plans to join us for our tenth annual NAMI Walk on Saturday, May 3, 2014 at the Ventura Beach Promenade. All proceeds from the Walk will be used to fund NAMI's support, education, and advocacy programs right here in our community.

### Register Today

Online registration is fast and easy at our Walk web site [www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty](http://www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty). All walkers are encouraged to reach out to family, friends, co-workers and business associates to raise support for their participation in the Walk. Tell your friends and family about NAMI and what it means to you. Ask for their support. Online fundraising is fast, easy and secure.

### Organize a Walk Team

Create an employer, service provider, government agency, church or community organization Walk Team. We encourage you to consider forming your own Walk Team and reach out to your network of family, friends and co-workers to support and walk with you. Recruit 5 to 50 people to join your team and walk with you. Set fundraising goals for your team. Then encourage all your team members to get donations by sharing why mental health or NAMI is important to each person. Design a team t-shirt to foster team spirit. By Walk Day we'd like to have about 75 teams!

### Walk as an Individual

If you prefer not to join a team, join the hundreds of independent walkers! And ask *everyone* you know to support your Walk effort with a contribution.

### Online Tools Available 24/7

You can register to walk, join a walk team, form a walk team, create your own personal walker page, sponsor a walker, or become an event sponsor on the NAMIWalks website. For help with registration or Walk team, call the NAMI office at (805) 641-2426 or e-mail [walk@namiventura.org](mailto:walk@namiventura.org).

### Ask Others to Support You

Make a list of everyone you know who will sponsor your own Walk effort, including family members, friends, co-workers, business associates, etc. Send an email and tell them why you are walking with NAMI; be sure to include the link to your personal Walkpage so they can donate easily and securely. Include that link in your email signature as a reminder to everyone you email every day.

### Walk Sponsorships

This is the time to become a Walk Sponsor. Sponsorships are available at all levels, from \$250 to \$15,000. To learn more, call the NAMI office at (805) 641-2426 or visit the Walk web site at [www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty](http://www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty).

Let's make this our most successful Walk yet! Help us reach and exceed our goal of raising \$200,000 and 1,200 walkers. YOU can make a difference!! ❖

## NAMIWalk Ventura County Why I Walk for NAMI by John Nielsen



months our son became a different person; a young man our family struggled to understand, support and relate to. In a way he had become a son and brother we didn't know who had a disease we knew nothing about.

When I began researching our son's illness I was startled by some facts published by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):

- 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. will experience a mental health disorder in any given year.
- 1 in 17 adults are diagnosed with a serious and persistent mental illness such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or Borderline Personality Disorder (aka, Unstable Personality Disorder).
- 1 in 10 children live with a serious mental or emotional disorder.
- Adults living with a serious mental illness die, on average, 25 years earlier than other Americans, largely due to treatable medical conditions.

Do you know anyone who has been touched by a mental health disorder?

Our son's first episode took place while he was a student living in Hawaii and the symptoms were textbook - the FBI, local police, even foreign governments were out to do him harm. However, due to effective medications and wonderful doctors our son was stabilized fairly quickly. Thankfully, as we left Queens Medical Center we were given a brochure telling us about NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

NAMI has been a lifesaver for both our son and our family. Over the past few years our family has benefited tremendously from NAMI's support, encouragement and educational programs, especially the *Family-to-Family* class.

NAMI also provides our son with an opportunity to use his "lived experiences" to be an advocate by being a presenter for NAMI's *In Our Own Voice* public awareness program. His speaking engagements take place at universities, hospitals and community organizations. This program also allows him to educate the community about the need to "stomp out" the stigma and stereotypes associated with mental illness.

I'm amazed when I think that NAMI provides all their programs and services to the community at no cost. I believe these programs are vital to the health and wellbeing of our community because they keep families together, help keep people off the streets, help prevent suicide and help with recovery.

Thank you NAMI ! ❖

(John Nielsen is the Board President of NAMI Ventura County)

## January General Meeting The Mind Body Connection

by Mark Neal

The topic of January's General Meeting was "The Mind-Body Connection," a discussion of the role of overall wellness in the treatment and recovery of mentally ill clients. The speaker was Dr. Vanessa Lauzon, a specialist in both Psychiatry and Family Medicine who provides Psychiatric Consultation for Community Memorial Hospital and the CMH Centers for Family Health in Ventura County. As both a psychiatrist and family physician, Dr. Lauzon was able to draw on her wide ranging clinical experience treating those with mental illness and her knowledge of current research to give a talk that was filled with both information as well as practical ideas and techniques to help patients adopt healthier lifestyles.



In the past, Dr Lauzon has volunteered with NAMI San Diego in the "Ask the Doctor" program, so she gave a brief informative talk followed by a lively question and answer session.

During the first part of her presentation, Dr. Lauzon spoke about health issues that proportionately affect mental health. She cited alarming statistics that the life expectancy of clients with serious mental illness is on average 25 years less than the general public (51 years vs. 76). That difference is at least partially due to higher incidence of chronic illness such as diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease – diseases that affect clients' quality of life and positive outlook such that it is clear that overall health is essential to mental health and that any path of treatment and recovery must include promotion of wellness.

Contributing to the higher incidence of chronic diseases among the mentally ill are higher rates of smoking, obesity, and lack of healthy foods and exercise. Some reasons for that include weight gain that can be a side effect of some medications and illnesses such as depression that can contribute to low energy and therefore reduce motivation to exercise. Additionally, Mentally ill patients often have reduced income and can't easily afford healthy foods and many treatment programs do not emphasize adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

Dr. Lauzon has had the greatest success working with clients to find reasons to make health improvements that are personally important to them. For example, it is important to help clients to understand and recognize that nutrition supports mental wellness. If a client or loved one is not willing or overwhelmed by making large changes to his or her diet, perhaps encourage them to add one healthy food at one meal per day. For those on limited incomes, farmers' markets now commonly take EBT as payment. She also encouraged us all to advocate for healthier foods

Exercise is also an important component of treatment and recovery because it boosts mood, improves body image and self-confidence, promotes an overall sense of wellness, can

provide greater self-efficacy, and improves sleep. The goal regarding physical activity is at least 30 minutes five times per week, which can seem overwhelming to those who are not active. If a client or loved one is reticent to make changes, perhaps encourage them to choose some way they might increase their activity. That can be as small as walking out to get the mail each day. Any amount of activity can improve their outlook, which can in turn encourage them to further increase their activity. Dr. Lauzon also stressed the importance of advocating for treatment programs to include physical activity in their regimen.

She also encouraged clients to quit smoking, citing the availability of free support programs such as 1-800-NO BUTTS. She pointed out that Medi-Cal will pay for nicotine patches if they are prescribed by a physician and that other medications can be prescribed where appropriate to help curb nicotine cravings.

Dr. Lauzon finished the lecture portion of her presentation with a call for us to be active consumers, patients, and family members. She encouraged the audience to know their medications and the possible side effects.

Dr. Lauzon then opened the floor for questions and answers. One audience member asked about other aspects of wellness apart from diet and exercise. In her reply she spoke of the importance of spirituality, mindfulness, and self-awareness to recovery. She also stressed how important it can be for clients to develop positive social roles whereby they contribute to the world around them, which can add meaning to life and create a sense of belonging. Throughout the rest of the evening's discussions, the insightful questions from the audience brought forth informative answers and practical ideas of how to help client and loved ones in recovery. The evening with Dr. Lauzon was well received and greatly appreciated. ❖

## Welcome Diane Bustillos to the NAMI Ventura County Staff!

Please join us in welcoming Diane Bustillos as our newest staff member at NAMI Ventura County.

Diane has joined us as the Program Coordinator for the Stigma Reduction Programs, including *In Our Own Voice*, *Parents & Teachers as Allies*, and *Ending the Silence*.



Volunteering for NAMI Ventura County over the past ten years as a *Family-to-Family* teacher, *Provider Education* teacher, *Friend in the Lobby*, *Helpline* volunteer and more, she has given hundreds of hours to NAMI. Diane consistently won the Presidents Volunteer Service Award for her many hours of service to NAMI Ventura County.

Leaving her job of 14 years as the office manager of VCE Services, Diane will use her NAMI volunteer experience as well as her extensive work history to manage and grow the Stigma Reduction Programs.

In her spare time, Diane enjoys spending time with her children and grandsons, her husband, and her horses. ❖

**February General Meeting**  
**CLIENT ENGAGEMENT**  
**A Way To Improve Client Care Outcomes**

*by Eddie Carrington*

*“Listen to the patient. They’ll tell you what’s wrong with them.” – Sir William Osler*

This month’s General Meeting covered a challenging topic. It affects us every time we go to the doctor. Dr. Robert Fire, PsyD, discussed the importance of Client Engagement and its impact in healthcare. Dr. Fire has a Doctorate of Psychology, is a Nurse Practitioner and a Registered Nurse. Dr. Fire is also a Nursing Professor at Cal-State Fresno and has recently joined the faculty at Channel Islands. Add this to his soft spoken charm and Dr. Fire was able to explain Client Engagement and how it became a national healthcare priority.

Dr. Fire first explained that practitioners are not our enemies. No one is pointing fingers. They are just mired in the politics of the medical record. The medical record not only communicates notes and treatments of the client’s status and history, also ensures the practitioner get paid, forcing practitioners to follow the requirements imposed by insurance companies and other providers. This lead to the disconnect we have today between practitioner and client.

Dr. Fire did note one known exception, the County Hospitals. Even though they run the risk of not getting reimbursed they will not allow the possibility of not being reimbursed dictate quality of care.

Dr. Fire explained he does not mean documentation and the medical record are unimportant. It just means the medical record is more focused on communication. (e.g. client’s history, treatments, etc...)

Also, practitioners are just as frustrated as us. They did not go into healthcare to fill out paperwork, they want to help people. However, the current system puts all of the importance on the medical record and not the client. Making the client’s role passive and creating the “The Doctor knows best” Medical Model we have today.

Dr. Fire explained that “Client Engagement” is having the client involved with their care. Practitioner and clients developing a treatment plan together; the result being an improvement in overall efficacy of care.

Client Engagement is a two-way street, a partnership, where both the practitioner and client participate. The more the practitioner involves the client the more engaged they will become. Clients will now have an investment in the process.

Client Engagement relies on you, the client, advocating for yourself. Remember, we are the ones wanting to be well. So we need to make sure our practitioners are listening and know our concerns.

One way is to have a journal or list of issues to share with your practitioner. This can help ensure all of your questions and concerns are addressed.

If you feel your practitioner is more focused on the documentation and not listening, Dr. Fire suggested a card or note reading, “Please don’t think me rude but I find it difficult

to assert myself. My care is vitally important to me. Would it be OK with you if I had your undivided attention while we are together?”

Dr. Fire also had a suggestion if you feel the practitioner has not clearly explained your illness and its treatment options. He suggested using another card reading, “Pardon me, but I find it difficult to assert myself. My care is vitally important to me. If I am not part of my treatment plan it is less likely that I will follow it after my discharge and we all know what that can mean to my chances of success.”

Admittedly, Dr. Fire stated, educating and including the client may be a challenging situation. However, we cannot forget the importance of doing that. So patience will be required by practitioners when educating clients.

This does not mean that all of the responsibility is on the practitioner. Client Engagement is a partnership. We as clients need to do our part like attending support groups and joining organizations such as NAMI.

Dr. Fire had one more suggestion. The client’s family is included as part of the treatment program. Studies have shown that 78% of clients successfully follow up with their outpatient treatment care.

Dr. Fire ended the presentation by reminding us of some things to remember. Clients that are engaged and in partnership with the practitioner will have more success with complying with their treatment plan. Clients also don’t require hospitalization as often. Instead they develop the skills to self-calm or reach out and accept help in other ways. The client and/or client’s families need to be our own advocates. If we don’t express our needs, concerns, and issues no one else will.

Finally, we need to educate ourselves and our families. By doing all these things we can increase our family member’s or ourselves chances of success. ❖

**Q & A with NAMI Guest Speaker,**  
**Robert Fire, PsyD**  
*Interviewer, Eddie Carrington*

**NAMI:** What are three things a client should keep in mind when they are meeting with their practitioner?

**Dr. Fire:** They should make a list of how they’re doing, their concerns and issues. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve seen that “So how are you doing.” I realize I keep going back to my own experience with my medical practitioners. “Hi! How you doing?” “I’m fine” and then I’m surprised when he says, “Why are you here?” So that’s a social thing we do. It’s a dance. Why don’t we get right to it? You’re not feeling well. Tell me about the symptoms. It would be more productive time. You’re not my friend. I get that somewhere else. So why not make use of the time you have and be more prepared.

**NAMI:** Because so many practitioners are holding onto the medical model, how can the clients challenge or help change the view of “Doctor knows best.”?

**Q & A (cont’d)**

**Dr. Fire:** Good question. I think part of those three things, maybe say, and “This is what I’ve been doing. Here is how it has been working or not working.” And then everyone keeps reminding that the whole experience is one that makes us feel like a child going to the parent. It is no one’s fault. It is our socialization. And we need to keep that in mind so we can break out of that. So we can assert our adult responsibilities. Also, we need to keep in mind that the practitioners are conscientious of their time and want to spend as much time with the client as possible. So the more prepared we are, the more effective our visit can be.

**NAMI:** What’s the biggest hurdle for the change and acceptance from the medical model to a client focused mode for practitioners and client?

**Dr. Fire:** I think the answer is the same for both. Change is difficult. We have been socialized into one way of doing things for so long. I don’t think we could change the whole thing at one time. We probably need to choose one area. Do that. And when we’re feeling good and comfortable with that, do another one. Add something else to it. Then in a step by step fashion. We will change the situation.

I don’t think we can change the whole thing overnight. I don’t think it would succeed. Then again if someone went in with a list of their concerns, problems and everything to keep the focus on them instead of being focused on the practitioner, that would be a great start. ❖

### Moving Day at NAMI

Dozens of boxes were packed, computers were shut down. The 26 foot moving truck arrived and loaded our entire office in a move that would take us just seven miles down the road, to the other side of Camarillo. NAMI Ventura County made the long-awaited move to an office better suited to our growing needs.

For many years, NAMI Ventura County resided in a small office on the west side of Camarillo. A generous landlord gave our little non-profit organization a very favorable rate on rent, and we gratefully did our business from this tiny space. The office was small, and the storage space inadequate. Volunteers and staff bumped into each other as we worked on expanded NAMI Ventura County programs. The organization had grown significantly, and our workplace had not. When the property changed hands at the end of 2013, the new landlord doubled the rent. The NAMI Ventura County Board of Directors decided the time had come to seek a different space. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Board President John Nielsen,

and Board Secretary Shirley Brandon, who looked at dozens of office spaces, a spacious office was procured at an affordable price.

The new office, centrally located in Ventura County, with easy access from the 101 Freeway, has plenty of space to meet our growing needs. Boasting a massive storage area, and a beautiful, well-lit classroom, in addition to ample office space for volunteers and staff, there are already plans in the works for a Provider Education Class and a Family-to-Family Teacher Training to take place in the new facility! The space allows us to offer classes, support groups, trainings and other events, eliminating the need to rent or borrow space.



The move was efficient and well planned. Volunteer Bob Wickham spent several days in the new office, prior to the move, installing the internet cabling, so the office would be wired for business.

By the Monday following the Thursday move the new offices were set up



Bob Wickham with Chris Novak

and NAMI Ventura County resumed business as usual. New shelving for the storage space was installed by 2 more generous volunteers, Calvin Beeker and Dennis Perry. Gail Beeker came to the old office to assist in the daunting task of packing up the materials, supplies, and various sundries associated with running a busy non-profit.

Our new office is located at 5251 Verdugo Way, Suite K, Camarillo, CA 93012. Our mailing address remains

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## NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

*Please note – These NAMI groups are for family members.  
Consumer/client support groups are listed separately.*

Support group attendees and other family members are urged to come back so as to help others! Drop in – no need to call ahead!

To check the date of the next meeting, go to [www.namiventura.org](http://www.namiventura.org) and select "Calendar" from the top menu bar. Or call NAMI at (805) 500-NAMI.

**Camarillo** – Meets at 11:00 am, the first Saturday of each month at the NAMI Ventura County office, 5251 Verdugo Way, Suite K, Camarillo, CA 93012.

**Camarillo** – Meets at 5:30 p.m., the second Tuesday at Vineyard Community Church, 1320 Flynn Rd, Camarillo.

**Thousand Oaks** – Meets at 7:00 p.m. the first and third Monday of each month at Hacienda de Feliz Community Room, 2084 Los Feliz Drive, Thousand Oaks.

**Ventura** – Meets at 6:30 pm, the first and third Tuesdays at Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston St (use entrance from Johnson Drive), Building 300, Room 302, Ventura.

### GRUPO DE APOYO

*For Spanish-speaking family members*

**Oxnard** – Meets at 6:30 pm, the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at the Turning Point Clubhouse, 426 W. 5th Street, Oxnard. For information in Spanish, call: Lisa (805) 984-2839 or Pablo (805) 794-6316 ❖

## NAMI Ventura County Help Line (805) 500-NAMI

Volunteers and staff can provide information about a variety of resources, including mental health services, housing, legal assistance, support groups, classes for families and clients and more. Open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If you have a mental health emergency, call the Ventura County Behavioral Health Crisis Team at (866) 998-2243. Or call police at 911 and ask for a CIT trained officer.

## NAMI CONNECTION

### Peer Support Group Meets Twice Monthly

**NAMI Connection** is a recovery support group program, for adults living with mental illness, which is expanding in communities all across the country. These groups provide a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope.

**NAMI Connection** groups offer a casual and relaxed approach to sharing the challenges and successes of coping with mental illness.

Each group meets weekly for 90 minutes, is offered free of charge and follows a flexible structure without an educational format.

**WHEN:** First and third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

**WHERE:** NAMI Ventura County Office  
5251 Verdugo Way, Suite K, Camarillo, CA 93012

## PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

*Please note – These groups are for consumers/clients.  
Family member support groups are listed separately.*

### Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance

**Ventura:** DBSA Support Group meets every Tuesday, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston Street (& Johnson Drive), Building 300, Room 301, Ventura. Park in the lot off Johnson Drive. No registration required. For more information, call (805) 253-3289.

See [www.DBSAAlliance.org](http://www.DBSAAlliance.org) or [www.facebook.com/DBSA.Ventura](http://www.facebook.com/DBSA.Ventura)

**Ventura:** DBSA Support Group meets 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the Adult Wellness and Recovery Center, Turning Point Foundation, 1065 E. Main Street, Ventura. For more information, call (805) 671-5038

**Oak Park:** DBSA Conejo Valley Depression Support Group meets Mondays at 7:00 p.m. at Church of the Epiphany, Mitchel Hall, Room 6, 5450 Churchwood Dr. (Kanan & Churchwood) Oak Park. No registration required. For more information, call Rachel at: 818-601-7767 or email [dbsaconejovalley@gmail.com](mailto:dbsaconejovalley@gmail.com)  
See [www.dbsalliance.org/conejovalley](http://www.dbsalliance.org/conejovalley) ❖

## OTHER ACTIVITIES FOR CLIENTS

### THE WELLNESS CENTER (TWC)

Turning Point Foundation operates an Adult Wellness Center (TWC) five days a week in Oxnard and part-time in Ventura. The TWC is open to all clients and is staffed by Peer Support Specialists. Many activities and classes scheduled daily.

Their mission is to provide a positive healing environment for adults with mental health challenges and to build on their strengths, develop new skills, connect to the community, and receive support from peers on their journey to recovery.

Oxnard TWC, 2697 Saviers Rd., Oxnard CA 93033  
Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  
and Thursday 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm

Ventura TWC, 1065 E. Main St., Ventura, CA 93001  
Open Thursday, 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm, Saturday 10:00 am to 4:45 pm

For more information, call (805) 653-5045

### TAY TUNNEL

Run by Pacific Clinics, this drop-in center is aimed at helping Transitional Age Youth (TAY), age 18-25, and connecting them with services. Many activities daily. Open to all TAY clients.

TAY Tunnel, 141 W. 5th Street, Suite D, Oxnard, Tel: (805) 240-2538  
Open Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:30 pm

### WRAP CLASSES & more

VCBH contracts with Recovery Innovations (RI) to run a WRAP program for clients – "Wellness Recovery Action Plan".

This is a 16-hour mental health wellness and recovery course that will help one regain control of their life. This course focuses on: one's strengths, identifying triggers, warning signs, when things are breaking down, and the development of a crisis plan.

RICs mission is to create opportunities and environments that empower people to recover, to succeed in accomplishing their goals and to reconnect to themselves, others, and to meaning and purpose in life.

RI also offers other class for clients, including:  
Wellness and Empowerment in Life and Living (WELL)  
Medication for Success  
and more.

For class schedules, contact RI at (805) 981-5439. ❖



NAMI Ventura County  
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See page 6 for a membership or renewal form.



Join us for the Tenth Annual  
**NAMIWalk Ventura County**

**Saturday, May 3, 2014**  
**Ventura Beach Promenade**

**Honorary Walk Chairs**

**Linda Parks**  
*Supervisor, District 2*  
Ventura County Board of Supervisors

**Robert Mehrabian**  
*Chairman, President and CEO*  
Teledyne Technologies, Incorporated

**Walk as an individual! Join a team! Become a team captain! Donate online!**

**REGISTER ONLINE!!!**

**[www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty](http://www.namiwalks.org/VenturaCounty)**