



# NAMI Sacramento Newsletter

National Alliance on Mental Illness

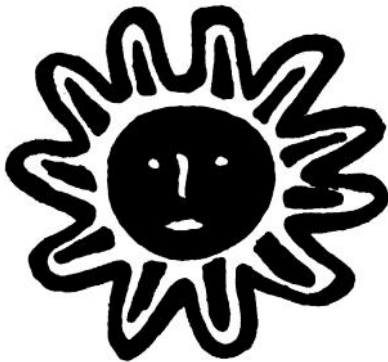
Sacramento's Voice on Mental Illness

August 2008: Issue No 6.07

## General Meeting

### August General Meeting:

There will be no General Meeting in August. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Please look for the announcement of the September program in the September newsletter.



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## Sacramento's Mental Health Court Is Succeeding... and in Jeopardy

by Ed Fishbein

Early this year, Linda Iaccopucci was forced to call 911 to get help for her schizophrenic son. The 26 year old had stopped taking his medication, and needed treatment. But when the Sacramento police arrived, they had trouble subduing him, and he was charged with resisting arrest.

It was, Iaccopucci recalls, an ugly episode. It was also one of the best things to happen to her son in years.

The reason is that Iaccopucci's son wasn't funneled into the normal criminal justice system. A crisis team member at the jail helped Iaccopucci get her son's case handled through the Sacramento County Mental Health Court. While her

son hasn't yet completed the program, Iaccopucci says he's receiving the best care he's gotten in years.

Iaccopucci's son is one of a small group of clients participating in the Mental Health Court's two-year pilot program. Administered by Sacramento Superior Court, it was begun in 2007. It is already facing budgetary headwinds that put its survival in question.

But it also seems to be producing lots of stories like Iaccopucci's. The program's results so far, said Mental Health Court coordinator Jaime Collins, have been "very positive."

The court is rooted in the belief that

➤ *continued on page 5*

## A Secret Mission on the Streets - the author goes public about her work helping the homeless

by Danielle Steel, from Newsweek, June 23

The reality of homelessness landed squarely in my lap one dark December day 10 years ago. Despite all our efforts to prevent it, after three previous attempts, my much-loved 19-year-old son had committed suicide three months before, after suffering from bipolar disease all his life. My husband left me shortly after, and despite the blessing of eight wonderful surviving children, I was devastated. I went to church, trying to pray about who I could help who was more miserable than I. The message came to help the homeless. I didn't want to hear it. Homeless people had always scared me. My son Nick was never homeless, but had great compassion for them. Finally, grudgingly and nervously, I embarked on what I hoped would be a one-time mission. Instead, it became a labor of love that changed my life.

I've never spoken publically about my

activities on the streets, and have maintained my anonymity. But as funds for the homeless are cut in many states and cities, their situation is dire, and I want to help them by drawing attention to their plight.

I formed an outreach team, called Yo! Angel!, bringing direly needed supplies and hope to homeless people in San Francisco. In the decade since, our 11-member team has served more than 30,000 people, 300 per night. Our mission has been to keep them alive until someone else could help them get off the streets. We provide new warm clothing (down jackets, long johns, sweat suits, hats, gloves, socks, scarves, sandals, hand warmers), sleeping bags, bedding, tarps, waterproof ponchos, umbrellas, useful tools (eating utensils, water bottles, can openers, etc.), personal-hygiene supplies and food that doesn't need to be cooked or refrigerated. We also give them hope: the realization that

➤ *continued on page 4*



## Support Groups

### Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento

☞ See: [www.dbsasacramento.org](http://www.dbsasacramento.org)

Contact: Andrea Hillerman at [andrea@mhasc.org](mailto:andrea@mhasc.org) or (916) 366-4601; or Marilyn Hillerman at [marilynhillerman@yahoo.com](mailto:marilynhillerman@yahoo.com) or (916) 648-1358.

### Dual Recovery Anonymous Group

Every Monday from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Clean and Sober Building, Loaves and Fishes, 1321 North C Street, Sacramento.

Call Susan Young at (916) 236-7679 for more information.

### Early Psychosis Family Support Group

For families with a member who has a newly diagnosed brain disease. Imaging and Research Center Conference Room, UCD Med, Center, 4701 X Street, Sacramento. Call for information.

Call Jane Du Bet at (916) 734-2964 for more information.

### Emotions Anonymous

For people working toward recovery from emotional difficulties. Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Wellness Center, 3815 Marconi Ave., Sacramento, or Thursdays from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 1615 Morse Ave., Sacramento. Meet in the choir room.

Contact (916) 366-0699 or see <http://allone.com/12/ea/>

### NAMI Family Support Group, Sacramento

Held on the third Wednesday of each month from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. 3135 Woodmark Court, Sacramento 95821.

Call facilitator Heidi Sanborn at (916) 485-7753 for more information.

### NAMI Family Support Group, Natomas

Held on the second Thursday of each month from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Natomas Service Center, 3291 Truxel Road #26 (corner of Truxel and San Juan), Sacramento 95833.

Call facilitator Pat Pavone at (916) 397-7831 for more information.

### Obsessive-Compulsive Support Meeting (OCD)

Every Monday from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento.

Call Jim (916) 223-6541 or Steve at (916) 456-8239 for more information.

### Recovery, Inc., Self-Help Mental Health Meetings

Promotes a cognitive-behavioral approach to managing symptoms and changing attitudes and behavior. Groups meet weekly.

Contact: [www.recovery-inc.com](http://www.recovery-inc.com)

Call (916) 483-5616 for meeting locations.

### Sacramento Borderline Personality Disorder Non-BP Support Group

For people who have a family member or friend who suffers from Borderline Personal-

ity Disorder. Held on the second Tuesday of each month from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Location to be announced.

Call Lee Gassaway at (916) 421-7354 or contact [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

### Meetup.com Groups

You may find other informal groups that keep their own schedules at [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com). Search for a diagnosis to find a group of people that share your interests.

**NAMI Sacramento does not necessarily endorse the organizations and groups listed above. This information is offered as a convenience to our newsletter readers.**

**Go to NAMI Sacramento's web site at [www.namisacramento.org](http://www.namisacramento.org) for an extensive list of resources and crisis help available in the Sacramento area.**

## Upcoming Events

**UC Davis Department of Psychiatry Community Lecture Series presents noted speaker and author, Elyn R. Saks, MLitt., J.D. - "The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness"**

Wednesday, September 10, 2008, 5:30 p.m. UC Davis Health System Education Building, 4610 X Street, open to the public. RSVP: [Friendsofpsychiatry@ucdavis.edu](mailto:Friendsofpsychiatry@ucdavis.edu) by September 1, 2008

See article on page 3.

### Walk for Mental Health

Saturday, October 4, 2008  
State Capitol Grounds, Sacramento  
See article on page 5.

## Important Notice

NAMI programs should not be used to replace the specialized training and professional judgment of mental health professionals. We cannot, and will not, assume the role of a physician or therapist.

NAMI cannot be held responsible for the use of the information we provide. Please always consult a trained mental health professional before making any decision regarding treatment of yourself or others.

### Educational Meetings

#### Family to Family Education Classes

Offered twice a year, spring and fall.

☞ [www.namisacramento.org](http://www.namisacramento.org)

For the current class schedule see the Sacramento NAMI web site or call (916) 399-5762.

#### Peer to Peer Education Classes

☞ [www.namisacramento.org](http://www.namisacramento.org)

The NAMI Peer-to Peer education course is a nine-week experiential recovery course for any person with serious mental illness.

### General Interest Meetings

#### Sacramento Mental Health Board Meeting

Held the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Sacramento Mental Health Treatment Center (Media Room), 2150 Stockton Blvd., Sacramento.

#### NAMI Sacramento Board of Director's Meeting

3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. conference Room A, 3331 Power Inn Road, suite 140, Sacramento, CA 95826.



## NAMI Sacramento Update

NAMI Sacramento is moving again. As we reported in the June 2008 newsletter, the Board of Directors feels that our ability to serve our community will be strengthened by having paid, permanent staff. Our search for a part time Executive Assistant was temporarily suspended as we looked for office space that could accommodate our increase in staff – from one part-time worker – to two! We are happy to report that we have located space at Turning Point’s headquarters at 3440 Viking Dr., Sacramento, and will make the move in August. The space is excellent, the rent is reasonable, and the proximity to an organization whose mission is closely allied to NAMI’s make this a great location for us. Happily, we can resume our recruitment effort for an Executive Assistant, and we hope to have someone on board soon.

Another noteworthy event in July was NAMI Sacramento’s participation in its first United Way event as a United Way Certified Agency. Two of our Board members manned a booth at an agency fair at the management offices of UPS and spoke with several interested UPS employees. We hope that their interest and empathy will translate to donations during the United Way campaign, but just having the opportunity to educate people about mental illness and the work that NAMI does was of value as well.

Also during the summer months, our members have continued to give input on proposals to allocate funds for the Mental Health Services Act. We have been asked to comment on the content of NAMI California’s Public Policy Platform. “In Our Own Voice” presenters Joe Texiera and Kathleen Derby spoke at the Community Luncheon at Sierra Vista hospital in July. NAMI members met with local television station KCRA’s Melissa Figueroa to discuss how NAMI can do more outreach and further educate the community about mental illness.

In the coming months we will continue these and other efforts to serve the mental health community and to improve the mental health system. We hope you will help us by sharing your ideas, volunteering, and with donations to support NAMI’s work.

## Host An “In Our Own Voice” Presentation

In Our Own Voice is an anti-stigma presentation given by consumers to all types of community audiences, large and small. The focus is on living well with mental illness and the presentation centers on the themes of Dark Days, Acceptance, Treatment, Coping Skills, and Successes, Hopes and Dreams. If your group is interested in hosting a presentation, if you would like to become a presenter, or if you would just like more information on the program, please contact Kathleen Derby at the NAMI Sacramento office: (916) 874-9416; office@namisacramento.org

## UC Davis Psychiatry Series Presents Noted Speaker

Elyn R. Saks, M. Litt., JD knows all about success. She graduated summa cum laude from Vanderbilt University, graduated with honors from Yale Law School, and was a Marshall Scholar at Oxford University. Currently, she is an associate dean and professor at University of Southern California Gould School of Law. She is also an accomplished author. Her most recent written work, an engrossing memoir entitled *The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness*, was recognized as one of Time Magazine’s Top 10 Nonfiction Books for 2007.

Elyn R. Saks also knows about struggle. Diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, she has been hospitalized several times, restrained, force-fed medication, and given a “grave” prognosis. Her memoir tells the story of her illness, continuing recovery, and the life she salvaged in the face of a crippling mental illness.

Ms. Saks will provide a rare first-hand account of schizophrenia’s defining feature - psychosis - and how she has managed her illness and remained productive despite her struggles to sort what is real from what is not.

*Wednesday, September 10, 2008, 5:30 p.m., UC Davis Health System Education Building, Second floor lecture hall, 4610 X Street, Sacramento*  
*Parking: Lot 12 (45th and Y Streets)*  
*RSVP: FriendsOfPsychiatry.ucdavis.edu by September 1, 2008*

## Get To Know Your Board



NAMI Board Member Pat Pavone

*From time to time we run articles on our NAMI Sacramento board members. We hope these article provide a way to better connect our board members with the membership.*

Pat Pavone has been a member of NAMI Sacramento for six years. She has been a member of the Board of Directors for 2 years and currently serves as the Vice President. Pat’s previously served as a volunteer advocate and Board Member with the Sacramento Court Appointed Special Advocates, an organization that works with high risk foster children who are dependents of the county. It was as a Court Appointed Advocate that Pat learned lots of skills that have helped her to advocate for individuals with mental illness. Last year, Pat was certified as a NAMI Family to Family Support Group Facilitator and she has a regular support group meeting in Natomas on the second Thursday of each month (see page 2 for details). Pat also enjoys helping with NAMI’s outreach activities and she has been an active volunteer with the Walk for Mental Health. In addition to her volunteer activities, Pat works part-time as a Human Resources Management consultant and as an adjunct professor in the Public Administration program at the University of San Francisco. In her spare time, Pat enjoys quilting and traveling with her husband, Robert.

## September Newsletter Contributions

We welcome submissions to the newsletter. The due date for the next newsletter is August 10. Submit to Belinda Beckett at nimabima@aol.com. Submissions may be edited.



➤ Danielle Steel, from page 1

someone cares about them and good things can happen even at the worst of times. We drive around late into the night, with four van loads of supplies, looking for “clients.” Recently our costs have become prohibitive, and we are seeking new sources for our supplies.

The most functional homeless people find their way to programs and shelters. But it is those at the bottom of the spectrum who worry me most, those who are too desperate and disoriented, or too ill physically and emotionally to come in for help. So we go to them. We find them in doorways, cardboard boxes, dumpsters, and along the railroad tracks where they sleep. There are absurd dichotomies in the homeless world - you have to arrive promptly at a homeless shelter to get in, and people who exhibit “bizarre behavior” are not allowed. Once in the shelter, someone who stays there runs the risk of being mugged, robbed, raped, and exposed to rampant contagious diseases. Many homeless people are afraid of the very real dangers in the shelters and prefer to take their chances on the streets. These are the clients my group serves.

People living on the streets are vulnerable to predators and are often the victims of crimes. They are easy prey to a multitude of diseases. Wounds are frequent, infections acute and often untreated, and many people lose limbs. The ratio on the streets seems to be about 10 men to one woman. The incidence of mental illness is extremely high, believed to affect 85% of the homeless population. Self-medication in the form of alcohol and street drugs is common. Programs that offer assistance are understaffed and underfunded. And for people already mentally disordered, filling out forms and wading through miles of red tape for benefits is not only daunting, but impossible. The wait for detox is long. Many of those people will be dead before they get in. It’s a tragic reality of the streets.

There are no easy solutions to this catastrophic national problem. We need

more facilities, workers, programs, funding, and perhaps some different laws. Budgets to assist these people are constantly being slashed. In some cities, local governments lie about the number of homeless on their streets, and lull their citizens into believing more is being done about it that really is. And clearly, whatever we are doing is not working.

It’s easy to say “they should clean up and get a job.” When was the last time you hired a homeless person, or even stopped to help one? Homelessness is primarily a **mental-health** issue, of mentally ill people not receiving adequate treatment, and there are not enough in-patient facilities to house and treat them.

“Homelessness is primarily a mental health issue, of mentally ill people not receiving adequate treatment, and there are not enough outpatient facilities to house and treat them.”

I carry the people I meet on the streets in my memory forever. I never ask how they got there; it’s none of my business. They’re already in distress and pain; they don’t need to be humiliated, too. I remember the 21-year old girl I met on my first night. She was sleeping on a piece of cardboard, under a thin tattered blanket on a freezing cold night. She was undergoing chemotherapy for a brain tumor, and died a year later. I remember the woman who began life on the streets in a flowered silk dress and a string of fake pearls; she eventually lost all her teeth, one leg, and is now unrecognizable, but always kind and polite when I see her. There was the man in the pin-striped suit with shined shoes, who looked like your banker and was living in a sleeping bag on the library steps, while interviewing for jobs in Silicon Valley; he had lost his job as CFO, his marriage and his money. I remember the barefoot people on freezing nights, the ones in T shirts plastered to their bodies in the pouring rain, the pregnant girls suffering from malnutrition and the teenage boy I saw just before Christmas, sitting in a doorway in the driving rain. He was delirious from fever, with scabs all over his face, and had recently lost a leg. How can we turn away?

Dealing with homelessness feels like emptying the ocean with a thimble. But sometimes making a difference in the world, a big difference, happens one person at a time.

## NAMI in the Community



Mental Health Services Court (MHSA) program director Michelle Callejas (on right) and her MHSA associate Kathryn Skrabo at the June General Meeting where they answered questions and took input about the MHSA legislation.



NAMI Board Vice President Pat Pavone and Board member Belinda Beckett staffed a booth at the United Way Certified Agency Fair at the UPS Management Center in Sacramento on July 17. It was our first activity as a United Way Certified Agency.





➔ *Mental Health Court, from page 1*

many mentally ill people are being criminalized instead of being treated. Academics call the situation “trans-institutionalization.” Mentally ill offenders end up in jail because there’s no treatment available in the community.

This is obviously not good for the mentally ill. But mental health court proponents say it’s also bad for communities. Taxpayers end up paying the cost of repeat “revolving door” arrests and incarcerations, along with the treatment that has to be provided behind bars. About 20 percent of the 4,000 inmates in Sacramento’s jails receive psychiatric care.

The Mental Health Court seeks to transform that situation by providing community treatment to nonviolent mentally ill offenders. That requires a different structure than conventional courts, which are obviously not set up to deal with the confusion and suspicion felt by many mentally ill defendants.

Sacramento’s Mental Health Court is one of about 100 such institutions around the country that provide the mentally ill with more supportive environments. Its staff includes a presiding judge, a probation officer, peer and family advocates, and part-time deputy DAs, and public defenders.

Iaccopucci, whose son’s case is being handled by this staff, said that “everyone in the court is positive and uplifting. The judge seems very concerned about each individual.”

And the court apparently produces more than good feelings. Collins said that five people have completed the program, a process that usually requires 12 months, but can take longer. None, she said, have re-offended, or used emergency services. “That’s huge for us,” she said.

The 16 people currently in the program, Collins said, have produced comparably positive results. Arrests among the participants are down 80 percent. Days incarcerated have fallen 93 percent.

But the court may not be able to do this much longer. Most of the court’s

budget comes from the county general fund, which ponied up \$294,000 for the court in the last fiscal year.

But the county, like the state, is facing a massive budget deficit. The Mental Health Court is one of many programs in a range of agencies that are on the block. And while other funding sources can be pursued, Collins can’t say for sure that the court will have the money to even complete its pilot program.

To Collins, that would be a shame. In talking about the Mental Health Court, she brings up something that’s not often mentioned in discussions of the judicial system. She talks about the amount of smiling that goes on during court sessions. “It’s something we all believe in,” she said. “It’s really nice to see changes in people.”

## Stanford Seeks Participants for Bipolar Studies

Stanford University’s Bipolar Disorders Clinic is seeking participants in three research studies. The clinical trials offer eligible individuals a thorough and detailed assessment by a psychiatrist who specializes in bipolar disorder, as well as intensive treatment and study medication at no cost to the individual. Some of the studies also compensate individuals for their time and travel expenses. Being part of a research clinic provides patients access to the latest treatments, some of which may not yet be generally available.

One study assesses the effectiveness of lithium as part of optimized treatment in adults with bipolar disorder. For information about this study contact Shelley at (650) 498-4801.

The other studies examine the use of Seroquel in patients currently experiencing both hypomania and depressive symptoms, and Olanzapine (Zyprexa) in patients experiencing increases in symptoms of bipolar disorder. For additional information about these studies, contact Kristine at (650) 498-4868. For more information on any of these studies, see [www.bipolar.org](http://www.bipolar.org).

## Remember October 4, 2008! The Walk for Mental Health

The Walk for Mental Health provides an opportunity for NAMI Sacramento and other local mental health agencies to educate the community and raise money for our programs. The Walk welcomes mental health professionals, people coping with mental illnesses, their families, friends, and community supporters. By meeting together at an event where everyone is welcome, we can convey the needs of people with mental illnesses and have a positive impact on these issues in our community.

The Walk has three major goals:

- Dispel the myths about mental illnesses, which are chronic brain disorders similar to heart disease and diabetes;
- Dissolve the disheartening stigma that prevents people from seeking treatment and hinders their recovery;
- Raise funds and community awareness for our local mental health organizations that help people who are ill.

The 2008 Walk will again be at the State Capitol from 9:00 a.m. until noon, but this year we will be gathering at the South Steps and taking a new three-mile route to Southside Park and back. As in years past, we will also have speakers who are knowledgeable about our local mental health issues, information tables with mental health resources, snacks and entertainment.

This is a very important fund raiser for NAMI Sacramento and we need your support. So please mark your calendar for Saturday, October 4 and join us for a beautiful morning in the park, a healthy walk and a good time. Anyone who is able to raise at least \$100 in pledges for the Walk will receive a commemorative T-shirt. If you are interested in becoming involved with the Walk, making a donation, or just getting additional information, please go to [www.walkformentalhealth.com](http://www.walkformentalhealth.com).



## NAMI Sacramento Annual Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Activities

### NAMI Sacramento Statements of Activities Years Ended June 30, 2008 and 2007

	2008	2007
<b>INCOME</b>		
Member Dues and Contributions	\$ 10,295	\$ 14,770
Fundraising	13,870	14,058
Investment Income	10,835	6,323
Grant Income	29,033	6,923
Miscellaneous Income	436	80
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>64,469</b>	<b>42,154</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program Services		
Education	15,679	8,293
Outreach	43,919	19,593
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>59,598</b>	<b>27,886</b>
Support Services		
Management and General	3,231	278
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>62,829</b>	<b>28,164</b>
<b>Increase in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,640</b>	<b>\$ 13,990</b>

### NAMI Sacramento Statements of Financial Position June 30, 2008 and 2007

	2008	2007
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Cash	\$ 93,273	\$ 117,849
Other Assets	3,184	5,960
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 96,457</b>	<b>\$ 123,809</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>		
<u>Current Liabilities</u>		
Accounts Payable	\$ 991	\$ 5,490
Deferred Revenue	-	11,587
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>17,077</b>
<u>Unrestricted Net Assets</u>		
Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Mutual Funds	-	12,906
Retained Earnings	95,466	93,826
<b>Total Unrestricted Net Assets</b>	<b>95,466</b>	<b>106,732</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 96,457</b>	<b>\$ 123,809</b>

by John Gilbert, Treasurer

We are happy to present our annual Statement of Financial Position for your information. In the last year NAMI Sacramento changed its fiscal year from January 1 to December 31 to July 1 to

June 30. In addition, a Certified Public Accountant now prepares all of our financial reports. If you have comments or questions, please contact me at [jjilb1@pacbell.net](mailto:jjilb1@pacbell.net).

### Fall Family to Family Class Full

The Fall Family to Family Class is now full and the waiting list is closed. To sign up for the Spring Family to Family Class please call or register online beginning the first week of December.

### NAMI Sacramento Can't Change the World...

...but with your help, it can change our community. NAMI Sacramento looks forward to a time when the entire community is educated and supportive, when all families have strategies to help their loved ones and to cope with feelings of fear and frustration, when each law enforcement officer is knowledgeable, when housing is adequate, and when every consumer is equipped with the tools to cope with mental illness and to lead a meaningful life.

With your help we can make Family to Family and Peer to Peer classes accessible to more people, offer more support

groups, train more law enforcement, and advocate more successfully for access to treatment, housing, education and training, and employment for the mentally ill.

You know that NAMI Sacramento educates, advocates and supports mentally ill individuals and their families. And you know there is no charge for any of our services. In the coming months, NAMI Sacramento will be asking our members to increase their support for NAMI beyond the annual dues. Every dollar, you, our friends and families, give, will move us towards a better world.

### Wanted: Volunteer Affiliate Family to Family Coordinator for NAMI Sacramento

Would you like to be a part of a team that helps set up the Family to Family classes? Please contact Lynn Cathy for a job description at (916) 399-5762 or [Lmcathy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lmcathy@sbcglobal.net). The time commitment is an estimated 15-20 hours total per year as we have two other co-coordinators who work in tandem for this volunteer program!





## The Doctor's Corner

*Dr. Robin Zasio is a local Licensed Clinical Psychologist and owner of the Anxiety Treatment Center at: [www.anxietytreatmentexperts.com](http://www.anxietytreatmentexperts.com).*

*She addresses mental health questions submitted by NAMI Sacramento members, consumers, and readers.*

*Submit your questions to:*

*Dear Dr. Robin,*

I have been seeing a therapist five years for depression. At times I feel better, but it seems to be more related to when I am with my family and feeling loved, rather than my treatment. I am very invested in feeling better, but I am not getting any strategies to help fight my depression. Do I have unrealistic expectations? Is depression treatable or should I just expect to always feel this way?

*Maryann*

*Dear Maryann,*

First and foremost, depression is treatable, and never settle for feeling badly. It has been my experience that many people think that because depression is often times related to a chemical imbalance that little can be done. This is not true. While depression can be caused by a chemical imbalance, it can also be caused by situational stressors. This might include dysfunction in the family system, discord at work, difficulty dealing with loss or trauma, and so forth. The first step then, is to determine the cause. Once that is established, a clear treatment plan should be outlined, which indicates the therapist's ideas about specifically how they can help you. This allows you to make an informed decision as to whether the plan will work for you. If this has not been done, I recommend that you start there.

Next, I recommend that you research (if you haven't already), how depression is treated. For instance, Cognitive Behavior Therapy has been determined to be the best treatment protocol for depression. It helps one to look at their thoughts, how it can affect how they feel, and then transfer into their behavior. So for instance, if you wake up in the morning and say to yourself, "There is no reason to get out of bed," then probably you will feel badly and stay in bed. This is an example of a "Cognitive Distortion"

that is called "All or None Thinking." Now, if you tell yourself, "It is hard to get out of bed, but I am going to because there is a greater good that will happen" (walking the dog, cleaning your house, calling a friend for lunch), etc., then you are more likely to get out of bed. It may be difficult, but you are more apt to follow through. As you can see, this is a very directive treatment and very structured. It gives you tools to cope, like being able to identify your negative thinking and how to reframe it and feel better about yourself.

So in general, while you are working with your therapist and are given strategies to feel better, you should begin to feel gradual relief from your distress, develop self-assurance, increased empowerment and confidence, and hope.

If you feel you are not getting results, Maryann, I would urge you to consider talking with your therapist about your concerns. Five years is a very long time to be in therapy and not feel positive results. If you are still dissatisfied after having "the talk," you may want to consider making a change. Options to explore for providers can begin with NAMI ([www.namisacramento.org](http://www.namisacramento.org) or call them at 916.874.9416), the Sacramento Valley Psychological Association ([www.sacpsy.org](http://www.sacpsy.org)), or the California Psychological Association ([www.cpapsych.org](http://www.cpapsych.org)). If you have insurance, another good resource is to contact them, express your concerns, and ask them for a list of providers that are covered by your policy and specialize in treating depression. You can also go to my website at [www.AnxietyTreatmentExperts.com](http://www.AnxietyTreatmentExperts.com) for a list of questions that you can ask potential therapists to increase success in finding one that will work for you. For more information on Cognitive Behavior Therapy, go to [www.CognitiveBehaviorExperts.com](http://www.CognitiveBehaviorExperts.com) or call 916.273.1158. I would like to add one final thought. Medications can be very helpful in treating depression. If this has not been considered, you may want to explore this option as well. The resources listed above can assist you in finding the doctor that suits you best.

*Sincerely,*

*Dr. Robin*

## Become a NAMI Volunteer

NAMI is currently recruiting volunteers for the following positions:

- Consumer Program Co-Leader
- Family to Family class teachers, English and Spanish speakers wanted
- Family to Family Class Coordinator
- Event Photographer

If you can help, please contact Pat Pavone at [pavone@surewest.net](mailto:pavone@surewest.net) or (916) 359-2366.

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# NAMI Sacramento Membership Form

Please join us! Join others in your community dedicated to improving the lives of people with mental illness in the Sacramento area. Become part of our grassroots revolution and make a difference! Either detach and mail in the membership form below, or join online at [www.namisacramento.org/membership](http://www.namisacramento.org/membership). Collecting this information helps us to serve our members better. Your information is treated confidentially and will never be shared outside of NAMI. Please print clearly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address/City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

(circle one)

Home/Work/Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(check one)

Your relation to the consumer:

- I'm a consumer
- Family member
- Friend
- None, just interested

Ethnicity:

- Asian
- African/Black
- Hispanic/Latino
- Caucasian/White
- Other
- Decline to state

If you are a consumer, please enter your primary diagnosis:

- ADHD
- PTSD
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Dual diagnosis
- Unknown
- Major depression
- Other
- OCD
- Decline to state
- Panic disorder

If you are the consumer's family member, please enter your family relation to the consumer:

Membership type:

- Consumer, \$15
- General, \$35

Newsletter preference:

- E-mail
- Postal mail
- Both
- Don't send

You can help! Volunteer with NAMI Sacramento:

- Contact me about volunteer opportunities

Please consider an additional donation of:

- \$100 or more
- \$50-\$99
- up to \$50

Make checks payable to NAMI Sacramento. Mail to NAMI Sacramento Membership Chair, PO Box 2154, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. NAMI Sacramento thanks you for your support. Your donations directly help those with mental illness.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NAMI Sacramento Chapter  
3331 Power Inn Road, Suite 140  
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