



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# nami | San Francisco



## OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

### A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Fall is here—which in San Francisco means the fog lifts and summer begins. As schools find their rhythm, more teachers are inviting NAMI SF into their classrooms. Our high school education program is in full swing, with record demand—a clear reminder of the importance of reaching young people early with honest mental health education and genuine connection.

Today's youth are navigating far more than academics. Climate anxiety, social unrest, and a constant stream of headlines add real pressure to already full lives. One in seven adolescents lives with a mental health condition, yet far too many go unrecognized and untreated. We know the consequences can reach far into adulthood, affecting both long-term health and the opportunities a person is able to pursue. That's why early intervention is at the heart of our work.

Through our high school programs, students are learning to recognize warning signs and to talk more openly about mental health. Most importantly, they are gaining the confidence to reach out for support when it's needed. Our Youth Council builds on this foundation by creating a space where young people can speak openly, challenge stigma, and gain the skills to become mental health advocates in their communities. Members form genuine friendships and discover that their voices carry weight in shaping change. Research shows that connection, combined with service, not only lightens the burden of mental health struggles but also fosters lasting resilience.

I also think often of the families and educators who stand alongside our youth. They, too, need tools and resources. Our programs are designed not only for students, but also for parents, caregivers, and teachers who want to better support the adolescents in their lives. By equipping adults with practical strategies, we strengthen the safety net around our young people and create the kind of protective environments research shows are vital to mental well-being.

Later this month, our 4th Annual Youth Mental Health Symposium will bring together a wide range of perspectives to imagine healthier communities. A panel of practitioners will share insights on how to foster resilience, encourage self-advocacy, and strengthen connections. By showing up for our youth now, we're building a future where mental health needs are met early, openly, and with care. I hope you can join us on October 23rd!

With gratitude,  
Anne Fischer  
Executive Director

**DONATE AND SUPPORT OUR YOUTH COUNCIL**



## **The Youth Council needs your help!**

Our passionate members have been working hard to host an event that tackles the loneliness epidemic—bringing Bay Area youth together to connect, share strategies for mental well-being, and break down the stigma around mental health.

Their vision: panel presentations, creative activities, resource sharing from local organizations, group discussions, and much more!

**But they need your help to secure a space to host the event. Can you support the Youth Council today?**

## MEET OUR NEW STAFF

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HI, EVERYONE! MY NAME IS

# Emma Peat

Director of Education  
Programming

Thank you for having me.



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My name is Emma Peat, and I'm honored to join NAMI San Francisco as the new Director of Education Programming.

In everything I've done, working with middle schoolers for nearly 20 years, supporting people rebuilding their lives after incarceration, and hearing the stories of those impacted by the death penalty, I've seen how deeply people are affected by mental illness, and how powerful it can be to feel truly supported.

All of these experiences have led me to believe that we need to invest in our communities, interrupt cycles of trauma, and ensure that knowledge, healing, and support are accessible to everyone, in every neighborhood, across all communities.

NAMI SF has already done so much to grow its education programs and reach more people across San Francisco. I'm looking forward to meeting more of you and hearing your stories, because those lived experiences are at the heart of everything we do.

Let's work together to expand access, share knowledge, and build the kind of support systems every community deserves.

With gratitude,  
Emma



Take a look at the [On Our Minds Zine](#) by Chloe Lau, a **member of the NAMI SF Youth Council** and senior at Lowell High School. The zine's very first publication dives deep into the “unspoken” topics of mental health. Consisting of works from youth across the world, from Singapore to the U.S. to Poland, this issue aims to empower young leaders to speak up about mental health and illness.

The Youth Council is a group of young leaders dedicated to fostering understanding, reducing stigma, and promoting mental well-being in their communities. Each member is currently working on projects, such as Chloe's zine, that focus on mental health and can be used as resources for the communities they serve.

Support the Youth Council by donating to help secure a space to host their upcoming event [here!](#)

[READ MORE](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

NAMI SF Presents:

## En Nuestra Propia Voz/ In Our Own Voice

Ft. voces latina/latinx voices

Thursday, October 16 | 6:00-7:00pm



**Jueves, 16 de Octubre @ 6:00 - 7:00p**  
**Thursday, October 16 from 6:00 - 7:00p**

“En Nuestra Propia Voz” es un programa central de NAMI y tiene como objetivo desestigmatizar y humanizar la salud mental: aprenda de miembros de la comunidad latinx acerca de sus historias viviendo con una condición de salud mental y navegando su identidad cultural y étnica. La presentación “En Nuestra Propia Voz” es parte de NAMI SF x Salud Mental Latinx, una serie de eventos centrados en la salud mental latina en septiembre. En Español. Zoom.

In Our Own Voice is a core NAMI program and is all about destigmatizing and humanizing mental health - learn from Latinx community members about their stories of living with a mental health condition and navigating their cultural and ethnic identity. The In Our Own Voice presentation is part of NAMI SF x Latinx Mental Health, an event series focusing on Latinx mental health. In Spanish. Zoom.

[REGISTER](#)



## NAMI SF YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

FOSTERING RESILIENCE, SELF-  
ADVOCACY, AND COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT FOR YOUTH

THURSDAY OCTOBER 23  
6:00-7:30  
ON ZOOM

**Thursday, October 23**

**6:00 - 7:30 pm**

**On Zoom**

Join us for an inspiring and culturally relevant Youth Mental Health Symposium, an event dedicated to supporting adolescents and young adults as they navigate identity, emotional well-being, and resilience. Learn practical tools and best practices for creating psychologically safe environments at home and in the community, fostering self-esteem, and encouraging self-advocacy. Hear from expert speakers and community organizations committed to empowering youth and promoting mental wellness in ways that respect and celebrate cultural diversity.

Whether you're a parent, educator, or youth advocate, this event offers valuable insights, resources, and connections to support our next generation in a culturally mindful way.

The Annual Youth Symposium is part of NAMI SF x Youth Mental Health, an annual event series focusing on youth mental health.

**REGISTER**



NAMI SAN FRANCISCO

# Parents as Allies & Advocates

Partnering to Promote Youth Mental Health

**October 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00 pm**  
**Zoom**

**Thursday, October 30**

**6:00 - 7:15pm**

**On Zoom**

This program provides an overview of youth mental health issues, including contributing factors, warning signs related to mental health challenges, and ways to support children and teenagers. The presentation is facilitated by NAMI SF staff in collaboration with a parents who have experience raising children with a mental health condition. The parents will share their stories of how they supported children who experienced mental health challenges, providing a first-person example of what happened, what worked, and what they would have done differently.

Parents as Allies & Advocates is part of NAMI SF x Youth Mental Health, an annual event series focusing on youth mental health.

**REGISTER**

## CLASSES



# OCTOBER PEER TO PEER CLASS

## COURSE TOPICS & ACTIVITIES

- Understanding mental health conditions
- Strengthening relationships
- Growing support networks
- Learning treatment options
- Breathing and relaxation techniques
- Goal setting

**APPLY AT**  
[tinyurl.com/2p8wd3kr](https://tinyurl.com/2p8wd3kr)

Questions? Email [simonebenamisf.org](mailto:simonebenamisf.org)



Apply for NAMI SF's free 8-week Peer to Peer class! You'll learn skills to help manage mental health symptoms, practice coping strategies, meet like-minded people, and more.

Classes are held online weekly on Wednesdays from 12 pm to 2 pm PT, October 13th through December 10th.

**REGISTER**

## La clase de Familia a Familia



Clase NAMI Familia a Familia vía zoom. Eres el familiar o cuidador de una persona con una condición de salud mental? Este curso gratuito es para ti! Comenzamos el Viernes 17 de octubre - 12 de diciembre, 19:00-21:30 horas.

NAMI Family to Family Class via Zoom. Are you a family member or caregiver of someone with a mental health condition? This free course is for you! We begin on Friday, October 17th - December 12th, 7:00pm-9:30pm.

[REGISTRATE](#)



Clase NAMI Persona a Persona vía zoom. Has sido diagnosticado con alguna condición de salud mental o estas pasando por síntomas o retos de salud mental? Este curso gratuito es para ti! Comenzamos el Viernes, del 3 de octubre al 21 de noviembre, de 19 a 21 horas, por 8 viernes consecutivos, vía zoom.

NAMI Peer to Peer Course via Zoom. Have you been diagnosed with a mental health condition, or are you experiencing mental health symptoms or

challenges? This free course is for you on Fridays, October 3rd - November 21st, 7 pm-9 pm.

[REGISTRATE](#)



NAMI San Francisco ofrecerá un curso de BASES Y FUNDAMENTOS en español los Jueves 9 de octubre - 13 de noviembre 18:30h - 20:30h. NAMI BASES Y FUNDAMENTOS es un programa gratuito de seis sesiones diseñado para los padres y otros cuidadores de niños y adolescentes menores de 22 años de edad, con dificultades emocionales y conductuales. Aprenderá sobre las condiciones de salud mental y cómo apoyar a su hijo en casa, en la escuela, y dentro del sistema médico. Esta clase será enseñada por maestras entrenadas que también son madres y/o cuidadoras de niños quienes experimentan estas dificultades.

NAMI will be offering the BASICS course in Spanish on Thursday, October 9th - November 13th 6:30pm-8:30pm. BASICS is a free 6-week program designed for parents and family caregivers of children and teens under the age of 22 with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Learn the facts about mental health conditions and how to best support your child at home, at school, and when they're getting medical care. The class will be taught by trained teachers who also are caregivers of children who experience these difficulties.

[REGISTRATE](#)

**RECURRING EVENTS**

# VOLUNTEER OPEN HOUSE

First Thursday | 6pm on Zoom *Monthly!*

Third Wednesday | 12 pm on Zoom

Meet staff and learn about ways to get involved!



Thursday, October 2nd @ 6:00 - 7:00p  
Wednesday, October 15th @ 12:00 - 1:00p

Want to learn about ways to get involved and give back? Check out the Open House! Volunteers are at the heart of the NAMI SF mission and there are tons of ways to get involved. The Open House is a great space to meet staff and explore available positions. Monthly on the first Thursday (evening) and third Wednesday (noon).

REGISTER TO ATTEND

## OPPORTUNITIES

Hey There!



NAMI San Francisco  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

*Join NAMI SF as a speaker!*

Share your story of living with a mental health condition

*Paid volunteer opportunity!*

Ages  
18-30

To learn more contact Emma: [emma@namisf.org](mailto:emma@namisf.org)

VOLUNTEER

# RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Cantata Health Solutions is a leading provider of technology solutions for behavioral health and human services. Cantata's Arize EHR is designed to help providers break free from the frustrations of their outdated systems so they can focus on spending time with the individuals they serve.

Cantata Health Solutions has created a survey to learn more about how individuals who live with behavioral health challenges (including mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders) might be interested in using new tools and technology to be even more involved in your personal recovery journey. The survey should take you about 5 minutes to complete. After finishing, you'll have the option to enter to win one of 6 Visa® gift cards -- \$250 (1), \$100 (1), \$50 (2), \$25 (2).

Your responses are completely private. All responses are reviewed together as a group. No one can trace your answers back to you.

To enter the raffle, click the link at the end of the survey. You will be taken to a separate page where you can enter your email. Survey responses and raffle entries are kept separate.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

## MENTAL HEALTH MEDIA



**Every second Friday of the month at 8pm  
All Out Comedy Theater  
2550 Telegraph Ave, Oakland, CA 94612**

Mental Health Comedy Hour aims to destigmatize mental illness and therapy by using humor and having open conversations about often difficult topics.

Hosts Kristee Ono and Wonder Dave are two comedians who have themselves struggled with mental illness and found both therapy and talking about mental health in their comedy to be beneficial.

Mental Health Comedy Hour is part stand-up comedy show, part late night talk show featuring interviews and sketch comedy segments. It showcases comedians who have mental health conditions and after their sets, interviews them about their mental health. Every show features a special guest mental health professional who is interviewed about their field of work. The show aims to demystify the profession and encourage people who might be interested in seeking help to do so.

If truth is what makes comedy great then telling the truth about difficult topics can make great comedy.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## BOARD CORNER



# VINCENT MAO

When I reflect on the past decade, I see my life purposefully re-built. It's a journey that spans continents, multiple degrees, challenging roles in big tech, and the launch of my own company. Yet, the drive behind every choice—and the reason I'm proud to serve on the NAMI SF board—stems from a foundational belief: that mental resilience is the bedrock of a fulfilling life.

My arrival in the U.S. was a profound blend of hope and disorientation. Having grown up in two monolithic societies, China and Japan, the move to the U.S. meant navigating countless cultural missteps and pouring immense effort into adaptation. This cultural collision, immigration system, combined with the relentless personal drive required to land a job and climb the professional ladder, created pressure and insecurity. People often ask, 'Have you considered giving up?' My answer is always: 'Every day.' But I treat each day as my last, deciding if I want to show up again tomorrow."

I'm fortunate that my friends and family acted as my shield, allowing me to continue. But I've seen too many people, especially those navigating similar cross-cultural

pressures and language barriers, who haven't been as lucky. This experience fueled a need to give back.

A few years ago, I was inspired by a Book ("The Spare Room") from Emily Chang: finding the intersection of our offense and our offer.

The injustice that deeply offends me is the silence and struggle surrounding mental health, particularly for those whose journeys are complicated by immigration, systemic pressure, language barrier, and professional career.

My 'offer' is the robust, dense capital of career and life experience I've built—the expertise in strategic innovation and the ability to reject a predictable trajectory.

This intersection was clarified during a visit to an Asian temple in 2023, where I read a powerful inscription: "Without the ferocity of a thunderbolt, one may not be able to harbor the kindness of a Bodhisattva." My drive and my resilience are the "thunderbolt" I need to effect real change.

Mental support isn't a one-time fix; it's a lifelong necessity. As the world faces economic restructuring and the implications of rapidly advancing technology, the pressure on individuals and society is immense. As the old Chinese saying goes, "The tree may wish to remain quiet, but the wind will not subside." We can't stop the wind, but we can strengthen the tree.

The role of organizations like NAMI SF is growing bigger and more vital than ever. I am proud to be part of NAMI SF and look forward to working with everyone to create a more compassionate and mentally resilient San Francisco.

Vincent Mao  
Board Member

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## OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

### Support local business that SUPPORT NAMI SF!

**COMMUNITY THRIFT STORE** accepts donations on behalf of our charity partners, sell the items in our store, and then disburse the proceeds. When donating with us you can select which charity should benefit from the sale of your items.

**SPORTS BASEMENT** is a sporting goods retailer and community center in San Francisco, that sells and rents outdoor gear and equipment. Sports Basement has multiple locations in the San Francisco Bay Area, including the Presidio and Stonestown Galleria. Sign up to become a Basmenteer and enjoy 10% off, then choose NAMI SF as your charity and 10% of profits from that purchase will go to support our mission.

[DONATE TO NAMI SF](#)



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