

Inside This Issue

Social Stigma and Latin Americans	1
Four Decades of NAMI Clackamas	1
Volunteer Power!	2
Resources for All!	2
Staff & Volunteer Leaders	2
Ask The Expert Nights	3
Family and Peer Support Meetings	3
<i>Estigma Social y Latinoamericanos</i>	4
Program Leader Trainings	4
Open Minds Art Studio	5
Welcome Board Members	6
Membership Form	7
Resources	7
From Your Director	8

A grassroots organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for everyone impacted by mental health issues through
SUPPORT + EDUCATION + ADVOCACY

July is Minority Mental Health Month

Social Stigma About Mental Illnesses Affects Latin Americans.

By Gisela Foster Latinx Outreach Coordinator - NAMI- Clackamas County

July is Minority Mental Health month. 7% of the population in Clackamas County identify as “Hispanic” or “Latino. As a member of the Latinx community, it is my experience that stigma alone effectively prevents hundreds of Latin American families currently experiencing difficulties with mental illness in themselves or a family member from seeking professional help.

Stigma typically starts with a lack of knowledge—or an abundance of misinformation—in the identification, prevention, or cause of symptoms related to mental health. It prevents many Latin American families from seeking help early and increases the incidence of chronic depression in men, women, and especially children. Due to the stigma involved, too many Latin American families hide mental disorders that could otherwise be diagnosed and can fully impact the whole family.

This was the case with Maria, a young 26 year-old mother who informed us that she lived for some years with depression and,

(Continued on page 5)

NAMI Clackamas Through the Decades

Calendar

- Tues., July 10**
Peer & Family Support Group in Oregon City
- Fri July 13**
Annual NAMI-CC Picnic N Clackamas Park
- Sat, July 28**
Family & Friends Seminar Oregon City Library
- Tues., Aug. 14**
Peer & Family Support Group in Oregon City
- Sat., Sept. 15**
Party with a Purpose Hilton by Doubletree

Part 3: Housing Heroes

by Judy Winter, NAMI Clackamas Board

The 1990s were a turbulent time in the movement to bring mental health treatment and support out of the Dark Ages. Funding was precarious and unreliable while there was an ever growing need for community-based housing and support.

NAMI Clackamas County support group attendance grew steadily, necessitating a larger Oregon City meeting space and new support groups in other Clackamas County communities. NAMI Basics and Peer-to-Peer education classes were introduced to eager families as more and more of them found themselves seeking resources for themselves and their loved ones.

One morning in 1998, NAMI-CC president and parent Elaine Krause opened her family room curtains to discover her son asleep on the picnic bench on the patio. He had been homeless for several months as his behavior was threatening the family. This sight reinforced the growing reality that there was

little to no housing available for persons with mental health issues in our county.

Soon Elaine and Ginny Davidson decided NAMI would take the bull by the horns and proceeded to put together a series of fundraisers including a monster garage sale, a golf tournament, and a dinner auction to raise funds for housing. Named **Hearts for Housing**, the events eventually raised over \$150,000 in seed money for purchasing property.

Together with Clackamas County Mental (now Behavioral) Health, NAMI-

CC began looking at Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants. A joint housing committee led by Susan Johnson and NAMI-CC Board President Stephen Loiza mobilized Oregon civic leaders and housing partners, and ultimately obtained grants totaling over \$5 million. Through a partnership with Central City Concern and Northwest Housing Alternatives, three apartment communities were established specifically for persons in recovery from

(Continued on page 6)

Contact Us

NAMI Clackamas County
10202 SE 32nd Ave.,
Ste 501
Milwaukie, OR 97222
503-344-5050
info@namicc.org
www.namicc.org



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Gary Marschke

Peer Resource Coordinator:

Montia Leighton

Volunteer Coordinator

America Barraza

Latinx Outreach Coordinator

Gisela Foster



Volunteer Power!

If you have some free time and would like to make a difference, please call 503-344-5050 or email america@namicc.org for more information.

Hot Volunteer Opportunities

Family-to-Family Teacher

Training will be provided. Must be a loved one of a person with a mental health concern. Class is for families and loved ones of individuals with mental illness. Commit to volunteering to teach two 12-week courses for families and loved ones of individuals with mental illness in the two years following training. **Applications due July 20.**

Volunteer Picnic

The event is a celebration to honor our outstanding volunteers for their commitment and dedication to NAMI Clackamas. Opportunities include: planning, sending invitations, setup, cooking, and cleanup.

On-Call Office Volunteer

Help with photocopying, labeling, mailings, phone banking, and office organization on an occasional basis. Sign up then watch your email for opportunities that fit your schedule.

With Gratitude...

From April 1, 2018 to May 31, 2018, **53** people gave a total of **980** volunteer hours! NAMI Clackamas is the essential, vibrant organization it is because of our amazing, dedicated volunteers. Thank you from the NAMI Clackamas staff and everyone who benefits from the work you do. **YOU ROCK!**

Resources for All!

Montia Leighton, Peer Resource Coordinator, 503-344-5050, montia@namicc.org

July is Minority Mental Health Month.

For members of marginalized communities, it can be extremely difficult to find resources that speak your language or share your experience. NAMI welcomes people from all backgrounds and identities, and we respect the desire to find culturally-specific mental health support.

[Clackamas County Crisis Line](#) at 503-655-8585 has Spanish speakers and translation services available. This 24/7 resource serves people with mental health needs and those who support them. The [Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255](#) has services and online resources in Spanish.

All three Portland Metro counties now offer [a Behavioral Health Provider Directory for Oregon Health Plan members](#). You can search for specialties such as African-American, Hispanic, or LGBTQ as well as by languages spoken.

Other resources: OHSU [Avel Gordly Center for Healing at 503-418-5311](#), a multicultural mental health center.

[The LGBT Hotline at 1-888-843-4564](#)

[Trans Lifeline at 877 565-8860](#)

The [Trevor Project at 1-866-488-7386](#)

Julio es el Mes de la Salud Mental de las Minorías.

Para los miembros de comunidades marginadas, puede ser extremadamente difícil encontrar recursos que hablen su idioma o compartan su experiencia. NAMI acepta personas de todos los orígenes e identidades, y respetamos el deseo de encontrar apoyo de salud mental culturalmente específico.

¿Sabía que la Línea de Crisis del Condado de Clackamas al 503-655-8585 tiene hispano hablantes y servicios de traducción disponibles? Este recurso 24/7 puede ser utilizado por personas con necesidades de salud mental, así como aquellas que apoyan a otras personas con necesidades de salud mental. [El Suicide Prevention Lifeline al 1-800-273-8255](#) también tiene servicios y recursos en línea en español.

Los tres condados de Metro de Portland ahora ofrecen [un directorio de proveedores de salud del comportamiento para los miembros del Plan de Salud de Oregon](#). Y, ahora usted puede seleccionar especialidades para Afroamericanos, Hispanos o LGBTQ. Además, puede buscar otros idiomas hablados.

Si su seguro le permite utilizar proveedores de salud mental de OHSU, puede interesarle [el Centro Avel Gordly para el Curación al 503-418-5311](#), un centro de salud mental multicultural. [La línea directa LGBT al 1-888-843-4564](#) [Trans Lifeline al \(877\) 565-8860](#) [El Proyecto Trevor en el numero 1-866-488-7386](#)

NAMI CLACKAMAS MONTHLY ASK THE EXPERT IN OREGON CITY FOLLOWED BY FAMILY AND PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Oregon City Evangelical Church 1024 Linn Ave, Oregon City

2nd Tuesday of each month.

6 p.m. **dinner** (\$3 suggested donation) ■ 6:30 p.m. **program** ■ 7:30 p.m. **support groups**
~ Come for all or any portion of the meeting ~

July 10, 2018

Companion Animals, Therapy Dogs, and Service Animals

Speakers: Catherine and Richard Spencer-Mills

Could my companion animal be a service animal? People have been claiming their companion animals are service animals for some time now. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been expanded, by including definitions and clarifications. This talk will assist with clarifying the different types of support animals, what is legally required of service animals, and what is required specifically of service dogs.

Catherine and Richard Spencer-Mills

have been rescuing dogs since 1995, with emphasis on herding breeds, but sometimes other breeds as well. Richard is a member of ADPT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers), and specializes in training dogs with bite histories using positive reinforcement and clicker training. In the course of rescuing dogs, we have had six dogs become service or therapy dogs for their new owners.



Additionally, Catherine and Richard may have their son, Robert, and his PTSD service dog, Max, as special guests. Looking forward to meeting everyone!

More Peer Support Groups at NAMI Clackamas Office

Friday Goodness Group

An upbeat group focusing on positive experiences and goals.

Fridays 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Women's First Friday Chat

An informal, confidential discussion of women's issues and concerns, including physical and mental health, family, relationships and more.

First Fridays 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Aug 14, 2018

QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention

Speaker: Kathy Turner

QPR stands for **Question, Persuade and Refer**, three steps anyone can learn to help prevent suicide. Just like CPR, QPR is an emergency response to someone in crisis and can save lives.

This brief and basic course is for you if you would like to learn general information about how to identify and help someone who might be at risk for suicide. This program teaches "gatekeepers" the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond by following three specific steps.

Gatekeepers are those who are strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide (e.g., parents, friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, caseworkers, police officers).

Kathy Turner works for Clackamas County Behavioral Health and is part of the Prevention Team. Kathy has trained over 200 people in Clackamas County including educators, health care providers, faith community members, older adult caregivers, first responders, and interested community members in QPR.



Weekly Support Groups for Peers

Free, peer-led support group for adults living with mental illness. Gain insight from hearing the challenges and successes of others.

Wednesdays from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sundays from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Kaiser Brookside Center, Sanctuary 1
10180 SE Sunnyside Rd, Clackamas, OR

NAMI Clackamas Family and Peer Support Meetings

For people with a mental illness and those who love them.

In Oregon City:

2nd Tuesday of each month

Oregon City Evangelical Church

1024 Linn Ave
Oregon City, OR 97045

6 p.m. dinner
6:30 p.m. program
7:30 p.m. support groups

July 10 and Aug 14 (See descriptions to the left)

In Molalla:

1st Monday of each month,
6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Molalla Christian Church,
3rd St. and Berkeley Ave.
Molalla, OR 97038

In Sandy:

3rd Saturday of each month
9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
39901 Pleasant Street
Sandy, OR 97055

In Milwaukie:

Suicide Bereavement Support

Compassionate support for adults after a suicide death.

2nd & 4th Sunday of each month,
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

NAMI Clackamas Office
10202 SE 32nd Ave., Ste. 501
Milwaukie, OR 97222

For additional information and directions:

Please contact the NAMI Clackamas office at (503) 344-5050 or info@namicc.org. For a complete Calendar of Events, go to www.namicc.org/calendar



Estigma Social y Latinoamericanos

Enfermedades mentales afectan a latinoamericanos en Estados Unidos.

Por: Gisela Foster NAMI- Clackamas County

Milwaukie, Oregon (NAMI) - Julio es el mes de la salud mental de las minorías. La población "minoritaria" más grande en el condado de Clackamas se identifica como "Hispana" o "Latina" (7% según las estadísticas suburbanas 2017-18).

Si bien el lenguaje y la cultura son primarios, muchos otros factores contribuyen específicamente, la falta de acceso a información básica junto con la falta de comprensión de las necesidades únicas de las familias Latinoamericanas, han convertido a la salud mental en uno de los temas más sensibles y estigmatizados.

Hablando como miembro de la comunidad de Latinx, mi experiencia es que el estigma por sí solo impide que cientos de familias latinoamericanas que actualmente experimentan dificultades debido a una enfermedad mental en sí mismas y / o un miembro de su familia busquen ayuda profesional.

El estigma generalmente comienza con una falta de conocimiento, o una abundancia de desinformación, en la identificación, prevención o causa de los síntomas relacionados con la salud mental. También impide que muchas familias latinoamericanas busquen ayuda temprana y aumenta la incidencia de depresión crónica en hombres, mujeres y especialmente niños.

Ese es también el caso de los trastornos sociales, la ansiedad y los trastornos postraumáticos que todos deben abordarse con anticipación para que no se intensifiquen. Debido al estigma involucrado, muchas familias Latinoamericanas esconden desórdenes mentales que de otro modo podrían ser diagnosticados y pueden afectar completamente a toda la familia.

Varios estudios recientes en los Estados Unidos han revelado que la depresión y la ansiedad son frecuentes en la familia Latinoamericana y que varían en frecuencia y gravedad según el origen de la familia. En nuestra experiencia, las causas de la depresión y la ansiedad en los jóvenes Latinoamericanos a menudo provienen de problemas de autoestima, presión social, estado socioeconómico familiar, estrés diario y dinámicas familiares, independientemente de su país de origen.

Así es el caso de María, una joven madre de 26 años que nos informó que vivió varios años con depresión y, debido a la falta de información sobre su historia familiar combinada con el estigma, terminó no buscando la ayuda que necesitaba. Ella no se atrevió siquiera a preguntar.

María nos dijo que "es muy fácil deprimirse pero estar deprimido es difícil. He sufrido en silencio y no hablé con nadie sobre mis dificultades por temor a que me dijeran que estaba loca".

Finalmente, no pudo contenerse más y, según María, descubrió que su familia tiene un historial de depresión. Si bien su familia permaneció en la negación, finalmente buscó y recibió el apoyo de sus consejeros, maestros y familiares extendidos, lo que la ayudó a mejorar significativamente y continuar su proceso de recuperación hasta el día de hoy.

Un estudio reciente publicado en la edición de abril de 2018 de la Revista de la Academia Estadounidense de Psiquiatría Infantil y Adolescente (JAACAP) concluyó que "... la mayoría de los jóvenes inmigrantes con trastornos mentales tenían significativamente menos probabilidades de recibir servicios de salud mental que sus pares no inmigrantes".

En el caso de José, descubrió que su ansiedad podía ser tratada una vez que se abrió a conocer. "Le dije a mi mamá que en la escuela me estaba poniendo ansioso en la escuela y no tenía deseos de hacer nada una vez que llegué a casa".

(Continued on page 5)

Donate Now

Program Leader Trainings

August 3-5

Family-to-Family Teacher Training

Providence Willamette Falls Med. Ctr.
1500 Division St.
Oregon City, OR, 97045

Applications due by Friday July 20

Download the Family-to-Family Teacher training [Application](#) and [Schedule](#).

(Continued from page 4)

Como resultado, la familia de José buscó ayuda inmediata comenzando con grupos de apoyo. No fue fácil para la familia admitir y era importante dejar de lado el pensamiento de que otros dirían de ellos y buscarían ayuda. La presión social y el estrés que su familia (y un sinnúmero de otras familias Latinoamericanas) experimentan diariamente han aumentado enormemente los síntomas y la prevalencia de la depresión y la ansiedad en su comunidad. José actualmente asiste a grupos de apoyo y terapia para superar su ansiedad y está en proceso de recuperación.

Con demasiada frecuencia, la barrera para la recuperación es nosotros y no recibimos los servicios que necesitamos porque el estigma nos impide buscarlos. Es hora de curar el estigma y terminar con el silencio que rodea la salud mental.

La Alianza Nacional de Salud Mental proporciona grupos de apoyo y asesora a las familias con clases y capacitación educativa sobre el reconocimiento y la recuperación de los trastornos mentales. NAMI Sharing Hope es una presentación bilingüe que enfatiza la identificación de síntomas de salud mental en la comunidad Latinoamericana y promueve los lugares donde la ayuda es para las familias. Si necesita ayuda o información sobre los programas NAMI, puede llamar al 503-344-550 o enviarnos un e-mail a info@namicc.org. Para más información sobre NAMI sobre salud mental y comunidades Latinx: <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Diverse-Communities/Latino-Mental-Health>. Sobre diferencias: <https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/Psychiatrists/Cultural-Competency/Mental-Health-Disparities/Mental-Health-Facts-for-Hispanic-Latino.pdf>



Mental Illness: Stigma and Latin Americans (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

due to the lack of information on her family history combined with the stigma, ended up not seeking the help she needed. She couldn't bring herself to even ask.

Maria told us that "It is very easy to become depressed but still, being depressed is hard. I've suffered in silence and not talked to anyone about my difficulties for fear they would tell me I was crazy."

Finally she couldn't hold back any longer and, according to Maria, she found that her family has a history of depression. While her family remained in denial, she eventually sought and received support from her counselors, teachers, and extended family which has helped her improve significantly and continue her process of recovery to this day.

AN EXPANDED VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE IN SPANISH BEGINS ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE

Open Minds Art Studio

Work on a personal activity or a group project. Socialize and connect with others. Beading, stamping, journals, painting, doodling, drawing, mosaics and more. Materials provided or bring your own.

FREE DROP-IN EVERY THU, 1:30 to 4 p.m.



Meets at NAMI Clackamas County office, 10202 SE 32nd Ave, Suite 501, Milwaukie



Come celebrate 40 with us!



Fundraising Dinner & Auction

Saturday September 15th
 Doubletree by Hilton Lloyd Center
 5:30 pm—9:00 pm

Silent & Live Auctions
 Music by Gina & Garner Pruitt

Tickets available at:
<https://tinyurl.com/Celebrate40>



Through the Decades (cont.)

What is NAMI Clackamas?

NAMI Clackamas is a non-profit, grassroots, self-help organization providing education, support, and advocacy for individuals with mental illnesses, their friends and loved ones as well as training, information, and resources for professionals, schools, and the general public.

Also known as brain disorders, these illnesses include: bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder, borderline personality disorder (BPD), post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

NAMI Clackamas provides:

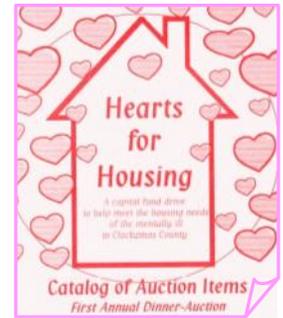
- A place for socializing, friendship and networking.
- Self-help and support for people with mental illness and their families.
- Educational classes for people who love someone with a mental illness.
- Information to communities regarding mental illnesses, available services, and services needed.
- Advocacy for, encouragement and acceptance of people with mental illness living in the community.
- Formats for educating public officials and legislators about the needs of families affected by mental illness.
- Newsletters:
 - NAMI
 - NAMI Affiliate
 - NAMI Oregon



(Continued from page 1)

mental illness in Clackamas County: Fisher Ridge and Meadowlark in Oregon City, and Chez Ami near 82nd Ave. in Happy Valley. The result was a substantial increase in the number of supported beds available in Clackamas County for which the state of Oregon presented NAMI-CC with an award for Excellence in Housing in 2000.

Meanwhile in Salem, Governor John Kitzhaber was proposing handing over the building and grounds of the former Dammasch State Hospital in Wilsonville for a new women's prison. Then-NAMI Oregon President Harold Kulm and State Representative Jane Lokan objected and put together HB3446, now referred to as the Dammasch Bill. It proposed selling the property with proceeds earmarked for incentive grants for new mental health housing around the state. After a lengthy NAMI-led grass-roots campaign, the land was sold in 2004 and nearly \$12 million went into the Housing Trust, helping pay for three new apartment houses and two lovely five-bed group homes on ten acres of what would become the new Villebois development. A plaque on the former Dammasch grounds commemorates NAMI's role in this achievement.



Welcome, Board Members and Officers!

Heather Canahai joined NAMI as the Board Treasurer as the role allows her to combine her passion for service with her accounting skills. She is a self-proclaimed life-long learner. In addition to building accounting proficiency, she's enjoyed the opportunity to attend classes in sociology, psychology, and family studies. She believes that labels and surrounding stigma can be detrimental to building a healthy self-concept, social identity, and sense of community. She supports NAMI's mission of advocacy and education, as means for improvement of life for individuals living with mental illness.



In her free time, Heather enjoys spending time with her family, exploring the Columbia River Gorge, and expanding her interests through new activities.

Mary Clark grew up in California and attended Willamette University. She has lived in Clackamas County for more than 35 years. Mary recently retired from the Department of Human Services where she worked in direct services, administration and community development for 40 years. The families Mary served experienced many challenges including mental illness, domestic violence, substance abuse, and learning needs in addition to poverty.



Mary continues to work as a community volunteer for the Youth Service Provider Network, Hispanic Interagency Networking Team, Children of Incarcerated Parents Committee, and recently joined the board of NAMI. Mary firmly believes that the more collaborative we can be the better we are able to serve our citizens.

Laura Canida is a new member of the NAMI-Clackamas Board as a Member At Large. She works as an Oregon Realtor® at Cascade Sotheby's International Realty.



In 2013, Laura's son became ill, and ended up in the emergency room for observation. Three days later, he was admitted and eventually found his way into the mental health system. While trying to navigate through this highly stressful situation, Laura was directed to NAMI for help and guidance. The struggles she has seen her son and many others go through as they travel through the current system have ignited a passion in Laura to support the mission of NAMI so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

Welcome to the Board, Laura, Mary, and Heather!

NAMI Clackamas County Membership Application

Includes membership in local, state and national NAMI groups—and newsletters from all three!

NAME _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I have enclosed annual dues of \$40 \$ _____

OR Open Door membership of \$5 for those of limited means \$ _____

I have enclosed an additional donation of: \$ _____

Donation in memory or honor of _____ \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

- Please contact me about Volunteer opportunities
- I wish to receive the NAMI-CC newsletter in hardcopy in the mail rather than via e-mail
- I have enclosed a matching gift form from my employer

Make checks payable to: NAMI Clackamas
Mail to: 10202 SE 32nd Ave., Ste. 501, Milwaukie, OR 97222
Or : register [online](#)

Do You Like NAMI Clackamas?



We can only fit so much into a newsletter, but we share the latest updates and events on Facebook frequently.

Do You Follow NAMI Clackamas?



Timely alerts, event, and information. Follow us: @NAMIClackamas

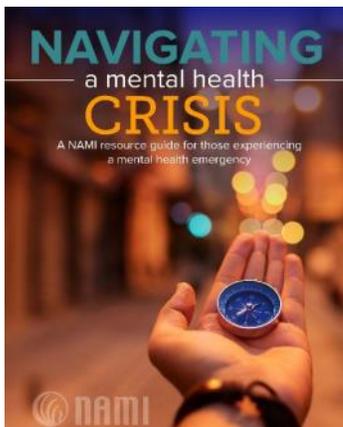


Resources

Crisis Guide Released

We are proud to release “Navigating a Mental Health Crisis: A NAMI Resource Guide for Those Experiencing a Mental Health Emergency.” We developed this guide to support people experiencing mental health crises and their loved ones.

This potentially life-saving guide outlines what can contribute to a crisis, warning signs that a crisis is emerging, strategies to help de-escalate a crisis, and resources available for those affected. Also included in this downloadable pdf booklet is information about advocating for a person in crisis along with a sample crisis plan.



Start here: <https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/Publications-Reports/Guides/Navigating-a-Mental-Health-Crisis/>

NAMI Homefront Class Now Offered Online

We understand that attending an in-person class can be difficult for busy individuals and families. That’s why NAMI is proud to announce that we now offer [NAMI Homefront](#) online!

[NAMI Homefront](#) is a free, six-session program for family, friends and significant others of military service members and veterans. The class helps families understand what the service member/veteran is experiencing related to trauma, combat stress, civilian life transition, PTSD, and other mental health conditions. The class is free, but you are expected to attend all six sessions.

Online classes meet weekly in a virtual classroom, so participants experience the same level of interaction and learning as traditional classes. [Registration](#) is OPEN for the following online sessions:

- 8/6/18 – 9/17/18 / 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 8/7/18 – 9/11/18 / 7:00-9:00 a.m.
- 8/8/18 – 9/12/18 / 3:30-5:30 p.m.
- 8/9/18 – 9/13/18 / 4:30-6:30 p.m.

All times are Pacific time
<https://www.nami.org/homefront>

NAMI Clackamas Board Meetings

First Friday of each month
9:30—11:30 am.

NAMI Clackamas
 10202 SE 32nd Ave., Ste. 501, Milwaukie, OR

Board meetings are open to NAMI members or other interested parties. You are welcome to come join us for the next board meeting.



**NAMI CLACKAMAS
COUNTY
PRESORT STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT # 49
CLACKAMAS, OR
97015**

**NAMI CLACKAMAS
NEWSLETTER
VOL. 2018, NO. 4
JULY-AUG 2018**

“What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.” – Aristotle

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Milwaukie, OR 97222
503-344-5050




Pamplin MediaGroup
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS | PORTLAND TRIBUNE YOUR TOWN, YOUR PAPER.™

We thank the Pamplin Media Group for helping make possible the publication of the NAMI Clackamas newsletter.

From the Executive Director



July is Minority Mental Health Month. Some people might ask, “Why a special mental health month for minorities?” As someone who does not identify as minority, it was not too many years ago I may have asked the same question. Now I feel I can answer it with some amount of awareness.

ethnicity, religion, and language.

I grew up and spent most of my life in communities that were primarily white and middle-class. I did not realize the privilege I enjoyed until my children were marginalized due to their mental health and substance use conditions. It made me much more aware of how I often have implicit bias and how I need to increase my understanding and awareness.



We celebrate Minority Mental Health Month because while there are gaps and holes in our mental health system, minorities are often even more underserved. Minorities are less likely to receive diagnosis and treatment for their mental illness, have less access to and availability of mental health services, and often receive a poorer quality of mental health care.

Please join me in learning more and spreading the word through the many awareness, support, and advocacy activities available for Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. Share information, images and graphics for #MinorityMentalHealth throughout July. Check out the National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health.



To be effective, mental health issues often need to be addressed with a unique lens when working with individuals and families with diverse values, beliefs, and sexual orientations, as well as backgrounds that vary by race,

I look forward to walking with you into a brighter future where all people enjoy the hope, health, acceptance, and community that is NAMI Clackamas’ vision for the future.

[Michele Veenker](#)