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Psychiatrist Daniel Kostalnick, M.D. Gave an “Ask The Doc” Presentation

Psychiatrist Daniel Kostalnick, M.D was the speaker at the February 2021 “Ask the Doc” General Meeting. He is a highly regarded psychiatrist, certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Dr. Kostalnick has extensive training and expertise in psychopharmacology and psychotherapy. His practice is in Pleasanton, and he treats children, adolescents, and adult patients and families.

Dr. Kostalnick began his presentation on COVID19. He explained that the pandemic has mainly focused on the spread of the virus and vaccines and not on the mental health aspects of dealing with the sudden and profound lifestyle shifts caused by the pandemic. It has taken its toll on everyone, especially children and adolescents, which is evidenced by the increase in suicidal thoughts and self-harm in that age group. Dr. Kostalnick also pointed out that at the other end of the spectrum, the elderly, particularly those 75 and over, also have had a lot of mental health issues to deal with due isolation and to the real threat the virus poses to their physical health. He then answered questions from those in

attendance, and his responses are summarized below:

Medications

Dr. Kostalnick stressed that it is important to find a correct diagnosis to ensure that the correct medication is prescribed. He also explained that he was offering his opinion about various medications, and that he is not paid by or funded by any pharmaceutical companies and is speaking from his own experience. Here are some of the points he made:

- **Invega**, also known as **Paliperidone**, can be taken orally or as an injection for long-acting use. It is in the same category as **Abilify**, an antipsychotic, and works (in part) by blocking dopamine. It is a good medication in terms of how it works, but the doctor prescribing it needs to know when and why to increase or decrease the dosage. There can be serious side effects, such as cardiac arrhythmias, low blood pressure (dizzy or fainting), extrapyramidal symptoms that look like Parkinson’s disease, such as tardive dyskinesia (irregular, jerky movements). However, long term it tends to be well tolerated.
- **Abilify**: A typical range of a dose of Abilify might be 10 to 15 mg/day, but it depends on the diagnosis. FDA limits on dosage are determined by studies, but safety data can enable going higher. He

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suggested that anyone on Abilify should be screened for heart health.

- **Seroquel:** In his practice, he has not made the jump to the slow-release Seroquel. The regular Seroquel is very sedating and he feels that taking it once every 24 hours is sufficient. That way it is concentrated at a particular time of day.
- **Benzodiazepines:** In general, as a matter of practice, he would not prescribe Xanax or any benzodiazepine to someone who has a substance abuse issue. He would prefer to address a patient's anxiety without the use of those particular medications—but medications that are not addictive can be highly effective in treating anxiety. Benzodiazepines are addictive, and the most addictive is Xanax.
- **Geodon** has variable results, and at lower doses can be activating and cause restlessness. Some people cannot tolerate the lower doses to get to the higher doses. Conversely, it can be very sedating, and varies from individual to individual.
- Although Atarax (Hydroxyzine) is an antihistamine like Benadryl, it is a medication that can be prescribed for anxiety.
- **Lamictal** is used for bipolar disorder and for seizures. A typical dose might be 200 to 300 or 400 mg. However, like Lithium, the amount in the bloodstream is also important to track. In general, this medication must be increased very slowly because one of the side effects is a life-threatening rash.
- **Suboxone** is a safe and effective medication that is used to treat opioid dependence and can be used long term.
- **Olanzapine (Zyprexa)** is used to treat schizophrenia and bipolar type 1. It is not ideal as a maintenance medication because it can cause diabetes, high cholesterol, and weight gain. It can also cause mental numbness. It is a good medication in an emergency to treat an acute phase.
- **Caplyta** is a new medication prescribed for schizophrenia, which works in a similar way to Seroquel and Abilify and has similar side effects. The downside is that, like Clozapine, it can cause a low white blood cell count and that should be monitored closely. Although it has similar side effects to other medications prescribed for schizophrenia, it is being promoted as not causing as much weight gain.

Treatment/Diagnosis

Dr. Kostalnick also received several questions regarding treatment and diagnosis. The following are some of the points he made:

- When asked about whether there is a correlation between over thinking and over worrying, he said that some people use over thinking as a coping mechanism, thinking thoughts through to a logical conclusion. However, some people think things through with anxious rumination, with their thoughts going in circles rather than coming to an end. This type of overthinking frequently happens at night, which interferes with sleep.
- When asked if there is a correlation between intelligence and creativity and mental illness, he said that he has seen some extraordinary talent in people with mental illness, people who think out of the box. However, he said he has also seen that same sort of talent in people who do not have a mental illness. He went on to explain that mental illness affects people with all levels of intelligence, all races, all genders, etc. It affects all people throughout the world, in all walks of life and in all socioeconomic levels. He added that people with mental health problems must be looked at as a whole person, and that their mental illness should not be a limiting factor in their life.
- When asked if bipolar type 1 can be incorrectly diagnosed as schizoaffective disorder, he said bipolar type 1 and schizoaffective disorder are similar in some ways. However, he said with bipolar type 1 a person can experience psychosis during a mood episode (mania or depression), but with schizoaffective disorder a person can experience psychosis in a normal mood state. He said if the doctor knows someone long enough, it is easier to figure out which is which.
- When asked how one can talk to a person about getting treatment who has schizophrenia and anosognosia (a lack of ability to perceive the realities of one's own condition) he commented that it is one of the hardest things to deal with in a practice. He said that he typically starts by asking the patient what things are going well for them, and then what things are not going well. This starts the conversation, and when responding about the things that are not going well, the patient might say a couple of things, such as they are upset or anxious, or that they are having trouble with people following them. From there, he builds rapport, so the patient sees that he is interested and wants to help them with those things that are upsetting them. After that, he can start to introduce options to make those things better. The overall goal as a psychiatrist is to build a trusting relationship with the patient so they feel they are heard and understood.

FCC Unanimously Approves 988

By USA Today, July 2020

Months after announcing a proposal to implement a three-digit suicide prevention hotline, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved 988.

The vote to create a national three-digit hotline, was unanimous among FCC commissioners – some of whom acknowledged the strains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the compounded effect of George Floyd's death and protest that ensued.

The toll that these events have taken on Americans' mental health is profound: Three times as many U.S. adults reported symptoms of serious psychological distress in April compared with two years earlier, according to a study in the medical journal JAMA.

The process to implement the number will take two years. Telecom and voice service companies will be mandated to have a 988 hotline by July 16, 2022.

According to FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, the nation's suicide rates are at the highest point since World War II. Suicide disproportionately affects marginalized groups – Black Americans, Native Americans, rural residents, teens and young adults and LGBTQ people.

The number to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255), which received 2.2 million calls in 2018.

An FCC report published last August found that having a three-digit hotline would ease access to resources for people struggling with suicidal thoughts.

Advocacy groups celebrated the unanimous vote.

For further information, please see the following: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-designates-988-national-suicide-prevention-lifeline>

Crisis Support

Crisis Support Services Suicide Prevention
[\(800\) 309-2131](tel:8003092131)

Crisis Support Services
Text Line - Text keyword "safe" to 20121
between 4:00p.m. and 11:00 p.m. 7 days a week.

Nationwide Hotline
[\(800\) 273-TALK](tel:800273TALK) | [\(800\) 273-8255](tel:8002738255)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

NAMI Tri-Valley Continues To Work

By Gwen Lewis
President, NAMI Tri-Valley

As I enter my third year as President of NAMI Tri-Valley, I realize that we have just endured what may be remembered as the most unsettling year of our lives.

I am proud to say that during this time the NAMI Board has continued its participation and hard work. All our support groups and presentations have moved to Zoom videoconferencing meetings. NAMI Tri-Valley General Meeting presentations, Connections Recovery Support Group, Family Support Groups, and Parent Resource and Support Groups are on Zoom until it is safe to meet face-to-face again.

In addition to this, the NAMI Tri-Valley Board engaged in a one-day retreat also on Zoom. Proposed goals for the upcoming year were discussed. Some goals have already been achieved. Our 2021 Annual Budget was reviewed and approved. Also, our Grant Committee received their second grant of \$8,000 for the Connections Support Group from the City of Pleasanton. Other goals that were discussed are as follows:

- Create a succession plan for Board leadership.
- Review and approve the 2021 Annual Budget.
- Publicize support groups through advertising and social media to increase attendance.
- Update the website and enable membership payments on-line.
- Engage in fundraising efforts by exploring donations and possibly grants. The Grant Committee will be attending the second annual Affiliate Leadership Symposium in February.

I continue to stay optimistic, especially with the availability of the vaccine. I look forward to 2021.

2021 NAMI Tri-Valley General Meeting Presenters

April 5, 2021

Rosa Warder, MS, MFA
Manager, Office of Family Empowerment
Alameda County Behavioral Health

May 3, 2021

To Be Announced

June 7, 2021

Yvonne Jones, LCSW
Director, Adult Forensic Behavioral Health
Alameda County Behavioral Health

Family-To-Family Educational Program

Joyce Lombardo
Family-To-Family Coordinator

Six years ago, I was desperately trying to find answers regarding my loved one who had been diagnosed with mental illness. I felt alone, worried, and needed to educate myself about mental illness. During a support group meeting, I heard about the Family-to-Family Program. I decided to take it.

NAMI Family-to-Family (F2F) is a peer-education program developed by psychologist Dr. Joyce Burland. It was developed in 1991 and became NAMI's in 1997. This program has helped families understand what their loved one is experiencing. It is also offered free of charge to participants.

The goals of the program are to:

- Provide current information about mental health conditions.
- Describe treatment options, including evidence-based therapies, medications, and side effects.
- Develop skills in communication, problem-solving, and crisis preparation.
- Promote self-care and stress management for family members.
- Share local, state, and mental health resources.

This program is peer-led, which means the people leading this program have similar life experiences to the people taking the program. Our goal is to share helpful information and let you know that you are not alone.

If you are interested in taking Family-to-Family, we are planning our second class of 2021 in March using Zoom. It will be on a Wednesday evening, from 7:00-9:30 PM, for 8 consecutive weeks. If you have questions, or concerns please contact me:

Joyce Lombardo
NAMI Tri-Valley Family-to-Family Coordinator
Email: jloindublin@aol.com

NAMI Tri-Valley Annual Financial Report

Total Balance 12/31/2020 -	\$75,603
NAMI Tri-Valley: 2020 Income	
Fundraising	
Donations	\$13,501
Grants	\$2,650
Membership Dues	\$1,929
Total Income	\$18,080
NAMI Tri-Valley: 2020 Expense	
Consumer Program (NAMI Connections)	\$5,600
Operations	\$3,598
Conferences & Training	\$348
Public Education	\$128
Family Support (Family 2 Family)	\$262
Total Expenses	\$9,936

Livermore, Dublin, Pleasanton To Open Local Mental Health Center

Officials believe a total of 500 residents of Dublin, Pleasanton and Livermore will be served by the program in its first year.

By [Courtney Teague, Patch Staff](#)

Posted Mon, Mar 8, 2021 at 10:00 am PT | Updated Mon, Mar 8, 2021 at 1:00 pm PT

LIVERMORE, CA — The city councils of Dublin and Pleasanton unanimously voted last week in separate meetings to join Livermore in jointly creating a Tri-Valley mental health pilot program, in partnership with Axis Community Health. Dubbed the Mental Health Urgent Care Center pilot project, the program would be accessible to any residents of Dublin, Pleasanton or Livermore regardless of their income or insurance status. People could make same-day appointments for urgent care needs, and telehealth appointments would be provided during the coronavirus pandemic.

“The need for mental health services in the Tri-Valley has increased dramatically in the last decade...”

The program is expected to serve some 500 patients in its first year, Dublin staff members [wrote in a report](#) to the Dublin City Council. “The need for mental health services in the Tri-Valley has increased dramatically in the last decade and has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic,” Pleasanton staff members [wrote in a report](#) to the Pleasanton City Council. “There is not enough capacity to meet the demand and the systems are complex and difficult to maneuver, especially in a crisis.”

The site would be located at an existing Axis (Community Health) site in Pleasanton, which is currently being used to offer behavioral health services to teens in the city, the Pleasanton staff said. Pleasanton is in the midst of a two-year contract with Axis for \$70,000. The facility would initially be open weekdays 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 5925 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite 100. That’s when police receive the most mental health-related calls. Hours could be adjusted depending on community need and budget, Dublin staff said.

“I think this is very needed because I see the increasing numbers of people, including teenagers and students, needing these kinds of services urgently,” said Dublin

Councilmember Sherry Hu at the council’s Tuesday meeting.

Axis approached city managers of Dublin, Pleasanton and Livermore in October and proposed a program to provide urgent care mental health services, Pleasanton staff said. The three cities have agreed to pay a total of \$320,000 for startup costs in the first year, and Alameda County Behavioral Health is expected to put \$250,000 in grant funding toward the program. If county grant funding is received, each city would have to pitch in only \$24,000. Staff would determine where patients have a mild to moderate condition or a moderate or severe condition, according to the city of Pleasanton’s staff report. An estimated 5 percent of patients would need medication in order to benefit from treatment and would be referred to facilities that can offer appropriate care. Staff would seek to avoid placing patients under an involuntary mental health hold — also called a “5150,” referring to the relevant section of the California Welfare and Institutions Code — even if they are wrestling with suicidal thoughts, Pleasanton staff wrote.

The issue has become a national topic of discussion over reallocating police funding to mental health agencies better equipped than police to deal with mental health emergencies. “A lot of our police officers are not therapists and psychiatrists,” said Dublin Mayor Melissa Hernandez during the meeting. “How are we also able to help them as well before elevating it to a 911 phone call?”

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill into law in January that increases mental health services private health care companies must provide. The new law requires providers to cover full treatment of all mental health conditions and substance-use disorders identified in the most recent edition of the International Classification of Diseases or the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. “This is just such a success and everybody seems really excited about it,” Pleasanton Mayor Karla Brown said during the council’s Tuesday meeting.

SPEAKER NOTES

October 2020

An Overview of Alameda County Behavioral Health

Karyn Tribble, PsyD, LCSW

The NAMI Tri-Valley General Meeting on October 5th featured Karyn Tribble, PsyD, LCSW. Dr. Tribble is the Director of [Alameda County Behavioral Health \(ACBH\)](#). It is the agency that oversees mental health and substance use programs for Alameda County residents. It also contracts with community-based organizations to provide specialized services.

When Dr. Tribble became Director of ACBH, one of her main goals was to simplify the way people access information for programs, and to provide better support to the county's diverse community. To that end, and among many other things, she is ensuring that the website is redesigned to make it more accessible to everyone, and she is renaming and redesigning programs to meet the needs of the community.

Dr Tribble talked about the Safe Landing program that was launched in June on the campus of Santa Rita Jail. The purpose of this program is to provide a physical space on the grounds of Santa Rita Jail for people with mental illness, co-occurring conditions, and substance use disorders as they are released from the jail, to connect them to housing and other immediate post incarceration needs.

Dr Tribble also talked about the launch in July of the Community Assessment and Transport Team (CATT). The mobile crisis team includes a behavioral health provider and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in a non-emergency van. They provide onsite assessment and transport to whichever facility is deemed necessary (Emergency Room, sobering center, etc.) This program is currently serving the Fremont area, but the plan is to expand to the rest of the county.

Dr. Tribble spoke about many other things the agency is doing and addressed questions on various topics from the attendees.

November 2020

Housing Options for Individuals with Serious Mental Health Challenges

[Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services \(ACBHCS\)](#) Housing Services Director Robert Ratner, MPH, MD, was our guest speaker at November's General Meeting. Dr. Ratner focused on housing options for individuals in Alameda County who have serious mental health challenges. He listed information about where adults with serious mental health issues in Alameda county live:

- Private home or apartment, which they own or rent
- With family or friends
- Homeless
- Criminal Justice institution
- Community-living licensed facility, such as a board-and-care home or hotel
- Affordable housing building
- Health care institution (hospital, skilled nursing facility, etc.)

At the conclusion of his presentation, Dr. Ratner provided the following sites for searching for housing:

- [Housing Services Office \(HSO\)](#) of Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services.
- Alameda County [211 phone](#) service for finding affordable housing.
- [Alameda County Independent Living Association \(ila\)](#) for finding a privately-owned or operated home or complex that provides shared housing for adults.
- [Alameda County Housing Portal](#) whose goal it is to make it easier to find affordable housing in Alameda County and easier to complete an application.
- California Department of Social Services (CDSS) where you can search for and download data about [Adult Residential Facilities](#) by county.

Support Groups Calendar

NAMI Tri-Valley uses Zoom until it is safe to meet at a physical location.

Family/Caregiver Support Group

Every **2nd Monday** of each month on Zoom:

Monday, April 12, 2021

Monday, May 10, 2021

Monday, June 14, 2021

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Contact: Marsha McInnis 925.980.5331

marsha@nami-trivalley.org

Parent Resource and Support Group

Meets every **3rd Tuesday** of each month:

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Contact: Marsha McInnis 925.980.5331

marsha@nami-trivalley.org

Family/Caregiver Support Group

Every **4th Monday** of each month on Zoom

Monday, April 26, 2021

Monday, May 24, 2021

Monday, June 28, 2021

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Contact: Marsha McInnis 925.980.5331

marsha@nami-trivalley.org

NAMI Connections Recovery Support Group

Meets every **Wednesday** of each week

Wednesday, April 7, 14, 21, 28, 2021

Wednesday, May 5, 12, 19, 26, 2021

Wednesday, June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021

7:15 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.

Contact: balllewis@comcast.net or

namitrivalleyconnections@gmail.com

NAMI is a non-profit, grassroots, self-help, support and advocacy organization of consumers, families, and friends of people with severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic and other severe anxiety disorders, autism and pervasive developmental disorders, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and other severe and persistent mental illnesses that affect the brain.

Brainstorm is published by NAMI Tri-Valley, an affiliate of NAMI National and NAMI California.



Annual Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

NEW **RENEWAL**

REGULAR (PER PERSON): \$40

HOUSEHOLD: \$60

OPEN DOOR: \$5

The Open Door rate is available to those whose economic circumstances require it, and entitles you to the full rights and privileges of NAMI membership.

Donation

\$ _____ In Memory Of: _____

\$ _____ In Honor Of: _____

Your dues include membership in NAMI Tri-Valley, NAMI California, and NAMI National.

Membership dues are tax-deductible renewable 12 months from initial application. Membership also entitles you to receive NAMI Tri-Valley Newsletter *Brainstorm* and NAMI National *The Advocate*. Tax I.D.# 72-1610675.

Volunteer and make a major difference in the lives of those affected by mental illnesses.

Please send this application form with your check payable to **NAMI Tri-Valley, P. O. Box 5563, Pleasanton, CA 94566**