February 5th, Board Meeting  6:30pm
Open to the public

Interview of Ruben Imperial

Meet our newly appointed interim mental health director for Stanislaus County, Ruben Imperial. He has worked in some capacity for the Behavioral Health Department since 2001. He started out with BHRS at the old Scenic hospital as a clinical service technician, working weekends and graveyard shifts, meeting a lot of people and learning about mental health. He went on work at the Stanislaus Recovery Residential Program in Ceres for 4-5 years as an analyst, monitoring programs. He started to lead work groups using his analyst skills and was soon asked to assist in the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program planning. He also assisted Karen Hurley, the MHSA director in coordinating planning, where he became involved in community engagement through the stakeholder process. Soon he was hired as manager of the Prevention and Early Intervention programs, followed by manager of the adult system of care. These experiences gave him a good understanding of the program structures within BHRS, involving both prevention and treatment.

Some of the biggest challenges he has faced in his new role are in balancing the needs of the community with compliance requirements at the state and federal level. BHRS is a large and complex organization, where finding and retaining mental health professionals is an ongoing cyclic problem. He has already felt tremendous success in truly understanding the mental health system and communicating with his staff the strategies they will be working on with their performance measures.

His goal for the next year is to deliver to the Board of Supervisors an outlined strategy for the department to implement which will guide planning for the next 2-3 years.

What anchors him through this work is his commitment to this community where he lives. He cares for the community and wants to have a behavioral health system that he would be happy to utilize if his family ever needed it. He believes he can make a difference and also feels the community deserves the best we can give them. He strives to provide the highest quality treatment for those needing it.

Continued page 2
Continued.... Ruben Imperial

experiencing a severe mental illness and substance abuse disorders. He has started partnering with CSU Stanislaus to work together to find ways to improve our services and increase providers.

Ruben acknowledges that our community mental health needs have changed over the years, creating a need for a broader community planning process. He wants the department to take a new look at priorities, aligning MHSA funds with community needs in order to change and be more responsive to those most in need and experiencing distress. He has found that in the past the behavioral health department has not been very strategic in how it responds and provides treatment in the community. This is something he hopes to correct. He stated his hope for the community is “If you see someone on the corner (in distress), we are around the corner!” Helping the community understand how the mental health system works and how to access it through improved communication and simplifying the message is part of what he is now working on. He also hopes to broaden the involvement of stakeholders and community members to gather insights into areas of need. He values the role that NAMI has in providing peer and family support and wishes to encourage NAMI members to continue to be a voice in advocacy for clients and families, and being a strong partner with BHRS.

Rhonda Allen

**HUGGING IS....**

The most beautiful form of communication that allows the other person to know beyond a doubt —— that they matter. Hugging is one of the most powerful ways to express love, happiness and joy.

Hug, verb .... hugged, hug-ging, 1. To clasp a person or thing in one’s arms; to embrace, hugga, to soothe, to care for, noun.... an embrace. Hugger, noun.... one who hugs, huggee; a person of thing that receives a hug. Huggable, adj .... possessing an affectionate nature or qualities desirable to hug.

**FACTS AND HINTS ABOUT HUGGING**

- There is no such thing as a bad hug; there are only good hugs and great hugs.
- Hug someone at least once a day and twice on a rainy day.
- Hug with a smile; closed eyes are optional.
- A snuggle is a longish hug.
- Bedtime hugs help chase away bad dreams (and you don’t need to be a child to understand that).

Allison

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**VALENTINES DAY .... FEBRUARY 14, 2020**

**ARE YOU LONESOME TONIGHT ?**

Contrary to popular belief, Valentine’s Day has not always been about lovers. In fact, 5th century Rome had a lottery system that would match local gentry with teenage girls for the day. Now emperor Claudius II believed that soldiers should not be married as he thought they should keep their minds strictly on business...or more so, the battle rather than their 'lady love'. Along comes bishop Valentine of Interamna, secretly inviting young lovers to join them in Holy Matrimony. On February 24, 270, Valentine was clubbed, stoned and eventually beheaded.

Around A.D. 496, Pope Gelasius sternly outlawed the revelry of the Lupercain Festival, toned it down while Saint Valentine, the spiritual overseer, became it’s patron saint.

As Christianity spread, so did the Valentine’s Day card. Charles, duke of Orleans, sent his wife a card while locked away in the Tower of London in 1415 A.D.

We expect all the “Goodies” associated with Valentine’s Day: a well versed Hallmark card, doily hearts, cupids, a special dinner out at a restaurant with tablecloths jewelry, lingerie, flowers, especially roses, red for love, perfume, a home cooked gourmet meal, a date to see a movie, and chocolates, with cherry middles, nuts, caramel, fudge...... ice cream!! We will take it all ..... BUT ...... what if it isn't there for us this year? Ok....let’s talk about Emotional First Aid. For most of us, life will include some emotional pain. That’s the pain we feel in the aftermath of upsetting common experiences like rejection, failure, and loneliness. But for persons with a Mental Health Condition it can be devastating. Our negative self-talk impacts our emotional resilience, the first step in breaking out of the negative cycle of ruminating and unhealthy brooding. Our minds deceive us in all sorts of ways. Here are 3 ways to beat back the negativity.

1. Guard against putting yourself down.
2. Disrupt negative thoughts with a healthy distraction.
3. Look for purpose in loss.

Allison Clark
SafeTALK Half-Day Training
Time Frame: 3 hours

SafeTALK is a half-day alertness training that prepares anyone, regardless of prior experience or training, to become a suicide-alert helper. Most people with thoughts of suicide don’t truly want to die, but are struggling with the pain in their lives. Through their words and actions, they invite help to stay alive. SafeTALK-trained helpers can recognize these invitations and take action by connecting them with life-saving intervention resources, such as caregivers trained in ASIST. Since its development in 2006, SafeTALK has been used in over 20 countries around the world, and more than 200 selectable video vignettes have been produced to tailor the program’s audio-visual component for diverse audiences. SafeTALK-trained helpers are an important part of suicide-safer communities, working alongside intervention resources to identify and avert suicide risks.

Participants will:
- Notice and respond to situations where suicide thoughts might be present
- Recognize that invitations for help are often overlooked
- Move beyond the common tendency to miss, dismiss, and avoid suicide
- Apply the TALK steps: Tell, Ask, Listen, and KeepSafe

Know community resources and how to connect someone with thoughts of suicide to them for further help.

Who Should Attend:
Anyone can attend. SafeTALK prepares anyone, regardless of prior experience or training, to become a suicide-alert helper.

Registration:
To inquire about workshop dates please email: gro.srhbnats@gniniartsrhb
BHRS website

FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

I’ve been thinking about February being the shortest month of the year, but it has a lot going for it none the less. 2020 is a Leap Year, but do we really know what that means other than girls are supposed to ask the guys to get married? Fat chance, right!? The Julian calendar, closed the gap by adding an extra day every fourth year as the seasons were three months out of step with the calendar in AD46, this according to Julius Caesar of Rome. Unfortunately, this did not correct the problem, in fact, eleven minutes a year by 1572 had built up to a loss of ten days. Consequently, in 1582, it was decreed that Leap Year should occur only 97 times in 400 years; this means that century years are Leap Years only if they can be divided by 400.

That being said ... Valentine’s Day, the day for lovers. More couples get married on this day than any other day of the year. Of course, President’s Day honors Lincoln and Washington’s birthdays, but over time the dates have been changed to give workers a three day week-end. So, I suppose you could honor any president you’d like on that day.

February 2nd is Groundhog Day. Originally started in Germany in the 16th century, I hate to burst your bubble, but, Groundhog Day has nothing to do with the weather. German immigrants settled in a small town in the heart of Pennsylvania in the nineteenth century called, Punxsutawney, to carry out the folklore of the badger. Unable to find badgers in their new homeland, the ever present groundhog took its place. What the hibernating rodent is really looking for is food and a mate. Yes, this is typically the time of the year for groundhogs to mate, and if it doesn’t look as if that is possible, back into the hole they go for six more weeks. As far as forecasting the onset of spring, the figure is no worse than the estimate of a modern weatherman.

Lastly comes Mardi Gras on the heels of Lent, then spring, then Easter. A festival like no other observed in New Orleans, Louisiana for a full week of parades, costumes and revelry. Originating in Haiti by slaves to celebrate the coming of spring.

Allison Clark
NAMI Stanislaus Household Membership dues are $60, Individual dues are $40. The monies that NAMI Stanislaus Affiliate receives from each category is to pay for the training of our teachers, programs, purchases of educational material, including the brochures we give for free to the public, office supplies, and postage, as well as publication and mailing of our newsletter. We offer our Open Door dues of $5 if you have limited income. Membership is important, so please join at whatever level you can afford. If you have any questions about your membership, please call the NAMI Office at (209) 558-4555.
Checks are to be made to NAMI Stanislaus. Please mail to:
NAMI Stanislaus, P.O. Box 4120, Modesto, CA 95352-4120

Name ________________________________ __ $5 Open Door (Limited Income)
Address ________________________________ __ $40 Individual
Home Telephone __________________________ __ $60 Household
Work Telephone __________________________ __ No membership, Donation
Email _________________________________ __ $____ Other
In Memory of ____________________________ __ Newsletter only

Thank You For Your Contribution

Membership
Sharon and Dave Froba
Patricia Romo
James & Teri Curtis
Shirley Morgan
Glenda Olsen

Donations
Jamie Fabela
Richard and Melissa Feemster
Facebook
Colleen Small
Zachary & Dave Schmidt
Tom Meyers
Abney Carpet Installation
C Vieira
Patricia Vergara

Together We Support Our Community
February 2020

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Modesto Connection Support Group
Jana Lynn Plaza
500 N. 9th St., Modesto
Jana Lynn Room
2nd and 4th Mondays
6:30-8:00 p.m.
Call Dar (209) 656-8855
(First double doors to your right as you enter the parking lot)

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