

05/08/18

*Date*

Dear Parent,

Pioneer Valley High School \_\_\_\_\_ is thrilled to announce that we are forming a NAMI on Campus  
*School Name*

High School (NCHS) Club! NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and NCHS is a program designed by NAMI California (NAMI CA). NAMI CA provides support, advocacy, education and services to families and loved ones whose lives are touched by mental illness.

NCHS is a mental health awareness club for students and teachers on high school campuses. The purpose is to create a dialogue on campus about mental health and well-being to help eliminate the stigma of mental illness. **It is not a support or therapy group.** Students are encouraged to join and learn more about mental health, warning signs of mental illness, how to seek help for themselves or others, and how to be a supportive friend to someone experiencing a mental illness.

Research shows that 1 out of every 5 U.S. adults have a diagnosable mental illness, and that 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24. With these statistics in mind, we wanted to take the opportunity to share with you information on **First Episode Psychosis (FEP)**, so your family is aware and prepared, should a teen family member ever begin exhibiting symptoms. It is also important to remember- **mental illness is NOT rare, it IS common, and it IS treatable!**

Below are some warning signs of FEP. If you notice these in your child, contact a healthcare professional right away, as early intervention helps recovery.

These warning signs may signal early psychosis:

- Hearing, seeing, tasting or believing things that others don't
- Suspiciousness or extreme uneasiness with others
- Persistent, unusual thoughts or beliefs
- Strong and inappropriate emotions or no emotions at all
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- A sudden decline in self-care (not showering, not caring about appearance, etc.)
- Trouble thinking clearly or concentrating

For more information on FEP, please visit <https://www.nami.org/earlypsychosis>

Each Mind Matters (EMM) is California's mental health movement and another organization that NAMI CA has partnered with to help spread mental health awareness. Their goal is to unite people wanting to stand up to stigma and create a community that feels safe and supported in reaching out for help. For information about EMM, please visit [www.eachmindmatters.org](http://www.eachmindmatters.org)

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For local resources and support, your local NAMI Affiliate can help connect you to services in your community.

NAMI SLO County

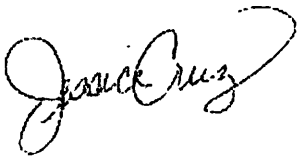
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*NAMI Affiliate*

*Affiliate Contact Number*

If you have any questions about NCHS, NAMI CA or FEP, please contact NAMI California at (916) 567-0163.

Thank you for your support!



Jessica Cruz, MPA/HS  
NAMI CA Executive Director