Making Anxiety Your Best Friend

We took a whole new look at anxiety this month as our Education Program speaker Luana Marques from the MGH Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders introduced us to “How to Make Anxiety Your Best Friend.” Her approach, “exposure therapy,” which builds on the body’s “fight or flight” reaction to anxiety, is scientifically proven to be effective, she reported. Anxiety attacks affect the body in dramatic ways: pumping blood, loosing focus, tensing muscles, shutting down the digestive system, and increasing body temperature.

Despite these unpleasant reactions, her solution is to not fight these obvious symptoms, but to accept them and learn from them. Avoidance is only a short-term benefit; it doesn’t address the root cause of anxiety. Getting “comfortably uncomfortable” should be your goal.

Almost 300 million people suffer from anxiety disorders, she reported, 40 million of them in the United States alone. Luana described Mina, a client whose level of anxiety kept her from using public transportation. She avoided crowds and usually stayed inside. She taught Mina to approach her anxiety as a skill, to learn how her body reacted to various levels of anxiety, and to practice tolerating it until the effects of the anxiety were cut more or less in half. “Focus on your avoidance, not on the anxiety,” she advised.

Her suggested steps are:

1) Find your anxiety “zone.”
2) Find an opportunity to practice “tolerating” the anxiety—something that is DOABLE, SPECIFIC, and TRACKABLE.
3) Practice until the fear dissipates.
4) Strengthen your approach muscles. Over time, with repetitive exposure, the intensity of discomfort will lessen.

“Play with it,” she advised. “Go for the highest anxiety you’ve experienced and then find something in the middle you can tolerate.”

Find Marques’ TED talk at: https://www.google.com/search?q=luana+marques+ted+talk&rlz=1C1EKKP_enUS760US760&oq=Luana+Marques+TED&aqs=chrome.0.0j69i57j0.8212j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
Cambridge-CM Leaders Honored at NAMIMass Convention

Indefatigable Cambridge Walk Chairman John Sharp (left) did it again, picking up the prize for the top performing Walk Team. Under John’s outstanding leadership, the NAMI-CM team had 34 walkers plus four other teams that contributed to our affiliate. The total raised was $66,668, including a $25,000 anonymous donation. Rae Simpson (right) was honored for her tireless advocacy efforts with the Advocate of the Year award. As chair of the NAMI-CM advocacy committee Rae has met with key state legislators to help shape legislation, worked on reform at Bridgewater State Hospital and on improving messaging about mental health, participates in a collaboration with First Parish in Cambridge to strengthen community mental health outreach, and shares her family story in CIT trainings. Rae is at rae@nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org.

Auction Winner Goes to Paris

Susan Flannery and her husband Stephen Coren pose at The Moulin Rouge during the trip to Paris they won in the NAMI Auction.
Cambridge Family Support Groups (FSG)
Free and confidential drop-in support groups are open to caregiving families and friends of people with mental illness every first and third Monday, 7:30-9:00 pm, at Cambridge Hospital, 1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge.
For information, email rae@nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org or visit nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org.

Area Support Groups
- **ACTON**  Susan McDougall, mcdougalltal@aol.com or 978-263-8830
- **BEDFORD**  781-982-3318.
- **DORCHESTER**  Monica 857-342-2796 or Mpmare28@gmail.com

Free Peer-to-Peer classes
Cambridge Hospital Contact jmaguire@namimass.org for schedule and registration.

NAMI Connections
Contact Janel at 617-863-5388 or tanj@vinfen.org

**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

**Cambridge Hospital** 617-665-1560
The Psychiatric Emergency Service (PES) of the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) is located in the Emergency Department at Cambridge Hospital, 1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge. Psychiatrists and clinical social workers are on duty 24 hours a day.

**BEST Team (Boston Emergency Service Team)** 800-981-4357
Primary emergency service team that serves Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville. In-person behavioral health crisis assessment, intervention, and stabilization service in the community or at their two centers, 24 hours a day for individuals of all ages covered by MassHealth (Medicaid) plans, Medicare, and the uninsured.

**Emergency Psychiatric Services for other communities** 877-382-1609

**SUICIDE PREVENTION**
Samaritans of Massachusetts
24-hr. emotional distress line 1-800-273-TALK
24 hour crisis intervention/hotline 1-877-870-HOPE
Teen Line (statewide) 1-800-252-8336
24 hour Helpline 1-617-247-0220

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE HELP**
Mass Substance Abuse HELPLINE 1-800-327-5050
Free, confidential information and referrals
Cambridge Support Group for Family and Friends
Mondays, 7-8:30 pm, Spaulding Hospital. Free parking.
http://www.chpbc.org/whatweedo/Recovery-Services/psaths-connect-to-services/Pages/psaaths.aspx

**OTHER RESOURCES**
NAMI National Legal Center (namimass.org under “Resources” includes “Road Map through the Massachusetts Criminal Justice System for Persons with Mental Illness and Their Family.”

**NAMI-MIT Support Group**
Free and confidential peer support group held the last Tuesday of each month at Cambridge Hospital, 1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge, from 7:30-9:00 pm.

**CAMBRIDGE NAMI CONNECTIONS**
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**NAMI-CM FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER / p3**
Your membership helps strengthen the voice of NAMI, nationally and locally, for the millions of Americans living with serious mental illness. Please join today. NAMI-Cambridge/Middlesex offers free support groups and education programs for family members and friends of the mentally ill.

Join NAMI Cambridge-Middlesex:

Please print clearly and mail to the address below with your check or visit www.nami.org to join online

NAME___________________________________________________________

STREET________________________________________________________________

CITY _______________________________________  STATE_________________________  ZIP_____________________________

TELEPHONE ____________________________  EMAIL ADDRESS__________________________

(Enter your address, if you want to receive occasional updates by email.)

☐ I would like to become a NAMI-CM member. Please send $40 for Individual Membership or $60 for the new Household Membership (covers all individuals in your home) or $5 for Open Door Membership.

☐ I want the Cambridge-Middlesex NAMI newsletter only, since I am already a member of another affiliate. Please send $10.

Make checks payable to: NAMI-CM  Mail to: NAMI-CM, 174 APPLETON ST., CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

This is not an office, but a mailing address only. NAMI-CM is a volunteer organization; we do not maintain an office.
Made it a day to remember at the NAMI-CM Annual Auction Event.

Special thanks to our hosts, Paul and Debbie Klein Walker, entertainer Jimmy Tingle, musicians from Tune Foolery and Right Turn, and all of our generous sponsors, donors, and bidders.
Achieving Population Mental Health Through a Learning Health Community

PHILIP WANG
MD, DRPH, CHAIR AND CHIEF OF PSYCHIATRY, CHA, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

Meet the new chief of Psychiatry at Cambridge Health Alliance and hear about new opportunities to detect and intervene earlier, as well as prevent mental health conditions in the community.

Dr. Wang will address how this can be achieved by transforming Cambridge Health Alliance into a learning healthcare system, and Boston Metro North into a learning health community.

CHA's mental health staff of 172 MDs, RNs, and MSWs cover more than 100,000 patient visits per year. Adult Psychiatry's 4-year Residency Program is one of the best in the country, attracting 900 applications for 8 positions each year.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2019 7:00-8:30 PM

MACHT AUDITORIUM, CAMBRIDGE HOSPITAL
1493 CAMBRIDGE ST., CAMBRIDGE
(Parking vouchers available)