



National Alliance on Mental Illness

P.O. Box 18124, Pensacola, FL 32523

(850) 208-1609

namipensacola@gmail.com

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namipensacola.com

Facebook: NAMIPensacola

Don't Miss the February Educational Meeting: Using Tai Chi and Qigong for Improved Mental Health

The ancient Chinese arts of Tai Chi and Qigong are now being used in mental health. Scott Mayberry, LMHC at West Florida Hospital directs the exercises for the benefit of patients and staff. "It is a martial art," Mayberry said, "however, the movements as well as the focus on breathing can be used in treating depression, anxiety and stress." He stated that the use of Tai Chi and Qigong can improve one's mental health as well as overall physical health.

Mayberry said Tai Chi and Qigong aid in relaxation, with an emphasis on being mindful and intentional. The use of Tai Chi can have applications in treating individuals with arthritis and chronic pain as well as other health issues. In addition, Tai Chi and Qigong can help individuals with balance as well as maximizing one's breathing. In particular, Tai Chi and Qigong have multiple applications in the geriatric population, i.e. fall prevention and balance.

"Typically people don't do breathing well," said Mayberry. "When we're younger we breathe from the stomach but as we get older, breathing is moved up to the chest. We show folks how to maximize breathing and get more oxygen to the parts of the body where they need it."

NAMI Pensacola is pleased to offer this Tai Chi and Qigong session at the 4th Thursday educational meeting for this month. The meeting will be held Thursday, February 25, 6:00-7:30pm at The Pavilion at West Florida Hospital. For this session, attendees are encouraged to wear comfortable, loose clothing and tennis shoes. Remember that space is limited, so you might want to get there early!

Letter from the President

2016 is off to a great start. It has been both exciting and encouraging to see the success of the new focus for the 4th Thursday meetings (education and fun) held at West Florida Hospital Pavilion. On January 28th Dr. Georgia Ketchum, Psychiatrist at West Florida Hospital, held a forum on depression that offered a great opportunity for an informal discussion of this problem. Depression affects nearly one in four people and knows no socioeconomic boundaries.

In addition, we had record attendance at this month's Family to Family Education Program. One of NAMI Pensacola's goals for 2016 is to reach as many local families with this program as possible and we are well on our way. Jerry Valanzano was recently recognized by the National NAMI organization for his dedication to the Family to Family program. We are very appreciative of his hard work and dedication to helping families cope with the obstacles they face in dealing with mental illness.

We are in the process of organizing the annual NAMI walk in May (National Mental Health Awareness month). This is an opportunity to raise awareness for our community and

reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. This walk cannot be successful without all of us working together.

This month, I encourage you to join NAMI Pensacola February 25th at The Pavilion at West Florida Hospital when Scott Mayberry, LMHC will provide a Mind/Body Wellness class utilizing Tai Chi and Qigong techniques. Get there early, as space is limited.

Roger McBride,
President

Upcoming Meetings

The second Thursday meeting on February 11th, 7-8:30pm, will be held at Lakeview Center, Bldg I, 1995 N Hernandez Street (Hernandez & H streets). This is a good opportunity to come and talk about any issues that we seek solutions for, in an informal setting. Please note that the 2nd Thursday meeting is at 7:00 until 8:30, while the 4th Thursday meeting is at 6:00 until 7:30.

Meetings for March will be Thursday, March 10th, 7:00-8:30pm at Lakeview and Thursday, March 24th, 6:00-7:30pm at The Pavilion. For more information, call 208-1609 or email namipensacola@gmail.com.