



NAMI

Pensacola

National Alliance on Mental Illness

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Tai Chi and Qigong for Improved Mental Health Explained at January Educational Meeting

The ancient Chinese arts of **Tai Chi** and **Qigong** are now being used in mental health. **Scott Mayberry**, Licensed Mental Health Counselor 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."



LMHC Scott Mayberry

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, January 26, 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!

Monthly Support Meeting Starts at 6pm

NAMI Pensacola holds two meetings per month, for the membership and the public: a support meeting on the second Thursday and an educational meeting on the fourth Thursday. As of this month, the support meeting will start at 6pm, to make it more convenient for attendees who are headed home from work. A mental health professional will be present to answer questions or provide direction for those who need help with their mentally ill family member or friend. Or even for themselves at a very difficult time for them.

Lakeview Center has kindly offered to send one of their staff members to address the concerns of NAMI members directly at the meeting. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring your issues and questions to a professional in a relaxed setting. **Tasa Isaak, MS., CMHP, Director of Adult Case Management Systems** at Lakeview Center, will also be available to take phone calls on her direct line during working hours, (850) 469-3565, or at the **Case Management Office (Sarah)** at (850) 469-3805, if she is away from desk.

The Support Meeting will be held **Thursday, January 12th, 6:00-7:30pm** at Lakeview Center, Building I, 1201 N H Street (between Hernandez & Lakeview).

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group is a Huge Success!

The first meeting of the **NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group** had 23 attendees, people from all walks of life who have expressed a desire to improve their mental health. The support group is slated for the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 6-7:30pm at **Lakeview Center**, Building I, 1201 N H Street (between Hernandez & Lakeview). Facilitators are **Lauren Ochoa** and **Lara Sweetland**, who attended training and have been on a journey of recovery themselves.

The **NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group** is a free, peer-led support group for adults living with mental illness. This group is unique in that it follows a structured model to ensure that those in the group have an opportunity to be heard and to get what they need. By sharing experiences in a safe and confidential setting, attendees can gain hope and develop relationships. The group encourages empathy, productive discussion and a sense of community.

One attendee said: "NAMI Connection has enabled me to take a good look at my illness and see that I am not alone. The program has given me additional tools to not only accept my illness, but to help others along the way."



One can join the group at any time, and come to one session or every one. The next meeting will be **Tuesday, January 17** at 6pm at **Lakeview Center**, Building I, 1201 N H Street (between Hernandez & Lakeview).. For more information on the support group, call 850 361-9813. Following is a flyer which can be printed out and given to those you know who could benefit.