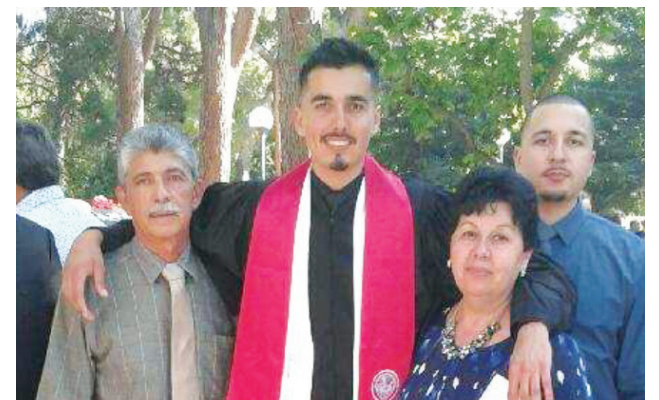




CONNECT TO PROTECT

Our connections with people at home, work and school can impact our mental health.



**Qhia txog kev nyuajsiab hauv
Hmoob lub zejzós: Nplooj 7**

**Información de Salud Mental para
la Comunidad Latina: Página 6**

CETA makes lifesaving connections

Care Enough to Act is on a mission to prevent suicide

From left, Holli Drobny, Butte County Behavioral Health, Community Services Program Manager, and Kris Kidd, Counseling Services Director of Stonewall Alliance, know that taking care of people's mental health is about forming meaningful relationships and caring enough to act.

PHOTO BY MARIANNA CHAMBAR



RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Help Central is a local nonprofit organization established to help Butte and Glenn county residents access health and human services by calling a 24/7 helpline, 2-1-1. Operators are social workers who can refer callers to no- and low-cost services. Butte 2-1-1 recently updated its youth resource page to make it easier to find resources for children. The page allows you to search a database of local resources specializing in youth-specific mental health services, filtering the results by: city, age, payment type and preferred language. "We held focus groups to identify the needs in the community, and the types of resources that we want to classify and categorize," says Tara Sullivan-Hames, the Executive Director of Help Central and Butte 2-1-1. "The page was designed for the community, by the community. It is meant to be an instantly accessible resource, a usable tool for people to turn to when they're not quite sure where to look, or how to find the mental health information and services that they need."

To use Help Central:

- **Call the 2-1-1 helpline 24 hours/day for live help**
- **Text your zip code to 898211 for live help**
- **Search the free public database at [HelpCentral.org](https://www.helpcentral.org)**
- **To access the youth page, visit [mentalhealth4youth.net](https://www.mentalhealth4youth.net)**

A person wrestling with seemingly insurmountable internal struggles can become overwhelmed by those struggles. It is at this point of despair when one human connection can save a life.

"We as humans strive to feel connected," says Holli Drobny, Butte County Behavioral Health, Community Services Program Manager. "Relationships become even more vital when we are struggling internally."

Research shows the connection made with one compassionate and caring person can provide the meaningful relationship a person struggling with mental illness needs to give them hope, Holli explains.

Holli is part of Care Enough to Act (CETA), which was created in 2011 in collaboration with the Butte County Suicide Prevention Task Force (SPTF). CETA's mission is clear: "We provide hope and care for people affected by suicide in order to reduce suicide attempts and create a healthier community."

Hope begins with education.

"CETA strives to educate the community about the resources available to those struggling with their mental health," Holli says. "That community education includes promoting mental wellness strategies."

Education includes overcoming the stigma of seeking professional help for mental illness. "Seeking professional help is not weakness, it is actually a sign of courage," Holli says.

One mental health strategy is to encourage people to find strength in their relationships with friends, parents, partners and co-workers.

"Reaching out to someone can take a lot of strength and it can save a life," says Kris Kidd, LMFT, Counseling Services Director of Stonewall Alliance, one of several CETA member organizations.

The world can feel like a lonely, dreadful place, Kris points out. A survivor of suicide who is diagnosed with Complex

PTSD, major depression and gender dysphoria, Kris knows the isolation of a person with suicidal thoughts.

"Even as a mental health professional, when I was at my most suicidal, I did not think to reach out to my support systems," Kris says. "It wasn't an option at that moment. I didn't have a good enough relationship with myself in that moment."

"We as humans strive to feel connected. Relationships become even more vital when we are struggling internally."

Holli Drobny

Butte County Behavioral Health, Community Services Program Manager

Often, the most important relationship is the one people have with themselves. A sense of self-worth can give someone the strength to ask for help, even despite our culture, which views mental health issues with shame, Kris says. People need to tell themselves there are people out there who care, who understand, who will not judge, Kris says.

"It is as simple as what Mr. Rogers taught us as children," Kris explains, "I see you and you are special, just the way you are. Everyone is special, valuable, and needs support sometimes."

CETA partners with the community to make people feel connected and feel that they have worth, Holli says. "Human nurturing is really the most impactful way to help," she says.



Ril Werstler, center, says her relationships with her daughters, seen here, aren't always perfect, but she has learned to listen to their needs.

PHOTO BY MARIANNA CHAMBARO

'We do Recover'

Ril has learned how to navigate parenthood while living with bipolar disorder

Parenting six daughters has been an "amazing journey" for Ril Werstler, especially while struggling personally with extreme emotional states.

"Consistency is vital in maintaining a large household. And flexibility," she says.

As a young mother with bipolar disorder, Ril found that her extreme highs and lows and her desire for a rigid schedule caused confusion and disruption for her daughters. They adapted to the pattern: When Mom stays in bed, fend for yourselves. When Mom's up; get things done.

Ril struggled with substance use disorder as well.

"I self medicated to feel a part of life, to feel normal," she says.

Substance use took on a destructive life of its own though, and Ril sought recovery through treatment centers and 12-step programs.

"As I took care of my addictions, I found that recovery was a holistic endeavor," Ril says. "The more I balanced the physical, mental, spiritual and social aspects of myself, the easier it was to

stay clean and to maintain a healthy mental state."

Ril is employed now through Northern Valley Catholic Social Service and works as a Peer Assistant and Team Lead at the Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center.

"Being of service to others is a vital part of my recovery," she says. "Being able to share what I've learned has really strengthened my personal wellness."

Recovery has improved her mothering skills, too. "My daughters are all adults now and are dealing with challenges of their own. Our relationships have weathered many storms. I strive to take care of myself to model for my daughters a healthy way to manage their mental health.

"Recovery is an individual journey and everyone responds and recovers differently. I've learned to really listen to my daughters and strive to respond by what is important to them."

"I've learned to really listen to my daughters and strive to respond by what is important to them."

Ril Werstler
Parent living with mental illness

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Supportive parents are vital to a child's health, but sometimes parents need support, too. Butte Parent Cafe lends that support by providing a space for parents to grow together. Through guided, small-group conversations, individuals share their experiences and discover different ways to parent successfully. "What overwhelmingly happens is that families, through this Parent Cafe process, become a new type of support network," says Justin Margolis, Butte Parent Cafe Coordinator. "They start being able to lean on each other for support where they

might not have had the support before, and they're really seeing that there's different ideas, and friendships, and resources outside of the circles that they generally run in."

Butte Parent Cafe runs from 6-8 p.m. on Fridays, with rotating locations in Chico, Oroville and Gridley. Free dinner and childcare are provided. Learn more about Butte Parent Cafe at www.butteparentcafe.com or contact Justin Margolis at jmargolis@valleyoakchildren.org.

‘I’ve Learned to Value Myself’

With a supportive circle of friends, Lilli is thriving as a young adult



Lilli Golde, currently a student at Butte College, says dealing with her peers in high school was “rough,” leading to her feeling isolated.

PHOTO BY
MARIANNA
CHAMBAR

Spend just a few minutes with Lilli Golde and you’ll find yourself smiling. The 19-year-old is buoyant, optimistic, and has that same positive effect on other people.

Taken away from her birth mother as a child, she was adopted along with her siblings by a family in another town. She’s now a college student and has a summer job working with youth through the Chico Area Recreation and Parks District. She also has a job providing respite care, stepping in when an in-home caregiver needs relief.

Despite the support of her loving family, Lilli couldn’t avoid bad experiences throughout high school that left her feeling increasingly isolated. Peer interactions grew so bad, she didn’t want to get out of bed on schooldays.

“It was pretty rough for a while, because I’ve never been a [person that] ... likes telling people no,” she says.

Along with her demeanor, her grades went down — a complete turnaround for a standout student and varsity athlete. Her parents noticed.

So, mid-semester junior year, Lilli switched into an independent study program to complete classwork at home. She then enrolled in College Connection, a program that let her spend her senior year at Butte College, where she now attends. She’s on track to transfer to Chico State.

“I feel that, through the years, everything that’s happened to me, I’ve gained confidence and learned to value myself and make sure other people understand that,” Lilli says.

The new friends she started making “were so much more mature, ready to take on the world, open and supportive,”

she says. “I feel like that got me out of my shell and helped me realize that life is going to throw [challenges] at you, and you just have to keep going.

“I was never totally alone, even though I felt like it at times.”

She also credits Youth for Change’s Youth Empowerment Services with building up her self-esteem during the nonprofit organization’s outdoor camping trips. Beginning at age 11, she’s spent her summers backpacking and whitewater rafting in places such as Klamath and Trinity rivers and along the Pacific Crest Trail, “places that were way out in the wilderness.”

“Greatest trips of my life,” Lilli says. “Couldn’t have asked for better adults to help direct me, nurture me, push me to the adult I am today.”

“I’ve gained confidence and learned to value myself.”

Lilli Golde
Butte College student

RESOURCES IN SCHOOLS

Finding an accessible and effective treatment plan for your child’s mental health concern can be a complicated task. School Based Counseling (SBC) simplifies the process by providing on-site mental health services for students and families at school. “We’re able to serve the kids whose parents are unable to get them to a counselor any other way,” says Tami Keeney (LMFT), SBC Program Manager at Youth for Change, a nonprofit that provides treatment, education and support services to children and families in northern California. “We work not only with the student but with the family, teachers, and other school staff to really wrap around whatever client that we serve.”

The SBC program is a collaboration between Youth For Change, the Butte County Department of Behavioral Health and the Paradise Unified School District. To learn more about School Based Counseling, visit www.youth4change.org.

Skylar Rossy had the support of friends while he dealt with depression and suicide.

PHOTO BY
MARIANNA
CHAMBARD

‘I Didn’t Feel So Alone’

Skylar found a place to belong during critical college years

BY HOWARD HARDEE

Skylar Rossy had always felt alone in his struggles with depressive episodes and suicidal thoughts throughout high school. At 18 years old, he had nobody to confide in — not even at home. He struggled with body-image issues, often resorting to self-harm.

“I didn’t know what I wanted or who I was,” he says.

Before he graduated high school, he had a mental breakdown and his parents decided to kick him out. He’d never had a job, and he quickly discovered that it’s practically impossible to rent an apartment without a history of credit or a co-signer. Homeless, he sought help at the 6th Street Center for Youth, a service organization through which he secured an entry-level job and transitional housing.

As a pre-operative transgender man, he attended therapy and group sessions at Stonewall Alliance, where he found a community he identified with.

“I had a network of people I could relate to, and I’d never had that before,” he says. “Before, I didn’t know what transgender was, and that [gender] was something I could change about myself. I didn’t feel so alone.”

However, at 20 years old, Skylar became isolated again due to an emotionally abusive relationship. Severely depressed, he tried to take his own life.

Due to gender-based victimization, discrimination, bullying, violence, being rejected by the family and friends, 40 percent of transgender adults report having attempted suicide, according to one national study.

Waking up in the hospital was an eye-opener for Skylar.

“I realized I didn’t want to die,” he says.

“I wanted to live my life the way I thought I should live my life. I wanted to be happy and make other people happy.”

Skylar then underwent testosterone therapy and sex reassignment surgery. The same support system was in place when he started

taking classes at Butte College.

College is a critical period for young people living with mental health diagnoses based in developmental trauma, according to Juni Banerjee-Stevens, a Ph.D. psychologist with Chico State’s Counseling and Wellness Center.

“One of the key ways your brain heals from trauma is connection,” she says. “You don’t have to be a club-joiner, but as we’re seeing more and more students come to college who may have experienced trauma,

it’s becoming more clear that you need to find at least a couple of people you can confide in, who *get* you.”

Skylar recently graduated with an AA degree in psychology from Butte College, and he’s enrolled in classes at Chico State this fall. Life hasn’t all been easy sailing since his suicide attempt, but he feels more supported than ever.

“I’ve got my own place, my own job,” he says. “I’m loving myself the best I can.”

“I had a network of people I could relate to, and I’d never had that before.”

Skylar Rossy
College student

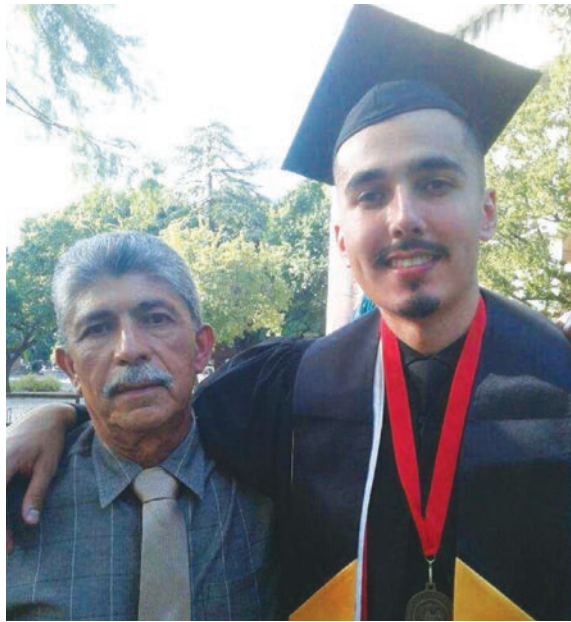
RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

College is an especially vulnerable time for those who struggle with mental health concerns. Studying demands during the semester, profound homesickness and financial stresses make it easier for mental health conditions to arise, and difficult for students to seek treatment when they do. “There’s a stigma issue,” says Kathy Dahlstrom, LMFT, “they may not access mental health because they don’t want anybody to know, and they can’t necessarily afford it on their own.” In light of these challenges, local colleges have taken steps to promote the mental wellness of their students with free counseling, treatment and referral on campus.

Low-cost and no-cost mental health services are available to students at various locations:

- **Butte College:** Butte College Student Health Center (530) 895-2441
- **CSU Chico:** Campus Alcohol and Drug Education Center (530) 898-6450, Psychological Counseling and Wellness Center (530) 898-6345
- **Off-campus:** Stonewall Alliance Center (530) 893-3336





Eduardo Santana, with the help of his parents, overcame his mental health struggles and graduated from CSU Chico. / Eduardo Santana, con la ayuda de sus padres, supero sus dificultades de salud mental y llego a graduarse de CSU Chico.

COURTESY
PHOTO /
FOTO
CORTESÍA

‘I’m Not Afraid to Seek Help’

(‘No me da miedo buscar ayuda’)

Eduardo finds the mental health support he needs / Eduardo encuentra el apoyo personal que él requiere.

BY RODNEY OROSCO /
ESCRITO POR RODNEY OROSCO

Seeking mental health care should not be considered a sign of weakness, but that is exactly what Eduardo Santana thought. As the CSU Chico graduate points out, this stigma is part of the Latinx culture.

“Under the role that machismo plays in Latin America,” Eduardo says, “people who are suffering from mental illness remain silent about their battles.”

Eduardo remained silent for years as he struggled with social anxiety as a teenager.

His Mexican-American extended family, his neighbors and even his older brother didn’t understand Eduardo’s mental illness.

“A family member down played the fact that I had a mental illness, and he instead saw it as a crutch,” Eduardo says.

When an individual seeks help, it can be perceived as an admission that something is wrong with the whole family, which increases the stigma about seeking help, he said.

Thankfully, Eduardo received the emotional support he needed — from a source very close to home.

“Both my parents were very supportive of me seeking help, as they also allowed me to come and discuss my struggles with them,” he says.

Eduardo’s parents listened to their son and gave support when the confused and angry young man needed it.

“The help a person with mental illness gets can be the deciding factor between life and death,” he says.

While Eduardo was lucky to find the emotional support he needed from his parents, other individuals in the Latinx community struggle to overcome obstacles that result from their immigration status in this country.

“I have friends and family members who feel they can’t get help, even though they want it and need it,” Eduardo says.

The risk of deportation is so great for undocumented Latinos, those needing mental health care will often just “tough it out” rather than seek public assistance, Eduardo said. And even if they did want to seek mental health care, they could not afford it, he pointed out, because they do not have health insurance.

“It is sad, because you can see, and they can see, they need the help,” he says. “The truth is that the need is inescapable and not getting help means the lower they fall.”

El buscar cuidado de salud mental no debería ser una debilidad, pero esto es precisamente lo que pensaba Eduardo Santana. Como el graduado de CSU Chico indica, este estigma es parte de la cultura Latinx.

“Bajo el papel que el machismo desempeña en Latino América,” dice Eduardo, “la gente que sufre de trastornos de salud mental se quedan callados de sus luchas.”

Eduardo se quedó callado por años mientras sufría de ansiedad social durante su adolescencia.

Su familia extendida, sus vecinos y hasta su hermano mayor veían al trastorno de salud mental de Eduardo como un estigma.

“Un familiar mío negó que tenía yo un trastorno de salud mental, en vez mirándolo como una muleta,” dice Eduardo.

Cuando un individuo busca ayuda, se puede percibir como admisión que algo no está bien con la familia entera, y llega a aumentar el estigma sobre la busca de ayuda, él dice.

Afortunadamente, Eduardo recibió el apoyo emocional que el necesitaba — de una manera profunda.

“Mis padres me apoyaron a buscar ayuda, y también me escucharon sobre mis dificultades abiertamente,” él dice.

Los padres de Eduardo escucharon a su hijo y dieron apoyo cuando el joven confundido y enojado lo necesitaba más.

“La ayuda que una persona con trastorno de salud mental recibe puede determinar si vive o si muere,” él dice.

Mientras Eduardo tuvo suerte en encontrar el apoyo emocional que el necesitaba de sus padres, otros individuos en la comunidad Latinx luchan en superar los obstáculos causados por sus estados inmigratorios en este país.

“Tengo amigos y miembros de mi familia que sienten que no pueden pedir ayuda, aunque la quieren y la necesitan,” dice Eduardo.

El riesgo de la deportación es tan grande para los Latinx indocumentados, que los que necesitan cuidado de salud mental muchas veces se aguantan en vez de buscar asistencia pública, Eduardo dijo. Y aunque quisieran buscar cuidado de salud mental, no pueden pagar, el índico, por no tener seguro médico.

“Es triste, porque puedes ver, y ellos pueden ver, que necesitan la ayuda,” él dice. “La verdad es que la necesidad es ineludible y no recibir la ayuda quiere decir que recayeran más bajo.”

RESOURCES FOR LATINX COMMUNITIES / RECURSOS PARA LA COMUNIDAD LATINX

For members of the Latinx community, finding culturally sensitive mental health care is critical. “It’s important that a mental health professional is familiar with the Latino culture because it provides a common ground to work from,” says Norma Servine-Lacey, a Promotores Case Manager. “The traditions and beliefs provide a point of reference, so they can better understand the needs of the individual.” Finding such a mental health professional can be difficult in the face of language barriers, stigma and misinformation. Promotores helps by connecting members of the Latinx community to local resources that are better suited to their needs.

Promotores is an extension of the Northern Valley Catholic Social Service (NVCSS) and is available in Chico, Gridley, and Biggs. To learn more about Promotores, visit www.nvcss.org/programs/promotores/

Para miembros de la comunidad Latinx, buscando cuidado de salud mental que es culturalmente sensible es crítico. “Es importante que el profesional de salud mental entienda la cultura Latinx porque el trabajo se proporciona de una base común,” dice Norma Servine-Lacey, Manejadora de Casos en el programa de Promotores. “Las tradiciones y creencias dan un punto de referencia, para poder entender mejor las necesidades del individuo.” Encontrando un profesional de salud mental como este puede ser difícil por las barreras del idioma, el estigma, y desinformación. Promotores ayuda a conectar a los miembros de la comunidad Latinx a recursos local que son más apropiados para sus necesidades.

Promotores es una extensión de Northern Valley Catholic Social Service (NVCSS) y están disponibles en Chico, Gridley, y Biggs. Para aprender más sobre el programa de Promotores, visite www.nvcss.org/programs/promotores/

‘I’m smiling again’

(‘Kuv rov luagntxhi dua lawm’)

Bao tried traditional healing before seeking Western medicine / Npaub siv neeb siv yag uantej nws mus nrhiav Sab Hnubpoob li tshuaj noj

BY MACKENZIE MENDEZ / SAU LOS NTAWM MACKENZIE MENDEZ

Bao Vang’s mental health journey began shortly after she moved to America. She was 43 and the stress of her mother’s passing coupled with her husband’s illness put a tremendous amount of pressure on her, making her transition from Thailand to America even more difficult.

Bao describes feeling hopeless and incomplete as depression and anxiety took hold of her life.

Noticing the changes in her behavior, her family sought help through traditional Hmong channels. Bao’s family enlisted a shaman to perform a hu-plig (soul calling) ceremony, hoping to restore harmony in her life by reuniting her physical body with her spirit. When Bao’s symptoms persisted, they tried another soul calling ceremony, and another.

After exhausting all the traditional methods of healing, Bao and her family turned to Western medicine to find an alternative treatment plan. A family member referred her to Butte County Behavioral Health, which helped her access counseling and medication for her condition. Her family encouraged her treatment, helping her overcome the language barriers and the financial and transportation constraints that would have made accessing mental health services impossible.

Her family was emotionally supportive, too. Bao didn’t receive any criticism for turning to Western medicine, and her relatives were respectful and supportive of the decisions she made during her mental health journey.

That respect and support was vital to Bao’s recovery. Her family’s understanding made it possible for her to assume a more active role in family life as she recovered, which helped to reduce the sense of isolation and incompleteness that caused her depression and anxiety in the first place.

Today she is 67 and lives with her daughter. She is a respected member of her family, and her relatives describe her as being filled with laughter and smiles.

Npaub Vaj txoj kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv pib tom qab nws tuaj txog tsis ntev nyob rau tebchaws Asmelikas.

Nws muaj 43 xyos thaum nws txoj kev nyuajsiab pib vim nws niam tau tag nruamsim thiab nws tus txiv muaj mob hnyav, ua rau nws lubneeb nyob Thaibteb tuaj txog rau Asmelika teb nyuaj heev.

Npaub qhia tias nws tas kev ciasiab thiab tsis muaj kev vam vim nws txog kev nyuajsiab thiab ceebntshai loojkoov nws lub neej.

Nws tsevneeg pom tias nws tus cwjpw tau pauv thiab tau mus nhraiv kev pab los ntawm Hmoob kablis kevcai moojkav mojcoj. Npaub tsevneeg tau mus hu ib tug txivneeb tuaj hu plig kom nws nyob nyabxeeb. Lawv kuj hu plig ntau zaus tabsis nws qhov kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv loj zuzus.

Lawv kuj siv txhuayam kev pab rau sab uaneeb uayaig los pab kom nws nyob nyabxeeb tabsi pom tau haistias ntshe yuav tsu tau nrhiav Sab Hnubpoob li kev pab thiab. Nws tsevneeg kuj xa nws mus rau tsev Kajsiaab, lawv pab txog counseling thiab muab tshuaj rau nws noj. Nws tsevneeg txhawbnqa qhov kev pab los ntawm tsev Kajsiaab, thiab nws tsevneeg thiab cov txheebze pab txhais lus rau nws, thauj nws mus, thiab them nws cov kev khomob los ntawm kev nyuajsiab.

Nws tsevneeg kuj txhawbnqa nws tej kev xav. Npaub kuj tsis tau txais lus thuam thaum nws mus nrhiav kev pab rau nws cov kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv los ntawm Sab Hnubpoob li kev pab.

Tej kev hwm thiab txhawbnqa tseemcee rau Npaub txog txoj kev nyabxeeb. Nws tsevneeg txoj kev nkagsiab pab nws rovgab los pab nws tus kheej rovlos nrog nws tsevneeg nyob kajsiaab li qub, thiab pab daws nws cov kev nyuajsiab thiab kom tsis txhob xav mus nyob ibleeg.

Hnub no, Vaj muaj 67 xyoo thiab nws nrog nws tus ntshais nyob. Nws tsevneeg hwm nws heev thiab lawv haistias nws nyob tau kajsiaab lug rau txojkev zoosiab thiab luagntxhi.

Bao Vang, who suffered from depression and anxiety after immigrating to America, reduces her sense of isolation by regularly attending Zoosiab recreational groups.

Npaub Vaj muaj kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv tom qab nws tuaj txog tebchaws Asmelika, nws kuj tau mus nrog Zoosiab kev sib ntsib kom nws daws tau nws cov kev nyuajsiab thiab tsis txhob nyob ibleeg.

PHOTO BY/DUAB
THAJ LOS NTAWM
MARIANNA
CHAMBARO



RESOURCES FOR THE HMONG COMMUNITY

While younger “Americanized” Hmong are becoming more open to sharing mental health challenges, their grandparents are still rooted in a culture that views mental illness as taboo, says Seng Yang, Director of the Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County.

“The Hmong community literally don’t have a term for [mental illness],” he says. “We have a challenge in Hmong community ... [that we] don’t communicate a lot about this issue.”

This stigma around mental health issues can be very isolating. That’s why the center created the Zoosiab

“Happy Program,” which gives older Hmong individuals a safe place to talk about mental health challenges. The program utilizes both Western treatment methods and traditional cultural practices, which Yang says leads to more older Hmong being comfortable sharing their struggles.

The Zoosiab “Happy Program” meets three times in Chico at the East of Eaton Community Room and three times at the Hmong Cultural Center in Oroville. For more information, visit hmongculturalcenter.net.

KEV PAB RAU ZEJZOG HMOOB

Cov hlus uas cojli “Asmelika” lawm lawv kuj tham qhibsiab lug txog kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv, tabsis cov laus tseem coj moojkav mojcoj kevcai pojyawm Hmoob ces lawv tsis khabseeb tham txog lawv cov kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv, hais los ntawm Txawjxeeb Yaj, Thawj (Director) ntawm Hmoob Cultural Center of Butte County.

“Hmoob yeej tsis muaj loslus [mental illness],” nws hais. “Peb muaj kev hnyavsiab txhawjxeeb rau hauv Hmoob zejzog ... [ces peb] tsis tham ntau ntau txog cov teebmeem zoo lino.”

Lub qhovtxhab teebmeem kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv kuj yog ib qhov kev cais. Vim li ntawv lub koomhaum thiaj tau tshim muaj Zoosiab “Zoosiab

Kev Pab” yog ib txoj kev pab uas nws zoo rau cov niamtxiv Hmoob laus tuaj tham txog lawv cov kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv. Qhov kev pab no siv Sab Hnubpoob li kev pab thiab Hmoob kablis kevcai moojkav mojcoj uake, Yaj haistias qhov no nws ua rau cov niamtxiv Hmoob laus muaj hnubug khabseeb hlo los tham txog lawv tej kev nyuajsiab ntshovplawv.

Zoosiab Kev Pab muaj sib ntsib peb zaug rau ib lub hli nyob rau Chico hauv lawv koog tsev East of Eaton lub Community Room thiab ib hli peb zaug nyob rau Oroville hauv Hmoob Cultural Center of Butte County. Xav paub ntxiv, mus siab peb rau ntawm peb lub vasab www.hmongculturalcenter.net.

‘He Never Gave Up on Me’

Nicole found a long-lost brother who saw her through mental health challenges

For as long as she can remember, Nicole Thomas knew she had a brother. That may not seem unusual, except for the fact that she was raised with a sister as her only sibling.

“As a kid, I used to ask my parents, ‘Where’s my brother?’” Nicole recalls. “They kept on saying I don’t have one.”

Nicole was adopted at birth. This was no secret. But what she didn’t know was that her birth mother already had an infant son when Nicole was adopted.

Growing up, Nicole felt she didn’t quite fit in with her adoptive family, which included an adopted sister. Nicole also struggled with feelings of self-hatred and suicide. She couldn’t shake the feeling that there was someone else out there who might understand how she felt.

As a teenager, Nicole did some online detective work to locate her brother. She hesitated to contact him, for fear of disrupting his life. A couple years later, when she was 19, Adam tracked her down and sent her a message on Myspace. Nicole’s reply changed both their lives.

They met for coffee and found coincidences: “He grew up not very far from where I did, and actually worked at the movie theater near my house that I almost worked for ... and he ended up going to the same high school as my adopted sister, at the same time.”

After meeting, Nicole and Adam became virtually inseparable. He became her best friend and her support as the mental health issues she battled grew more severe. Together they faced her anxiety, bipolar disorder, agoraphobia, self-harm and thoughts of suicide.

His insistence she get help led her to the psychiatrist and therapist who catalyzed her recovery. Adam came to some of her therapy appointments, even moved to Chico to live with her as she attended Chico State.

She’s told Adam, with gratitude: “You cared enough to put your foot down.”

That was eight years ago. Nicole, 31, has put her psychology degree to use as a case manager at the Iversen Wellness & Recovery Center in Chico. Adam, 32, moved back to San Jose with his girlfriend for a job in the tech industry.

“I always say how grateful I am for him because he never gave up on me,” Nicole says.

“I always say how grateful I am for him because he never gave up on me.”

Nicole Thomas
Sister

Nicole Thomas was supported through mental health challenges by her brother.

PHOTO BY MARIANNA CHAMBAR



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

A family relationship can become complicated when one of its members is diagnosed with a mental health condition. However, there are also many benefits for that individual and his/her family when the journey to health is shared. “The severity of the symptoms, as well as duration of episodes can be reduced in many cases if treatment is sought early from an experienced professional, and a required treatment plan of medication and/or psychotherapy is supported by the entire family” says J.A. Quaytman, Ph.D. Dr. Quaytman also recommended that “couples involved in a romantic relationship where one of the members may be experiencing mental

health issues should seek premarital or couple counseling to identify and better understand what difficulties to expect.” “Genetic counseling”, according to Dr. Quaytman, “is also beneficial for couples who may be planning to have children, and where a close relative of either partner has been identified with a heritable (genetically based) mental health condition.”

NVCSS Counseling Services offer a full range of services, including family and couples counseling. To learn more about NVCSS Counseling Services, call (530) 241-0552.



Garth Nielsen, left, looks in on 89-year-old Elizabeth Bernstein, whom he was matched with as part of the Senior Companions program, which aims to provide social connections with older adults.

PHOTO BY MARIANNA CHAMBAR

“It’s just such tremendous human kindness.”

Elizabeth Bernstein
Senior Companions program participant

‘I can’t imagine life without him’

When her husband died, Elizabeth craved companionship

With all the stories she has to tell, it’s no wonder Elizabeth Bernstein is a writer. An Englishwoman who came to the United States after living in Africa and Iceland, she’s packed several lifetimes’ worth of living into her 89 years.

Many of those years were spent with her husband, Alvin, with whom she moved frequently before landing for good in Paradise. When Alvin died eight years ago, Elizabeth received grief counseling, plus additional support from Passages, a nonprofit dedicated to assisting seniors. However, she now lived alone and craved companionship.

In her neighborhood, Elizabeth explains, “everyone keeps to themselves

very much. Now, they’re very nice when we start to talk, they’re very nice. But to me, a mobile home park — especially a senior mobile home park — can be a very lonely place.”

So around five years ago, she joined a writing group held at a local church. There she met Garth Nielsen, a published author who coincidentally volunteered for Passages. The two became fast friends.

Soon after, Garth asked to volunteer for Passages’ peer program called Senior Companions — in which his wife, Barb, also volunteers. Elizabeth became his first match.

“My wife and I have tried to be there for Elizabeth in whatever way we can be,” Garth says.

“It’s wonderful, just wonderful,” she adds.

Isolation can be detrimental to mental health, especially for older adults. Programs like Senior Companions provide a social connection, someone to look after their well-being, as well as a helpful hand for daily activities.

Garth describes himself as “a gofer” since much of his role as a companion comprises helping Elizabeth with errands, such as taking her to get her hair done and to medical appointments. But his role is greater: They speak by phone and in person, including a weekly dinner with him and Barb at their home. Elizabeth brings them something: low-sugar cranberry juice (she’s diabetic), bread, shrimp cocktail, a houseplant.

“I couldn’t imagine [life] without Barb and Garth from Passages,” she says. “They have filled the awful gap left behind by Alvin.”

Due to illness and losing her strength, Elizabeth says she’s not up for going out to lunch with her other friends. “But, of course, if you’re persistent enough to live to be nearly 90, what can you expect?” she quips.

Garth and Barb have a cookout in the park planned for Elizabeth’s 90th birthday.

Summing up the relationship, Elizabeth says: “It’s just such tremendous human kindness.”

RESOURCES FOR SENIORS

Peer relationships provide unique support in a person’s mental health journey. “A lot of people open up and tell somebody who’s considered a neutral individual a lot more,” says Julie Buck, the Director of Volunteer Services for Passages. “They can really be themselves versus being a bit more guarded about what they say and do in front of a counselor, or a family member.” The understanding inherent in a peer relationship keeps seniors from feeling isolated, an important factor, Buck says, as isolation is one of the largest contributors to depression and anxiety in seniors. Passages’ Connections program is aimed at reducing the sense of detachment that often leads to these mental health concerns, offering low-cost and no-cost counseling to seniors while providing peer support through the Senior Companions program.

To learn more about the Passages, call (530) 898-5923 or visit www.passagescenter.org.

Marianne Paiva experienced traumatic stress as a result of working as a paramedic, which she describes in her 2011 book, "Breathe: Essays from a Recovering Paramedic." While studying sociology, she discovered connections on the job can be an insulating factor against workplace stress.

PHOTO BY MARIANNA CHAMBARD

'I wasn't taking care of myself'

After working as a paramedic, Marianne discovered the key to reducing workplace stress: her co-workers

Being a paramedic in your hometown can be traumatic, especially if it's a small town. Inevitably, you respond to car accidents, drug overdoses and incidents of domestic violence involving people you've known your whole life.

Indeed, Marianne Paiva saw things during her time as a paramedic in Orland, where she was born and raised, that she cannot forget.

"I was suffering pretty significant [post-traumatic stress disorder]," she recalls. "I would drive down the street and be like, 'I remember that accident — it was ugly. I'm not going there.' And then I'd always avoid that street. I wouldn't talk to certain people because it reminded me too much of those days."

As she recounts in her 2011 book, "Breathe: Essays from a Recovering Paramedic," she worked three or four 24-hour shifts a week, attending classes at Chico State on her off days.

The extreme stress eventually got to her. "I just wasn't taking care of myself," she said. "My body got worn down, my mental state got worn down. I suffered a back injury that left me disabled for nine months. I was bedridden."

As she recovered and completed her bachelor's degree in sociology, Marianne became interested in the subject of work-related burnout. In fact, she explored the subject with her master's thesis and had a realization: Other types of first responders

didn't suffer the same level of stress as paramedics.

"Police officers have the exact same type of stress," she said. "Firefighters, too. Why don't they burn out as fast?"

Marianne found that it came down to connection and recognition. Police officers and firefighters typically have tight-knit workplaces that provide insulation from the inherent stressors of the job. "They have more support from each other; they are like a family. And they also have more support from the



the all-encompassing nature of occupational stress, especially in fields that deal with traumatic events — i.e., first responders, law enforcement and mental health professionals. And the best way to shield oneself from that stress is to develop strong relationships in the workplace.

"The network people have at their jobs absolutely influences their satisfaction and how they feel about what they're doing."

Marianne Paiva, Ph.D.
Sociology lecturer

community," she said. "It comes down to how much you feel appreciated at your job that contributes to your overall sense of well-being at work."

Now Marianne teaches the sociology of stress at Chico State. She emphasizes to her students the importance of recognizing

"It's a social thing," she said. "The network people have at their jobs absolutely influences their satisfaction and how they feel about what they're doing."

RESOURCES IN THE WORKPLACE

Experiencing stress in the workplace is common, but when the occasional stressful afternoon becomes a regular occurrence, it might be necessary to make some changes to your routine. "Frequent and consistent high levels of stress with no time to reset and calm our nervous system [can be] toxic," says Dr. Sésha Zinn, a licensed clinical psychologist. "You really want to choose, or be a part of creating, a healthy work environment so that people can ... fully engage in their professional activities." So what does a healthy workplace look like? Dr. Zinn recommends creating a trauma-informed work space, allowing time to connect with colleagues, breaking regularly for physical exercise, and engaging in mindfulness practices, including deep breathing and short meditation breaks.

Enloe Medical Center offers Occupational Wellness Programs to help promote safe work environments and healthy lifestyle choices. To learn more, visit www.enloe.org.

Starting the Conversation

BY MACKENZIE MENDEZ

Expressing concern about a friend or loved one's mental health can be difficult. Colter Diehl, an LMFT with Tehama County Health Services Agency, shares some tips to help you find the words you need.

TIP 1: Be specific.

Referring to a specific observation when asking someone about their mental health helps them understand where you're coming from and why you're concerned. Even if it seems trivial, your observation could be a sign of something serious. "You might be the only person to ask, and you could literally save someone's life by being the person to ask," says Diehl.

Example: "I've noticed you've been canceling plans with your friends a lot lately, is everything OK?"

TIP 2: Be straightforward.

It might seem impolite to speak candidly about something that is potentially painful to a person, but where mental health is concerned, asking a straightforward question is the best way to go. "The person that we're talking with is living in that reality, so we're not going to make it any more scary or difficult for them by actually asking the question directly," says Diehl.

Example: "You haven't had much of an appetite lately. Are you feeling depressed?"

TIP 3: Listen.

When asking someone about their mental health, your main role is to be a listener. "Listening is the most important piece of it," says Diehl. "If we can really just listen, and help people feel heard, I think that makes a tremendous amount of difference."

Example: "I sense that you're in a lot of pain, and I just want to be with you."

TIP 4: Be patient.

Don't be discouraged if a person isn't receptive to your concerns right away. A person might respond defensively to your questions out of fear or because they feel too overwhelmed to answer. "It can come off as very uninviting, but very often even those most uninviting things can actually be invitations in and of themselves for a person to stay. If I'm someone who's in an incredible amount of pain and you're trying to ask me about it, my initial reaction may be to push you away because I'm scared of being hurt or I'm scared of something bad happening, but that doesn't mean I don't want you to stay with me."

Example: "There's no pressure to talk about it. I'm here for you whenever you need me."

SAVING LIVES WITH ASIST

Erica Zuccato is a bilingual Family Support Worker for Healthy Families Tehama Public Health Services Agency and Red Bluff. She is trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), a two-day workshop put on by LivingWorks, a suicide intervention training company. Zuccato has used the skills

she learned in the ASIST training to do a life-saving intervention on two separate occasions. "It's been an eye opener for me," says Zuccato. "It helped me identify their actions, their body language, those key words that they would say, and it helped me know the proper steps to take. I kind of tiptoed around things before,

and now I don't because this could be a matter of life and death for this person, and I want to get them the help they need right then and there."

To learn more about ASIST, visit www.livingworks.net

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Butte County crisis

Behavioral Health 24/7

Crisis Line

800-334-6622

530-891-2810

560 Cohasset Road, Ste. 180, Chico, CA

www.buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth

Enloe Behavioral Health

530-332-5250

www.enloe.org/wellness

Crisis Care Advocacy and Triage

Non-licensed mobile unit available

24/7 to respond to Mental Health

Emergencies

510-396-5109

bridginggapsbutte@gmail.com

www.ccat.life

Butte County support

6th Street Center for Youth

(ages 14-24)

130 West 6th St., Chico

530-894-8008

www.6thstreetcenter.org

African American Family & Cultural Center

530-532-1205

www.aafcc-oroville.org

Butte County Behavioral Health

530-891-2810 (Access Line)

www.buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth

Butte County Library

855-379-4097

www.buttecounty.net/bclibrary

Butte Youth Now

530-891-2891

www.butteyouthnow.org

Care Enough to Act

www.careenoughtoact.org

Genuine DBT

Provides specialized treatment (accepts

Medi-Cal/Medicare)

530-433-1001

www.genuinedbt.com

Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County

530-534-7474

www.hmongculturalcenter.net

Homeless/Runaway Emergency Action Response

Team (HEART) (under 18 years)

877-478-6292

www.youth4change.org

Iversen Wellness & Recovery Center

492 Rio Lindo, Chico

530-879-3311

www.buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth/AdultServices/IversenCenter.aspx

The Jesus Center

1297 Park Ave., Chico, CA

530-345-2640

jesuscenter.org

NAMI Butte County

1-888-626-4530

530-343-7775

6 Governors Lane, Chico, CA

www.namibutteco.com

Northern Valley Talk Line

855-582-5554

<https://nvcss.org/programs/northern-valley-talk-line/>

Mothers Strong

www.helpcentral.org/mothersstrong

www.facebook.com/MothersStrong

Therapeutic Solutions

530-285-4602

www.therapeuticsolutionspc.com

Butte 211

Provides a way to quickly find low-cost

and no-cost health and human services

in Butte County 2-1-1

www.HelpCentral.org

PASSAGES

Serving older adults and their families

530-898-5923

www.passagescenter.org

Promotores

Serving Latino and Hmong residents

530-345-1600

www.nvcss.org/butte/promotores

Stonewall Alliance

Serving the gender and sexual minority

(GSM) community

530-893-3336

www.stonewallchico.org

center@stonewallchico.org

Low-fee, no-fee counseling

530-809-2485

counseling@stonewallchico.org

Torres Community Shelter

Serving homeless community

101 Silver Dollar Way, Chico, CA

530-891-9048

chicosshelter.org

Veteran's Service Office

530-891-2759

www.buttecounty.net/dess/Services/VeteranServices

Youth For Change

530-877-1965

www.youth4change.org

National crisis

24-hour Crisis Text Line - Alex Project

Text "LISTEN" to 741-741

www.alexproject.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio

888-628-9454

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol

SAMHSA Suicide Safe mobile app

store.samhsa.gov/apps/suicidesafe

The Trevor Project

For LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention

866-488-7386

www.thetrevorproject.org

Veterans Crisis Line

800-273-8255, press 1

www.veteranscrisisline.net

Statewide support

Each Mind Matters

www.eachmindmatters.org

Know the Signs

www.suicideispreventable.org

The Friendship Line

For older adults

800-971-0016

www.ioaging.org

Support at school

Butte County Office of Education

530-532-5650

www.bcoe.org

Butte College Student Health Center

530-895-2441

www.butte.edu/shc

Butte College Safe Place & Wellness Program

530-879-6185

www.butte.edu/safeplace

CSU, Chico Counseling & Wellness Center

530-898-6345

www.csuchico.edu/counseling

CSU, Chico Student Health Center

530-898-5241

www.csuchico.edu/shs

CSU, Chico Safe Place

530-898-3030

www.csuchico.edu/safeplace

Glenn County

Glenn County Behavioral Health

Welcome Line

530-865-6733

www.countyofglenn.net/dept/health-human-services/behavioral-health/welcome-line

Tehama County

Empower Tehama

24-hour crisis domestic

violence services

530-528-0226

www.atvr.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

Greater Sacramento Chapter

707-968-7563

rayers@afsp.org

www.asfp.org/chapter/afsp-greater-sacramento

Children First Counseling Center

530-529-9454

www.lassencounseling.com

Family Counseling Center

530-527-6702

www.fccredbluff.com

Head Start Counseling Services

530-529-1500

www.nccdi.com/tehamacenter

Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention

Skills Training (ASIST) Training

Available year-round through Tehama

County Health Services Agency. To

register, visit www.eventbrite.com and

search TCHSA.

530-527-8491 ext. 3713

Kelly.Keith@tchsa.net

Tehama County Community Crisis Response Unit (CCRU)

530-527-5637

www.tehamacohealthservices.net/MentalHealth/crisis_services.htm

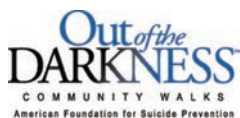
Tehama County Mental Health

Outpatient Services

530-527-8491, ext. 3121

www.tehamacohealthservices.net

CHICO OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMMUNITY WALK



Saturday, Oct. 13, 2018

Hours: 9 a.m. registration/check-in,

10 a.m. walk begins, 1 p.m. walk ends

Where: Chico City Plaza, W.

Fourth St., Chico

This 1.3-mile walk raises awareness and decreases stigma surrounding suicide. Friends, family and co-workers will come together to raise funds for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Registration: FREE registration is at www.afsp.org/Chico, or for more information,

contact Ariel Ellis, 530-433-9293,

arielschoolpsych@gmail.com or find the

event on Facebook.



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Butte College

