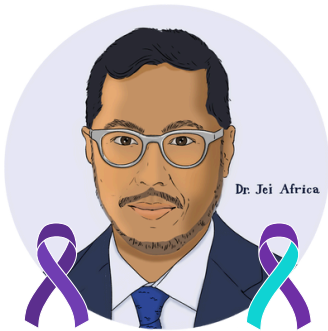




DIRECTOR'S NEWSLETTER: Suicide Prevention & Recovery Month



Dr. Jei Africa

This September we wear a teal and purple ribbon to honor Suicide Prevention Month and a purple ribbon to honor Recovery month. Both of these months are important for BHRS because they elevate the importance of increased public awareness and education on these issues, but more importantly on how to access support and resources. As someone who has been impacted by suicide, substance use and mental health conditions I see the value of being able to talk about it honestly so the shame and stigma goes away. We know recovery is possible, help and treatment is available and everyone can play a role in helping save a life!

Visit SMCSuicidePrevention.com this month for updates on free events, how to get involved and resources. For Recovery Month events, visit [Voices of Recovery's website](#) or see page 3.

Peninsula Family Services Aims to Replicate Approach to Loneliness

Loneliness, declared a public health crisis by the SMC Board of Supervisors in January, has profound impacts on the well-being of individuals across all age groups. Peninsula Family Service (PFS) is leading the charge to address this critical issue with the "Overcoming Loneliness Through Care and Connections" initiative. In collaboration with San Mateo County and the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), PFS is spearheading a three-pronged approach to overcome loneliness that is already underway.

In June, coinciding with Loneliness Awareness Month, the initiative raised awareness about the mental and physical health impacts of loneliness. The campaign included community outreach and education efforts aimed at destigmatizing loneliness and promoting social connections. Second, PFS is expanding the successful Peer Counseling Program for older adults, which provides weekly one-on-one meetings and group support to help participants build social connections and reduce feelings of isolation. Finally, PFS will double the number of participants and peer counselors within a year, focusing on underserved populations such as African Americans, LGBTQIA+ adults and Pacific Islanders. These three pillars—awareness, peer support and inclusivity—form the foundation of our approach.

By enhancing and publicizing our model, we will create a toolkit for nationwide replication. Working with UCSF, we will track and document the effectiveness of our programs, ensuring that no one in San Mateo County faces loneliness alone. Finally, we will share our findings to help other communities overcome loneliness.

By Charles Hansen, Chief Program Officer. For more information, please visit pfso.org/loneliness/.



Client Story: Always Remain Hopeful

My name is Roxanne Barfield and my story is about Suicide Prevention. At the age of three I had open heart surgery, the recovery from this included regular visits to different doctors and therapists. My mother suffered a variety of serious mental conditions that caused her to neglect these appointments, raising suspicion with Child Protective Services. At this point, my mother decided to end both of our lives through murder/suicide. The attempt failed ending up with her going into prison time and me into foster care.



I found my faith in God at 12 years of age and with faith, no matter how dark my world was or how hard my circumstances were, I didn't want to choose suicide as an option for me. I did not want to take my own life. In every tumultuous, terrifying situation I have always sought out help with my faith and succeeded.

Suicide not only takes one life, it greatly affects many others. I am sharing this story as a testament that there are always alternatives. The resources that I have found in San Mateo County are amazing and I want to recognize [Life Moves](#), [Healthcare in Action](#), The Navigation Center, [IMAT](#) and my appointed therapist who have all helped me find so much hope and new possibilities for future and my journey.

By Roxanne Barfield.

Client Story: Beneath the Surface of a Mental Health Warrior

My name is Amanda, I am 36 years old and live in South San Francisco. I am a graduate of the BHRS program, [Lived Experience Academy \(LEA\)](#). I am grateful to be celebrating another National Suicide Prevention Month as a survivor of my own suicide attempt in 2007. I am passionate about sharing my story with others in hopes that it may help someone who is struggling or someone who may think that suicide is their only option. I hope to spark the notion that with the right support, they too can find purpose and reason for living.



Living with Bipolar Disorder has sunk me to the lowest depths of depression, darkness, addiction and isolation. As well as mania that gives me superhuman energy, creativity and many times, impulsive behaviors. After waking up in the ICU and realizing I survived my attempt, it became my mission to learn new tools to better navigate the world with the cards I had been dealt. I got sober, lived in a halfway house, committed myself to behavioral health and cut ties with relationships that were not supportive of my new healthy lifestyle. I wish my story was linear and I could say that I lived happily ever after, but my journey continues to have many turns and dips.

Continue Amanda's story on the [BHRS Blog](#).

Recovery Happens 2024 Events

In collaboration with BHRS, Voices of Recovery is proud to host the 32nd annual Recovery Happens Month Celebrations this September. These free events provide a positive and empowering outlet for individuals on the path of recovery to expand their knowledge and celebrate their accomplishments.



Candlelight Vigil - September 6, 5:00pm at 400 County Center, Redwood City Courthouse

Join us for a Candlelight Vigil to celebrate recovery and unity in our community. This event symbolizes our commitment to support, remember and advocate for those affected by addiction. Let's come together to honor all experiences and reaffirm our dedication to recovery and fellowship.

Walk of Hope / Brunch - September 10, 10:00am at 400 County Center, Redwood City Courthouse

The Walk of Hope is in honor of Philomena Anderson-Ashford's life, who worked in the field of recovery. As a woman proud of her recovery, she generously spread her laughter and joy. We march in her honor, heads raised high, never forgetting the incredible person she was. This event will feature brunch, speakers sharing personal stories of recovery, a resource fair for substance use and mental health challenges and a community recovery art show hosted at the Recovery Connection Center at 650 Main Street, Redwood City. There will also be a proclamation ceremony as the SMC Board of Supervisors recognize National Recovery Month.

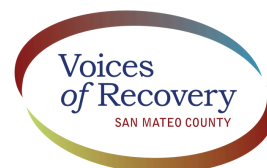
Picnic - September 18, 10:00am at 1701 Coyote Point, Recreation Area: Eucalyptus, San Mateo

Join us for a BBQ lunch and resource fair with a joyful atmosphere including a DJ, lawn games, art projects, raffles and a guided walk led by San Mateo County park rangers. We will also announce the winner of the Steve Kaplan Award, a tribute to a person or organization who represents, supports and advocates for the diverse SMC recovery community. Come and enjoy a day of community, connection and celebration!

Dance - September 28 , 6:00pm at 416 Second Avenue, Project 90: Friendship Hall, San Mateo

Our month-long celebration wraps up with a dance at Friendship Hall. This event will feature music, dancing, entertainment, dinner and cake. It's a wonderful opportunity for everyone to relax, showcase their individuality and celebrate the benefits of living a sober life. This evening is all about unity, activity, joy and gratitude for the journey of recovery and its positive impact on our lives. Everyone is invited to this special occasion which honors Recovery Month and reaffirms our commitment to supporting and empowering our recovery community!

By Heather Henry, Outreach Coordinator, Advanced Level WRAP Facilitator, Recovery Coach II, Mental Health First Aider.



Carry Naloxone, Save a Life

Naloxone, commonly referred to by brand name Narcan, is a life-saving medication that reverses an opioid overdose and can give individuals a second chance at recovery. Naloxone is safe to use, has virtually no side effects or effects in the absence of opioids and is readily available in California. One BHRS client, Kenneth, is extremely grateful for the existence of Narcan. He is now in recovery, but during his time of using fentanyl he reports overdosing 13 times and being administered Narcan every time (half by bystanders or friends, half by EMS). "It saved my life," says Kenneth, "I am able to live a better life and see a path back to my family and fixing myself."

Where to get naloxone (Narcan):

Pharmacies and online

- Naloxone is available online via [NEXT Distro](#), [Target](#) and [Amazon](#).
- Chain pharmacies such as CVS, Rite Aid, Safeway and Walgreens are able to provide naloxone without a prescription from your physician. Pharmacists can prescribe naloxone and bill your insurance. Without insurance, the cost of naloxone nasal spray typically ranges from \$40 - \$80. Discount coupons may also be available from [GoodRX](#).

County behavioral or medical facilities

- County patients may be able to obtain free naloxone by speaking with their provider. BHRS clients can obtain naloxone from regional clinics, crisis teams and residential programs such as Eucalyptus House or Hawthorne House.
- The [IMAT Team](#), located at the San Mateo Medical Center and County primary care clinics, can hand out free naloxone to anyone in need or concerned about a loved one. Call at 650-573-2735.
- A Narcan vending machine has recently been installed in the [public lobby of the Maguire Correctional Facility](#). The machine provides a box of Narcan containing two doses to anyone who needs it, including the public.



What is it like to administer naloxone?

Dr. Tia Bell, Program Coordinator at BHRS, has experience administering naloxone five different times when working in clinical setting as well as walking in the community. Tia carries Narcan in her work and personal bag and has it at home. When asked what it was like to administer Narcan on one occasion, Tia shared,

"In the moment I was scared. But I remembered my training and I remembered that if I didn't do what I needed to do that there could be potentially more harm and even death in front of me and other community members. You never know when you need Narcan, but having it when you need it is crucial. That's always been at the forefront of my mind while working with communities - to ensure that I always have it because I don't want to be caught in a situation without it."



How to Use Naloxone Nasal Spray for an Opioid Overdose

KNOW THE SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

- Person is passed out and you cannot wake them up.
- Breathing very slowly, choking, gurgling or snoring sounds.
- Lips or nails are blue, skin is cold or clammy.
- Pupils are tiny.

CHECK FOR A RESPONSE

- Shake them and shout to wake them up.
- If no response, grind your knuckles into their chest bone for 5-10 seconds.
- If the person still does not respond, call 911.

CALL 911

- Tell the dispatcher, "*I think someone has overdosed*".
- California's Good Samaritan law protects those giving emergency medical care at the scene of a medical emergency, including giving naloxone.

If the victim needs to be left alone, place them in recovery position.



- Turn to one side, place hand against chin to support head
- Bend knee against floor to prevent body from rolling
- Tilt head back, lift chin to open up the airway

HOW TO ADMINISTER NALOXONE (NARCAN)

▶ Watch this brief instructional [video by the CDC](#)



- Lay the person on their back to receive a dose of Narcan.
- Take Narcan Nasal Spray out of box.
- Peel back tab with the circle to open the Narcan.



- Hold the Narcan with your thumb on the bottom of the plunger and your fist and middle fingers on either side of the nozzle.



- Tilt the person's head back and provide support

- Gently insert the tip of the nozzle into one nostril, until your fingers on either side of the nozzle are against the bottom of the person's nose.



- Press the plunger firmly to give the dose of Narcan. Remove Narcan from the nostril after giving the dose.



If still not breathing, give rescue breaths.

- Ensure person is on their back.
- Make sure mouth is clear.
- Tilt head back, lift chin, pinch nose.
- Give 2 breaths to start & then 1 breath every 5 seconds.
- Chest should rise.



- Wait and watch the person closely.
- If the person does not respond in 2-3 minutes, give the second dose of Narcan in box in the other nostril.
- Follow 911 dispatcher instructions.

STAY WITH THE VICTIM

Stay until help arrives to provide support & make sure the overdose does not come back. Naloxone wears off in 30-90 minutes. When the person wakes up, explain what happened. Place them in recovery position if unable to sit up.