



## February 2020

### Meet NAMI SA's New Executive Director!



Debbie Rich, who has served as the Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona's (GSSOAZ) chief executive officer for nearly 15 years, will be the next Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Southern Arizona, starting full time in March.

"We are excited to work with Debbie to promote her vision for NAMI SA," said David Delawder, CRSS, CPRP, President of NAMI SA's Board of Directors. "Together with the board and staff, we will set the stage for a prosperous future where NAMI SA can have an even greater impact in the community. We will also continue to raise awareness and look for

new funding and support to make sure more mental health services, not fewer, come to those in need."

### Help & Hope for YOUTH Youth Task Force!



We are excited to announce that we now have our Youth Task Force! The selected Youth Task Force members will help mobilize our community to generate change and engagement in mental wellness efforts.

The Youth Task Force will support and guide Help & Hope for YOUTH's efforts to reduce stigma, support suicide prevention, and increase mental health awareness, education and access to care.

Members held their first meeting and set goals for the year. One of the immediate goals is increased youth involvement in NAMI Walks. This year's walk will be held on Saturday, April 4, 2020 at Kennedy Park Fiesta Area. Check-in is at 7:30am with the walk starting at 9:00am. To support Help & Hope for YOUTH at NAMI Walks, click [here](#).

In the words of our youth members, "Mental health is more than depression and anxiety. It's about mental wellness and healthy minds. Healthy Minds, Happy Futures."

Stay tuned to know more about the work of the Youth Task Force!

## Member News



The MEC (Metropolitan Education Commission) Teen Town Hall Report is in. Out of 280 students who participated, 150 chose mental health as their choice of dialogue circle; suicide prevention and substance abuse topics were also among top choices.








Some of the top issues related to mental health and suicide were; not enough mental health help, unapproachable adults, peer pressure and high expectations, fear of judgment, stigma surrounding mental health and lack of transgenerational education and communication.

Top solutions offered by the youth included more funding for mental health programs, an increase in awareness and training for adults, teachers, counselors and administrators, normalizing mental health through educational courses that teach people to advocate for themselves and others, developing strategies and taking action to mend the transgenerational communication gap, incorporating mental health education into existing curriculum and providing on-campus professional help and resources. Additionally the youth suggested the use of teen-run social media for awareness, teens making policies, and starting teen emotional support groups.

To see the full report, click [here](#) for the first half and [here](#) for the second.

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## Events Calendar

-  **[Youth Mental Health First Aid](#)**  
February 13th, 8:00AM - 5:00PM
-  **[Education & Training Task Force Meeting](#)**  
February 18th, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM  
4765 E. Camp Lowell Drive
-  **[Capacity Building Task Force Meeting](#)**  
February 20th, 4:00PM - 5:00PM  
Casa de los Ninos
-  **[Mental Health First Aid Training](#)**  
February 21st, 8:00 AM - 5:00PM  
[Click here](#) for flyer
-  **[Legal Issues Surrounding Mental Illness](#)**  
February 22nd, 9:00 AM - 12:00PM  
[Click here](#) for flyer
-  **[Advocacy & Policy/State Standards Task Force Meeting](#)**  
March 3rd, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM  
Casa De Los Ninos
-  **[Help & Hope for YOUTH Alliance Meeting](#)**  
SAVE THE DATE: April 20th, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

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## Task Force Reports

### School-Based Behavioral Health Services Coalition

A panel discussion meeting was held to bring providers, school representatives, youth, parents and guardians together to discuss behavioral health services in the schools. Access to care was addressed as a main issue both from a provider standpoint and from an insurance perspective. Schools reported difficulty getting service providers to communicate and make contact, while providers expressed the same challenge with contacting parent/guardians. The amount of time a consumer needs to wait until being seen is an issue. Individuals with private health insurance may have additional difficulties in getting treatment/services due to high costs. Challenges with

having to apply to AHCCCS and get denied in order to seek other coverage were also addressed. A teen panel representative pointed out the need to have more mental health support groups like what is offered in her school as a way to connect students both to each other and to a trusted adult that's willing to offer that type of intervention. The next Coalition meeting will be scheduled in April; email [acornidez@helphopeforyouth.org](mailto:acornidez@helphopeforyouth.org) if you are not already on our list and would like to receive the meeting notice.

## Education & Training Task Force

The Education & Training Task Force continues to focus on mental health and suicide prevention education, expanding our reach with Ending The Silence and Text Talk Act. Members will now begin planning for a Healthy Brain, Healthy Body Youth and Family Wellness Event. The goal of this event is to provide both mental and physical health educational and interactive workshops for young people and their families in a community setting. This event is designed to address mental health concerns expressed by youth in the Metropolitan Education Commission 2019 Teen Town Hall and through responses gathered from July 2018 through June 2019 from teens who participated in Text Talk Act.

## Advocacy & Policy/State Standards Task Force

The Task Force members are monitoring legislation being introduced that affects education and mental health in order to review for support by Help & Hope for YOUth. The Help & Hope for YOUth policy statement is being revised. Recommendations to the State include:

1. Amend the state education statute (ARS Sec 15-701 et seq) to include a requirement for curriculum on mental and emotional health.
2. Amend the state educational statute and state health education standards to make clear that "health" includes mental and emotional health.
3. Amend the state education health standards to include concepts and performance objectives on mental and emotional health.

The Task Force will begin meeting with State Senators and Representatives to discuss the need for mental health education in schools, and the need for additional funding for counselors and social workers.

## Capacity Building Task Force

The Capacity Building Task Force continues to raise money, build support, and increase membership for Help & Hope for YOUth. The group met with local PBIS (Positive Behavioral & Intervention Supports) group to introduce HH4Y and invite to participate. Planning continues to establish an AmeriCorps VISTA position for a grant researcher/writer.

Help & Hope for YOUth—NAMI Southern Arizona is now a Qualifying Charitable Organization. Members are encouraged to solicit their contacts to make Arizona state tax credit donations to Help & Hope for YOUth. The Capacity Building Task Force continues to invite suggestions for possible members and investors/donors, and to submit edits and additions to the online youth mental health Resource Directory.

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## Project Director Report

- **Zero Suicide Task Force:** In exciting news, Help & Hope for YOUth is now serving on the Zero Suicide Task Force in partnership with AHCCCS and the Arizona Department of Health Services. Our goal is to improve the mental health of individuals and communities by increasing access to mental health care for Arizonans by adopting the Zero Suicide model statewide. More information to follow.
- **Arizona Department of Education School Safety Task Force (SSTF):** We have continued to participate in the SSTF meetings. At our last meeting we learned about current bills being proposed regarding school safety. Our subcommittee is currently working on finalizing our legislative recommendations regarding a model school safety plan incorporating mental health and school climate and determining how to align with bills already supported by legislators. The ADE Social Wellness Committee is working with the CASEL Collaborating States Initiative on the development of Social Emotional Learning Standards.

## Evaluation Updates

In January's Newsletter we told you about our effort to reduce the stigma about mental illness in the community, by offering middle and high school students Text Talk Act (TTA) and NAMI's Ending the Silence (ETS) programming. After surveying nearly 5,000 youth, the results from the evaluations showed an increase of 22.3% of students feeling more comfortable talking about mental health after attending an ETS and/or TTA presentation. Of these youth, 86.9% report knowing how to help themselves or a friend after their participation.

Participants also reported their satisfaction with ETS and/or TTA presentation(s) by sharing one thing about the presentation that was meaningful to them. Participants shared a diverse range of qualitative responses. A few examples of the response themes include:

- learning about how many people struggle;
- learning that anybody can have a mental health problem;
- enjoyed talking about mental health in groups;

- learning warning signs;
- feeling impacted by the guest presenter's personal stories;
- learning to get help from a trusted adult and how they can help each other;
- the videos felt meaningful;
- enjoying the texting portion; and
- learning that they are not alone.

One participant noted, "*Having a mental illness isn't anybody's fault and it's nothing to be ashamed of.*" Another reported, "*How personal it was, talking from experience. It felt very nonjudgmental and informative and was very important and I appreciated how real it was.*" While another participant felt comfortable disclosing that they are "*two years clean from self-harm so the suicidal self-harm video meant a lot.*"

**We want to hear from you. Send your news and events for the next issue to [newsletter@helphopeforyouth.org](mailto:newsletter@helphopeforyouth.org).**

**Want to help? Please give a tax-deductible gift of Help and Hope to children and teens in Southern Arizona.**

**All funds go to Help & Hope for YOUth**

**DONATE NOW**



Help & Hope for YOUth is an initiative of  
the National Alliance on Mental Illness Southern Arizona  
(NAMI SA), a 501(C)3 non-profit organization (EIN 86-0450977).