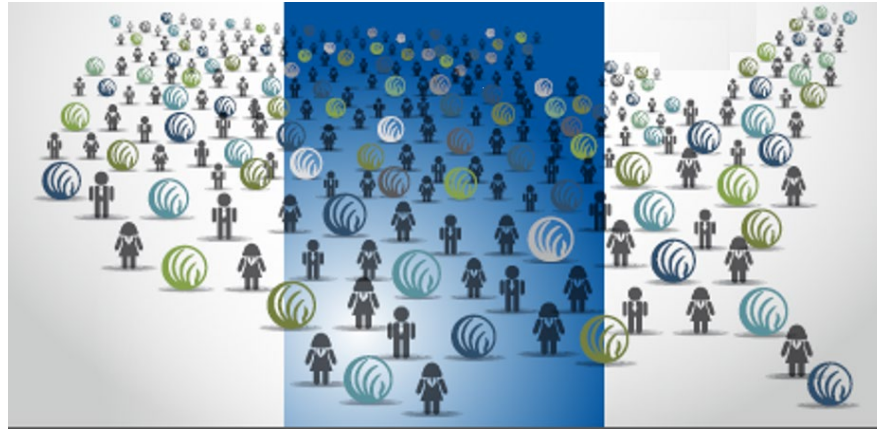


# HOW TO DE-ESCALATE and FIND SUPPORT for a MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS



Kumi Macdonald, Executive Director, NAMI Hawaii State



Largest Grassroots Mental Health Organization in the U.S. with over 600 affiliates.

**FREE PROGRAMS STATEWIDE**

# OUR WORK

SUPPORT

EDUCATION

AWARENESS

ADVOCACY



## **WHAT YOU WILL GAIN:**

- 1. Learn tips to de-stress and practice self-care**
- 2. Learn the warning signs**
- 3. Learn what to say and what not to say**
- 4. TIPS TO De-escalate a MENTAL HEALTH crisis**
- 5. Resources and Information**
- 6. Free NAMI programs, support groups, & classes**

# **DISCUSSION**

**What do these people have in common?**

**Bruno Mars  
Oprah Winfrey  
King Kamehameha  
YOU**

# DISCUSSION

**What do these people have in common?**

**Justin Bieber  
Martha Stewart  
Jeffrey Dahmer  
Jesus Christ**

# **DISCUSSION**

**What do these people have in common?**

**Abraham Lincoln**

**Martin Luther King Jr.**

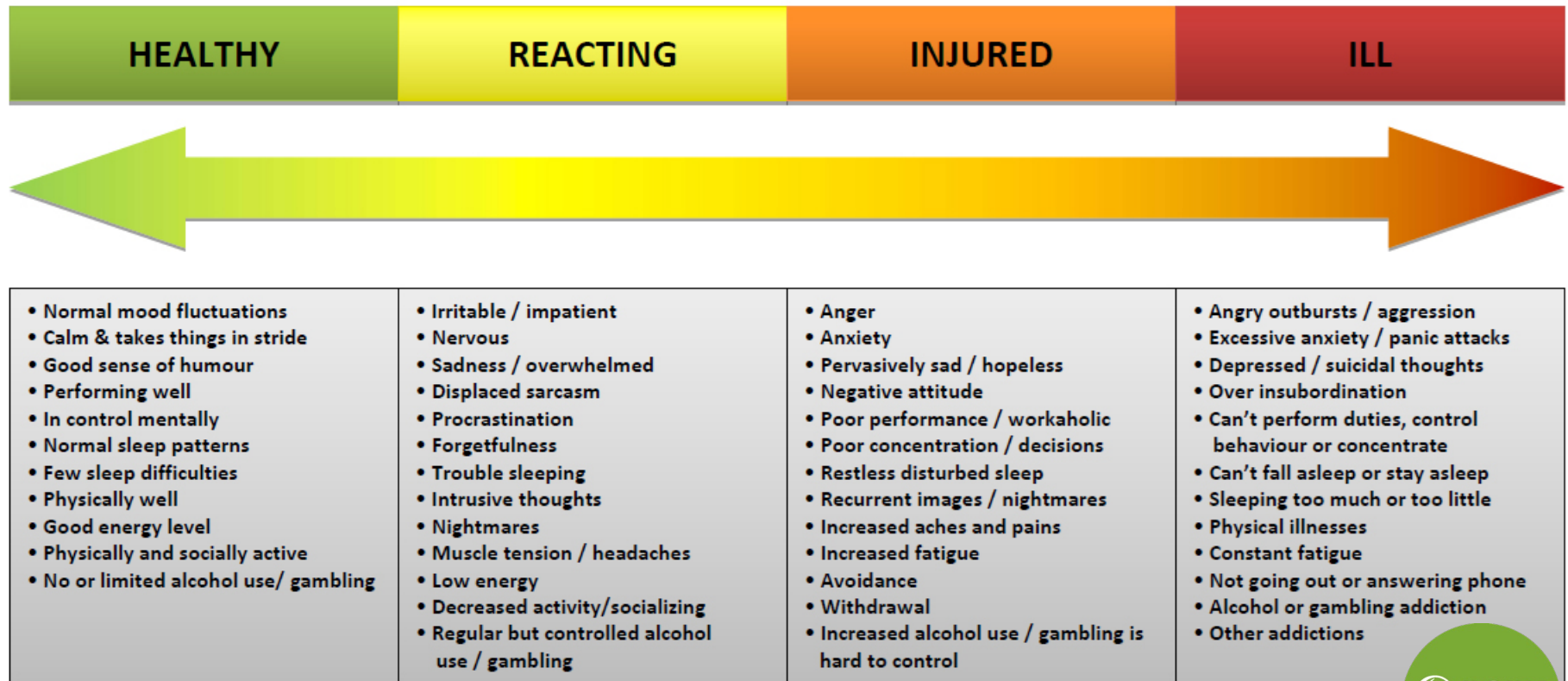
**20% plus of People in the U.S.**

**Kumi**



# Mental Health Affects Everyone

## Mental Health Continuum Model

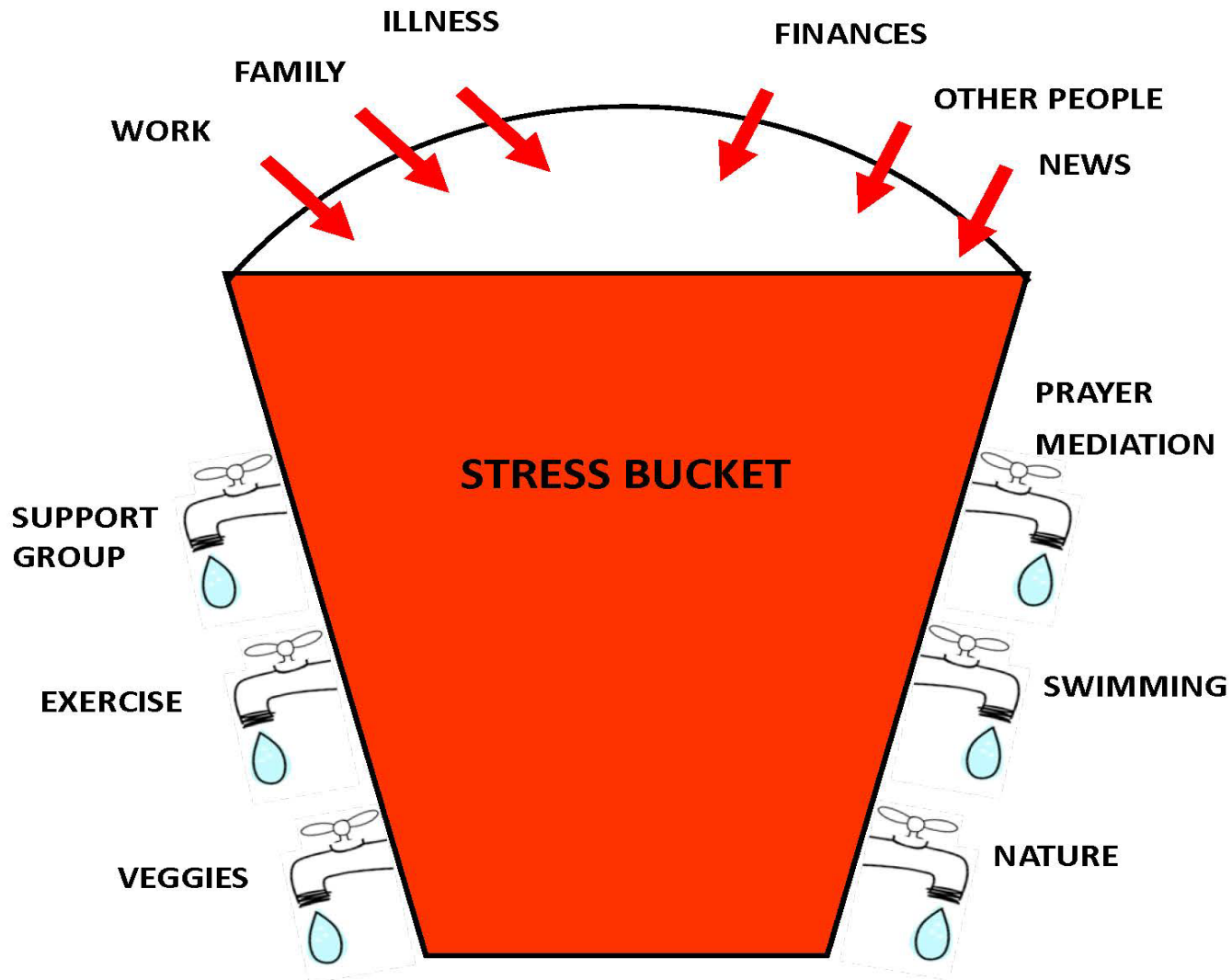




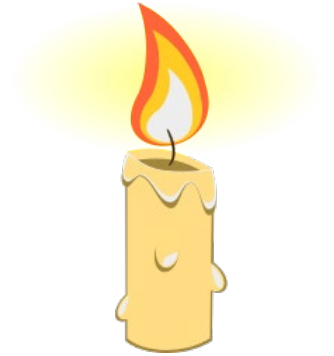
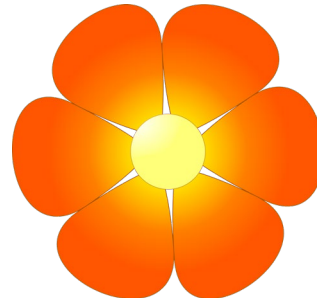
# A Personal Story



# Stress Bucket



# BREATH WORK



## Flower Breath

Imagine you are holding a flower in your hand. Take a deep breathe in and smell it and then as you let it out pretend that you are blowing out a candle. Blowing multiple candles can take long, deep breaths.

# MY SELF CARE TOOLS

- **Take care of yourself: mind, body, spirit**
- **Set goals and boundaries**
- **Make a list of what makes you happy, mad, tired...**
- **Stay connected with others, get support and**  
**INFORMATION**
- **Be kind to yourself and forgive yourself**
- **Help others, give back**



# **MY SELF CARE TOOLS cont.**

- **EAT HEALTHY FOOD EACH DAY**
- **SLEEP**
- **GET SOME SUNLIGHT & ENJOY NATURE**
- **MOVE MY BODY**
- **Spend time with loved ones (people or pets)**
- **Get into the water**
- **Breathe**
- **Practice gratitude**
- **Journal**
- **Listen to music**
- **Mental health apps and YouTube**
- **Create a self care toolbox**
- **Practice my Faith**



# Sleep, are you prioritizing it?

- If you get even 2hrs. Less sleep than you need it can be detrimental.
- Sleep is for the brain to clean itself, body to recover and repair, consolidate memories.
- Benadryl linked to Alzheimer's: does not increase sleep quality, not cycling, brain not cleaning itself

## **Bad sleep:**

- Can't fall asleep
- Can't stay asleep
- Not cycling



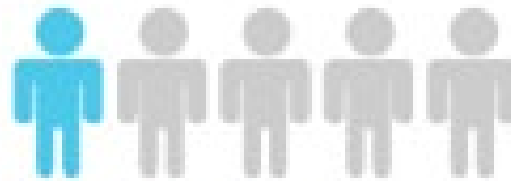
Good Sleep means falling asleep faster, waking up less often, and sleeping deeper.

# Discussion

**What WILL YOU DO FOR Self Care  
THIS WEEK?**



Mental  
health  
conditions  
are common.



**1 in 5** people live with a  
mental health condition. (1 in 25  
lives with a serious mental illness.)

**6.9%** Depression

**2.6%** Bipolar Disorder

**1.1%** Schizophrenia

**18.1%** Anxiety Conditions



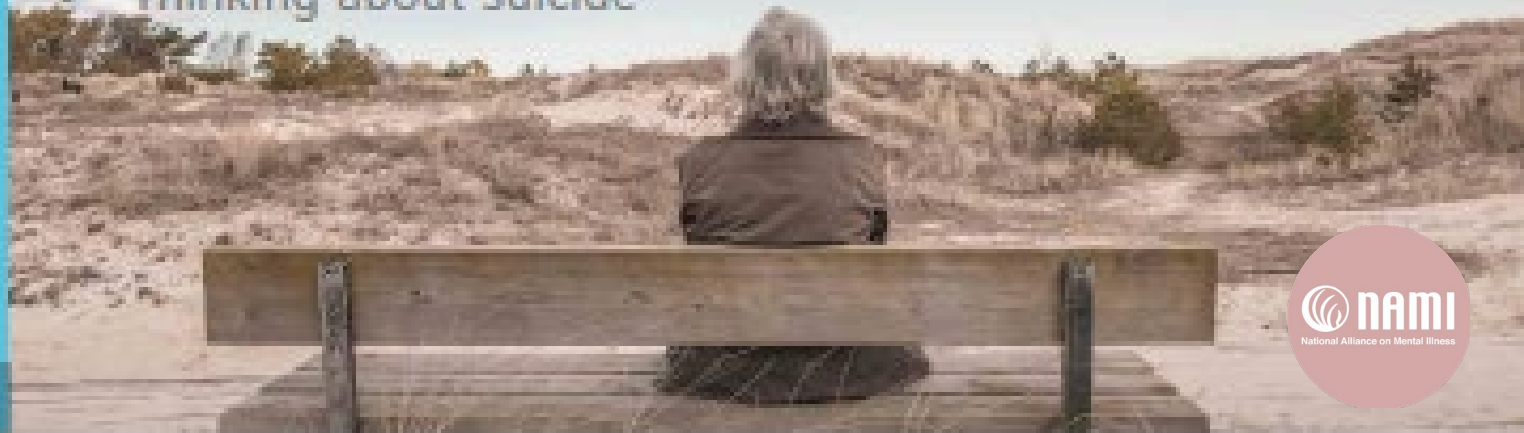


# Symptoms

may include:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Difficulty perceiving reality
- Abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Thinking about suicide

(partial list)



# Definition of Crisis and Crisis Intervention/De-escalation

- Crisis is short-term and overwhelming event which involves disruption of an individual's stable state and usual methods of coping and problem solving do not work
- Crisis intervention: using here and now orientation, managing one's own emotions to build rapport and avoid escalation through hope and meeting immediate needs

# A Different Mindset



- If you take a **less** authoritative, **less** controlling, and **less** confrontational approach, you will have **more** control.
- You are trying to give the person a sense that he/she is in control.
- Why? Because he/she is in a crisis, which, by definition, means that he/she is feeling out of control and normal coping mechanisms are not working at this time.

# What is Required in Effective Responses to Mental Health Crises?

- Approaches are person-centered
- Approaches that are non-judgmental
- A here-and-now approach
- **Objective:** To reduce anxiety to encourage meaningful communication

# How Do We Do It?

## Guidelines to defuse a potential mental health crisis

- Maintain a safe distance
- Use a clear voice tone
- Use a voice volume lower than that of the individual
- Use a relaxed, well-balanced, non-threatening posture (yet maintaining tactical awareness)
- Set limits
- Be active in helping
- Build hope
- Focus on strengths
- Present yourself as a calming influence
- Demonstrate confidence and compassion

# How Do We Do It?

## Guidelines to defuse a potential mental health crisis

- Remove distractions, disruptive or upsetting influences
- Be aware of body language and congruency
- Be aware that your uniform and your tools may be intimidating
- Be consistent
- Use “I” statements
- Be helpful with basic needs like water, blanket, etc.
- Be in the here and now
- Validate and accept
- Make no promises you cannot keep
- Recognize that the person may be overwhelmed by sensations, thoughts, sounds, and the environment; provide careful, clear explanations and instructions

# Empathy: Why is it Important?



- Conveys understanding
- Others feel understood & supported
- Encourages others to share more
- Creates a connection
- Establishes rapport
  - *That then enables problem-solving, advice, etc.*



**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Hawaii**

# Active Listening Skills

- Attending
- Restatement
- Reflection
- Open-ended questions
- Minimal Encouragers
- Effective Pauses
- Silence



# Empathic Stems



- “Maybe you feel....”
- “Sounds like a \_\_\_\_ day”
- “What a day you’ve had”
- “That is a lot to deal with”
- “That is the last thing you wanted”
- “That’s confusing when that happens”
- “It’s hard for you to know what to do...”
- “Right now it feels like there is no hope”
- “You wish things were different”

# The DOs and DON'Ts of Crisis Verbal Interaction



## Don't

- Threaten
- Argue
- Challenge
- Order
- Shame
- Blame

## Do

- Show empathy
- Use modeling
- Reassure
- Respond and encourage
- Use active listening techniques
- Guide the situation toward resolution

# Phrases That Damage Rapport



~~"Calm Down"~~  
~~"Relax"~~  
~~"I Understand"~~  
~~"Why?"~~  
~~"You Should"~~  
~~"You Shouldn't"~~



# Tips for Effective Engagement

1. Introduce / Greeting
2. Ask for the Person's Name
3. Expressing to the person what you are seeing
  - What do you see/hear?
  - Express the emotions you are seeing/hearing
  - Use reflection statements
4. Be an “active listener”
  - Communicate with the person in crisis
  - Summarize the information that you have learned

# The LEAP METHOD

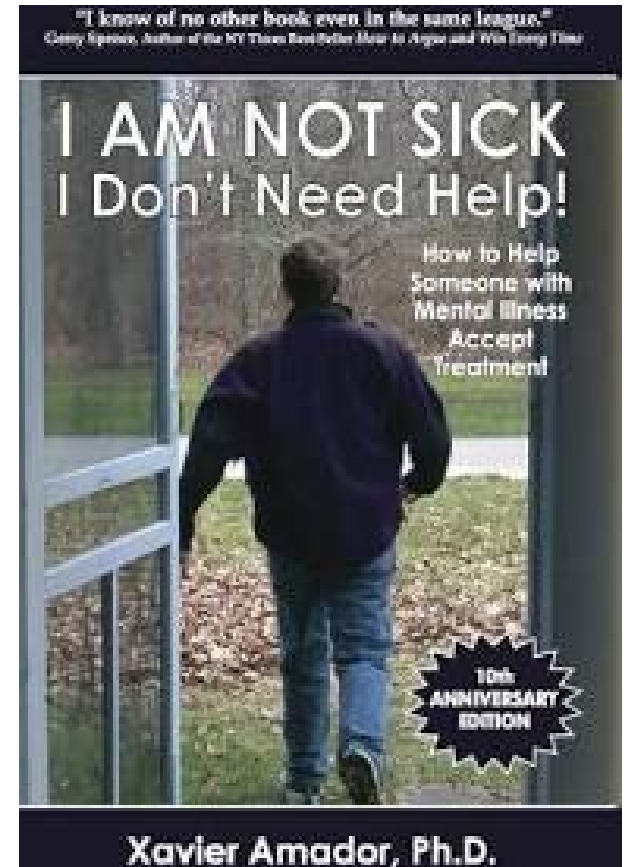
Dr. Xavier Amador

Listen

Empathize

Agree

Partner



<https://namihawaii.org/resources/>



**FREE HELP**

**Hawaii Cares 24 hr Crisis Line:**

**Dial or Text 988 or call 1-800-753-6879**

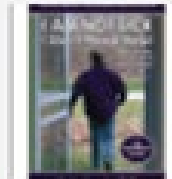
**Suicide Prevention:**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**



# FREE RESOURCES at [namihawaii.org](http://namihawaii.org)

## I Am Not Sick, I Don't Need Help:



I AM NOT SICK, I Don't Need Help!

Ask the Expert with Dr. Xavier Amador (Click for video)

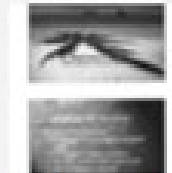
## General Resources:



700 Notable People with Mental Illness



The Crisis



Crisis Line Perspectives Scams



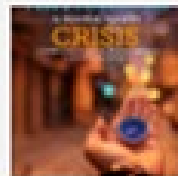
Family to Family Book Suggestions



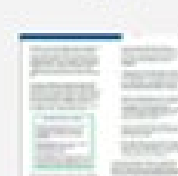
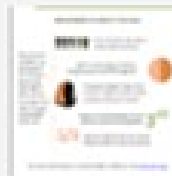
Calling 911 and Talking with Police



Navigating a Mental Health



Issues Mental Health Fact Sheet





**FREE**

**Support Groups, Classes, Presentations, Info & More**



National Alliance on Mental Illness **RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP**



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**CIT for Law Enforcement**



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



# What Can We Do?

- **Live by example, talk openly about your own mental health**
- **Learn more about mental health**
- **Start a social media campaign, compose a poem, art, video and SHARE**
- **Schedule a mental health speaker**
- **Movie night on mental health**
- **Join our NAMIWalks Oct. 10, 2026**
- **Get Involved in our NAMI programs**





# nAMI Walks Hawaii

SATURDAY,  
OCTOBER 10, 2026





**NAMI**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Hawaii State**



# REIMAGINE

## *Crisis Response*

**Every person in a mental health crisis deserves a mental health response**



**Keynote: Kody Green**

## **NAMI Hawaii State Conference**

**in Partnership with Mental Health America of Hawaii**

The Schizophrenic Hippie  
is an advocate,  
podcaster, author,  
comedian and more.

<https://www.kodygreen.com>

**Reimagine Crisis Response is a Free Conference for 300 mental health and medical providers, law enforcement, community leaders, faith communities, families and peers.**

**Monday, April 13, 2026 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at the Prince Waikiki Hotel**  
**Registration Opens March 2, 2026**

It's time to stand up, take a stand and  
make a difference.

**TOGETHER,**  
we can make mental  
health a priority and  
be part of the  
solution to solving  
one of the biggest  
problems we face as  
a nation and a world.

**Learn more about NAMI.**  
Find out more about who we  
are, what is available in our  
community as well as online  
resources.



National Alliance on Mental Illness



# Questions or Comments?

CONTACT US

IF YOU WANT MORE INFO

[namihawaii.org](http://namihawaii.org)







**nami**

*Hope starts with you.*



Thank You!