

news

COMMUNITY OF HOPE

Delivering HOPE at Navos

My real life story of Recovery



Lisa Drechsler, former Navos client

I am filled with gratitude for all of the incredible people at Navos for guiding me toward recovery and not giving up on me.”

Like many people with mental health challenges, my life has been chaotic and traumatic. I experienced abuse as a child: sexual, mental, physical, and by neglect. As an adult, I have experienced domestic violence. I have been addicted to marijuana, cocaine, meth, Xanax, valium, and alcohol. I have had suicidal tendencies for over 20 years and have had two attempts. I have had bouts with depressed and manic behavior, as well as anxiety with panic attacks. I have been utterly hopeless.

I first began seeking psychological treatment over 25 years ago. Over the years, I have seen close to 10 psychologists and several psychiatrists. Every one of them told me that my mental illness was chronic and could only be managed by medication and ongoing therapy. I did not have any support from family or friends. I felt alone and worthless.

I was referred to Navos when I called a suicide prevention hotline. When I had my first appointment with my case worker, I was depressed, hopeless, and cried a lot. I could not assure him that I would not attempt suicide again. He was the first to tell me that recovery was possible. He referred me to a recovery method class.

The recovery method is a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) based class. I learned how to replace my negative insecure thoughts with positive secure thoughts, thus controlling my impulses and changing my behavior. The facilitators taught me skills and gave me tools to help me take charge of my own recovery. I met peers who cared about me and supported me. I also had an awesome therapist and psychiatrist to assist me in my recovery.

After a year or so of actively working on my recovery, I am able to identify situations that trigger my symptoms, and I have the power to change my thoughts before I am thrown into depression or anxiety. I no longer consider hurting myself. I am also clean and sober. I am working diligently to improve my life and all of my relationships. I am hopeful for the future!

I am now employed as a Certified Peer Counselor at a facility in Seattle. I am sharing my story to help others who are experiencing the traumas of mental illness and drug addiction. I now have a life of service and purpose. All of the hardships and challenges in my life have led me to this fulfilling career.

I am filled with gratitude for all of the incredible people at Navos for guiding me toward recovery and not giving up on me. Through their caring and wisdom, I have learned that there are no hopeless cases.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends of Navos,



We are living in a prolonged season of a series of catastrophes, each painful in its own way and collectively impacting us with waves of dread, profound discouragement and pushing us past saturation points of grief.

In the past month I spoke at the West Coast Poverty Summit and also to a gathering of 700 at the National Council of Behavioral Health about the horror of 2017 being a time of serious campaigns to make racism acceptable again. After all the decades of movements for enlightenment I never would have predicted how regressive the 21st century would become. With each episode of obvious brutality against people of color I am amazed that a core of Americans becomes even more desensitized to race-based violence rather than infuriated about it.

At Navos, many of us have spent much of our time during our years as behavioral health professionals working to mitigate the legacy of trauma for those who have been neglected, abandoned, physically and sexually abused. It is especially astounding to live in a time that elects a highest leader and rewards industry bosses who have explicitly touted their ability to abuse others.

We deal daily with immigrant and refugee adults having to navigate each day with the recently heightened prospects of being deported, or never again seeing their family members who live abroad. We provide services to children who are now terrified at the prospect of their parents being deported and are even afraid of going to school, not knowing what they will find when they return home at the end of the day.

We are proud to be part of the Navos mission to provide healing and empowerment for those who are disabled adults, children and the elderly, increasingly living in poverty. We are burdened with fighting to keep services intact during this season of continued attempts to horribly decimate the services we provide in order to accommodate a massive reduction in taxes for the top few percent of the wealthy.

In this season we have also had to deal with yet another mass shooting tragedy which could only have happened in a country that makes it possible for a person (whose motives and make-up we still don't understand) to acquire and fire weapons that could kill and wound hundreds in the space of nine minutes. Access to those weapons was easier than acquiring a driver's license or keeping one's shoes on while in a security line at an airport. I have been part of planning clinical care for a family who lost a loved one in that event and another family traumatized by being at that Las Vegas concert. I know many others at Navos have connections to that carnage.

As part of a trauma-informed organization, all of us at Navos have been trained in what impact trauma has on our daily consciousness and our capacity to function, whether we are directly experiencing trauma or vicariously experiencing it in the stories of those we serve and work with. We know how to fortify ourselves and others to deal with the trauma, and we also know how hugely difficult it is to do that work of providing solace, mitigating harm, and weathering grief. And we know that nothing fully replaces what is lost. Thank you for supporting this work we do to address these issues! This is one of the worst times in the world during my many decades of doing this work.

The irony is that we have never known better what to do to help, and also our help has never been more needed. Thank you for your help and support during these difficult times. We find solace in this, our "community of hope".

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David M. Johnson, Ed.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David M. Johnson, Ed.D, LMHC
Chief Executive Officer



IN MEMORY OF NAT PENROSE

We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Nat Penrose, on August 18, 2017. Nat served on the Seattle Children’s Home Board of Directors for nearly 20 years. He saw it as a privilege to “see and be a

part of an organization that takes the most difficult and seriously emotionally troubled youth, and helps them to recover from their past trauma.” We are grateful to Nat for his steadfast commitment to the children and youth we serve, his confidence in our staff, and his belief that with treatment recovery is possible.



NAVOS’ INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Navos is pleased and honored to be a recipient of an estate gift from the late Dr. Kathryn Barnard. Dr. Barnard was a

University of Washington nursing professor who pioneered work on the mental health of infants and changed the way parents interact with their babies. She was a founder of the school’s center named in her honor: The Barnard Center for Infant Mental Health and Development. Dr. Barnard’s gift to Navos will establish a training fund for the therapists who work with babies and young children in Navos’ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program. Navos was among the first to establish a program based on Dr. Barnard’s work and we are proud of our leadership role in this field and the many successes our therapists have had helping at risk babies, young children and their families in our community.



MUSIC THERAPY HELPS CHILDREN AND YOUTH HEAL

Elizabeth Shain, a Music Therapist on our Lake Burien campus helps children and youth process trauma through music making, helping them to develop emotional regulation.

Music therapy is held in group sessions for the purpose of building attention and social skills, and also in individual sessions with song writing helping children to process grief using music as an emotional outlet.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT NAVOS



Our thanks to the employees from WE Communications and PCL Construction who spent the day planting winter flowers, cleaning garden beds,

refurbishing the dock on our Lake Burien campus, and painting one of our group homes as part of the 2017 United Way of King County Day of Caring.



SAVE THE DATE!



Thursday, May 17, 2018

Sheraton Hotel, 1400 Sixth Ave, Seattle
Reception 11am-12pm, Program 12-1pm

Because treatment works, join hundreds of businesses and community leaders at a **LUNCHEON** to support recovery and wellness for low income children, youth, families, and adults with behavioral health issues. Community support is vital to sustaining Navos programs for at risk children and youth which prevent problems from worsening, and for adults living in poverty with mental and emotional health issues.

To RSVP, host a table, or for sponsorship information, contact events@navos.org



Navos Welcomes Eric Svaren to the Board Of Directors

Eric Svaren recently joined the Navos Board of Directors after learning about us through his wife’s mentorship of a former Navos resident, and his friendship with board member Brian Abeel. He is impressed with both the scope and innovation in Navos’ programs, seeing mental health issues as both a root cause and an effect of many other problems we face. Eric believes it’s critical we expand and improve care and neutralize the stigma, he says that he’s “looking forward to being part of the solution.”

Eric brings a wealth of experience working with non-profit organizations. He served as Senior Organization Development Consultant at Fred Hutch and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance. He also served on the Board of Directors for Leadership Eastside, Hilltop Children’s Center, Seattle Infant Development Center, and Operational Emergency Center. Eric has consulted with dozens of non-profits to improve capacity, including board development, executive and staff team development, and strategic planning. Welcome Eric.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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David M. Johnson, CEO

MISSION

Navos is committed to transforming the quality of life of people vulnerable to mental illness and substance use disorders by providing a broad continuum of care. We believe that diversity, inclusion and equity are vital to living our values and achieving our mission.

VISION

A healthy community in which people thrive while managing symptoms of mental illness and substance use disorders

VALUES

- We choose HOPE
- We embrace DIVERSITY
- We EMPOWER the individual
- We provide COMPASSIONATE CARE
- We do WHAT IS RIGHT
- We deliver COORDINATED SERVICES
- WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO A QUALITY OF LIFE
- We are Navos



Ruth Dykeman
Children’s Center

