

NAMI Ask the Expert:
Suicide Prevention Series, Session 3:
Creative Approaches to Suicide Prevention
Featuring Janet Berkowitz, Sascha Biesi, and Nicholas Emeigh
September 22, 2022, 4:00-5:30 p.m. ET

Teri Brister (00:00:04):

Good afternoon everyone. I'm Teri Brister, NAMI's Chief Program Officer, and I want to welcome you to NAMI's, Ask the Expert Series.

I'm going to cover a bit of housekeeping before we get started. We usually have a lot of callers that call in right on the hour, so I want to go ahead and get us started so we can be ready for our presenters to step in and share their wonderful information with us. I want to begin by letting you know that all callers are muted. Only presenters have their microphones on, so don't worry about having to figure out how to mute your phone. Chat is disabled to reduce the distraction because we have the luxury of having and the pleasure of having so many people on these calls. So you won't be able to communicate with each other in chat, but you can ask questions and we want to encourage you to submit the questions in the Q and A pod at the bottom, and you'll see the instructions on the screen in front of you.

I want to let you know that this call is being recorded. You will receive an email next week from us with the link to the recording. You'll also receive a certificate of attendance, a PDF of the slide deck, and any files that might be referenced during the presentation that we'll have available for download as well. But I do want you to know the call is being recorded so you'll be able to listen to it. There's also a transcript that's created that makes it easy. If you have difficulty hearing, you're able to read through what the presenters are saying.

You'll also notice on the bottom of the screen that's in front of you, we do have the option of closed caption. For people who have difficulty reading, please feel free to use that as well, and you just click it on, and it will work.

Jordan, if you'll go to the next slide. Okay, well there's our title slide and if you'll go to the next one. There you go.

We want to remind you that if you need support during the presentation today or at any time, remember that you're not alone. Feel free to connect with the NAMI helpline via phone, email, chat, or text. We have all those options available now. And now on behalf of NAMI CEO Dan Gillison, our board and our board president Joyce Campbell, I'd like to welcome you to the final presentation in a special series of three NAMI Ask the Experts that have all focused on the topic of suicide. NAMI recognizes that the devastation associated with suicide, and we are committed to raising awareness on the topic and sharing information on what we can do as a society that can help impact what's become an epidemic in our country.

We have the great fortune of what you're going to hear more about during this session of Dr. Duckworth's book coming out and having just a wonderful panel of people that are included in the book that have been able to share with us on the previous Ask the experts. So now I'd like to hand it off to NAMI's Chief Medical Officer and bestselling author Dr. Ken Duckworth, who will introduce our speakers, Dr. Duckworth.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:03:34](#)):

Dr. Teri Brister. I want to thank you for everything you've done to support this endeavor, this series of webinars. You might know that last Thursday we did a discussion of people who've made meaning of loss after the suicide. If that topic is of interest to you, we had four very compelling people shared how they made meaning of their lives.

One of the questions I get in the real world a lot is you got more than meds in psychotherapy and peer support; you got anything on creativity? Well, today's your lucky day because in the book, *You Are Not Alone*, which came out on Tuesday and is selling quite well I'm happy to say. All the royalties go to NAMI this is straight up love gift. It all supports the mission. Jordan and I, Jordan Miller and I interviewed 130 people for about 150 hours, and along the way we found three people who are doing very different creative endeavors to attend to the prevention of depression, suicide, and other related experiences that are scary. And so for those of you interested in creative things that aren't medicines, aren't psychotherapy and aren't peer support, here we go.

Our first speaker is Janet Berkowitz. Janet is a peer support specialist from New Jersey. You're going to learn from Janet in a moment. We're then going to transition to Sascha Biesi, who we met through the Depressed Cake Shop. Which is an international movement of bakers who create community and support. And then we're going to meet NAMI's first and only superhero Nicholas Emeigh, he is of course NAMI Man, which is both an anagram and an extremely cool way to serve others with creativity. So I want you to send your questions in. You can ask the questions to one person, Nick, I want to know like, does NAMI Man have a NAMI dog? Or you could ask Janet, how is creativity working for you today? Or Sascha? Does it matter what you bake or is it you know what you put into it in your heart? Those are all questions you can ask, but you may also ask general questions. What other creative strategies did you hear in the book? That sort of thing.

So these are all stars in the book. These are our lived experience experts, New Jersey, Janet. Sascha, Texas. Nicholas, Pennsylvania. Right there. We have some very nice electoral wins for NAMI, just those three states alone. So let's start with Janet.

I want you to remind you that this could be provocative. If you need to step away from the conversation, step away from it. Obviously, you have support networks, and of course we have our helpline, which is staffed by 100 volunteers with lived experience. Janet, take it away and thank you for coming.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:06:31](#)):

You're welcome. I am a certified peer specialist and I have a business called Creative Crisis Care. I'm very drawn to crisis. I have an extensive history with suicidal ideation, though I never made an attempt because I worked with a psychiatrist, who was very suicidal, who began Suicidal Anonymous. And that is international, there's meetings online every day. He said that once you make an attempt, it's easier to keep going. So, I never made one. I was too scared. I want to live. I like life. I just sometimes can't stop the thoughts in my head. So, I have created a lot using all of the arts, theater, art, I'm a mime, I do mime skits on suicide prevention. I have a show called the Wizard of Is based on the Wizard of Oz. That's about looking at the fact that we always have a choice.

Janet Berkowitz (00:07:25):

So, I have a lot of tools that I've created, but one of my favorite tools is role playing. I love the idea of talking to suicide as if it were a person. So, what I'll do is I'll have a person sit in a chair and pick someone to play their suicide in the other chair. That person never talks. So, the person playing themselves, I facilitate and I ask them to look at the difference between the data, their judgments about suicide and their feelings about suicide. So, for instance, the data may be, I don't want to take a shower, I can't sleep. The judgments may be you make me feel like I'm evil. You make me feel like I'm doomed. You're mean, you're vicious. And then the feelings might be, I'm terrified of you. I'm ashamed to talk about you. I'm angry that you are in my life, ruining it.

And then I have them switch seats and now they become their own suicide. And this is where the real action happens. So, I'll ask them, why does this person want to end their life? And suicide may say, well, because they think they're not enough. They have talk directly to each other. People don't love you when you're angry or at least that's what you think. You're not paying attention to your feelings enough. And then I would say to suicide, who is actually the person playing their suicide, why do you think this person, you, is not getting enough help? So, they may say, well, they don't really want to commit to their recovery because they know that I suicide am a comfort to them. As long as they know I'm an option in their life I am a comfort to them, which we talk a lot about in Suicide Anonymous, some sort of piece that people get. I don't. I go into absolute utter fear. My heart's racing every day. It just gets horrible for me. But it is said that as people get closer to their attempt they go into like a trance, and we talk about that in Suicide Anonymous.

Then I ask suicide, Well, what's your purpose in this person's life? And what I want people to know is that suicide isn't here to destroy us. I don't think God or whatever you call God, love, whatever, I don't think that that force in the universe wants us to die. It's our fear that wants us to die. And so, we look at what is the purpose? What is suicide here to teach? And what I discovered for myself was I had to stop people pleasing. That was absolutely what was wiping me out. So then I switched back and I just check in with the person. So how was that for you to hear that? What are you feeling right now? What would you like to change? How can you change it? What kind of help can you get?

Now, another tool I use is called WRAP Scrap. Many of you have probably heard of WRAP, Wellness Recovery Action Plan. I am a certified facilitator in this. I trained with Mary Ellen Copeland and her people, and she uses scrapbooking too. So, Jordan's going to bring up three slides, and each one of these slides shows my progression in suicide. So, in this one you can see that there's thoughts of suicide are there, but I'm also thinking about walking the dog and my laundry and I used to feed the squirrels and I got to meditate or go to the gym.

So I'm still based in reality, but the word is starting to come up in my head. And I will tell you what I've done with that. I changed the word to sui-love. I instantly go to sui-love now instead of suicide. The book that I'm writing about my experience with suicide and just changing that word has really made a difference. I'm not scared of the word sui-love. The next slide shows me when I'm more progressed. So now you see that the word suicide is all around me. But if you look at the forehead, you still see the word God and love. So, there's still an awareness that, yes, there's a God, and yes, love is a reality, but it's closing in on me, this suicide thing. That would be when things are breaking down. The one before would be early warning signs in terms of WRAP.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:12:02](#)):

The next slide shows you crisis. This is when I go to the hospital, that's how I've prevented myself from killing myself. I always put myself in a hospital when it gets to this. And as you can see, the only word in my head is suicide. It's moving at the speed of light. And I feel like I have no choice though I do believe that we always have choice. And so, I hang closely when I'm that suicidal to just that belief, that little bit of belief that I do still have a choice. I have hundreds of these pages where I look at all the elements of WRAP. So scrapbooking has really made a difference for me.

And I do want to tell you quickly about the ASIST training that turned my life around. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. It was the best thing I've ever done. Sometimes you can do it for free or pay for it and get your money back. Best training I've ever done on how to handle suicide.

So, I just love the arts. And you can go on my website and see my mime skits about this. I have bipolar disorder and so I can accept that suicide is going to probably be hanging around for a lot of my life. However, I really believe that suicide is a spiritual thing. Just like any 12-step group would claim that it's spiritual. So, it has helped me to look at it that way rather than just see it as a physical problem, the bipolar disorder. Thinking of it that way was never enough for me. I love that there's now a 12-step group that addresses this.

I think that the arts are amazing. I have people move. I play music that helps them to, a lot of people aren't verbal, they don't like to talk about it so I have them show me through movement, what suicide looks like for them. I have them play instruments to show me what it's like for them. I have them color it out, I have them color their different emotions out. I'll have them take scarves and move the scarves around to show me, sometimes they'll just cover their head and that's all it feels like to them. They don't want to see anybody or talk to anybody. But just doing that helps them to feel like, okay, I am expressing it in some way. I'll just have them use words. Give me a word here or there, a word that if you can't put a sentence together.

So, there's just so many ways to do this. If you're interested, contact me. I have a whole toolbox full of ideas and I love to share them. And I don't have regrets about being suicidal. I wouldn't have my business if I weren't. It came from bullying as a child. And the show is also about bullying, the Wizard of Is. And so, I don't have any regrets it was meant to be so that I could come forth and do this work. And I really want to thank you all for letting me speak about this.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:15:22](#)):

Janet, thank you so much. So, we're going to hear from our other two panelists, then we'll take all your questions and your questions can be big or they can be very specific. Sascha Biesi is a leader in the creativity movement in something that Jordan Miller found. Jordan Miller is like, hey, check this out. There's an international movement of bakers. You might want to check this out, Ken. So, I reached out to the leader in here in the United States, Valerie Van Galder. We had a wonderful conversation and she said, "You must talk to Sascha Biesi," so we did. So Sascha, take it away and thank you for everything you do.

Sascha Biesi ([00:16:03](#)):

Thank you Ken and thank you for everything that you do. So, I am a vegan pastry chef. I used to tell people that the reason why I knew how to do vegan baking was because my daughter was born with allergies. And so, I always thought that was the best way to tell the story of how I became a baker was that it was related to being a mom. It was a much easier story for people to swallow, I felt like. But the truth of the story was that I had electric shock therapy in the fall of 2009. In the fall I had 13 bilateral electric shock therapy treatments. And after that I weighed less than 100 pounds and I had to find a way to feed myself and to get healthy again. So, I started vegan baking and vegan cooking. I never had all the ingredients, so it was easier to do it vegan.

What I was doing was I had my grandmother's recipe box and I'm going through the recipe box trying to find recipes that are familiar things that are in my grandmothers and my mother's handwriting. And I was recreating these recipes but without any butter or eggs in them. And that translated to somehow opening a bakery many, many years later. So, in 2009 was when I had electric shock treatments. And then it was in 2013 when we started the company and we started out just making cupcakes, thousands and thousands of cupcakes. But it really kind of put me in a position where because of the electric shock treatments, I couldn't really remember a lot. So I had trouble remembering what I was doing in the moment and how many ingredients I was using. I used my grandmother's recipe box, and I used the beginning of this business to kind of hone my skills a little bit.

It was in 2017 or '18, we were in our new space that we're in right now in Dripping Springs in Texas, in the hill country. We opened a storefront. So not only did we do cupcakes, but we did cakes, and we did all sorts of different things from baked goods to food. So, we had a lot of different employees. And I had one employee who always was there with me on the weekends and she and I worked really closely together. She had grown up with my daughter, so I knew her really well and I knew her family really well. We worked together really closely. And she helped me with my recipes and putting things together for the storefront. And I would talk to her a lot because I knew that she had mental health issues and I had talked to her mom about it. They were really struggling with what to do. And so I talked to her a lot.

At that time, I was afraid to use the word suicide. I've since learned through my work with NAMI that it's not a bad thing to ask somebody if they're suicidal. It doesn't plant the idea in their head, which at that time is what I thought. So, I never straight up asked her if she was suicidal. I myself was suicidal all the time. Always. Always. I have attempted suicide a couple of times. One time I can't believe it didn't stick, but still I'm trying to always make sense of that. And so it felt like I was making sense of my own issues by talking to Beatrice about her issues.

One day she left work and we had been planning her birthday party, which was coming up in a couple of weeks. And she went home, and she took her own life. It was so jarring. It wasn't the first person that I had lost a suicide, but she was so young, and I knew her so well. And she was a friend of my daughters and I had just seen her. I had just been with her. We had just been laughing together. And I was at the hospital with her family and I called, or I emailed rather, the executive director of NAMI Central Texas at the time and said, I need to do something. I want to volunteer; I want to do something. What can I do? I need to do more. That was when I started going into schools and volunteering and I was introduced to the Depressed Cake Shop.

Sascha Biesi ([00:21:30](#)):

The Depressed Cake Shop makes sense of everything to me. It makes sense of everything that I've been through, and it makes sense of everything that I'm going through on a regular basis. It just was the perfect thing that I was looking for really. Through the Depressed Cake Shop, bakeries become popups. They either have a section dedicated to the Depressed Cake Shop or they do like what we did, which was to turn our entire bakery into a Depressed Cake Shop. The Depressed Cake Shop is a movement that started in I think 2013 in Great Britain. And it's now, like Ken said, it's held by Valerie Van Galder Alder, and she does such amazing work with Depress Cake Shop and really turning it into what it has become now, which is this movement of what can we do to raise awareness? What can we do to help erase the stigma? What can we do to help give people a safer space, a safe space, a different space, a more unique space to come together with our united, not interest, but what brings us together, our united togetherness in mental health concerns, advocacy work?

In the Depressed Cake Shop you bake cupcakes that are gray with gray frosting on top, but inside of the cupcake is hidden beautiful rainbow colors of frosting. You bake cakes where the outside is gray with raining clouds on top and on the inside are bright, vibrant colors. For us, we always do the charcoal lemon scone because that was the last recipe that Beatrice came up with. It's a charcoal scone, so it's really dark and then it has that lemon frosting on top that really contrasts the darkness and the light of mental illness and mental health concerns. And all the proceeds that we make from selling these Depressed Cake Shop items goes towards NAMI.

We write messages on cookies. This one year, it was our second year, we decided to turn our entire bakery into a Depressed Cake Shop. And we had workshops on the weekends where people came and did yoga and we had therapists come in to give talks. Valerie came and spoke and joined us for some of the creative things that we planned, like knitting. And we had this little box where you could write messages of hope, or you could take messages of hope.

And it became not just a place to come and get a cupcake, but a place to be in community because that's always been our mission as Skull and Cake Bones is our community is what means the most to us. So, this Depressed Cake Shop was an easy transition because community is already so important to us. So, it gave me a platform to stop telling the story of my daughter and her allergies and to start embracing my own story of suicidality and mental health. It made people want to come to the bakery to tell their story. So now I'm sharing my story and everything is starting to make sense and people are coming in and things are starting to make sense for them too. And before you know it, we're having a conversation. They're coming in because a family member committed suicide, or a family member is struggling with mental health concerns. They would just talk to us because they found a space that was safe, and they found a space that was unique and they knew that they belonged there.

This last Depressed Cake Shop that we had; a woman came in after her therapy session. She said she was going to the bakery down the street, but she had heard about what we were doing. So she U-turned in the middle of the road and came back to the Skull and Cake Bones to our Depressed Cake Shop. She bought a scone, she bought a cupcake, she bought lunch, she sat and stayed for hours. We ended up having this really long conversation. Depressed Cake Shop doesn't make themselves out to be a suicide prevention network. It isn't about trying to solve people's problems. It's about advocacy and it's about giving references and giving the prevention help lines so that people know where to go. But we're creating this space where people can come in and talk to us about what's on their mind and what troubles them. It again creates community. It deepens the community as we all eat cupcakes and talk about our struggles because we've all struggled.

Sascha Biesi ([00:27:07](#)):

Now, it's like NAMI came into my life at the perfect time depress cake shop. I look forward to may every month Mental Health Awareness Month. That's when Depressed Cake Shop takes place. And I look forward to it every year because I want to see what new creative things we can come up with every year. But Valerie Van Galder really holds the Depressed Cake Shop. And like I said, she's done beautiful work and I'm so inspired by her and that's why I think we want to do as much as we can when it comes to what we do.

So, thank you so much for having me. It's an honor to be here talking about my little bakery and the Depressed Cake Shop. So thanks so much.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:27:59](#)):

Thank you, Sascha. I think it was you that taught me the slogan of the Depressed Cake Shop. Correct me if I have it wrong, where there is cake, there is hope, and there is always cake.

Sascha Biesi ([00:28:09](#)):

Isn't it great? There's always cake.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:28:11](#)):

I got it right, Like the perfect motto.

Sascha Biesi ([00:28:14](#)):

It is.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:28:17](#)):

So Sascha, thank you.

Our last speaker today. And again, I want to encourage you to interact with these remarkable creative forces. I knew about Nick from his leadership at NAMI as our first superhero. As Nick has taught me, everyone in the NAMI community is also a superhero, but he's got the full-on garb. And I realized when I was writing NAMI's first book that it would be authorial malpractice not to invite our first superhero to be part of the book. So, Nick, I want to thank you for everything you do and I want to see what you think about your journey, the strategies, the creativity, and the compassion and peer leadership that you've shown through this vehicle.

Nicholas Emeigh ([00:29:07](#)):

Absolutely. And thank you Ken. And I just need to point out that Ken, what you do, including us in these panels and including us in the book, and by us, I mean peers and people who are in recovery, that is suicide prevention. It's really hard for me having been a suicide attempt survivor to go back to thinking that that is a solution for me when I'm included in things like this, I just can't say thank you enough for including me and for embracing NAMI Man. Because before I was NAMI Man, I was Nick. And Nick had a fine upbringing, but Nick had a lot of anxiety and depression and bullying. And from a really young age, I just knew I was weird, and I didn't fit in anywhere. And now as an adult, I'm great with being weird, I'm fine with it. But for a really long time I was not okay with it.

Nicholas Emeigh ([00:30:21](#)):

After losing my mom and dad, I didn't have a place in the world. And coming to NAMI was special because no one batted an eyelash at any part of my story. You survived suicide attempts, oh, that's what we do here at NAMI. And if you have creative abilities, we want to explore those. And that is exactly what they did. And they embraced me, our state organization, our local affiliate.

One day we were preparing for our NAMI walk and our executive director asked if I'd be interested in wearing a NAMI Man costume. And I thought, well, what is that and why? And you have mascots at NAMI walks and everything and people to get attention and there should be a mental health superhero also. So, it just so happens NAMI Man is also an anagram, which is very cool. But I put the costume on and I just turned into a different person and it actually, I didn't turn into a different person, it's me. And I just didn't know really who I was or what I was capable of.

I flew around at the walk, and everyone was cheering and everyone was so excited that there was a superhero for them. And I thought I can make NAMI Man a model for peer recovery. And that's exactly what I did. And so, NAMI Man goes everywhere. NAMI Man is the face of NAMI Bucks County and NAMI as a whole. And what my favorite thing is to do as NAMI Man, I obviously love going to all the NAMI walks and spreading awareness and hope and making people smile because people catch me, a glimpse of me out of the corner of their eye and they turn and they're like, what is that? And I let them know that I'm a superhero because I survived everything I thought I couldn't. And I get to tell that story to children in adolescent units and children's units at behavioral health facilities. I get to let them know that I say I'm the one and only mental health superhero. But that's not the truth. Because when I walk into an inpatient behavioral health facility, and the first time I ever did, I did not know that we had children's units. I just thought it was maybe some young adults and we called them children or whatever, but it was an actual children's unit. And I was floored.

I walked in and this was a hospital that I was myself in, I was a patient in this hospital at one point. I walked in and I saw four- and five-year-old children and I thought, I am a superhero. I can't cry. I can, but what do I do? And so, there was one young man, and if you saw, there was a presentation at a NAMI conference I think a couple years back where I told this story, but I saw this little boy and he was responding to things that weren't there. And I just knelt down with him and he asked me if I was a superhero and I said, I absolutely am your superhero. I would've given him my wallet, everything he wanted from me. He just said, I didn't know that there was a superhero for me. And so, on the spur of the moment, I thought all of these kids are superheroes. So, I asked the staff if it was possible that we could sit down and all the kids could draw themselves as superheroes while I talked to them and told my story and they shared their little stories with me.

I just knew then that this was something that kids really needed. Because you see Spider-Man and Superman and everything and they're saving the day and there's no one sometimes when you're sick you don't feel like there's anyone to come and save your day and you're different and you're in a hospital and everyone else is out in the world living their life. And I know how that feels because I'd been there, and I didn't want them to feel that way. And so now I get invited to all the children's units around the Philadelphia area and I do that and I go and I sit with these kids for however long they'll let me. Sometimes I read stories. Sometimes I just tell my story and let them share theirs. And sometimes we have difficult crowds who do not understand why a guy would do this.

Nicholas Emeigh (00:35:54):

And I let them know, listen, there was a time in my life that I got bullied to within inches of my life. My mom died, my dad died, I don't really have anyone to support me in my life. My brother and sister I have back in my life now. But I didn't have anybody. And not just that when you're inpatient, you feel sometimes, especially if you're young, like someone put you there and it's a punishment. So I have the luxury and the privilege of letting these kids know what treatment is and I can show them what it did for me as Nick.

I have to say, every time I go out into the community and represent NAMI at an event and a kid comes up to me and asks me for my autograph, that's suicide prevention for me. And this picture over on the right-hand side, it's my right where a young man has a cape on, that's me giving him my cape. He came up to me and asked me for my autograph. And I thought, oh my gosh. And I said, well you're a superhero too. And he just said, oh yeah. And I said, no, you're really a superhero too. And I said, to prove it to you, I'm going to give you my cape. And now our walk is on October 9th, our NAMI walk in Bucks County. This young man is going to help me lead the walk because superheroes need support too. I can't tell you how lucky I feel to be able to do that.

I have to tell you a secret about suicide. I told you I survived three suicide attempts. We run support groups, a number of support groups in Bucks County. One of them is called Alternatives to Suicide. I lead that group, but I still struggle. Recently I had a bunch of surgery, I had a bunch of dental work done because there were years that I didn't take care of myself at all. I just thought, I'll take all this medication and I don't need to go to the dentist or anything like that. I didn't think I was worth it. I do all these things that I'm telling you about, I still didn't think I was worth my own health.

So, I had a reservation even as NAMI man that I can't be NAMI man, if all my teeth fall out or things like that. And I had to have surgery on my mouth, and I was so scared, I had surgery on my sinuses. It took two months to do all this. I didn't have it in me to just do that for me, Nick. But I didn't want NAMI man to have to go through that too. So I thought if I can't get my teeth fixed and everything, I won't be here anymore. I will have to not be here anymore. And so, we can't have that, we need NAMI Man. And so, I reached out to my sister who works in the dental field and I asked her for help and I got help and it took two months.

I was talking to my sister, and I was talking to my boss at NAMI who is the executive director and I said, do you know something? Everybody thinks NAMI Man saves other people's lives. But now this time NAMI Man saved me too. Because I don't know if I would've had that in me to do that for myself. But I knew I had that in me to do that for NAMI and for NAMI Man. And so I can tell you with confidence that I'm here today and talking on this panel because NAMI Man saved me too. I don't know how to say thank you for letting me do this in addition to the other things that I get to do for NAMI. But I'll tell you that every day being involved with NAMI, whether I have NAMI man on or not, it saves my life. It does. It gives me a purpose in a world where peers and people with mental illness were working and we're striving toward better for us.

But I still sometimes feel like when I walk into a room full, and I heard Janet say something about this earlier, when I walk into a room full of professionals and clinicians and everything like that, and I'm just a peer, NAMI gives me the strength to and the empowerment to walk into a room and say, yes, I am a peer. And I'm also NAMI Man, the mental health superhero that leads NAMI Bucks County and-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:41:19](#)):

That you created that has helped to save you. Think about that. You created the superhero to help others. And I want to encourage everyone to ask these three amazing people questions. While you're thinking on more questions, there's a couple questions about our book. Nick, Janet and Sascha are all in the book. In their words, what matters to them. So, You Are Not Alone. One person said, thank you so much for this book. I'm reading it now. It's terrific. I have something to say to you if you love it. Rate it five stars on Amazon. If you don't like it, you could probably use a vacation. Just take a break. Don't feel the need to rip the book to shred. This is our community. The goal of the book is to make NAMI a household name. If it's so many people say to me, why did I know about NAMI five years ago? I could have saved my marriage or changed my relationship.

The next question about the book, is the book available on audio book? The answer is yes. I want you to know I tried out to read the audio book and I was passed over and I gave it my absolute best shot. And this is what's known as life, right? I did read the introduction, so if you want to hear my familiar voice, hopefully, I've been at NAMI close to 20 years, it's been the best job. It's the only job I ever wanted. You'll hear my voice read the introduction of why this book. But then there's a professional who I'm sure is infinitely better than me. It's available on Audible, push the button, go and you can download it immediately. It was available on Tuesday.

A question has come to me which isn't on this chat. They're talking to a Spanish publisher to translate the book into Spanish. That's a question I'm anticipating.

Sascha Biesi ([00:43:21](#)):

Ken, I think you're on mute.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:43:23](#)):

Mute, Ken, you're muted.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:43:25](#)):

Dang it. See, this is why I wrote a book, and I don't run things. The first question is for Janet and they're asking about your website, and some person was concerned it didn't come up as secure or something. Can people contact you? Were you willing to give your email out and just contact them?

Janet Berkowitz ([00:43:43](#)):

I'm going to give my personal email it's the best way to reach me my, you can find me on creativecarecrisiscare.com. But the best way to reach me is B as in boy, E-R-K-Y122@gmail.com. That's Berky122@gmail.com. Berky is my nickname, my last name's Berkowitz.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:44:09](#)):

When did Berky come into your life? Because that's a great nickname. I just have to ask that.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:44:13](#)):

When I was in high school.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:44:13](#)):

Love it.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:44:15](#)):

A friend of mine started calling me that. It stuck.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:44:20](#)):

Yeah. Excellent. Sascha, somebody just said it's so great to know about the existence of the Depressed Cake Shop. I think the implied question is what has it done for you? It's clearly done a lot for other people and for community. How has it impacted you is the implied question.

Sascha Biesi ([00:44:41](#)):

It has showed me that I'm not alone. That's the greatest thing that's done for me because of the people that are drawn to it and that come in and share their stories. I really felt quite alone for a long time. And through doing Depressed Cake shop I really put myself out there and I thought, I'm putting myself out there. I mean I've read some memoirs so I know I'm not the only one, but I'm still going to just see what happens. And the response that I got back was so overwhelming, felt like we really did something. We really were part of this movement and I felt like everything in my life made sense.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:45:25](#)):

Thank you Sascha. The question comes up, is this conversation available for recording. Jordan who does all the heavy lifting for all these as the experts will get it up on the NAMI website, nami.org ask the expert. Is it slash ask the expert? It's findable. They're all listed, all the ones we've been doing for the last years. You can listen to it on audio, you don't have to watch it, if you want to walk the dog or do the dishes, you can learn from people kind of in low key podcast style.

Nick, a question for you. Are you thinking about training more people? Like superheroes, the Fantastic Four is a thing, right? Some of them don't hang alone like Superman, some of them travel together. The Avengers.

Nicholas Emeigh ([00:46:17](#)):

Absolutely. I am not the only mental health superhero out there. And as a matter of fact, I recruit people to my team of superheroes and they're smaller than me. They're kids. So, I have NAMI boys and NAMI girls and we have a NAMI dog and everything. NAMI Dog is a therapy dog. He visits hospitals as well with NAMI man. But I do have a team. But there is nothing that says that I'm the only one and I'm the only person who can do this. So if you are interested in doing NAMI Man in your area, I would be more than happy to teach you. Fear not, anyone could be a mental health superhero-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:47:04](#)):

You're technically the OG. I mean you came up with-

Nicholas Emeigh ([00:47:06](#)):

I'm the OG NAMI Man.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:47:08](#)):

Yeah, obviously.

Nicholas Emeigh ([00:47:10](#)):

But the idea as with everything else with NAMI, it can't just be one person. We have to pass it on and move it forward and keep it going. So, I would love it if that happens. So if you're interested, you know where to find me? Just Google NAMI Man. And there I come.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:47:32](#)):

Excellent. Laura asked the question; I Googled on Audible You Are Not Alone. You're going to have to put in my name too or NAMI. There is apparently a bestselling book out there called You Are Not Alone. It's some thriller series thing. So, we got work to do and so it's not the first thing that comes up, so you got to are not alone either my name or NAMI then we pop up.

I want to read a comment to you. I am crying as I was challenged with depression for about 50 years. But I don't have a question, I have a comment. I commend all three participants on the way they responded and are responding to their challenges. God bless. I just want you to know, I mean it's beautiful what you've done and what you're modeling. Do you have other people are also saying, okay, so you do creative arts and theater, you do bakery, you create superhero. I think the implied question is here, how do I find my creative muse to deal with suicidality? Like these were yours. Did they just come to you? I know you were always artistic Janet and you taught me that about yourself, but how would you encourage somebody who's looking for a creative preventive strategy to find their muse? So, this is a toss-up question. Anybody can take this.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:48:59](#)):

I can say something there. I think the first thing to do is play with what really turns you on. If it's words, get a journal and just start throwing words down on paper. Or write a dialogue as if you're writing a play between you and a part of yourself. Talk to your anger. If your throat is sore, talk to your throat and try to get what's underneath what's going on. If you like music, make a collection of music. Pull songs together that really inspire you and start dividing them up. Which songs maybe help you with your anger, which songs help you with your sadness? And then maybe even try to move a little bit even in your chair you can just start moving your hands and your head and maybe you can get it up on your feet. Find a way to put the feeling through your body.

If you like actual art, you can just pick up paper and start ripping and folding. If you want to explore art. Sometimes I just have my clients fold and rip and I give them a feeling and they just spend five minutes doing something with paper and then see what comes out. It doesn't have to be expensive, and it doesn't have to be weird and complicated. Just start with what turns you on.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:50:14](#)):

Well question to you Janet, Are those pictures behind you your artwork? There are beautiful.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:50:21](#)):

Yes, thank you. This one here is like a fairy world and it's all made with natural things from outside. That's something that really helped me was when I was suicidal, I did a lot of collecting of fungus, acorns, sticks, and I just would put them down on a piece of wood and see where they went. And this turned into there's little fairies in there. So just start nature if you love nature and collect things.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:50:52](#)):

Thank you, Janet. Let's go back to the toss up question for Nick and Sascha if you have comments. How do people find their muse? You found these brilliant, super cool, creative vehicles, each of you and they're all different and it's really cool to learn about them. Person who's struggling. Other suggestions? Janet had some good ideas. What are your thoughts about how you might find your way?

Nicholas Emeigh ([00:51:18](#)):

Well, I would say first that anything that you see any of us doing at NAMI is available to you too. It's available for you to be trained to lead programs. Anything at NAMI that you would like to do. You can do too. I'm not super special and that's how I got to do this was.

But I would say when I was sick and not feeling well, like what Janet said about find something that turns you on that you're good at. Just know that there's at least a couple of other people in the world who are also interested in that but are too sick to be able to get around to do that themselves. And also, the human connection that comes with just sitting with someone and doing an art project.

Suicide prevention doesn't have to be super innovative and out of the box and all this stuff. Suicide prevention can be like Janet goes out and collects some things and you sit together and you put together... That behind Janet, by the way, I love that artwork. I love that so much. That is suicide prevention. Suicide prevention doesn't necessarily have to be a step-by-step guide that was developed by a psychiatrist. No offense Ken, I'm sure you know more about that than me, but-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:52:49](#)):

No offense taken, I'm 96% NAMI and 4% psychiatry. I'm good. No offense taken.

Nicholas Emeigh ([00:52:56](#)):

If Janet came and sat with me when I was in the hospital and did that with me, I would never forget that. Never ever. And if Sascha came and showed me how to, I am the worst cook in the world, you don't want to eat anything I make ever, but if you came and sat with me, I sure would try to do that. And that little seed of hope is suicide prevention. So, I mean, I don't really have a concrete suggestion, I am just affirming what Janet said, if you're good at something, bring it to somebody else and share it with them. I just think that's beautiful.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:53:36](#)):

Sascha You found your muse a baking in a very unusual way. I wanted to know if you'd be willing to share that. I was very moved by this. I was taught as a psychiatrist that our stuff helped people, but our intervention didn't help you at all. And you transcended the side effects to create this. I want you to develop that a little bit because I think it illustrates how unusual a creative path can come. So, do you mind sharing that because it's in the book?

Sascha Biesi ([00:54:06](#)):

Not at all.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:54:07](#)):

It's absolutely incredible.

Sascha Biesi ([00:54:11](#)):

Thanks. In the beginning of 2009, I was a yoga teacher. That was what I did. I had practiced for about 12 years, and I had taught for about 10 years. And then in the fall of 2009, I had the electric shock therapy, like I said, and forgot all the yoga. Had no idea how to do any of it, didn't understand my connection to it. It didn't seem like something that really resonated with me. It just was erased from my brain. But, gosh, once I started going through my grandmother's recipe box and cooking and baking and it really turned into a passion for me that turned into, I felt like in a way, the electric shock treatments though they didn't really help that much in terms of making me want to stop killing myself. It just turned me into the person that I am now and turned me into a baker and a cook. It was just so weird.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:55:27](#)):

You created a cognitive remediation program worthy of the finest science by going through your grandmother's recipes. Think about it. The recipes from your grandmother are connection and let's just agree that food is love. So you're going back to transactions that you had with your grandmother. I mean, I was so blown away by that insight because the psychiatrists think the shock treatment is helping you. It didn't help you, but you created it as a win anyway. And would you be willing to show the people your logo again? Skull and Cake Bones? Because I thought it's quite remarkable how she has taken the side effects of this medical treatment and leveraged it for good. Are we able to show that slide, Jordan? Is that good? I would undoubtedly screw it up.

Sascha Biesi ([00:56:23](#)):

It's okay. Even if not, there's a... Oh, there it is.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:56:27](#)):

There it is.

Sascha Biesi ([00:56:30](#)):

Well, you can't see it in this picture, but there's a lightning bolt.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:56:39](#)):

Oh, we can see it. See it.

Sascha Biesi ([00:56:39](#)):

You can't see it.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:56:39](#)):

You can see it, Sascha. I just think it's amazing because it speaks to the beautiful, one-of-a-kind creativity. You said you had EST. I was asking you the simple question, the doctor thing. Did it help you? Well, not exactly but the problems from it I was able to transcend and find a creative vehicle for soothing, for a business and for community. Incredible. I'm going to give you all a break. Take it [inaudible 00:57:11]-

Janet Berkowitz ([00:57:10](#)):

Ken, can I show you-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:57:12](#)):

Go ahead, let's go. Go ahead Janet.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:57:14](#)):

I had 45 shock treatments. It did nothing for me. So after I got through with it, somebody showed me you can take a book, any book, that's me on the front, and just collage it. It's called altered books. You just do whatever you want. Put anything in it. And this really saved me from that process, but just not... I was like, she said, I had no memory of anything. Yeah, I was, look, this shapes, whatever, just put anything in it. And it really helped me get through that shock treatment business.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:57:51](#)):

Just so you know, the FDA was re-certifying the EST devices and we submitted a special letter saying that NAMI members complained about memory loss, and this was not central to the FDA statement on it. And I just want to say there's someone in the book who I believe the family believes life was saved by shock treatment. So this is not an anti-psychiatry book. I'm still 96% NAMI-

Janet Berkowitz ([00:58:14](#)):

They pushed them on me.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:58:15](#)):

No, I understand.

Janet Berkowitz ([00:58:16](#)):

I had finally learned to say no and it was hard.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([00:58:19](#)):

Good. I'm going to give you all guys a break to take a breather. A bunch of doctor type questions are being asked.

Dr. Ken Duckworth (00:58:25):

All right. Are there easy ways to detect risk of suicide? The answer is you should probably look at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention in some of the signs and symptoms. The Medical Director of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Christine Moutier is in the book as a person who had a medical leave for her own suicidal experiences in medical school, then became the dean of the same medical school and opened up the whole culture towards help seeking. She also writes an essay in the back; how do I talk to somebody who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts? So, in the book you have some of the expertise in the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, but their website does have some of the things you might want to look for.

This is a very imperfect science. And I just want to emphasize if you miss it, and I interviewed for the book eight people who lost people who died by suicide. And the first one story says, sometimes there are no signs. So you have to be gentle with yourself. I just want to emphasize that.

A related question's going to come up. What are the treatments that prevent suicide? It's implied in one of the questions. There's three things that have actually been shown scientifically to work. One is dialectical behavior therapy. This deals with dysregulation and internal distress, which is probably biologically wired, maybe made worse with trauma. That treatment works. Marsha Linehan won the NAMI Research Award about six years ago for this invention. What she did is she took highly suicidal people in Seattle, Washington and assigned them to the best therapists or to DBT. And her comment was, I still can't believe the institutional review board allowed me to do this. And after two years her work, DBT, coping strategies showed better results. So, that's a psychotherapy that is scientifically proven to reduce the outcome of suicide.

Lithium, a treatment for bipolar disorder has also been shown to reduce the outcome of suicide. And interestingly in places where there's lithium in the water supply naturally occurring on planet earth, suicide rates are a little lower. We don't understand why, there's a lot we don't know about the brain. Let's just be straight up about it and say we don't know. In clozapine, the only FDA approved antipsychotic for treatment resistance, schizophrenia, I participated in a research study on whether it could reduce the outcome of suicide for people with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder. The answer was a very clear yes.

So what we're talking about today are creative individual, I would say brilliant strategies that work for them and hopefully might apply to you. But on the medical side, the scientific side, there are three strategies that are quite well established. DBT is very hard work. Lithium, you got to keep an eye on your kidneys. Clozapine, there's blood draws and it's a pain in the neck to take. All these things have been scientifically proven to reduce the outcome of suicide. That was the medical halftime show perhaps. Where I like to give you a break, Someone who practices DBT is hard to find, especially now. That's absolutely true. But I think one of the things that I was taught by Blaise Aguirre who wrote a book called DBT For Adolescence is you may not need a person who has perfect DBT training to get the elements of DBT, but it's absolutely true. DBT, the supply of clinicians is limited and the demand is very high.

New question, Janet mentioned Suicide Anonymous. Did I get that right? What is that?

Janet Berkowitz ([01:02:17](#)):

Yes, it's a 12-step group just like Alcoholics Anonymous. The founder, a psychiatrist who had made many attempts was an AA and he decided why not apply this? He did a study with his patients that showed that suicide is addictive by his standards. You're collecting your pills and all of your ropes and stuff just like an addict collects their drugs and alcohol there. After you make an attempt, there's withdrawal just like an addict goes through. He has a whole lot of information. If you take down my email, I can send you some of his studies. His name is Ken Tullis, T-U-L-L-I-S. And he talks about this whole study, it's fascinating.

I want to just say one that I saw, one of the questions that asked, why is this thing so taboo? I think it's because people are scared to talk about it because even if they don't have a diagnosis, they might have to look at themselves and ask uh-oh, could I possibly be suicidal? It brings it up for themselves and people don't want to look at it in themselves unless they have to, it's smack in front of them.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:03:27](#)):

Janet, that was a very psychiatric answer. That was fantastic. No, seriously, that's what a psychiatrist that was exactly what they would say. Afraid of it in themself-

Janet Berkowitz ([01:03:39](#)):

I've never heard anybody say it who works in the field.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:03:41](#)):

Well, there it is, Janet. So again, a medical question came up, is new ECT less likely to cause the side effect that Sascha had? The answer is yes. I had the head of the National Institute of Mental Health Neurostimulation Department discuss what is neurostimulation in NAMI's book, *You Are Not Alone*, all royalties to NAMI because this question comes up and she describes how there's ways to do it that have fewer cognitive side effects using one sided, right sided, doing the dosing differently. So she wants you to know that they are making some progress on that. So ECT is not guaranteed to cause cognitive vulnerabilities, but I think it's just important to acknowledge that it can. And we did, when we submitted our feedback to the FDA, we wanted the treatment to be available, but we really wanted them to know that people should be notified of this potential risk.

I'm going to ask you guys ask each other one question. So, you're these creative forces and we've hit a lot of the questions that have come out, but I want to give you each chance, like a little discussion between the three of you. What do you think the overlap, my question for the three of you, what's the overlap in these three extremely cool ways that you have found?

Sascha Biesi ([01:05:09](#)):

I mean, the overlap is creativity, isn't it really? I think. We've all found this creative outlet, a creative way to make sense of our own lived experience. And so, I think creativity is what brings us together.

Nicholas Emeigh ([01:05:27](#)):

I think it's purpose. I think this gives us, I'm looking at both of you, Janet and Sascha, and I'm like, why did you ask me to be here? You're amazing. But it's purpose. I need a purpose. And I think other people do too. And so, my purpose gives people hope, I hope.

Janet Berkowitz ([01:05:56](#)):

I'm getting the word communication. And a lot of people are very uncomfortable when they're suicidal. We have so many people who come to Suicide Anonymous and won't turn on their camera and won't talk for a long time. When I was suicidal, like she said, Sascha, you could barely say the word suicide. It's so awkward. And so all these creative forces are really a wonderful way to do expressions. So, you don't have to get into the speaking stuff.

And for you, Nicholas, my question is, I'm a mime and I used to feel like a superhero when I performed in public, in street fairs and stuff. And I live, I go to Doylestown all the time. My interfaith community, Pebble Hill Church is there. I'd like to ask you to think about that, how a mime could express this. I have mime skits on it, but I don't know what it would be. But I would like to find that superhero in me as a mime. So, I'm going to meet you apparently please in a couple of weeks. So, I want to talk to you about that.

Nicholas Emeigh ([01:07:08](#)):

I would love that. Give me a chance.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:07:11](#)):

Creative forces are about to join. So, I want to tell you, there's book events all across the country. On October the second in South Philly at Headhouse Books, Janet and Nick will be discussing these creative strategies. I happen to have a world-famous niece, not related to me, trust me, her name is Angela Duckworth and she wrote a book called Grit. Sold a million copies, doing pretty well. Better than the NAMI book so far, we're not in a million yet. We're moving, but we're not in a million yet. We're going to have a conversation with two of the most persistent, gritty, and amazing people I could imagine that happened to also live near Philadelphia, and they're going to sign your books if you come. Sascha, you are going to be in Austin, Texas where you live, will be a book event in Texas in the third week of January, date TBD.

So, if any of you want to get to know people better, talk to them in person, get their autographs, it's all happening and it should be easy to find where the tour is. Jordan and I are traveling in America. We've done five events. They're quite beautiful. They're quite beautiful because the people in the book explain why they wanted to be in the book, why they wanted to share their names, what they were hoping to accomplish in terms of changing the attitudes and changing the world by being in it. So, it's 5:10. I'm going to ask each of you one final comment on creativity as an antidote to suicidal thoughts. Anybody can start.

Sascha Biesi ([01:08:45](#)):

[inaudible 01:08:46] starts-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:08:56](#)):

What's that?

Janet Berkowitz ([01:09:01](#)):

I got it. So, all the [inaudible 01:09:02] the only reality in my world. Everything else stems from fear. And it's not that fear is real it's that-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:09:09](#)):

You said love is the only reality because we didn't the first word? But I know you-

Janet Berkowitz ([01:09:14](#)):

If isn't love, it's fear, and then under fear is like anger and all that stuff. So the thing about fear is I don't call it a reality, I call it I have a belief that fear is real when I'm in it. And the words that always come to me are allow and accept. So, I am learning to allow suicide to kind of wash over me and to allow it to be, not try to push it away that just has not worked for me to love myself while I'm suicidal and to look for the next loving action that I can take.

I mean maybe looking at the inside of one of Sascha's cupcakes is enough for me just to return to love. I'd like to see a cut open of your cupcake. Watching you be NAMI man is enough for me probably to just shoot me back into the state of love. So I'll just figure out what's the next closest thing I can do to help me allow and love myself while I'm suicidal.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:10:18](#)):

That is beautiful. May I call you Berky? Is that okay?

Janet Berkowitz ([01:10:22](#)):

Please do. I love it.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:10:24](#)):

That's beautiful. Berky. Sascha or Nick, any final comments on this topic?

Nicholas Emeigh ([01:10:31](#)):

Well, I'll go because I know how it is, Sascha. All I want to say is I used to lay in hospital beds and think about what a useless person I was and that there was no place for me in the world. You never know what kind of an opportunity will come along when you're feeling like that. And you never know. We have a NAMI man bobble head doll now. I mean, who knew?

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:11:05](#)):

That's got to be on Amazon with the book, the marketing team total breakdown. We'll talk later.

Nicholas Emeigh ([01:11:13](#)):

I need you to know that if you're sitting out there right now and you're feeling like there is no point to you being here, there absolutely is. And I was there myself too. And now I get to run a NAMI affiliate, I'm NAMI man. I get to do all of these things. Just please know that your current situation is just not your final destination. And I believe in the power of peer support. Get trained whether you're fully healed, whether you're trained or not. It doesn't take a fully healed trained individual who has experienced suicidal thoughts to help another person who's experiencing suicidal thoughts, and I just need you to know that. And it may be me that you end up helping one day.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:12:06](#)):

This is an unusually fabulous Ask the Expert. I want you to know when this started, I had researchers who presented slides and detailed research. So I thought my job initially was to get famous researchers to connect with the public. It's evolving, right? This conversation has been so beautiful. So Sascha, we're going to let you close it out. Unfortunately, you don't have that feature where you can send cupcakes through the Zoom yet.

Nicholas Emeigh ([01:12:32](#)):

I wish.

Sascha Biesi ([01:12:33](#)):

I wish.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:12:35](#)):

We don't have the item. I didn't pay for that feature. I'm sure. Is there a Depressed Cake Shop near me? You? How would I know? Because this is such a beautiful movement that you're part of.

Sascha Biesi ([01:12:47](#)):

It's so great. You can go to the Depressed Cake Shop, I think it's DepressedCakeShop.org and check out, usually they have lists of when there's Depressed Cake Shops and then calling your local bakery in May and asking if they're doing a Depressed Cake Shop. If they say, what's that? Turn them to NAMI turn them over to Depressed cake shop. Let them know so that they might want to participate in it as well. It's a really fun creative outlet for us to come together as a community.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:13:20](#)):

I'm a big both end guy, I like medical tools and I love creative recovery tools. No psychiatrist had ever thought of a Depressed Cake Shop. No psychiatrist in the history of birth has ever said we need a superhero. And no psychiatrist has really had funding in their hospital that's consistent for art intervention. Occasionally there's a grant, right? There's a moment. I'm not saying there's no art, but we have fallen short of respecting creativity in all these dimensions, and it's got to come through the peer movement and it's got to come through NAMI. I'm going to turn it back over to Dr. Teri Brister, my friend and co-host of today's program.

Teri Brister ([01:14:03](#)):

Thank you, thank you, thank you Dr. Duckworth. And right now, I'm feeling so jealous of all of you who were on the book tour and not just because you're getting to sign the books, but because this is a microcosm of what NAMI is. It's finding whatever it is that works for us and learning from others how you unique. Again, like Nick said, that you never know when the universe is going to reach out with what your thing happens to be. And I just want to echo, Nick, what you said to everybody who's in the audience today, don't give up. Your thing is out there and you never know when your search for your thing is going to help somebody else. So again, just and I join you Ken, researchers are great and psychiatrists are great, I happen to be married to one, Ken's one of my favorites-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:14:58](#)):

Took that pretty far, Teri.

Teri Brister ([01:15:05](#)):

It's not all about the clinical treatment. I'm a clinician. It's not all about the clinical treatment. And I thank all of our presenters there that have joined us today. This has been phenomenal, and we want-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:15:19](#)):

The movement really lives in our new book.

Teri Brister ([01:15:21](#)):

Yeah. It does.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:15:22](#)):

It really does. You should read it and say, dang, that's really important. That's what should be one of the takeaways.

Teri Brister ([01:15:29](#)):

And speaking of that book, it officially launched day before yesterday. And this is an important side note, my second grandchild was born on the book launch day, a baby girl. They would not name her Ken but I tried.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:15:44](#)):

Ken Drop was available.

Teri Brister ([01:15:46](#)):

Ken Drop. There were all kinds of options. I tried just to memorialize it. But the book has officially launched and please learn more. You'll see Jordan has the slide up now about where the tour is. Ken is and Jordan are doing a phenomenal job of going to so many NAMI affiliate and state organization events across the country. As Ken mentioned the book, the money is all coming back to NAMI and it truly is, as Dr. Joyce Burland who created our education program, said it's a love fest. We support each other and we give each other hope. And more than anything remind you that we're not alone. So again, encourage you to do that. Thank you.

For those of you who joined us today, we hope that you will join us for not our next session, which is October 13th. And Dr. Judith Cook and her team at the University of Illinois at Chicago is going to be doing a presentation for us on the immunity manual, information about immunizations and mental illness and what that intersection looks like. I want to give a huge shout out to the team that puts these presentations together. You hear from Dr. Duckworth and I and you hear from our CEO, Dan Gillison, but there's a team behind the curtain that makes all of this happen. They do the heavy lifting as Ken mentioned earlier. Jordan Miller, who's our senior producer, Jessica Walthall, Leticia Enos, and Hagen Stauffer who are helping field the questions to Ken and answering your questions in the Q and A pod. And last, but not-

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:17:28](#)):

Teri, may I interrupt you?

Teri Brister ([01:17:30](#)):

Sure.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:17:30](#)):

Can we go back one slide. You skipped our one-of-a-kind first ever NAMI book chat. What we're going to do is have people who looked at the book, bought the book and rated at five stars. And yes, if you only rated four stars, you can join the book chat. We're going to have you pick a chapter. We're going to have people in the book from that chapter and invite them. You want to talk about the hardest family questions, we'll deal with families that have dealt with the hardest family questions. You want to talk about co-occurring disorders, we'll have people who've dealt with that. You want to talk about trauma. So, you're going to pick the chapter and then Jordan and I invite people from the chapter. This is all made up. We never had a book in 43 years, like we're making this up, but we thought it might be fun. A lot of books are being sold, people are reading our book. This is our big statement in bookstores and libraries across America. And so, Jordan will be sending out a survey and we're going to say, which chapter you want to have a book chat on? And we get more than six people. We'll probably do it again. So it's an experiment. We thought we'd try it.

Dr. Judith Cook is really a wonderful resource. She did the research on the wellness recovery action plan. So, Judith Cook is a friend of the family and she's with us on a lot of the peer movement. But I did want to mention that. Teri has never made a mistake or skipped anything in my entire 20 years of working with her, but you skipped our one of a kind, completely made up, let's see if it works book chat.

Teri Brister ([01:19:03](#)):

And that was perfectly perfect timing, Ken, when I was talking about behind the curtain, because now they've all seen behind the curtain. Jordan mentioned this to me yesterday, I didn't know what was actually happening until you just showed it to me on the slide.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:19:17](#)):

Jordan reigns supreme, I think is the sooner you realize that at NAMI the better off you are.

Teri Brister ([01:19:22](#)):

Exactly. Exactly. But it was a great idea. And now you know why Dr. Duckworth is so phenomenal. He thinks it, it happens, and we make it work.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:19:33](#)):

Au contraire. When I presented the book at the NAMI convention, somebody sent in a conversation and said, why don't we have a book club? Never occurred to me. I've been working on this book in my head for 20 years. It never occurred to me that we could have a book and then a month later have a book club. So that didn't come from me, but I do know a good idea when I see it.

Teri Brister ([01:19:56](#)):

There you go.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:19:59](#)):

I don't know who it was, but they said, let's have a book club. I'm like, Oh my God. Let's go. So that's October 27th. And on the 13th is Dr. Judith Cook, who really is a wonderful researcher and resource.

Teri Brister ([01:20:11](#)):

Yes. And this is called building it as we go, but we're all in and we want to do all the things.

But now, Jordan, if you will, go to the next slide now. And we want you to remember that NAMI is a nonprofit organization, and we always welcome your donations. We do the work that we do, we're able to do the work that we do because of your donations. And the last thing I want to say about the webinar series itself in terms of making sure that you know it's to transfer information, but it's not intended to provide medical advice. You heard Ken say several times, little bit psychiatry, little bit us, it's a little bit of everything. It's whatever works for you and we just want you to know what's out there. But again, it's not intended to provide medical advice on any specific topic. It's absolutely necessary for each individual to make their own decisions. But this is the biggest and best way we figured out to share information.

So, thank you again for joining us. We'll look for you twice in October, once for the book club and once for Dr. Cook. Any last words Dr. Duckworth?

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:21:21](#)):

What a blessing this was Janet, Sascha, Nick, thank you. I'm going to personally listen to this when the tape comes out and just think about the work you did. I was never taught one idea about this and I went to a really fancy residency. Some of the answers are in our community. That's the point of the book, that's partly the point of the book. So I want to thank everybody for your attendance today. This was really fun and all the best. And look for us on the book tour. We're coming to America and that's kind of fun. We're just in Orlando, New York City, Boston, going to Alaska, Hawaii, California, Denver, Seattle, Philadelphia, Texas, Oklahoma City. Incredibly the book has resold the United Kingdom, I don't make a nickel from that and neither does NAMI but even the Brits want to learn from us. It's called the NAMI Guide to Mental Illness and Recovery. So I'm going to take a two week vacation and hang out with people-

Janet Berkowitz ([01:22:30](#)):

Your motto song should be, We're Coming to America by Neil Young. Or not Young, Neil Diamond.

Dr. Ken Duckworth ([01:22:38](#)):

So, I call it You Are Not Alone with Scones, that's the British version. So anyway, I want to thank everybody. This was really a very special conversation. Take good care. Thank you for all your leadership. Take care of yourself. If this was unsettling or triggered you or activated you in any way, use the resources you have, the peer support, the love, the helpline, if that's the best thing for you in case this was activating or a little too much. But I found it to be very educational and life affirming. Thanks everybody.

Teri Brister ([01:23:12](#)):

Thank you all so much. Have a good evening.