



THE CNMI DESIGNATED PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEM:

Providing legally - based advocacy services on behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families

Advancing the understanding of and appreciation for P&A services and disability related issues

Enhancing the quality of P&A services and efficiency of the organizations operations

Posse

Charging through Barriers of Discrimination

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3

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Early Hearing and Detection Intervention (EHDI) program



By: **ELSIE TILIPAO**
Program Manager

efforts to improve early intervention systems for children with special needs.

Hearing loss is the most common congenital condition in the United States (US). Each year, an estimated three in 1,000 infants are born in the US with moderate, severe, or profound hearing loss resulting in delayed development in language, learning, and speech.

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing face a potential developmental emergency and should be identified as quickly as possible so that

appropriate intervention services can be started.

NMPASI is here to help by connecting you to the resources to help understand this process and make informed decisions as a parent or provider. Together, we can ensure that every child receives the care and support they need in a timely manner.

For more information on the EHDI program, you can call NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/4 or visit our website at www.nmpasi.org



NMPASI received a subgrant from the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation Maternal and Child Health Bureau to help administer the Early Hearing and Detection Intervention program (EHDI).

NMPASI will be working in close collaboration with the island's sole pediatric audiologist and other Early Hearing and Detection Initiative (EHDI) experts to design training systems, and focus on a variety of

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ADAAG today!



By: **JOHN CABRERA**
Client Advocate

The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) was created by the United States Access Board. Guidelines to ensure access to public and private buildings are provided for individuals with mental or physical disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968.

This act provides scrutinizing and technical guidelines for proper access to buildings and establishments. These guidelines by law are to be implemented during the construction/and or renovations to buildings under Titles 2 & 3 of the ADA to the extent needed to meet ADAAG guidelines. The ADAAG Act applies to public places, local and state buildings in/or under construction. The Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation also issue ADAAG standards. The Access Board is responsible for

providing training and technical assistance on guidelines.

Because of ADAAG, I am confident that when I attend public or private events/functions that the building or establishment is accessible for people with mental or physical disabilities. I am assured that, when I show up, there will be an accessible parking space with a loading section with accessible routes and curb ramps to accessible entrances to events/seating area reserved for individuals with disabilities. Some basic ADAAG assures the right to access at public events, restaurants and bars, elevated areas, vending machines, public and/or private businesses, etc. The ADAAG also applies to transportation companies, medical care facilities, accessible transit, judiciary, legislature and correctional facilities, etc.

These I mentioned are just some of the basic ADAAG guidelines. Today I sit and think how far the ADAAG has come on island for me. Absolutely there have been some improvements to the buildings and transportation services. We now have COTA providing transportation services for individuals with disabilities for Saipan and real soon for the islands of Tinian and Rota. Vehicles meet ADAAG standards -- Equipped with a wheelchair lift for example. However, when it comes

to buildings meeting ADAAG guidelines, I am sure the laws and building codes need more enforcement. It is 2021 and still some business establishments fail to enforce/implement guidelines. Common accessibility issues are still overlooked, such as, an accessible disabled parking space without the required access route and ramps. Some Government and public places often don't meet accessible guidelines for restroom, the most common access needed for me to get around in a manual wheelchair.

For more information about ADAAG please visit [ADA Accessibility Standards \(enhanced single file version\) \(access-board.gov\)](#) or contact NMPASI at 235-7273/4 or online at www.nmpasi.org



Life After High School



By: LUIS MACARANAS
Client Advocate

As a parent there are many challenges regarding the transition to life after high school. Will my child go to college? Will they go to work? These are just some questions parents face as their child graduates from high school. The process alone is exciting, frightening, and can be overwhelming. Now if your child has special needs, you get the same emotion but it's usually increased and the challenge can be greater. Following these steps from a Brain Injury Alliance brochure may help your ease the transition for your son / daughter.

Step 1 Know your rights.

Your child and you as a parent have certain rights. Both federal and state laws have been passed to guarantee that people with a disability are protected with these rights.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its amendment provide for free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities who have not received a regular high school diploma up to the age of 21.

Transition Planning under IDEA. Transition services are supports to help a student move from school to employment, further education, adult services, independent living, or other types of community participation.

After high school or at the age 21 your child is no longer eligible for services under IDEA. However, two other federal laws protect students with disabilities: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA.

Step 2 Consider all the Options.

Choices our kids face after graduating high school are whether to continue education, get a job, or to do both. Transition planning is centered on that very decision. There are many formal education options which include community college, universities, on-line college, trade school, etc. Keep in mind that most college and universities have disability support services that provide or help arrange for information and referral, registration assistance, auxiliary aids, and academic accommodation. On the other hand, maybe your son/ daughter would like to jump straight to the work force right away. The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency has a key role in helping students find jobs and job training. Vocational Rehabilitation can identify work options and guide your son/ daughter in making choices based on their interest, abilities, and needs.

Step 3 Make a Plan.

Planning is part of the transition process. Yourself as a parent and other supportive people have the son/ daughter best interest in mind. The most crucial part in making a plan, is to reflect it in the ideas and goals of your child. Always keep track of your son/daughter progress, when goals, deadlines, and action plans are written down it's easier to track. Keep a plan B. Even with extensive planning, your son or daughter may find it hard reach the goals set. Break the goals into smaller parts to help them feel success and move on the next part.

For more information about "Life after High School" and the resources available for students with disability after high school, contact the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc (NMPASI) at 235-7273 or visit us online at www.nmpasi.org

MEET ME AT INTERSECTIONALITY : PTSD IN API



By: **SHARLEEN SABLAN**
Projects Specialist

Sorry about the cryptic title. Let's clear up some acronyms, shall we? PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress disorder. API: Asian/Pacific Islanders. While we're talking shop, let's look at the meaning of intersectionality. (Bear with me y'all. It will all come together.) Intersectionality, according to Google, is defined as: the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. In short, it is any and everything that can contribute to the discrimination or disadvantage of a person. Alright. We got through it. Thanks for hanging in there.

May is Mental Health Awareness month. It's also Asian Pacific Heritage month. You may have seen the CHCC Community Guidance Center's social media posts on the different ways members of our community take care of their mental health. What was so great about those videos was the diversity of the people showcased. There were, government officials, artists, the youth, some sports stars, and even those who are well known on social media. Although we saw a variety of different ways they take care of their mental health, we also saw that many of them turned to similar activities. So not only did we see an open conversation about mental health, we saw it from individuals who closely represent us – people we can identify with and who are like us. This is absolutely fitting with this year's Mental Health Awareness month's theme: "You Are Not Alone".

When talking about API, people of the CNMI are a minority within the minority. We have the least population amongst the nations that make up API but within our small numbers, we have a large percentage of people who serve the military. Within the military's population, there is a considerable percentage of people who suffer from PTSD. So even without getting into all the data and specific numbers, it's reasonable to say that there are quite a few members of our community out there who are suffering from PTSD. What's also interesting, if not alarming, is that many in our community are statistically not likely to seek mental health help. Many API think that mental illness is something not to be talked about or a weakness to push through on your own. As a result, many of our community members are silently suffering, most likely with only close friends or family who understand what they're going through.



With June being PTSD Awareness month, I thought it would be good to talk about how we can offer support. I found an online guide for helping someone with PTSD. Although professional help is ideal, below are a few tips on what you can do. I highly recommend you go read the full article (link address below) for detailed information on each tip and many other resources.

TIP 1: PROVIDE SOCIAL SUPPORT

TIP 2: BE A GOOD LISTENER

TIP 3: REBUILD TRUST AND SAFETY

TIP 4: ANTICIPATE AND MANAGE TRIGGERS

TIP 5: DEAL WITH VOLATILITY AND ANGER

TIP 6: SUPPORT TREATMENT

TIP 7: TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Helping Someone with PTSD by Melinda Smith, M.A. and Lawrence Robinson
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/helping-someone-with-ptsd.htm#support>

The intersectionality of being a person with a mental illness coupled with being a minority often hits us harder than we admit. Being a minority in the US, we often feel that our needs are not being met. Finding a feeling of commonality is comforting. Finding support is essential. So, let's meet our community members at each intersection. Let's show each other support. Whether you are suffering from mental illness or supporting someone who is, we're all in this together. You are not alone.

If none of these tools help, please seek out professional help. If you feel like you are struggling with your mental health, visit MHASCREENING.ORG to check your symptoms. This is a free, confidential, and anonymous screening service. After receiving your results, you will be given information about your symptoms and resources to feel better. To get further evaluations, seek professional help by calling CHCC Family Care Clinic at (670) 234-8950.

If you or someone you know has faced discrimination due to being a person receiving mental health services, please contact the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program at the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) at 670-235-7273/4 or visit us on the web at www.nmpasi.org, www.facebook.com/NMPASI, or on Instagram [@nmpasi670](https://www.instagram.com/nmpasi670).



DEAL: HOW TO BE A DECENT HUMAN BEING



By: **DAWN SABLAN**
Projects Specialist

As a Projects Specialist, one of my job duties is to advance the understanding of and appreciation for Protection and Advocacy services and disability related issues in the CNMI. One of the strategies we do in order to fulfill that goal is to conduct and participate in outreach activities in relations to Disabilities. My most memorable presentation was on "Disability Etiquette is about learning how to treat a person with a disability. People First Language is about knowing the most appropriate term to use when speaking about a person with a disability. The reason we repeatedly talk about these issues is to raise the appreciation for it and for people to understand the importance of it. But how can we make it interesting enough for people to actually pay attention? In the sense of Disability Etiquette and People First Language, I have come to the conclusion that the most important concept to remember is D.E.A.L. DEAL stands for Dignity & Respect, Educate yourself on Disabilities & disability related issues, Ask, do not Assume, and Listen to the Individual.

One way of being a decent human being is to treat people with Dignity and Respect and Realize when you're being a jerk. Self-awareness is key. Know when

you are getting out of line and remove yourself from the situation. My most favorite line is "I am responsible for my own feelings and you are responsible for yours." Being self aware of how you are reacting at a public setting should help you become less of a jerk. Just because the person in front of you at the grocery store is taking way too long paying, does not give you the right to gasp loudly or tap your feet impatiently. What if that individual is having a panic attack or what if it was their first time ever buying their own groceries? Being a jerk would only have made the situation worse. Instead, you should treat people with the same dignity and respect you want to be treated with.

A second way of being a decent human being is to have a thirst for knowledge and curiosity about the world around you. Educate yourself on your culture and the culture you have mixed yourself in. The CNMI is home to so much different ethnicities and backgrounds that being accepted here is not too difficult. Educating yourself on what makes you different from others and making the conclusions that even if you are different, you also have commonalities with other people. Disability is eventually a part of life, so learning about it and the issues surrounding it is important.

If Educating yourself is not enough, Ask questions. Do not assume you know what a person is all about just because you know their diagnosis and learned about it too. Asking and not assuming is another way in being a decent human being. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Be courteous about it, but if you genuinely want to know, then ask.

Lastly, Listen. Listen attentively. Listen to how you sound when you

ask, and listen attentively to their reaction and response. If you sense that you sounded too forward, apologize, and if they do not want to respond, then accept it and move on.

Treating people with Dignity and respect, Educating yourself on Disabilities and disability related issues, Asking and not Assuming, and Listening to the individuals are just four ways of being a decent human being. It sounds so simple when you break it down, but even I understand how hard it is to be a decent human being; however I would like to think that I have enough qualifications to write and talk about it. I know at times I fall short; but the most important thing I believe about myself is that as imperfect as I am, I try my best. Being a decent human being is not about going out of your way to prove that you are a good person; but more so on recognizing that you actually have to care about other people besides you and yourself.

For more information on presentations, we conduct such as "Disability Etiquette" and "People First Language" contact the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) at (670) 235-7273/4 or visit us on the web at www.nmpasi.org, www.facebook.com/NMPASI, and follow us on Instagram @nmpasi670.

PROMOTING PHYSICAL HEALTH TO SUPPORT OUR MENTAL HEALTH



By: GREG BORJA
Program Manager

May 2021 was proclaimed Mental Health Awareness Month. As part of the awareness month activities, the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc (NMPASI) in collaboration the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation-Community Guidance Center/Systems of Care, Northern

Marianas Athletics, Non-Communicable Diseases Bureau, the Public School System-Athletics Department & Project Haligi Aware, the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Northern Marianas College, planned activities that would focus on physical activities in order to support holistic wellness. The concept for each of the planned activities are based partly on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Wellness Initiative, which envisions a future in which people with mental or substance abuse problems pursue health, happiness, recovery, and a full and satisfying life in the community.

One activity used at the conclusion of the awareness month was the

Marianas Relay. The event was designed to bring families together to compete in athletic sports and promote physical wellness. During the event people of all ages ran in traditional athletics events including 4x100 meters relay, the mixed medley relay (100m, 100m, 200m, and 400m), and a community 8x50 meter relay. In addition to the relay events, a Micronesian All-Around event was held. The All-Around included speed coconut husking, coconut grinding, coconut chop & drink, and coconut spearing.



During the event families also had an opportunity to enjoy a free health screening provided by the NMC Nursing Club. Prizes were given to competing teams and a special THANK YOU goes out to the businesses and individuals who donated prizes toward the success of our Marianas Relay: D&Q-International Distributors; MegaByte; Bridge Capital; Micronesian Brokers; Triple J; WSTCO; Joeten; and Ken & Leo Kato.

Certain activities planned for Mental Health Awareness Month were aimed at encouraging the belief that promoting physical health to support mental health makes for a holistically well individual. In my opinion, these events were successful in bringing forward the positive nature of attending to our personal mental health as well as breaking down the barriers of Stigma of those who may be embarrassed to seek help in regard to their mental health needs and to

bring acceptance of those who live with their mental health conditions as being part of our community.

If you or someone you know has faced discrimination due to being a person receiving mental health services, please contact NMPASI, the CNMI state designated protection and advocacy system whose mission is "To protect the civil, legal, and human rights of people with disabilities."

Enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



By: **JEANNE RAYPHAND**
Legal Counsel

The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.



Title I of the ADA prohibits discrimination because of disability “in regard to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.” 42 U.S.C § 12112.

Title II of the ADA provides that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.” 42 U.S.C. § 12132. The term “public entity” means “any State or local government” and “any department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a State or States or local government.” 42 U.S.C. § 12131.

Title III of the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability “in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantag-

es, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who owns, leases (or leases to), or operates a place of public accommodation.” 42 U.S.C § 12182. Places of public accommodation include, for example, restaurants, bars, hotels, grocery stores, gyms, etc. 42 U.S.C. § 12181

If you feel you have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability and need more information, check the following websites:

Americans with Disabilities Act:
www.ada.gov

US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division: www.justice.gov/crt/disability-rights-section

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: www.eeoc.gov

Service Animals

Under the Americans with disabilities Act (ADA), State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is allowed to go.

“Under ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person’s disability.”

Frequently Asked Questions about

Service Animals and the ADA can be found at: www.ada.gov.

Emotional support therapy, cofort, or companion animals are not considered service animals under the ADA; however, the ADA does make a distinction between psychiatric service animals and emotion support animals. www.ada.gov.

When it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, a covered entity’s employees may ask only two specific questions:

(1) Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?

(2) What work or task is the dog trained to perform?

Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require the dog to demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person’s disability.



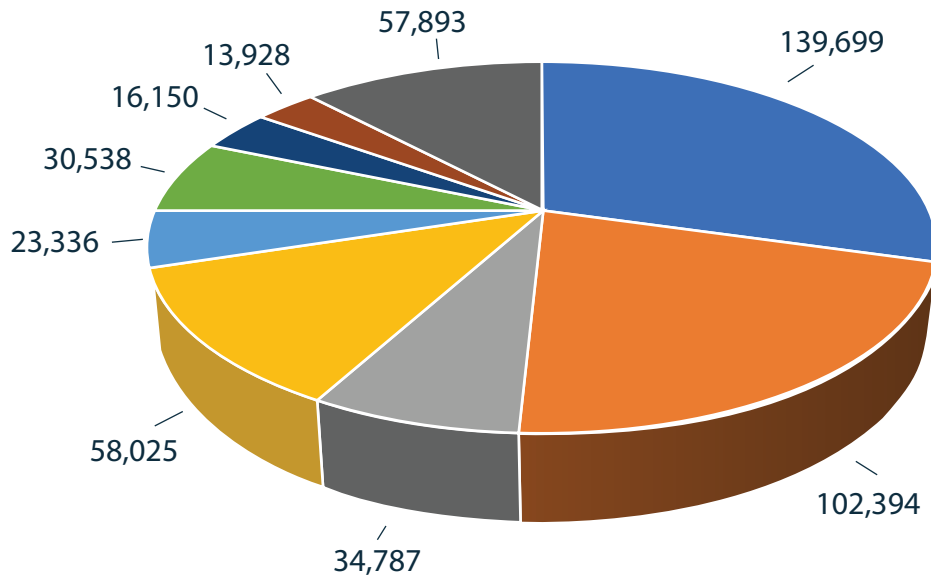
NMPASI

Funding Fiscal Year 2021

\$785,336.00 Total

	EXPENDITURES	BUDGET LEVEL
PADD	139,699	222,010
PAIMI	102,394	229,300
CAP	34,787	59,477
PAIR	58,025	85,799
PAAT	23,336	30,000
PABSS	30,538	50,000
PATBI	16,150	20,000
RepPayee	13,928	30,000
TSF/CHCC	57,893	58,750
Total	476,750	785,336

Total Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2021 as of Ending PPE: 05/21/2021



■ PADD ■ PAIMI ■ CAP ■ PAIR ■ PAAT ■ PABSS ■ PATBI ■ RepPayee ■ TSF/CHCC

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“To protect the civil, legal, and human rights of individuals with disabilities”