

December 2010

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Frederick County

A Letter From Our Frederick NAMI President

Rehabilitation

Recently I was thinking about rehabilitation. You know the rehabilitation you get after you had an injury such as blunt trauma to a hand or surgery on a knee or after having a stroke or heart attack. People who had injuries of this type say that the most difficult part is the not the incident itself or the resulting surgery but the weeks or months of rehabilitation that follows. When I ask them why this is the hardest part, I'm told that it's because one must "retrain" whatever was injured to begin working "normally" again. This is the same for individuals that require hospitalization due to a mental illness, yet the focus is often on the short term crisis management rather than on the necessary aftercare crucial to regaining mental health.

A few days later I was watching the cable program *Intervention*. It's a reality program focusing on an individual with an addiction, often drugs or alcohol and a family's struggle to get help for the loved one. Intervention happens when a

therapist gets the family member to go to a long term drug rehabilitation center. At the end of the program, the closing statement tells you that the person was in rehab for several months, yes months not days, and is now back at home living a new life with their family being "normal" again.

So that brings me to this point, I wonder why our loved ones who suffer "a heart attack to the brain" do not get follow up rehabilitation? Some of the lucky ones, you know those with "good insurance," may get five days of outpatient rehab. But, why doesn't everyone who has a psychiatric problem get the chance to have their brain rehabilitated to begin working normally again? And not for just for a few days or even a few weeks, but 30 days or longer just as they do for drug or alcohol treatment or the rehabilitation one receives after an injury, heart attack, or stroke? In these instances rehabilitation is often paid for by the employer or the individual's health insurance company...unless you are unemployed and have no health insurance. I will save that sce-

nario for another time.

NAMI Frederick's mission is to provide information, understanding, education and support for persons experiencing mental illness and their families. Please support us to stomp out the mental illness stigma so our loved ones can get the treatment AND rehabilitation that's needed to live a "normal" productive life again. When we become proactive and provide appropriate psychiatric rehabilitation, we will help individuals live better lives, support family members, and just think of the cost savings to society!

Warmest regards,

Remo Molino
NAMI Frederick President
NAMI Maryland Treasurer

"...why doesn't everyone who has a psychiatric problem get the chance to have their brain rehabilitated to begin working normally again?"

NAMI in Our Community

Did You Know?

Twice as many people live with schizophrenia than with HIV/AIDS, yet many people know little about the disease that affects nearly 2.5 million Americans.

You may know the important role NAMI plays in advocacy on a state and national level, but are you aware the role NAMI of Frederick County serves within our community? The local NAMI chapter, an entirely volunteer organization, is usually ones first contact with this important organization and often comes at a time of crisis. This personal connection with someone in

the community that shares the same challenges provides reassurance and hope at a difficult and confusing time. Here in Frederick County, we strive to provide outreach to those individuals and family members affected by mental illness through a variety of support group and educational opportunities. Please take a moment to read about the many way Frederick NAMI can help be there for you!

NAMI Monthly Education Meetings

Did you know that Frederick NAMI offers free education meetings on a variety of topics relating to mental illness?

As education coordinator, Nancy Gieser plans a series of monthly meetings presenting a variety of researchers and experts on serious mental illness. The goal is to help the community learn about mental illness, to find available resources, and learn how to help and get help. Programs over the past year have included: Trauma, Addictions, Mental Health and Recovery (TAMAR) Program presented by Eliza Fisher of the Frederick County De-

tention Center; Suicide Prevention and Intervention by Suzi Borg of the Mental Health Association Hot Line; Understanding ODD by Mark Martin, LCSW-C, Brook Lane Health Services; In Our Own Voice presented by members of Frederick NAMI; The Relationship of Antipsychotic Medications to Health and Well Being by Patricia Ball, MRPC and The Pharmacological Basis of Schizophrenia; Efficacy and Tolerability by Gerald Overman, NIMH.

Education meetings are held at the Way Station Annex Building, (adjacent to Way Station), 228 W. Patrick St., Frederick, at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of the month, in the Spring and Fall. *Please Note: The main Way Station building is usually closed at this time. Please park on Patrick Street and enter on the Patrick Street side of the building. The annex is to the left of the main building.*

-Nancy Gieser, Community Education Coordinator

Upcoming Education Meeting

March 8th at 7:00 PM

John Copolla, the State Director of the Healthy Transitions Initiative will present information on the IEP process and ways to encourage youth to become more engaged in planning for their future.

Support Group for Moms

Frederick NAMI is pleased to offer a support group for moms of children and youth with emotional or behavioral difficulties.

NAMI Mommies (as we are lovingly called by one NAMI Dad) meets on Monday mornings when FCPS is in full session. The group meets at 4 East Church Street in Frederick from 9:00 - 11:00 AM on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. Since December is too busy for everyone, we will have only one gathering on December 13th. At that time we will have a special guest, John Coppola, the State Director for the Healthy Transitions Initiative, join us for a question and answer time. The HTI supports transition age (16-24) youth and their families in transitioning youth to adulthood. It's a wonderful program that may change the way kids like ours are supported not only in Frederick County, but certainly in the State of Maryland and perhaps the Nation. It is an honor

for Frederick County to be chosen as a pilot county to launch this initiative. Please come to meet John Coppola and join us for cookies and the great company of NAMI moms just like you!

...of course, Dads are welcome too and we encourage parents of older "kids" to come as well....You are the ones who can share the wisdom you have gained over the years and offer hope to others. All are welcome!

Our offerings for the new year will be:

In February:

A book discussion. We will read the book *It's so Much Work to be Your Friend* by Richard Lavoie. We'll discuss the ways we can support and encourage our kids with the agonizing problem of making and maintaining friendships. Treat yourself to the book for the holidays and join us in February

to share your thoughts.

In March:

John Copolla returns for the monthly education meeting (Tuesday March 8th at 7pm) to discuss IEP language and ways to encourage our young people to become more engaged in planning for their future within the IEP process. Mom's regular support will focus on caring for the siblings of our emotionally and behaviorally challenged kids. Our other children often have needs that go unmet or even unnoticed. It's a huge task for parents and we can support and learn from each other.

April and May are open...

What would you like to know or discuss? Do you have a suggestion for a book we can read together? Please email us and share you thoughts:

christy.evans@namifcmd.org

or

dede.pucino@namifcmd.org

We hope to see you on December 13th!

-DeDe Pucino,
Frederick NAMI Vice President

"Our other children often have needs that go unmet or even unnoticed. "

Moms Group meets at

4 East Church Street in Frederick from 9:00 - 11:00 AM on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month when FCPS is in session.

Hospital Volunteer Program

It's Friday evening, not quite 8PM. On our way out of Frederick Memorial Hospital, my husband Rick says, "Wow, I'm really glad I went. We talked with ten patients, and they seemed so happy to see us." This from the guy who, two days before, complained, "Is it our turn again? I feel like we were just there." He's that way most months, so I'm used to it!

Rick and I are one pair of FMH volunteers for NAMI. We meet with patients and family members on the Behavioral Health Unit. We go on the second Thursday or Friday of the month, while other volunteers cover the first, third, and fourth weeks. We spend about an hour in the day room, making sure that everyone has the NAMI brochure and a very helpful brochure of mental health and social service resources. We encourage both patients and family members to participate in the support

groups and educational classes that NAMI offers as part of their plan when they get out of the hospital. In a non-identifying way, we talk a little about our son's experiences at FMH and Way Station. This seems to show the patients and relatives that we've "been there." Some open up about themselves, and many tell us how much they appreciate our coming. I know Rick and I get as much out of the visit as they do.

I recently became the facilitator of the hospital volunteers, and I am looking for others who would like to volunteer. We are in desperate need of substitutes who could fill in when a regular volunteer is not able to go. Training will be provided. You accompany me on the unit with me when I volunteer so you know what to expect—it's that simple.

Please contact me, Margie Van Dyk, at Margie.VanDyk@namifcmd.org if you would like to know more about the NAMI hospital volunteer program.

-Margie Van Dyk, Hospital Visit Coordinator

"Wow, I'm really glad I went. We talked with ten patients, and they seemed so happy to see us."

With your help, NAMI can continue its work as America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.

Consider Joining NAMI

The Benefits of Membership

When you join NAMI of Frederick County, you will belong to a network of local people like yourself, individuals and families who understand the daily challenges people with

mental illness face, and who are working to meet those challenges. Your membership will ensure that life-changing information, support, and education programs are available for the people in our community who need NAMI.

Joining NAMI of Frederick County also gives you membership in the state and national organizations.

For more details

Visit www.namimdfc.org

A NAMI Grant Application – How it Would Help

Wishing to help those who suffer from mental illness, I recently became more involved with NAMI in Frederick by agreeing to serve on its Board. I am motivated because I have seen the illness first hand, and because the need is pervasive.

One of the principal missions of NAMI is to improve the lives of those with mental illness - *and their families* - through education. We do this in several ways, one of which is to distribute brochures describing various types of mental illness and how to get help. It is one of our core means for reaching out to the Frederick community with information on how to cope with mental illness.

These brochures are professionally done and cost

money. Since we are an all-volunteer organization that provides its informational materials free of charge, we need help to pay for them. As a Board member, I have offered to ask for that help from organizations like The Community Foundation of Frederick County - a philanthropic organization that supports charities in the Frederick area.

Specifically, we recently submitted an application for a "Community Foundation Grant" in the amount of \$1959 – which would allow us to purchase a year's worth of brochures covering a wide range of mental illness issues. A couple examples of these brochure subjects are "Understanding Major

Depression and Recovery," "Understanding Bipolar Disorder and Recovery," and "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Recovery."

We distribute the materials broadly: Frederick Memorial Hospital, Frederick County libraries, Way Station, Mental Health Association, medical/psychiatric offices, etc. We also make individual mailings on request, and provide brochures to the Frederick County Public Schools. This amounts to a brochure distribution of thousands, each one offering some guidance and hope to the individual who might receive it.

-Gerry Blessing, Grants Coordinator

A Note of Apology...

All of you, we're sure, have received multiple membership reminders. This is and on going challenge for us all the way to NAMI National. We apologize for any confusion or incon-

venience this may have caused you. We think (cross your fingers!) that NAMI National is working the bugs out of their system and our data base is clean and current.

Thank you for your patience during this process!

-Frederick NAMI

The Frederick Connection Group is restructuring to better meet your needs.

Please read about how you can be involved!

NAMI Recovery Connection Support Groups

Connection Groups, are free support groups for persons with mental illness, of any diagnosis. They are led by co-facilitators who also live with mental illness and are trained to lead the groups in a format that helps participants learn from each other how to obtain and maintain recovery as well as support each other in hard times. I personally found the Connection group here in Frederick about 2 years ago when I needed such a group and could not find one in Hagerstown where I live. I discovered that a group was starting in Frederick. I came almost

weekly and found it so helpful I sought training to be able to start a group in Hagerstown. Another friend from Hagerstown and I received the training and a monthly group started in April, 2010. At about the same time a co-facilitator was needed here in Frederick, and I was happy to help out. Eventually the group was suspended for low attendance, and we are now in the process of regrouping, with the goal of eventually offering a group every week somewhere in Frederick. In the meantime,

we are looking for several people who, like me, so want a group locally they are willing to go for the free training provided by the state in order to make that group possible. The training will be offered in January, 2011, and applications will probably be due in some time in December. If anyone is interested, please contact me at sanrogers314@yahoo.com

-San Rogers,
Connection Coordinator

There are only four kinds of people in the world – those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers”.

- Rosalyn Carter

Care Giving Statistics

What is Family Care Giving?

Simply put, family caregiving is the act of assisting someone you care about who is chronically ill or disabled and who is no longer able to care for themselves. Family caregiving is the bedrock upon which this country's healthcare system depends. The services pro-

vided by family caregivers represent 80% of all home.

The impact of Family Care giving can take a toll on a Caregiver in many different ways— Social, economic, physical and financial. There are resources and support available to Caregivers and their families. For more information

along with statistical data on the impact of giving, please visit:

<http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org>

Peer to Peer Education Class: An Education Program for Consumers

Peer-to-Peer is a unique, experiential learning program for people with any serious mental illness who are interested in establishing and maintaining their wellness and recovery. The class and materials are provided free of charge.

Peer to Peer uses trained peer mentors to educate members of the class about mental health, management of medications, the nature of disorders and medications, intervention, relapse management, sup-

ports, maintenance, and crises response. In the winter of 2009 at Way Station there were three sessions of Peer to Peer offered with seven to eight individuals completing the eight to ten week sessions. Two peer mentors lead the class, and receive training for their positions from NAMI trainers. In 2010 there have been two additional sessions held at Way Station, with five to eight graduates. Responses have been positive, and

Shannon Petersen, staff member from the Way Station, has been doing an excellent job coordinating Peer to Peer in Frederick County. The next session is planned for January 2011. Kudos to NAMI Frederick and Way Station; Peer to Peer is educating us about mental illness!

-Barry Churchill, In Our Own Voice Coordinator

Peer to Peer Testimonials...

"Peer to Peer teaches in 9 weeks what it took me 20 years to figure out for myself." — California

"I feel much more confident now and am not ashamed to say that I have an illness. I know that speaking candidly about myself helps to break down the stigma that exists in others."—Maryland

Member Recommended Reading...

When Someone You Love Has a Mental Illness

To date, the best book I've read about mental illness is *When Someone You love Has a Mental Illness*, by Rebecca Woolis. Many books written about mental illness only cover the illness from a medical perspective. Woolis' book, however, offers useful, practical information and advice on how to foster good relationships between family members and a loved one with a mental illness as well as information on dealing with mental health professionals and various government agencies. This easy to read book has worksheets,

checklists and a chart of many common medicines used in dealing with mental illnesses including common dosages, possible side effects and therapeutic effects all written in layman's terms for easy understanding. It is really written like a handbook. For example, there is a quick reference guide located at the front of the book that points you directly to the section on handling such things as your ill relative's anger, whether an ill should relative live at home, dealing with relapses and how to apply for SSI.

Rebecca Woolis tells it like it is when describing the pain

that family members and the loved one must face, but she goes beyond the pain and gives sound advice on how to work through it all and take care of yourself along the way. This book is particularly useful to families dealing with a recent diagnosis, but the book also offers valuable insight and information for families at all stages. I highly recommend this book.

-Jane Kohlheyer, Frederick NAMI Secretary

In Our Own Voice

In Our Own Voice

“IOOV provides an opportunity for those of us living with mental illness to share with local community groups about our personal experience with our particular mental illness.”

(IOOV) is a unique public education program developed by NAMI, in which two trained consumer speakers share compelling personal stories about living with mental illness and achieving recovery.

“IOOV provides an opportunity for those of us living with mental illness to share with local community groups about our personal experience with our particular mental illness.” The opportunity helps us become more comfortable with speaking about what we have personally experienced; builds self-esteem; and lets us contribute to NAMI's mission of combating the stigma associated with having a mental illness. The presentations also help local community groups learn more about mental illness as it affects individuals and

families. So the benefit goes both ways.

This is how it works: a local group (a psychology class, a PTA, faith community group, or any other civic group) requests a presentation. Two trained NAMI volunteers will present for your group. On the day of the presentation, we are introduced to the group, and then we talk a little about ourselves and our personal diagnoses. A video is then used to broaden the insight for viewers on how mental illness affects individual lives. It is divided into 5 segments: Dark Days, Acceptance, Treatment, Coping Skills, and finally Successes, Hopes, and Dreams. After each segment of the video, the presenters share their own experience with the topic, followed by questions and comments

from the audience.

As a new presenter, I was anxious as I prepared and waited to be introduced, but after we began, I realized that people were there to hear me and cheer me on and learn something. Then it occurred to me that it is a privilege to be able to perhaps change someone else's life.

Please visit our website at www.namifcmd.org and check our calendar of events for upcoming presentations

To arrange for a In Our Own Voice Presentation for your group contact Vince Gieser at vince.gieser@namifcmd.org

-San Rogers,
Connection Coordinator

Did You Know?

Bipolar Disorder, sometimes called "manic depression" due to the severe mood swings, affects 5.7 million Americans.

Consider a NAMI Family Support Group

*You are not alone.
There are others in
your community that
share similar chal-
lenges and experi-
ences.*

*Extend your support
system by attending
a NAMI Family
Member Support
Group.*

If you haven't attended one of our family support groups, you ought to consider doing so.

Why? It's a great opportunity to learn more about mental illness, share your experiences, help yourself and others with genuine support in a caring, honest and friendly setting. And it's free!

We currently only have one family support group meeting per month (see the NAMI-Frederick calendar for details) and are prepared to facilitate other meeting dates if there is enough interest.

Our family member support group meets on the first Thursday of each month from 7:00-8:30 PM at Good Sheppard Lutheran Church, 1415 W. 7th Street, Frederick.

-Curt Kohlheyer, Family Support Group Coordinator

For more information about family member support groups contact curt.kohlheyer@namifcmd.org

NAMI Frederick in on the Web!

Visit us at **www.namifcmd.org**

- Learn about the NAMI educational and support programs offered in Frederick.
 - Check out the calendar of events.
 - Read and learn about specific mental illnesses.
 - Link to NAMI Maryland and NAMI National
 - Find additional information and resources.
 - Join or donate online.
-

Family to Family Education Program

Family members who take the NAMI Family-to-Family course are better equipped to work with mental health clinicians in a collaborative manner. My bottom-line recommendation? Take this course. It will help you learn to cope successfully with a major challenge in your life, and that, in turn, will help your loved one as he or she works toward recovery.

-- Peter Weiden, M.D., author of *Breakthroughs in Antipsychotic Medication*

Now Enrolling...

Next class begins on January 24th

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a free, 12-week course for family caregivers of individuals with severe mental illnesses.

- The course is taught by trained family members.
- All instruction and course materials are free to class participants.
- Over 115,000 family members have graduated from this national program

More information about the class can be found on the national website at www.nami.org. Click on find support – education. The NAMI Family to Family course was recently a subject of a study showing the effectiveness of caregiver education and support. Research proves what NAMI members already know, the support and information provided by Family to Family is effective in helping those living with and caring for persons with mental illness.

For a full copy of the published article about this study please see www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/Programs/Family_to_Family/

Our next class will begin on January 24, 2011. The class will meet on Mondays from 6 to 8:30 PM. **For more information and to register for the class, contact Carol Officer at**

Carol.Officer@namifcmd.org or call 301-371-5899.

We would like to thank Dwayne Singleton and Michael Neely for teaching our fall class and congratulate the participants who completed the course.

-Carol Officer, Family to Family Coordinator

Holiday Blues?

Many factors can cause the “holiday blues”: stress, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial constraints, and the inability to be with one’s family and friends. The demands of shopping, parties, family reunions and house guests also contribute to feelings of tension. People may also develop other stress responses such as headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating and difficulty sleeping. Even more people experience post-holiday let down after January 1. This can result from disappointments during the preceding months compounded by the excess fatigue and stress. Here are ten ways to minimize stress and make the holidays more enjoyable for the whole family.

10 Ways to Cope with Holiday Stress

- 1) Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities.
- 2) Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Don’t put the entire focus on just one day. Remember that it’s a season of holiday sentiment, and activities can be spread out to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.
- 3) Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.
- 4) Leave “yesteryear” in the past and look toward the future. Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don’t set yourself up in comparing today with the “good ol’ days.”
- 5) Do something for someone else. Try volunteering some of your time to help others.
- 6) Enjoy activities that are free, such as taking a drive to look at holiday decorations, going window shopping or making a snowperson with children.
- 7) Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.
- 8) Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- 9) Spend time with supportive and caring people. Reach out and make new friends, or contact someone you haven’t heard from in a while.
- 10) Save time for yourself! Recharge your batteries! Let others share in the responsibility of planning activities.

Source:

<http://www.nmha.org/go/information/get-info/depression/holiday-depression-and-stress>



Mission:

To provide information, understanding, education and support for persons experiencing mental illness and their families.

NAMI of Frederick County

4 East Church Street
Frederick, Maryland 21702

Phone: 240-379-6186

**Join or renew your
membership online.**

www.namifcmd.org

What to do in a Psychiatric Crisis in Maryland

A psychiatric crisis includes but is not limited to: suicidal or homicidal thinking and/or behavior, acute psychotic symptoms, sudden change in mental status and violence. Early intervention can help prevent tragedies. NAMI Maryland has created a brochure for those who need to help someone who is in psychiatric crisis in Maryland. See the brochure online at

<http://md.nami.org/eebrochure.htm>

211 - Dial this number to get ANY social service available in Maryland. It's a one-stop call for all programs, emergency services, benefits, etc, including Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security Disability Insurance.