



NAMI Frederick County

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Find Help. Find Hope.

April 2012

NAMIWalks Celebrates its 10th Anniversary in 2012!

NAMI Frederick is proud to be a part of the largest and most successful mental illness awareness event in America!

Walk with Us!

Location: Baltimore's Inner Harbor

Date: May 19th, 2012

Check In/ Registration: 10:00 AM

Start Time: 11:00 AM

Distance 3 Miles



For more information on how to sign up to walk, visit www.nami.org and click on NAMIWalks. You can also contact the NAMI Frederick Walk Coordinator, Terri Wenner at Terriwenner@yahoo.com.

NAMIWalks—Changing Minds...One Step at a Time is a nationwide event being held in communities across the country. It raises public awareness about mental illness and allows individuals with mental illness and their families and friends, as well as the larger community, to gather for this special day. This event hosts teams from various Maryland communities, and the walk features food, information booths and recognition of media, business and health care sponsors. Maryland has two NAMIWalks events this year. Frederick NAMI is participating in the walk at Baltimore's Inner Harbor on Saturday, May 19th 2012. The second walk location is in Silver Spring, Maryland on Sunday, May 6th 2012. For information on the Silver Spring Walk, visit www.namimd.org

The NAMI Mission

NAMI champions justice, dignity and respect for all people affected by mental illness. Through education, support and advocacy, we strive to eliminate the pervasive stigma of mental illness, affect positive changes in the mental health system and increase public and professional understanding of mental illness.

NAMIWalks accomplishes this mission in two ways. First, by gathering the community together to walk on behalf of NAMI, we show others the importance of our cause and help to stomp out the stigma associated with mental illness. Secondly, the funds raised during the walk go to support NAMI at the local, state, and national level. This allows NAMI to advocate, educate, and support those affected by mental illness as well as others in the community.

Participant Information

Individuals, families, companies, and organizations are encouraged to take part in the Walk. There is no registration fee for the walk. All participants are encouraged to collect donations from family members, friends, co-workers and business associates. All walkers raising \$100 or more will receive a NAMIWalks event t-shirt.

WALKERS: Join NAMI Frederick's official team, the Frederick NAMIgos, or form a team of your own and walk on behalf of Frederick NAMI. If you are planning to form a team of your own, you can register your team online under the Frederick NAMIgos "super team" site so that all the teams can be affiliated with NAMI Frederick. Please contact walk coordinator, Teri Wenner at terriwenner@yahoo.com if you are planning to form a team.

PREFER NOT TO WALK? You can help by being a "virtual walker." Simply register online as a walker, set a fundraising goal, and let your friends, family, and business associates know that they can help you support the NAMI. Or, you can choose to sponsor an individual walker or team with a tax deductible donation online or by mailing it directly to Frederick NAMI, 4 East Church Street, Frederick MD 21701.



A Note from Our NAMI Frederick President...

Dear Members and Friends,

NAMI Frederick is an all volunteer organization. (Only those with a mental illness get a small stipend when they teach a class or speak in public on behalf of NAMI.) We are all volunteers who want to expand our mission to help those with mental illness and their families. Our office space, including utilities, is donated by the United Church of Christ Evangelical Reformed Church.

NAMI Frederick receives no pharmaceutical money or money from local, state or federal governments. You, the membership, are our main source of income and 100% of that income goes towards our programs such as the NAMI Family To Family class, Connection peer support group, family support groups, community education programs, hospital visits and the office phone line.

When you become a member of NAMI Frederick for \$35.00 per year, \$10.00 goes to NAMI National, \$10.00 goes to NAMI Maryland and \$15.00 goes to NAMI Frederick. If you make a donation, above the membership dues, and mail it directly to NAMI Frederick, then 100% of that donation stays with NAMI Frederick. The entire donation goes directly to our local programs. If you make a donation to NAMI National, then 100% of that donation stays with NAMI National. The same would be true with NAMI Maryland.

Here is how NAMI is tiered. NAMI National encompasses all State affiliates. All State affiliates encompass all county affiliates such as NAMI Frederick. NAMI Maryland provides NAMI Frederick free training of class instructors, support group facilitators, In Our Own Voice presenters, etc. NAMI National supports NAMI Maryland in many ways as well.

As a NAMI Frederick member, you automatically become a member of NAMI National and NAMI Maryland. We encourage you to become a member, or renew your membership, at www.namifcmd.org.

Sincerely,

Remo Molino

NAMI Frederick President



Check your address label!!!

In the lower left hand corner of your newsletter address label it should read **"Exp: date"**. This is the date your NAMI annual membership expires. If there is no date there, then you either need to renew your membership or join. By joining NAMI Frederick, you also get membership in NAMI Maryland and NAMI National, receiving their news magazines as well as our NAMI Frederick newsletter! Everything we do at NAMI is free of charge and we are all volunteers. Your membership dues help pay for the educational classes, support groups and community outreach offered in Frederick County. Annual dues are **\$35** for Family, Individual or Business Membership or for those on a limited income, we have **\$3** annual dues with the same benefits of membership.

There are Two Ways to Join NAMI or Renew Your Membership

1. Join online at www.namifcmd.org and pay with a credit card.
2. Mail a check to NAMI of Frederick County, **4 East Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701**. Please include this form.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

_____ Individual/Business Membership \$35.00

_____ Limited Income Membership \$3.00

NAMI Frederick

Reaching Out to You!



►►► All NAMI support groups are facilitated by trained volunteers and are confidential and free of charge. ◀◀◀

Whether you are an individual living with a mental illness or a family member, you know that mental illness can be isolating. It is hard to find others that can relate to your experience. You may be hesitant to confide in friends, co-workers, and even extended family members. Your situation may cause you to withdraw from others and lead to feelings of isolation and despair. NAMI Frederick would like to reach out to you and offer you a supportive environment to connect with others and learn to cope. You will arrive at the realization that there is hope and things do get better! Read on to learn about how NAMI Frederick can be there for you.



Are You Missing Out?

In the spring of 2008, our 19 year old son was very ill and was hospitalized. The doctors said he had a mental illness and we were experiencing the onset of his disorder. We knew very little about mental illness and we were scared. One day, my wife *informed* me that we were going to a NAMI Family Support Group meeting later in the week. I had no clue what NAMI was, but I knew I didn't want any part of it. So, I protested, telling her that I was not going to share our family business with a bunch of strangers! I told her that I would not be going to any such meeting! But, over the next couple of days she kept telling me that I WAS going to the meeting with her, no ifs, ands or buts. Finally, I reluctantly agreed to *take* her to the meeting, even though I wasn't happy about it and I knew I would get nothing out of the experience.

What I found at that support group meeting was a group of warm, caring people who understood what our family was going through. They listened, sympathized, offered advice and even had plenty of Kleenex on hand for my wife. After being there for a while, I found myself sharing my thoughts and fears...out loud! Others in the group told me that they had been in my shoes at some point, but they assured me that our son would get stabilized, and that eventually I would feel better too. They recommended books and gave us some brochures. They encouraged us not to give up hope, and they said that they hoped we'd come back the next

month. When the meeting was over, my wife and I got into the car to go home. I reached across the front seat, squeezed her hand and said, "Thank you for letting me *take* you here tonight. I think we should come back next month, don't you?" Not only did we go back that next month, but we kept going back, month after month. I've learned that there are ups and downs when you have a child with a mental illness, but no matter where we are on that spectrum, I always feel better after going to support group. Believe it or not, my wife and I are now the volunteer facilitators of that same support group that I originally refused to attend, and I am also the Family Support Group Coordinator for NAMI Frederick.

Are you missing out? If you haven't been to a family support group meeting in a while, I think you are. And if you've never been to a family support group meeting, I know you're missing out. Maybe you have a loved one who was recently diagnosed with a mental illness. If that's the case, you should come to a meeting because you'll find people there who understand what you're experiencing. Has it been a long time since you've attended a support group meeting? Maybe it's been months, or even years. If so, I hope you'll consider coming back, even just a couple of times a year. Maybe you don't think you should attend family support group because your loved one is doing great. But, you have wisdom and insight that can be very helpful to others. So, ask yourself this question: Are you missing out?

Family Support Groups Meet

1st Thursday of each month

7:00-8:30 PM

Good Shepherd Lutheran
Evangelical Church,
1415 W. 7th Street

3rd Wednesday of each month

6:30-8:00 PM

All Saints Episcopal Church
106 W. Church Street

Curt Kohlheyer
Family Support Group Coordinator
Curt.Kohlheyer@namifcmd.org

Reaching Acceptance Through Group Support

My name is Dave Stant. I began attending NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group in December of 2007. I was trained as a Connection Facilitator for NAMI Howard County in January of 2010. I became the Consumer Coordinator for NAMI Frederick County in January of 2011. *Acceptance* for me began as I started to attend NAMI Connection support group and was surrounded by people with similar conditions who understood what I was going through. NAMI Connection is a large part of my coping strategy, which is establishing a support network. I believe that individuals with mental illness can benefit tremendously from peer support.

NAMI Connection is a program offered by NAMI Frederick free of charge. NAMI Connection is a support group for individuals with mental illness, not group therapy. The program is led by peer consumers who are living well in recovery from mental illness. The support group is built upon group guidelines and principles of support, which create an atmosphere of trust, hope, and mutual respect. Each member agrees to abide by these components at the beginning of each meeting. Connection facilitators are responsible for guiding

Stay Informed!



Are you receiving e-mail notices from NAMI Frederick? You can be kept up to date on the latest NAMI Frederick support groups, educational opportunities, and special events by registering your email address with us.

If your e-mails address has changed or if you are not currently receiving e-mail and would like to receive them, please contact Jane Kohlheyer at

Jane.Kohlheyer@namifcmd.org

*Please include both your **name and your e-mail address** when contacting Jane.

**Support Group
Reminders...
Guest Speakers...
Educational Classes...
Special Events**

Connection Support

Group Meets

2nd and 4th Tuesday
of each month
7:00-9:00 PM
4 East Church Street,
Community Room B

group discussion. At the beginning of each meeting, members are able to share their experiences. During the group, facilitators use these opening stories to ensure that all participants receive the support they need.

Perhaps most importantly, NAMI Connection practices **ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY**.

Each group member has an opportunity to share his/her thoughts, challenges, and or experiences in a safe, supportive, and non- judgmental environment. The facilitators understand what group members are dealing with. They have been in those places themselves. Participants also benefit from offering support. It creates a feeling of belonging, which is often hard to find in the real world. More often than not, members leave satisfied and feeling much better than when they arrived.

Dave Stant

Consumer Coordinator

Dave.Stant@namifcmd.org

Social Security Benefits Primer: Making Employment Work for Consumers with Mental Illness Through Work Incentives Workshops

Individuals with mental illness and their family members often fear the potential loss of Social Security benefits and health care coverage following employment; however, these fears are often based on myths and misconceptions. In many instances, individuals with mental illness may be able to enjoy the full economic, social, and therapeutic benefits of employment without forfeiting access to needed Social Security cash benefits and health insurance coverage. The workshop is offered on the following dates:

April 30, 2012- White Plains, MD.

For more information and to register, contact Maria Vaughan at MVAughan@dhmm.state.md.us

May 8, 2012- Cambridge, MD. For

more information and to register, contact Erica Horney at ehorney@msmhs.org



You are Not Alone

It may sound odd, that an illness absolutely brimming with trauma, pain and suffering could leave those involved feeling so empty. Coping with sometimes daily traumas drains our energy and interest in life. And whether it's our son, or mother, or spouse, we don't dare to reveal our struggles to our friends or co-workers. The risk of social stigma is just too great.

As alone and alienated as we might feel, we are not alone—far from it, as becomes obvious when we work up the courage to go to a support group. There we learn that there are others—perhaps many—whose struggles with the collateral damage of mental illness apparently parallel our own. According to a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control in 2004, an estimated 25 percent of adults in the U.S. reported having a mental illness in the previous year. That means that, in a family of four, at least one member is likely to suffer from a mental illness. Lifetime prevalence rates of mental illness in the U.S. were around 50 percent in 2004 (and presumably, not much different today).

Having so much in common gives families struggling with mental illness the opportunity to reach out and support each other. This opportunity is the foundation of NAMI's Family to Family course. Family to Family is a free, 12-week course led by others like you, who have been trained to convey helpful information and techniques for dealing with a loved one's mental illness. The course delves into causes of, and treatments for virtually all major mental illnesses, such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and more. It teaches that there are often genetically based physiological reasons for these illnesses, and that a wealth of treatments exist, which are constantly expanding through leading edge research. Practical exercises instill and reinforce communication and crisis management techniques. To date, over 300,000 family members have benefitted from this national 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." --Dr. Peter Weiden

Here is what one participant in the Family to Family course had to say about his experience:

"My wife and I are a middle-aged, middle-class couple who, 20-some years ago, bore the most wonderful possible son. While he was in the womb, we would wonder together, 'Who will this person be?' We envisioned his becoming a doctor, or scientist, or something befitting his incredible talents. When he was born, we walked on air. Little did we know that just a few short years later, we would be walking on eggshells, trying to prevent another huge tantrum. Through middle school, and then "live-away" high school, we felt like we were dying as we realized how deeply troubled and disabled our son was. Eventually we came to realize that this was our new life. One of the worst aspects was feeling that somehow we had caused it—or at least made it worse.

Through our participation in the Family-to-family class, we came to see more clearly that our son's illness was not and is not our fault. Just as a diabetic suffers from an insulin imbalance, our son suffers from imbalances in critical hormones, such as serotonin and dopamine. It is still painful to see him suffer, and to accept the profound loss of what might have been. But the truth is that I now truly love my son more than I ever have before. Feeling less guilt and having a more realistic perspective on his illness is enabling me to better relate to him, and help him in positive ways."

Participants aren't alone in raving over the effectiveness of the Family to Family program. According to Dr. Peter Weiden, author of ***Breakthroughs in Antipsychotic Medications***, "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."

NAMI Frederick County generally offers the course twice a year, in the spring and fall, at a location in downtown Frederick. Classes are held one evening per week for 12 weeks, for 2 ½ hours per class. All instruction and course materials are free to class participants. For more information or to register for an upcoming Family to Family class contact Mike Neely.

Mike Neely
Family to Family Coordinator
Mike.Neely@namifcmd.org



Interacting When Someone Appears to be in Crisis

Mary Lou Blessing, NAMI Frederick member and support group attendee, shares that family members often seek advice about interacting with a loved one in crisis. She suggests these guidelines from NAMI Maryland.

Interact by:

Remaining calm; speaking slowly
Maintaining safety and space
Acknowledging apparent feelings
Giving concise, clear and direct instructions
Addressing feelings of delusions/hallucinations
Being helpful, supportive, and validating

Avoid:

Talking in a loud, demanding voice or arguing
Staring, laughing, ridiculing, yelling, or touching
Blaming the person for the behavior
Giving choices: can increase confusion
Showing frustration: might increase agitation

The person might:

Appear agitated, fearful or threatening
Believe delusions
Deny his/her illness
Be over stimulated
Have poor judgment
Be preoccupied
Be withdrawn
Have changing emotions
Have changing plans
Have little sensitivity toward you
Have low self esteem and motivation

So you need to:

Remain calm and accepting
Remain simple and direct; do not argue
Do not try to convince otherwise
Be soothing; limit input
Avoid judgment; not expect rationality
Gain attention first
Gain trust slowly; not approach quickly
Acknowledge the emotions
Remain calmly consistent and direct
Recognize as a symptom
Provide positive feedback and support

Children and Adolescents Study Participant Opportunity

National Institute of Mental Health-Research into the Causes of Severe Irritability/Mood Dysregulation

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is conducting research studies with children and adolescents, with severe irritability. These studies will take place at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Both parent and child must agree to the child's participation. Travel expenses incurred by the patient and parent/guardian will be paid by the NIMH.

Research into Causes of Severe Irritability/Mood Dysregulation:

Children ages 7-17 with severe irritability

- Research tasks include neuroimaging, computer tasks & neuropsychological testing during up to 5 outpatient Children ages 7-17 with severe irritability
- Research tasks include neuroimaging, computer tasks & neuropsychological testing during up to 5 outpatient visits of 2-4 hrs each followed by annual visits of 4 hrs.

Or:

- If unstable on current medications, your child may be eligible for a study testing the efficacy of different treatments for decreasing irritability in children with severe mood and behavioral problems. Participant receives day or full hospitalization to discontinue medication, followed by either methylphenidate plus citalopram or methylphenidate plus placebo. This study lasts 12- to 15-weeks.
- If clinically appropriate, participants who receive methylphenidate plus placebo will be offered the opportunity to receive methylphenidate plus citalopram at the end of the study

To find out if your child qualifies or for more information, please call (301)496-8381 or email irritablekids@mail.nih.gov.



Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things

By Randy Frost and Gail Steketee

Hoarding

A Personal and Societal Issue

No doubt if you've seen the TV program on "Hoarding" you have been allowed into a world you can't imagine – unless you have lived in such an environment. Hoarding is seldom simply acquiring too much stuff – it may be about the stuff or it may be a manifestation of a much more subtle mental health disorder.

Having spent years dealing with family members and hoarding, we've been on a "venture" to learn all that we could. One thing we've learned is that simply disposing of the "stuff" seldom has any positive effect, except perhaps to make the caregivers feel that they have at least done "something". If you would like to understand this issue better, we strongly recommend a book that we have found to be the most informative and helpful. The title is ***Stuff, Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*** and was written by Randy Frost and Gail Steketee.

The book jacket explains that the authors were the first scientists to study hoarding and that this book comes after they have treated hundreds of sufferers. ***Stuff*** provides portraits of the behaviors involved in this disorder through a set of case studies. As the jacket goes on to say, "portraits that show us the particular traits of the hoarder – piles on sofas and bed that make furniture useless, homes that have to be navigated by narrow 'goat trails', stacks of paper that are 'churned' but never discarded, even collections of animals and garbage – Frost and Steketee expose the causes and previously ineffective treatment of the disorder." Finally the description which best explains our sense of the book and the disorder – "***Stuff*** answers the question of what happens when our stuff starts to own us." We highly recommend this book if you wish to try to get "inside the brain" of someone whose stuff has begun to interfere with their lives and relationships.

Reviewed by

Gerry and Mary Lou Blessing

NAMI Frederick Members

From Emotions to Advocacy:

The Special Education Survival Guide

by Pam and Pete Wright

If your child is at risk or diagnosed with a mental illness then you know the challenges that you and your child are facing at home can extend to peer interactions, extracurricular activities, and the classroom setting. Your child may need special accommodations to be successful in school. Accommodations can be part of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or part of what is known as a 504 plan. These accommodations may be as simple as extended time to complete tests, modified homework assignments, or preferential seating. Children with more severe special needs may require a one-to-one assistant or a special school placement in a therapeutic special educational program. These decisions are made by a team that consists of staff members from your child's school, school central office staff like a school psychologist or a special education coordinator, any invited guests, and most importantly you, the parent. Whether you are new to the new to the IEP process or you've sat through more than your fair share of these meetings, the process can be intimidating. It isn't always easy to advocate for the needs of your child and see that they are met. The team is not always in agreement about what is best for your child. You may not be aware of what accommodations are available or what to ask for at these meetings.

By doing a little homework ahead of time, you can enter the IEP meeting better prepared and more informed about your child's educational rights and how to go about advocating for services. ***From Emotions to Advocacy: The Special Education Survival Guide*** by Pam and Pete Wright the founders of the Wrightslaw Website is an excellent resource for parents that are new to the special education process as well as those already familiar with the IEP. This guide will teach you to plan, prepare, organize and receive quality special education services for your child.

Reviewed by

Christy Evans

NAMI Frederick Member

Wondering how you can help NAMI Frederick?

One way is by getting trained as an instructor or facilitator in a NAMI program. NAMI Maryland is offering free training for interested persons in these upcoming sessions.

In Our Own Voice Presenter Training

(for persons living with a mental illness)

April 14-15, 2012

Location: NAMI Howard County (Columbia)

Family Support Group Facilitator Training

(for family members who have a loved one with a mental illness)

June 1-3, 2012

Location: NAMI Montgomery County (Rockville)

If you are interested in one of these training sessions, please contact Kathy Van Arnum at Kathy.Vanarnum@namifcmd.org

www.namifcmd.org

"Volunteers are paid in six figures.

S-M-I-L-E-S"

*--Gayla
LeMaire*



We'd Love Your Help!

Become a NAMI Volunteer

Please contact Kathy Van Arnum, NAMI Volunteer Coordinator, to find out about current volunteer opportunities with NAMI Frederick.

Kathy.Vanarnum@namifcmd.org

Walk with Us!

Location: Baltimore's Inner Harbor

Date: May 19th, 2012

Check In/ Registration: 10:00 AM

Start Time: 11:00 AM

Distance 3 Miles



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