



nami

**National Alliance on Mental Illness
Frederick County**

NAMI Frederick County Newsletter for Spring of 2018



At a Frederick NAMI lecture, I met Dr. Rahul Bharadwaj, a neuroscientist in the Genetic Neuropathology section at the Lieber Institute for Brain Development who works under Dr. Joel Kleinman. So far, he and Dr. Kleinman have given three lectures for NAMI Frederick and will come back in the future. Dr. Bharadwaj will return on April 11th to start a lecture series titled *The Art of Thinking*. Their research was so interesting that I decided to interview Dr. Bharadwaj via email. Below is an article I wrote based on his responses to my questions.

From India to America: A Neuroscientist's Journey Into the Workings of the Human Brain

By Kevin Coyle

When one thinks of neuroscience and the brain, one may envision formal lectures and labs. While Dr. Rahul Bharadwaj learned some things in class, he says it is martial arts training as a child of 7 years old that revealed to him the true power of the mind: "That was where I learnt how one could use focus to improve concentration and learn complex movements over a few sessions – basically simple mind control over body type functions."

He adds: "This was surprising to me since I am arguably one of the least graceful and easily distracted beings on our planet, so obviously many parts of my brain were operating without my conscious awareness, that helped me learn some of these complex motor sequences and perform them satisfactorily."

Talking with his mother, a skilled classical musician from South India, gave him another place of insight and inspiration: music. For Dr. Bharadwaj, this was not just a topic of casual conversation. He too found personal enjoyment in the craft of song and melody. As he explains, "most of the mind's power became more apparent to me through my dabbling with music – composing and writing songs was one of my favorite things to do as a teenager, which gave me quiet time to understand and build my personality better."

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Under these influences with a quest to know and learn more, he decided to do a neuroscience major in college, completing his Masters in Neurobiology. For his thesis he decided to do a “research component” identifying bipolar genetic markers at Mumbai. For Dr. Bharadwaj this was not just a philosophical interest, it was personal. As he explains, “This was my first educational project involving serious neuroscience because I came in contact with bipolar disorder patients and their families.”

This led him to see a pressing need: “I could gauge that there was a huge unmet medical and clinical need in psychiatry added to a lot of emotional distress for the patient and their families. This was coupled with an undying issue – the socio-economic standing of the individual, which is usually a traumatic factor in a developing nation for a number of reasons.” These things led him to a fundamental insight: “I only then realized that the burden of mental illness was intertwined with life in so many ways other than the clinical aspect, which is what readily meets the eye.”

By then he was committed to behavior and neuroscience, “to study the basis of mental illness and better understand how the brain copes with trauma over a lifetime.” Moving to the United States he went to complete his PhD in Molecular Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Brudnick Neuropsychiatric Institute & Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NYC. His doctoral thesis was focused on understanding the “molecular basis of schizophrenia in the brain.”

Although he published widely in reputable journals and textbooks, he had a hunger to know more: “I was convinced that there was much more to learn about the brain

given the multiple facets woven into its integral makeup. Therefore, I opted to further my knowledge quest with a Fellowship award in Neuropathology and Neuroanatomy at the renowned Johns Hopkins School of medicine (JHSOM), Baltimore.”

Motivated, he yearned not only to reflect, but pass on what he learned: “Once I piled up all of my degrees spanning multiple disciplines of neuroscience, it became very clear to me that similar to the brain, the true value of translational neuroscience had many components to it including clinical, social, educational, behavioral... and my desire lies at the intersection of these components, and in sharing whatever I know with the larger community.”

Now he resides near John Hopkins as a neuroscientist in the Genetic Neuropathology section at the Lieber Institute for Brain Development with research interests in schizophrenia, PTSD, TBI and Alzheimer’s disease. Working there he says is a humbling experience: “I consider myself privileged to have met world-class leaders and mentors in neuropsychiatry and brain research such as Drs. Joel Kleinman, Daniel Weinberger, Thomas Hyde and Jose Paltan-Ortiz, from whom I enjoy learning on an everyday basis. Whatever I do in this area, I owe much of it to them.” To support their collective effort, he urges people to post research findings in their social media outlets.

**ART OF THINKING SERIES: To improve mental fitness for all age groups
April 11, 2018 7pm-8:30 pm
Frederick YMCA-1000 North Market Street**

Dr. Bharawaj’s next lecture will focus on yoga, mindfulness, as well as diseases like Alzheimer’s disease and trauma.

Dr. Rahul Bharadwaj on Breakthroughs and Relevant Findings

“One of the more relevant findings that come to mind is for Pitt Hopkins – a rare type of autism disorder characterized by intellectual disability and developmental delays. I believe that the Maher lab at LIBD has provided significant leads in this area.” For more information, please visit: <https://www.libd.org/team;brady-maher>

“Other highly relevant findings, in my opinion, are in the schizophrenia area that have recently been published by the Jaffe lab.” For more information, please visit: <https://www.libd.org/team;andrew-jaffe/>

“Possibly one of the most impactful finding in the last decade would be the genetic biomarker discovery for a group of familial amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) subjects – the mutation in the gene C9ORF72.” For more information, please visit: http://web.alsa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Research_C9&AddInterest=1403

“I would like to mention preliminary findings in the ptsd and traumatic brain injury area by Drs. Kleinman and Bharadwaj.” For more information, please see: <https://www.libd.org/the-lieber-institute-for-brain-development-establishes-the-worlds-largest-posttraumatic-stress-disorder-postmortem-brain-repository/>

<http://atlas.brain-map.org/atlas?atlass=138322605> (You might like this one if you find human brain anatomy and structure fascinating)

Mental Health Help for Veterans

NAMI Frederick sends a big thanks to David Galloway of Maryland's Commitment to Veterans and Jonathan Hollands from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. On Wednesday, March 14, NAMI Frederick was honored to host a lecture by these two Marine veterans on military culture and its relevance to suicide among veterans. They identified the isolation veterans often feel when they leave the military, the guilt of being a burden when they need help and the culture of not being afraid to die as major factors in veteran suicides. But they also presented good news in the form of supports that are being made available to veterans even if they did not receive an honorable discharge due to mental health issues or never were deployed. If you know of a veteran who is struggling, help is available

Some Mid-Year Inspiration to Start Your Spring Season

“Paper has more patience than people”

Anne Frank (Chosen by Loi Jimenez, fellow consumer)

“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”

— **Albert Einstein**

“We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.”

— **Oscar Wilde, Lady Windermere's Fan**

Family Support Groups

1st Thursday—7:00pm to 8:30pm

Good Shepard Lutheran Church, 1415 West 7th Street.

3rd Wednesday—6:30pm to 8pm

All Saints Episcopal Church, 106 West Church Street.

Connection Peer Support Group

3rd Tuesday—7pm to 8:30pm

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Save the date! NAMIWalks Maryland

Saturday, June 2, 2018 Rash Field, Inner Harbor, Baltimore

Please walk with us to raise funds for our local programming as well as for advocacy and training at the state level. All NAMI classes, lectures and support groups are provided free of charge. We need your help to maintain these services to the community.

To register or donate, go to www.namiwalks.org/maryland

To register to walk with or donate to our Frederick Affiliate Team, here is what you need to know.

- Frederick Affiliate team name: Namigos
- Team Captain: Janet Craigie

JOIN our team, the NAMIGOS or form your own team.

Donate! Share the word!



Message From the President

I have a cousin who is a writer. It is mostly technical and product marketing material in his position as a Marketing Director, but earlier in his life, he taught creative writing and for several years at Penn State. When he transitioned from academia to the business world, he fed his need for creativity by writing a regular column for the Ephrata, PA Review titled “The Aging Athlete.” A mostly tongue & cheek series of essays, it poked fun at himself and those of us who find that the older we get, the better we are. Interestingly, one article, where he questioned car racing as a sport (his assertion was more based on the capability of the car than the athleticism of the driver) generated a bunch of really bad press in the form of very critical Letters to the Editor.

Now you would think that “bad press” would not be something that the newspaper appreciated. But surprisingly, they liked it because it drew attention to the newspaper.

Today, in the wake of some horrible and very troubling events that continue to unfold, there are many unanswered questions causing mental illness to get significant attention. Hopefully, this attention will stimulate an honest discussion about how people are able to slip through the system and end the stigma that often prevents people from understanding mental illness and getting needed help.

In a NAMI Statement on the Parkland School Shooting, NAMI outlines four specific steps we can take to educate and break down barriers to understanding and put an end to this stigma. I encourage you to read this statement that can be found on our website at www.namifrederick.org.

I encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities NAMI Frederick has, including free presentations on mental illness topics held at the YMCA in Frederick. For those friends and families that are dealing with mental illness in their family, we have a Family to Family class starting on April 2nd and our two monthly Family Support Groups (1st Thursdays & 3rd Wednesdays). For those suffering with a mental illness, please plan to attend our Connection Recovery Support Group held the 3rd Tuesday of every month in downtown Frederick. For all of the specifics on time place, please go to the website at www.namifrederick.org.

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Help support NAMI by shopping on-line

The following are sites that will donate a percentage of the purchases you make through their shopping links.

- Amazon: <http://amzn.to/2jFC0KE>. This customized link will automatically donate up to 8% of your purchase to NAMI Maryland without adding any cost to you.
- Giving Assistant: <http://bit.ly/2f8QyZl>. This site allows you to shop at 3000 stores and will give a percentage of your purchase to NAMI Maryland.
- eScrip: <http://shopping.escrip.com>. Pick NAMI Maryland as your designated beneficiary. This site also provides special deals like free shipping and discounts by using their links.
- iGive: www.igive.com. Pick NAMI Maryland as your designated beneficiary and shop at over 1700 stores. They will donate a percentage of your purchase to NAMI Maryland.

NAMI Membership and Support

Please make sure that your membership is up-to-date. Go to <http://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Join> to check.

()Basic Membership \$40— () Household Membership \$60— () Student/Limited Income Membership \$5

Either go to the website above or you may send a check payable to NAMI Frederick along with your Name, Address email and phone Number to:

NAMI Frederick County

P.O. Box 3056

Frederick, MD 21705-3056

NAMI is a non-profit 501 © organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland are available from the Secretary of State.

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