

With more than 1,200 affiliates, NAMI is America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of all individuals affected by mental illness.



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Georgia Crisis & Access Line
Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services 24/7/365
1-800-715-4225



Peer Support "Warm Line"
1-888-945-1414 (toll-free)
The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network operates a state-funded, consumer-directed "warm line" for anyone struggling with mental health issues, 24 hours a day



AmericanWork, Inc.
Columbus ACT Team
706-641-9663

"Relaxation Training and Healthy Behaviors"

Dr. Lawrence Meisel, Presenter

Monday, February 17, 2014

Monthly Education Meeting 6:00 PM

4411 Rosemont Drive, Columbus

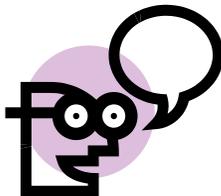
(President's Day – but the building is OPEN!)

With Valentine's Day approaching, our thoughts turn to our loved ones, but we need to love & care for ourselves, too. This month's program will help us to do just that. Our speaker for the February 17th meeting is Lawrence Meisel, Ph.D. Dr. Meisel received his doctoral degrees in Education and Community Agency Counseling from Auburn University.

He is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Marriage & Family Therapist. He worked at the counseling center at CSU for 10 years and has been in private practice since 2000. Dr. Meisel's presentation will show us how relaxation training can help to manage anxiety, stress, and the "fight or flight response". He will also describe healthy behaviors relating to sleep, nutrition, exercise, relaxation and leisure-time activities. As our NAMI Education curriculum teaches, we need to be sure to take care of ourselves, so be sure to attend this helpful presentation so we can practice this important self-care.

If you have a way to relax and care for yourself, won't you come and share with us? More than "one brain" always creates more ideas!

If you are able, please bring a refreshment for the refreshment table.



Frankly Speaking

Greetings everyone,

Sooner or later the prefix "Frankly" was destined to be used practically in this forum. So frankly, I wish that I could say that our affiliate was showing as much steady growth as I had hoped for by the time of this writing. But, that is simply not the case. I am asking you to help me with a particularly vital area that needs improvement immediately. We currently have 9 support groups strategically placed where they are desperately needed. However, we have very few facilitators that are signing up to lead these groups. I do understand completely that our NAMI Connections facilitators are consumers and that on occasions, leading a support group has to be put aside for personal recovery time. That's the reason why we try to work in pairs and keep a large number of facilitators on hand. Fortunately, we have plenty of capable, trained facilitators at this time. The number of qualified individuals is not the issue.

Recently, it has been challenging to get even just one person to sign up for each session, much less two. We have been unable to get adequate numbers of facilitators for the required weekly slots. My other concerns are that the Columbus Day Reporting Center for probationers has not been meeting for months, and the female inmates at the Muscogee County Jail haven't had a facilitator for over a year. This does require females only, which reduces the overall availability of eligible facilitators. This problem is disconcerting and should be of major concern to all of us.

I have great visions for what NAMI Columbus should and could be. I would love to spend my time doing the necessary work that will make our organization a household name and ensure that we leave not one person who

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needs our help behind. However, I am spending a great deal of this valuable time trying to get facilitators to fill these important roles instead of being the kind of leader that you need and want me to be to move this organization forward with steady growth and quality service.

So I'm asking these two things from everyone. First, if you want to be a facilitator, we would love to train you and help you in any way to be successful. But, please don't sign up to train unless you are certain that you can fulfill your obligation to facilitate at least twice a month. Second, I need everyone to please reach out to your friends and family and especially other consumers and tell them about NAMI. Strongly encourage them to try our support groups. This will naturally cause our affiliate to grow, and we will consequently gain more members who might consider becoming facilitators themselves. If we all work together, we can make an even bigger difference than we already are.

On a more positive note, we do have some amazing members who have stepped up to cover so many vacancies. Thank you to these people! However, if we don't take measures to improve our turnout of leaders for our support groups, we may be forced to suspend some of our services to give a break to the few that are covering these consistent vacancies. They are definitely doing more than their fair share. Temporarily ending some group meetings would be taking a giant step backwards from what we need to be doing to rank as an outstanding affiliate that truly significantly impacts the community we serve.

I apologize for the lack of prose and uplifting messages that I usually provide for our readers, but reality isn't always rainbows and sunshine. I do dearly love what this organization represents and I'm dedicated to its success and improvement. However, we cannot and will not make this happen without your commitment which we need NOW. Thank you in advance for stepping up and helping us to continue these vital services without interruption.

Thank you,

Frank Dunford

President, NAMI Columbus



Upcoming Events

February 2014	March 2014
03 Mental Health Court Graduation <i>(You are cordially invited to attend at 5 pm at the Columbus Government Center, Plaza Level)</i> 10-14 Columbus Police Department CIT 13 NAMI's "Hill Day" Webinar Series at <i>nami.org</i> 17 Monthly Ed Program – Dr. Lawrence Meisel 19 Mental Health Day at the Capitol 19 Peer-to-Peer begins	10-16 Brain Awareness Week 17 Monthly Education Program TBD NAMI Basics Begins (6 Weeks) TBD Family-to-Family begins

“Open” Support Groups:

Every Monday night, 6-7:30 pm
 Family/Friend and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups
Both meet at New Horizons CSB, 4411 Rosemont Drive

Every Saturday 1-2:30 pm
 NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
Meets at The Bradley Center's Multipurpose Room

HEAR YE, HEAR YE!

You are cordially invited to

Facilitator Trainings

WE NEED YOU!

*If you have an interest in training to become a NAMI Connections or Family support group facilitator, please contact the NAMI office for all the details! **Now is the time!** Give back to others what has been given to you. ☺*

I'm New on the Job. So Why NAMI? WHY NOW?

By Mary Giliberti, NAMI Executive Director

This is my first blog entry as NAMI's new executive director and my second full week on the job. In starting my new job, I am deliberately spending much of my time listening to NAMI members and others and learning from them.

One question I am asked is why I wanted to become NAMI's executive director. In some ways, it reflects two questions that can be posed to any one of us.



Why NAMI? Why now?

For me, it begins with my commitment to NAMI's mission: helping to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness I've seen the difference that NAMI's education, support and advocacy can make. From 2006 to late 2008, I served as NAMI's Director of Policy and Advocacy. After working for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, becoming NAMI's executive director has been like coming home. We share a strong sense of mission based on common values, which I believe draw all of us to NAMI.

NAMI is the home for many people who often are unable to get all the help they need out of the mental health care system. We are a beacon of hope that helps them navigate through a fragmented, confusing system—and provides hope for the future.

NAMI's greatest strength is its people, which is the second reason why wanted to be executive director. NAMI's grassroots members and volunteers are the heart of our organization, along with the leaders of NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates. Our grassroots include people who teach NAMI Family-to-Family classes or facilitate NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups. They include people who walk in NAMIWalks or meet with state legislators. They include people who rely on NAMI's website for information or who share encouragement on NAMI's Facebook page. Together, they are a source of passion, inspiration, energy and resilience that not only helps other people directly—but also is tremendous force for change.

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization. We are an organization of great diversity that steadily has become more inclusive as we have grown. Within the NAMI family, there sometimes are disagreements on issues, but there is always more that unites us than divides us and when we work together, we have more power than we know.

The opportunities that exist for NAMI at this moment in time are the third reason I wanted to be NAMI's executive director. It's the answer to the "Why Now?" question, which everyone should ask themselves. As NAMI prepares to redouble its work, everyone's help is needed, including yours.

America is finally waking up to the need to provide treatment and support for persons living with mental illness. In 2013, everyone from the President to governors and other policymakers talked about mental health care and hopes for recovery. Our challenge today is to make sure that the national dialogue does not stop in 2014 and to make sure that dialogue leads to action. Change must mean progress, not broken promises.

We also are experiencing rapid changes in the health care system overall. The Affordable Care Act is one of the forces driving change, but there are others, including mental health insurance parity. NAMI needs to be at the forefront in advancing new ideas to improve treatment and life outcomes for people living with mental illness. We must not settle for "more of the same," because more of the same is not enough. It is not acceptable that anyone be allowed to fall through the cracks due to neglect or an unresponsive system of care.

That's why I've come back to NAMI.

NAMI is more than an organization, we are a movement—the one that can make the greatest difference. Now is the time to affirm commitments to our mission. NAMI is needed today more than ever before.

As we proceed, I want to hear your thoughts. I may not be able to reply to every comment I receive, but please be assured; I will read all of them. To get in touch with me and offer your comments and suggestions please email YourComments@nami.org. I will be writing more blog entries as part of an ongoing dialogue. I hope you will continue to join me in those discussions.

MEDITATION SHOWS PROMISE IN RELIEVING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

By Kathleen Vogtle, NAMI Communications Coordinator

For many, the concept of meditation instantly brings to mind the quintessential image of the Buddha sitting with utter tranquility in the pretzel-like lotus position. The tranquility aspect is certainly accurate: meditation is a technique used to focus thoughts, reflect or relax.

Meditation is a means of developing wellness, an ongoing process of learning how to make choices that support a more successful, healthy life. A new review study, published in the



Journal of the American Medical Association Internal Medicine, showed that taking the wellness approach can result in a 17 percent decline in total medical visits and a 35 percent decline in medical visits for minor illnesses. NAMI has adapted the wellness process into its online Hearts & Minds program, which includes meditation as a promising practice to improve mindfulness.

One model of meditation is the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). Usually taught in eight sessions, it is described by its founder, Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, as "Buddhist meditation but without the Buddhism. It's completely secular." This technique is currently receiving attention from researchers. Meditation has been considered particularly helpful for many living with mental illness, as high levels of anxiety or constantly racing thoughts are common. Last week, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine published a new analysis based on previous research, suggesting that 30 minutes of daily meditation may improve symptoms of anxiety and depression.

The researchers looked back at more than 18,000 studies and ultimately selected 47 previous studies — all randomized trials — that involved 3,515 people. The study found that improvement in individuals experiencing mild symptoms of depression using mindfulness meditation was similar to individuals using antidepressants. They also found that there were no harmful effects of trying meditation.

"A lot of people have this idea that meditation means sitting down and doing nothing," said Madhav Goyal, M.D., M.P.H., an assistant professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine. "But that's not true. Meditation is an active training of the mind to increase awareness, and different meditation programs approach this in different ways."

The technique certainly shows promise, although more research has yet to be done. Also, mindfulness meditation takes time and practice, so do not be discouraged if you do not immediately notice the benefits. More information on this study can be found at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine website.

NAMI's Hearts & Minds program can be accessed at any time for additional information and resources on mindfulness, wellness and the variety of options available.

Dr. Lawrence Meisel will be the guest speaker at this month's educational meeting on Monday, February 17th. His topic will be "Relaxation Training and Healthy Behaviors". PLEASE COME AND JOIN US! See page 1 of this newsletter for more information.

It's TIME – to take action!

As SueNAMI mentioned in our last newsletter – it takes **PEOPLE** to make progress. We are at a critical point in our service to the Columbus community and surrounding areas. There are so many who are still in desperate need of our help. **It's TIME - to take action!** We should truly begin turning our attention to this fresh slogan from NAMI National.

Now it's my turn to recall the days when I found NAMI Columbus as our own Sue Marlowe did in the previous edition. What an amazing tribute she gave to our organization and how she and others have tirelessly worked to water the tiny seeds of NAMI Columbus into a strong, fruit-bearing vine whose branches are effectively serving a hurting population. Much of Sue's words bear repeating in this edition, and we **will** repeat them, because we are not heeding the call as we should. We are putting huge burdens on the backs of a few, and we are many. There is much more to be done, and we should do it together as one. A few pieces can't complete the puzzle. It takes ALL of us.



I don't know where my life would be without NAMI Columbus, and I shudder when I think of it. After my last hospitalization in 2008, I attended a Peer-to-Peer class. To my amazement, there were others like me who had experienced devastation and were recovering and sharing deeply with each other from within their hearts. I have never been the same. However, I recently needed to leave NAMI for a time to deal with family deaths, and personal health concerns, but NAMI never left me. Like me, some of us have been gone too long. **It's TIME – to return.**

To quote more words from our precious SueNAMI, "At almost every support group meeting, there are new people finding their way to us. I can see the look on a lot of their faces. It's a look of recognition that they've just discovered they are not alone any longer. Our NAMI National motto is "You Are Not Alone" and newcomers feel it at our meetings. I always tell people that I've met some really wonderful people through NAMI. Once one is affected by mental illness, it changes you. At first it may not be for the better, but NAMI helps people learn to live in a better place, a better space. Education is **POWERful.**"

Sue went on to say that "NAMI offers many educational programs. Wherever there's a need, **NAMI members have stepped in to fill the jobs.** We have teachers of Family-to-Family, NAMI Basics, and Mentors for Peer-to-Peer. We have many people trained to facilitate both the Family/Friend and NAMI Connection Support Groups. We have a working board that puts in many additional hours making NAMI Columbus run. CIT and the other classes don't happen because of hocus pocus magic. **PEOPLE** make it happen. In the next year, I hope I get to see even more people taking ownership of NAMI Columbus and making even more things and projects happen."

Like Sue, I can see and celebrate how far we have come, but I'm also very concerned about how far we have to go. Some of our members have worked tirelessly, it's true, but now they are getting tired. There are countless numbers of us who love NAMI and have been changed and can attest to the difference it has made in our lives, so why are we holding back? The very illnesses that have devastated our lives may very well be keeping us from taking action to help others.

Let us be reminded of one of our hallmark "principles of support" as consumers. It happens to be my favorite, and that is, "***We find strength in sharing experiences***". I continue to find strength each week from my extended NAMI family members who help me face daily struggles. There are many of us who need to find that strength again – the strength that can only be found through NAMI - strength that comes from a deeper connection that we all share. It is up to us to "***never give up hope***" – another of our principles. Others out there need a place to turn, a sanctuary, a stigma-free community where they can be accepted, loved, and appreciated for who they are.

In the last edition, Sue also mentioned the kind and giving spirit of our "normal" president, Frank Dunford. He does always seem to serve NAMI with a glad heart and always reminds us that we are not alone. He and our hard-working board of directors truly are the epitome of everything NAMI represents. However, they can sometimes feel **they** are alone in this fight. We must come to their aid. It's time for us to be the superheroes who are working behind the scenes - in support group meetings, giving presentations, texting and calling each other for strength, taking training classes, teaching courses, reporting data that shows how healthy this fruit-bearing vine really is, **and, most importantly,** seeking out others to join our family. It's not about us. It's really all about THEM – the ones who haven't found us yet. The ones who still think they are alone. The opportunities to serve are endless. **It's TIME - to do it - TOGETHER!**

~~ Amy Zabel, Interim Editor



Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
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(706) 320-3755
Our Area's Voice on Mental Illness



Many people find their way to our classes by first attending a support group. If you are a NAMI Columbus "long timer" (we don't want to call you old), please attend either of the two weekly NAMI Connection support groups or the weekly Family support group. Newcomers can use your wisdom and hard-earned experience. Sharing a message of recovery gives the hope they are searching for. Many people tell us that the NAMI motto "**You Are Not Alone**" is the initial feeling they realize at their first meeting. If you are willing to train to be a support group facilitator, let us know!

I want to support NAMI Columbus and NAMI's mission.

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Numbers (do not enter a number if you do not want to be listed in the Membership Directory (members only).

E-Mail (Please include so we can be green and email you our monthly newsletter.)

Please check type of membership desired:

- Individual Membership \$35 Dues
- Professional Membership \$50 Dues
(Individual and Professional Dues are for one year and are tax deductible.)
- \$3 Open Door Membership (financial hardship)
- I am not joining at this time, but I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____. (Thank you!!!)

NAMI National, NAMI Georgia and NAMI Columbus are dedicated to eradicating stigma and improving the lives of persons with mental illnesses thereby also benefiting their friends, family and community. Catch the wave and be a part of change.

NAMI Columbus is one of the largest affiliates in Georgia. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible. Membership includes a subscription to our monthly newsletter, membership directory, and access to immediate news on advocacy, treatment and support issues from our national, state and local organizations.

Please make checks payable to:
NAMI Columbus
P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, Georgia 31908

You can also join safely online at www.nami.org/join (\$35.00 by credit card).