

NAMI *Columbus, Georgia* *The Area's Voice on Mental Illness*

The National Alliance on Mental Illness – A powerful non-profit, self-help and advocacy organization

NAMI Columbus, P.O. Box 8581, Columbus, GA 31908 ~ (706) 320-3755
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Georgia Crisis & Access Line

Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services 24/7
1-800-715-4225



Monday, March 15, 2010 Education Meeting at 6:00 pm *CONTACT Training Building ~ 1520 22nd Street* ***Bipolar Disorder: How much do you know?***

More than 2 million American adults, or about 1 percent of the population age 18 and older in any given year, have bipolar disorder. (Source: excerpt from [Bipolar Disorder: NIMH](#))

Given that we are an organization that focuses on mental health/mental illness, this is a topic we should know something about. Why? One of the major parts of NAMI's mission is education. So when we are talking with non-members of NAMI, we can be more helpful if we know about the illnesses. And if you have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, or someone in your family or circle of friends has this brain illness, the road to recovery can be smoother. In addition to our speaker, we plan to have some of our members speak about their experience with bipolar disorder.

Come to our March 15th education meeting and listen to our presenter, Paul Morris, speak about:

1. the facts and myths related to bipolar disorder,
2. common signs and symptoms of bipolar disorder,
3. current trends in treating bipolar disorder,
4. common reasons that treatment is unsuccessful or suboptimal versus ways to enhance treatment success,
5. how drugs and alcohol affect that course of treatment to include the phenomena of "excited delirium", and
6. trends in mental health policy and how law enforcement is compensating.

Paul is the Health Services Administrator at the Muscogee County Jail. He is very familiar with people who come into the jail often as a result of their mental illness. In terms of background and experience, Paul is an RN and is certified in correctional medicine and forensics, a member of the Academy of Correction Medicine, and a member of the board of directors for ACHSA (American Correctional Health Services Association). Paul has published research in peer reviewed medical journals related to the treatment of mental illness. He is a nationally known speaker on issues related to mental health policy, treatment and research. And Paul will be presenting his most recent research project "*Predicting and Preventing Workplace Violence*" to mental health professionals at the American Correctional Health Services Association this month in Portland OR.

Paul is a real friend of NAMI. In his words, "I am a member of NAMI and proud of the work NAMI does."

Letter from Your President

Storytelling and NAMI

What does storytelling have to do with NAMI?

I had a conversation recently with a very good friend of mine who told me she was going to a storytelling festival being held this month. I was intrigued because I have always thought of storytelling as both a skill and an art. And I've wanted to attend a festival for over ten years now.

In addition, I had just received an email containing an article about the elements of good storytelling. This article said "storytelling is special because it shares an experience with your audience. You can inject your story - and in turn, your audience - with emotions and compelling imagery that enables them to connect to you much better.

You might still be wondering about storytelling and NAMI. Let me tell you why I leapt to this connection. The elements of good storytelling in this article include:

1. **Passion** - for something that draws in the reader; the more passionate the storyteller the more authentic they seem and the more compelling the story (**passion for NAMI's mission or your own experience**)
2. A **protagonist** - a hero in your story; someone who can be respected and related to (**a person, you or someone else, with a mental illness who is doing everything possible to manage their illness and lead a satisfying life**)
3. An **antagonist** - something or someone the protagonist is up against (**the mental health system and stigma to name a few**)
4. **Awareness** – an 'aha' moment in your story where people learn or realize something they otherwise wouldn't have (**how availability of a community service made a difference in someone's recovery or how a job or housing helped someone turn their life around**)
5. **Transformation** – what changed throughout the length of the story (**a personal success or any little change can be very moving**).

All of this leads me to my conclusion. And I'm going to use the words of a NAMI member in another state (anonymous) to help us see how we can use storytelling while advocating:

"I don't know how much you knew about mental illnesses before the diagnosis hit you and your family personally, but I believe most of you would say "not much" – or "certainly not enough." I think we have to step back and assume many people do not know about mental illnesses; that assumption then provides a great opportunity for us to educate them!

Advocacy is a cornerstone of our NAMI philosophy and mission. Who could possibly better address our needs? We know treatment works – and we know that the success of many individuals who have mental illnesses depends on the support of our community leaders. Remember "summer homework?" I urge you to do two things this summer.

1. Your legislators will be home, so educate those leaders. Make an appointment to see them in their district office. You put a face and **a story** to the issue of mental illness – they can't help but gain a better understanding of the challenges and needs of individuals and families alike.
2. Write a letter about **a part of your story**. Letters to the editors are among the most widely read sections of most papers. They provide an opportunity to educate a wide range of people throughout your community.

Mental health services make a big difference in the lives of those affected by mental illnesses. It's time to help consumers build healthier, happier lives, and it's time to strengthen and empower individuals and families alike.

Through collaborative efforts, we, our friends, families and neighbors can work together so all can live healthier, successful lives while making communities stronger."

Thanks...and please **tell your story** and make your voice heard!

~ Mimi Marlowe, President



2010: Year of
The Volunteers!



- Attending our Mental Health Court graduations to acknowledge and congratulate the graduates. Our next one is May 10. Let's fill up that room.
- Using the Goodsearch search engine. In February 2009 we had 165 searches. This February we had 400. So please keep using it as your search engine and help us make money.



Thank You . . .
Thank You . . .

- To Vernon & Brenda West for providing and setting up refreshments for our February 8 Mental Health Court graduation ceremony. I heard several of graduates say how much it meant to them that people would go out of their way to celebrate their graduation.
- To the NAMI Columbus Board of Directors and Advisory Council for giving up a day to attend a retreat (unfortunately without the spa, golf, etc.) on February 27 to plan the future activities for our affiliate (see pictures from that day on page 7). It was a lot of hard work but I believe well worth the effort. More information will be available to the members in the next few months.
- To the nine people who signed up as willing to be called to provide a refreshment item at one of our education meetings. This will make a big difference to the regulars who have been doing this up for a long time now



A "Greener" NAMI Columbus

In an effort to think green— environmentally and from a budget perspective— we are moving towards electronic communication as much as possible. Don't miss out! If you are receiving your newsletter by mail, please provide your name and email address to us at namicals@knology.net



Have You Heard?

The ADHD Action Guide (sponsored by Shire US, Inc.)

Go to the following website <http://www.adhdactionguide.com/>

1. Fill out some basic information (name, address, etc.)
2. Take a short questionnaire about the person who has ADHD
3. You're then taken to a site where you assess how often symptoms impact your life in the areas of Inattention, Hyperactivity, and Impulsivity
4. After that, you are asked to rate whether these symptoms appear in your home, work, or school life
5. Then (whew) you are given your personalized assessment (what you entered about frequency and where symptoms impact you)
6. Finally, you are given personalized tips for home, work and school

It takes about 10-15 minutes to go through this process. If you get the guide, please let us hear about your personal experience with it.

Need help paying for your medicine?

Help is here for you.

Here's what you do:

1. Know the names of the medicine you take.
2. Call toll-free: 1-800-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669).
3. A trained specialist will answer your questions and help you apply for the right programs.

Call Monday-Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 pm

Website: www.pparx.org

Partnership for Prescription Assistance



Ninth Annual New Horizons Benefit to Help Support Our Mental Health Court

On Wednesday, April 14th, the Ninth Annual New Horizons Community Service Board (CSB) Benefit will take place at the Green Island Country Club. For nine years our community has been helping New Horizons raise funds to help their employees help others "Build Better Lives" (their Mission Statement). It is more important than ever that we support our CSB (New Horizons) this year. The proceeds from this year's benefit will go toward supporting our Mental Health Court program.

This year's guest speaker will be Dr. Mike Mescon, founder and chairman of The Mescon Group, Inc. Dr. Mescon is a motivational speaker and the father of Dr. Timothy Mescon, President of Columbus State University.

Hopefully you have received a Save-A-Date card. You will receive an invitation soon. Whether you mail a check or call your reservation in to the New Horizons number on the invitation, please let them know you would like to sit at a NAMI table. As usual, the cost of the benefit is tax deductible (minus the cost of the dinner).

We will have more information in our April newsletter. If you have any questions, please call the NAMI Columbus office (706-320-3755).

NAMI COLUMBUS EVENT CALENDAR

As Of March 4, 2010

March 2010	April 2010
TBD Faithnet F2F 4 Mental Health Day at the Capital 8-12 Muscogee County Sheriff's Ofc – CIT 15 Monthly Education Program 15-19 Brain Awareness Week	12-16 Columbus Police Dept. CIT 14 Ninth Annual New Horizons Benefit 19 Monthly Education Program 17 SACVET Stand Down (Veterans) 24 NAMI Cols Semi-annual Yard Sale
May 2010 – Mental Health Awareness Month	June 2010
2-8 Children's MH Awareness Week 6 National Children's MH Awareness Day 10 Mental Health Court Graduation 15 NAMI GA Annual Meeting 17 Monthly Education Program 23-29 Older Americans' Mental Health Week	1-3 Nat'l CIT Conference, San Antonio 14-18 Muscogee County Sheriff's Office CIT 21 Monthly Education Program 29-30 NAMI National Convention, Wash. DC (continues through July 3)
July 2010 Minority MH Awareness Month	August 2010
TBA NAMI GA Walk Kickoff Luncheon 1-3 NAMI National Convention, Wash. DC 12-16 Columbus Police Dept. CIT 19 Monthly Education Program	9 Mental Health Court Graduation 16 Monthly Education Program 23-27 Muscogee County Sheriff's Office CIT
September 2010	October 2010
9 F2F – Week 1 (Ends 11-18) 12 P2P – Week 1 (Ends 11-14) 20 Monthly Education Program	2 NAMI GA Walk (Date to be confirmed) 3 -9 MIAW (MI Awareness Week) 4-8 Columbus Police Dept. CIT 18 Monthly Education Program 30 NAMI Cols Semi-annual Yard Sale TBD Georgia CIT Awards Banquet
November 2010	December 2010
8 Mental Health Court Graduation 14-20 Mental Health Wellness Week 15 Monthly Education Program 20 National Survivors of Suicide Day 15-19 Muscogee County Sheriff's Office CIT	No Monthly Education Program 5 NAMI Cols Holiday Celebration Party
January 2011	February 2011
TBA NAMI GA Affiliate Leadership Seminar 17 Monthly Education Program	21 Monthly Education Program

Every Monday night, 6—7:30 pm Family/Friend and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups
Every Saturday 1—2:30 pm NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
 NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups meet at The Bradley Center's Multipurpose Room (use the 22nd Street Parking Lot)
 Family/Friend Support Group meets at the CONTACT Training Building, 1520 22nd Street

Volunteer Possibilities



- **NAMI Columbus Office**

- One of the most critical aspects of NAMI Columbus is responding quickly to requests for help that come in on our office phone.
- An opportunity exists for someone who would be willing to call in and make notes about new calls.
- This would involve checking for new messages two-to-three times/day.
- Each message needs to be logged in (log sheet provided) and forwarded to a designated person who will handle the request.
- Time required: 30 minutes per day at the most. Most of the time is spent on responding to the requests (done by someone else) versus taking the message.
- Skills: Someone who has a computer and is comfortable typing the messages and sending them by email to a designated email address.
- Bonus: You wouldn't even have to leave your house.

- **Hospitality Committee**

NAMI Columbus holds an education meeting on the third Monday of the month, from 6:00-7:30 pm. As you all know, there are a number of things required to have a really good meeting, including:

- **Feed them and they will come.** One way to get people to meetings is to provide refreshments. We need to feed the stomach as well as the mind. So we'd like to hear from all you great cooks who would be willing to bring a refreshment item to a meeting you plan to attend. If you're better at the cash register of Publix than the stove (like your president), it's okay to buy something to bring.
- **Make sure there is a place to sit and that the refreshment table is ready.** It usually takes two to three people who are willing to show up at least 30 minutes before the meeting to:
 - Set up the room for the program.
 - Set up the refreshment tables as people bring in food items.
 - Make coffee and set up the cold drink table
- **Greet people when they walk in the door so they feel welcome.** We want people to have a good experience when they come to a NAMI education meeting. To ensure this, we want two people at the front door. Their responsibilities include:
 - Warmly greeting people as they arrive (wearing one of those famous NAMI smiles).
 - Asking each person to sign in.
 - Providing a name tag for each person to wear (even long-time members should have a name tag to help newcomers feel more comfortable).
 - Taking a new person (new to NAMI) into the main room and introducing them to someone who is familiar with NAMI Columbus. Ask them to be a welcome buddy to a newcomer. The other greeter stays at the door.
- **Many hands make light work.** We're lucky to have the CONTACT office for our meetings. So we want to leave the place as neat as it was when we arrived. A few people who would be willing to be responsible for cleaning up after the meeting would make sure we don't wear out our welcome. And remember, you don't have to do all the work. You can ask people who have attended the meeting to help with clean up.

If any of these opportunities appeal to you and you have the passion and skills, please contact the NAMI Columbus office (706-320-3755) or email at namicols@knology.net. Contacting us is not a commitment, merely an expression of interest.

Photo Gallery



From left to right: Kristine Walls, Sue Marlowe, Amy Zabel, Perry Alexander, Doris Keene, Sue Knight, Linda Peters, Mimi Marlowe, Steve Scott

The Board of Directors hard at work.



CIT Graduates January 29, 2010

THE



TO RECOVERY

NAMI Columbus C.A.R.E.S.

Consumers Achieving Recovery thru Education & Support

Whole Treatment

Before I got involved with NAMI, I had never heard of the bio-psycho-social model of treating mental illness. Now that I have learned more about it, I have a greater appreciation for how to better deal with mental illness from a broad perspective. The bio-psycho-social model is designed to deal with the three main aspects of mental illness; the biological component, dealing with one's biological makeup and chemistry, in which case medication may be required to alleviate the symptoms; the psychological aspect of the illness, dealing with such issues as behavior modification, cognitive therapy, counseling and group support; and the social issues, dealing with issues such as employment, or the lack thereof, one's ability to function in society, and dealing with other people in relationships.

Being the impatient person that I am, I tend to want a quick fix for almost every problem that I ever encounter, and since my struggle with mental illness started several years ago, it has been one of the most humbling experiences, especially in realizing that there is no quick magic formula that I could simply follow that would fix all the problems at once. My struggle with depression has affected all the aforementioned categories, from the biological symptoms (feeling hopeless and helpless, terrible and excruciating sadness and loneliness) to the psychological (self-destructive behavior, addiction, low self-esteem, self-flagellation) and the social (isolation, few real relationships, and social anxiety). And while medication does help when it comes to the physical symptoms of the depression I struggle with, I have since learned that I also need to be plugged into support groups with my peers, where I get hope knowing that I am not alone in this struggle. I also get to see that there are other people who are not only struggling with similar issues, but are still able to lead productive lives. I have also needed to address my own psychological issues in therapy, which is very helpful.

I have often wondered why simply taking care of one aspect of my life affected by the illness did not make everything alright. For instance, I would lose one job and then jump right back into another one, only to lose it because I failed to address the very same issues that led me to lose the first one. Now, I am learning that a complete treatment program takes all aspects of one's life into account, because they are all interrelated. It is not simply enough to tell someone who is depressed to "try harder" or "get a job". If the underlying issues are not addressed, the consequences of the illness shall persist. I wish I had known this many years ago; it would have saved me a lot of heartbreak. But then again, I was in denial about struggling with a mental illness for so long, I probably was not ready to hear the truth about my condition. For one, I was too ashamed of my struggles due to the stigma and male pride would not allow me to admit that I was in desperate need of help anyway.

~Contributed by Stephen Akinduro

Walking Club



Hello NAMI friends,

It's a new year and all of us want to look our best in spring and summer clothes. I love to walk and exercise and I want to share my success with you. I'm starting a walking club that will meet in Lake Bottom Park every Tuesday and Friday at 6:00 pm. I'm not sure if that's a good time and day for everyone so I will listen to feedback from those who are interested. We will meet at the playground and do stretches before we start walking. We will start slow and eventually work towards walking the length of both parks in Lake Bottom. If anyone is interested, I can also lead the group in toning and strengthening exercises for the legs, upper body and abdomen. Please contact me for feedback at (706) 984-8725. There are no dues and no commitment. Just show up a few minutes before the start time. Here's to looking great in 2010!

~Contributed by Edi Arnst



P.O. Box 8581, Columbus, GA 31908, (706) 320-3755
The Area's Voice on Mental Illness

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

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 check type of membership desired:

- Individual Membership \$30 Dues
- Professional Membership \$50 Dues
(Individual and Professional Dues are for one year and are tax deductible.)
- \$3 Open Door Membership (low income)
- I am not joining at this time, but I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____. (Thank you!!!)

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

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 the largest affiliate 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, (501(c)3) 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).