

With more than 1,100 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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**NAMI Columbus, P.O. Box 8581,  
Columbus, GA 31908  
(706) 320-3755  
Email: [info@NAMICols.org](mailto:info@NAMICols.org) ~~  
[www.nami.org/sites/NAMIColumbusGA](http://www.nami.org/sites/NAMIColumbusGA)**



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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**

**Guest Speaker: Teddy Barker**  
(Founder & CEO of A New U)

**Monday, January 17, 2011**

**Education Meeting 6:00 PM**

**CONTACT Training Building – 1520 22<sup>nd</sup> Street**

Our guest speaker, Teddy Barker is the founder and C.E.O. of A New U. He will discuss weight gain from medications as well as eating healthy through a balanced diet. There will also be a question and answer session after his presentation.

Included in the meeting we will have sign up sheets for the different committees that we utilize to keep NAMI Columbus running. We need YOU to sign up for whatever you have a passion for.

We look forward to seeing you at our meeting and help us kick off 2011.



*From the Prez:*

Hi everybody,

First off I want to thank the Board of NAMI Columbus publicly for electing me President. It is a great honor to help lead our affiliate. I have an open door policy so please feel free to contact me any time.

What a wonderful year we have planned for you. It's going to be focused on a new and better you. We all are guilty of putting everything else first and our needs last. Well, hopefully it is about to change. We need more focus on the right foods to eat as well as the exercise we all need to go along with it.

We will also have many different programs on understanding mental illness a little better. I know personally it can be a scary experience without some knowledge to go along with it.

So, hang on and plan for a whirlwind ride because we think we are the best of the best. I look forward to meeting all of you personally.

See ya soon,

*Sue Knight* (also referred to as the "other" Sue)

[Sknight2003@live.com](mailto:Sknight2003@live.com) or (706) 523-2867

# Support

## NAMI Columbus offers the following National Signature Support Programs:

one weekly Family Support Group, and  
two weekly NAMI Connection Support Groups

## Are you interested in being a support group facilitator?

Two of NAMI's signature programs are the NAMI Connection and NAMI Family Support groups. Many of our newest members come to us as a result of these well-facilitated groups. We have some facilitators who have generously volunteered their time for several years. Now it's time to bring in some new ones and let others have a little rest. If you have an interest in paying it forward and helping others receive the support you have received, we need you. You would need to agree to sign up to facilitate at least one time a month, NAMI pays for your room

and board for the 3 days of training. Future facilitators have a great time at the training and are shown how to follow a model that makes it easy (most of the time) to facilitate a support group. A training class for both the family and NAMI Connection group is scheduled for **February 11 – 13<sup>th</sup>**. If you have an interest in helping NAMI Columbus and think this might be something you would like to do, please contact the NAMI Columbus office (706-320-3755) and leave a message, then we can discuss it in further detail.



Too often, mental illness is an isolating experience, accompanied by profound anxiety. For those diagnosed with a mental illness such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or other conditions, talking with someone to share coping strategies and insights, as well as problems and concerns, can be an important link in the path to recovery. NAMI Connection is a recovery support group program for people living with mental illness that is expanding in communities throughout the country. These groups provide a place that offer respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope.

### How are NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups structured?

NAMI Connection groups offer a casual and relaxed approach to sharing the challenges and successes of coping with mental illness. Each group:

- Meets weekly for 90 minutes
- Is offered free of charge
- Follows a flexible structure without an educational format
- Does not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies

There is no need to register. Come when you feel like you need someone to talk to. Come when you feel you can lend support to someone else. The groups are led by trained individuals who are in recovery themselves. They understand daily challenges and the group utilizes group wisdom to offer you encouragement and support. All groups are confidential—you can share as much or as little personal information as you wish. NAMI Connection groups should add to **but not replace** the treatment plan determined by you and your mental health care provider.

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups are open to all adults with mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. Please feel welcome to drop by and share your feelings, difficulties, or successes. Everyone is a valued participant. Anyone with a family member or friend with mental illness who needs support in their recovery process can encourage them to attend a NAMI Connection group, too. Let them know how good it is to be with others who can say, "I've been there, I understand."

--R. Hall from NAMI Ga website

# Education

NAMI Columbus offers the following National Signature Education Programs:

Family-to-Family

Peer-to-Peer

In Our Own Voice

## FaithNet Family-to-Family Class to Begin

A new faith-based Family-to-Family Class will begin on **Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm (until 9:00 pm)**. **Pre-registration is mandatory** (in order to ensure the correct number of textbooks). If you have not received a confirmation yet, call **706-320-3755** and leave a message to register. Cutoff for registration is **Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>**.

Family-to-Family is a free peer-led 12-week course for family and friends of individuals with serious mental illness. It is taught by trained NAMI family members. The faith-based class is identical to the original secular class, except that prayer and discussion of faith as an added means of support is utilized.

“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 Medications*

## NAMI's Peer-to-Peer Class Begins January 6<sup>th</sup>

One of NAMI's signature programs, Peer-to-Peer, is being offered on Thursdays for the Winter Quarter. If you would like to take this remarkable course next quarter (**pre-registration is mandatory**) please call **706-320-3755** and leave a message that you would like to be placed on the wait list for the next class.

Peer-to-Peer, a free, 10-week, peer-led, recovery education course, is open to any person who lives with serious mental illness. Peer-to-Peer emphasizes recovery from mental illness as a feasible, supportable goal and challenges the stigma often wrongly associated with mental illness.

Peer-to-Peer is an important course because it gives people living with mental illness the information they often don't get when they are first diagnosed. It allows them to see other peers succeeding, and it also allows them to be with a group of people that are going through the same things they are.

Our sister affiliate (NAMI Troup County) is currently registering people for their next Family-to-Family Class, which is scheduled to begin **February 13<sup>th</sup>**. There is no charge for the class, however **registration is required**. The class will be held at Broad Street Church of Christ in LaGrange on Mondays from 6-8:30 pm. To register, call Valerie West at (706) 333-9600.

Will you be our “booking” agent? **In Our Own Voice (IOOV)** is a new public education program that was introduced by NAMI Georgia last fall. IOOV utilizes two trained consumer speakers who share their compelling personal stories about living with mental illness and achieving recovery. The program began with

a grant from Eli Lilly & Co. NAMI Columbus has two consumers who have been trained to present this interactive program and, by the end of January, will have four more consumers of mental health services trained to deliver the presentation.

We would like every single person to help us book an In Our

Own Voice presentation at their workplace, school, community organization or place of worship. The presentation takes, on average, 1-1/2 hours. To book a presentation, please call our NAMI Columbus Office at (706) 320-3755 and leave a message for our IOOV Coordinator, Stephen Akinduro.

# Advocacy

## Never Give Up Hope!

So states one of NAMI's Support Group 12 Principles!

My cell phone startled me back to the present from a wandering array of unrelated thoughts. For some reason I had a justified sense of foreboding at the sound. My wife was on the other end; our daughter was being arrested. We had suffered anxiety for more than a year and a half as she had spent a week in The Bradley Center the year before and was undergoing what we felt was inadequate psychiatric care since then. Of course, we had been kept totally in the dark because anytime we attempted to provide input about her previous healthy mental state, a couple of concussions she suffered growing up, etc., those treating her seemed to hide behind federal HIPAA regulations. The reality of the negative consequences of this seemingly well intentioned law became even more apparent as we confronted the legal system head on, banging our heads against a wall of silence throughout. To make matters worse for us, we feared that even though our daughter was known to us to be suffering mental illness, the stigma attached to it throughout the community, including many in the health care services industry, would cause her to be treated as a common criminal and she would not get the obvious care and treatment, including proper medications and therapy, she needed if she were incarcerated in the penal system. We sought legal advice and once again HIPAA prevented our ability to assist our daughter because she was considered an adult capable of properly handling her own affairs; finding her help seemed so hopeless.

NAMI Columbus members have advocated for some very good programs in Georgia and in Columbus. The Muscogee Mental Health Court, and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training are just two of the programs that have come into existence because of advocacy. The following article written by a new NAMI member shows how very grateful their family is for the advocacy work performed before they joined NAMI.

A spiritual Hand seemed to descend on our situation when her mother-in-law told her husband about an organization that might help. Almost no one we know had ever heard of it. We immediately contacted Sue Marlowe and were relieved beyond belief to learn that "we were not alone". Doors began to open! Knowledge was abundant although mysteriously concealed from the medical community? NAMI!? What is that!? National Alliance on Mental Illness?! Almost immediately Sue acted and convinced me to sit in on CIT training (Crisis Intervention Team) to be held the following week. She said it would be a quick way to bring me up to speed on the significant efforts in Columbus to recognize and effectively administer to persons with mental illness in our town.

So I became a week long observer to one of the most heart warming experiences of my life. To begin with, most of my previous contact with law enforcement was from the driver's seat as I successfully avoided traffic tickets most of my life (but that's another story). I was impressed immediately by the 17 officers and personnel in attendance. My respect for law enforcement officers and the daily dilemmas they face in dealing with all sorts of situations grew day-by-day. As they worked through the legal and biological/ psychological information, and the stigma attached to mental illness dissolved away from their faces and casual conversations, I watched a transformation that they probably weren't even aware of. I watched immensely strong males treat frail mental patients in obvious crisis during the training scenarios, become as gentle and caring as a

mother cat with kittens. I could only imagine the dilemma that this creates for them on the street as they confront the unknown internal mental state of someone creating a disturbance; are they drunk, on drugs, a potential criminal threat to me and others, or are they truly mentally ill and victims themselves? And how many of these confrontations will they face that could potentially make them susceptible to this organic disease that takes so many different forms? I silently shed tears during more than one of these scenarios as I was made aware that these were based on real cases with real people in deep need of an understanding hand help.

Thank God for NAMI, for we have been able to make real progress in getting the treatment for our daughter as she moves through a humane system to treat her illness. Mental Illness is still treated as the step-child in many ways but Columbus is blessed with leaders who are taking identification and treatment to new levels. Someday perhaps, the consumer will be given the same respect and open concern by society as a whole, as anyone with any other type of organic disease. Chemical imbalances in the brain are no different in principle than those in cancer cells, pancreatic cells (diabetes), thyroid glands, colon cancer, etc. The difference is that the history of treatment has created many myths and stigma, and our knowledge of cause and affect is seriously lacking. Medically, treatment is still more art and trial and error than science. Thanks to NAMI and the wonderful people in the Columbus Mental Health Court system though, we all have reason to HOPE!

# THE



# TO RECOVERY

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

*Consumers Achieving Recovery thru Education & Support*

## Overcoming Stigma

The American Heritage College Dictionary defines the word stigma as “a mark or token of infamy, disgrace, or reproach.” This definition appropriately fits how society often views persons who struggle with a mental illness and is a reminder of why there is still a lot of work to be done by mental health advocates in regard to education and awareness about this subject. Eventually, we must get to the place where people with mental illnesses are not referred to with such negative words or connotations like, “crazy”, “nutcase”, “cuckoo”, “loco”, “basket case”, “deranged” etc.

The terrible thing about this stigma is that when people hold on to these false beliefs that shame the person with a mental illness, it sets in motion a vicious cycle: The person with the illness (or consumer) tries to do everything within their power to act “normal” (whatever that is) in order not to show any of the symptoms of their illness in public. The consumer often does this by wearing a mask in order to shield the public from what is perceived to be a reprehensible illness. After all, who wants to be viewed as having a disease that some still see as a character flaw or sign of spiritual weakness? But when something cannot be talked about or revealed in public because there is so much shame associated with it, more power is rendered to the stigma, which ultimately prevents more people from seeking help or being open about their own lives. And when people hide their mental struggles, it feeds into the idea that something is inherently wrong with people who have these diseases. Stigma also prevents people who need help from seeing real life examples of people who are getting better through treatment. In the end, the stigma helps no one, and harms too many people.

When I think of how stigma has affected my life, I think of how I have avoided many of my friends from high school and college, simply because even with all the work I do with NAMI, I still struggle with the shame associated with mental illness. I get tired of lying and wearing the mask, so I choose to avoid so many people altogether. I don't want to have to answer questions about why I seem to be stuck in life and have not made the kinds of advancements in life that a “normal” person my age should have made by now – married with kids, a beautiful house and a steady job – all the things associated with “success” and the American dream.

We don't call people who have cancer “crazy”. We don't call people who have heart trouble “deranged”. We don't call people with sickle cell anemia “loco”. So why do all these terms seem to apply when it comes to mental illness? It all has to do with stigma. This is why many parts of our society have trouble accepting mental illnesses as diseases, as opposed to a sign of moral weakness. I was appalled the way some radio commentators made fun of basketball star, Ron Artest, when he thanked his psychiatrist on the air after winning the NBA title with the Lakers last season. Only stigma would cause such a ludicrous reaction by some in the media.

As people in recovery, let's continue to speak out to break the stranglehold that stigma has had on the lives of so many consumers. One voice at a time, we can shatter this stigma and assist people who need professional help so that they can step out and get the treatment that they need.

*– by Stephen Akinduro*

**Peer Support “Warm Line” at 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.

# Upcoming NAMI Events

January 2011	February 2011
06 P2P – Week 1 (Ends 3-10)	1 FaithNet F2F – Week 1 (Ends 4-26 6:30-9:00)
14 NAMI Connection Potluck	11 NAMI Connection Potluck
17 Monthly Education Program	14 Mental Health Court Graduation
20 NAMI hosts Homeless Resource 4 pm Network monthly meeting	11-13 Facilitator Training in Waycross
27 Homeless Employment Expo (ODCH)	12 Teacher/Mentor Tune Up
28-30 F2F, P2P & IOOV training in Atlanta	21 Monthly Education Program
31-4 Columbus Police Dept. CIT	
March 2011	April 2011
7-11 Muscogee County Sheriff's Ofc.- CIT	5-8 Columbus Police Dept. CIT
11 NAMI Connection Potluck	8 NAMI Connection Potluck
14-18 Brain Awareness Week	18 Monthly Education Program
21 Monthly Education Program	30 NAMI Cols Semi-annual Yard Sale
	30 4 <sup>th</sup> Annual SACVET Stand Down

## Support Groups

**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

### Meeting Location:

- NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups meets at The Bradley Center's Multipurpose Room (use 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Parking Lot)
- Family/Friend Support Group meets at the CONTACT Training Building, 1520 22nd Street

## We would like your help with the following:

- **CIT Classes** We need our NAMI chefs to provide a meal (or portion of a meal) for Mon-Thurs. for the following weeks that we have CIT Classes scheduled:  
**Jan 31-Feb 4; March 7-11; April 5-8.**  
Please call the NAMI Columbus office if you can help with any of these lunches.
- **Homeless Employment Expo, Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup>.**from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Open Door Community House (2405 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Columbus). Every year NAMI has a table where we exhibit the programs we offer. We need at least two people to help "man" (or woman) our table. Can you help do this?
- **Mental Health Court graduation, Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>.** This is your chance to help us congratulate and celebrate the successful completion by consumers from the Muscogee County Mental Health and Veterans Mental Health Courts. NAMI members Brenda and Vernon West always outdo themselves by preparing a feast of appetizers for each of our quarterly graduations. The graduation will be held on the Plaza Level of the Columbus Consolidated Government Center (main tower) at 5:00 pm. The graduation is well-attended by Columbus dignitaries and NAMI members. Please plan on attending to help us recognize the graduates' outstanding achievement.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Annual SACVET Stand Down, Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>** from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. It will be held at the Columbus Convention & Trade Center (801 Front Avenue, Columbus). NAMI participates in this community effort to provide supportive services to homeless veterans and veterans in need for one full day. We need at least two people to help "man" (or woman) our table. Can you help do this?

Dear NAMI Columbus Members and Supporters:

On television, I play Dr. Gregory House. Every week, we take 60 minutes to save one person's life. It's a lot harder in real life.

For more than 30 years, NAMI has been working every day to help real people living with mental illness build real lives of dignity and meaning. Through education, support and advocacy, NAMI gives individuals and families affected by mental illness the one thing no one else can offer: Hope. That's why I support the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

We are entering into a New Year. As you make plans for giving, I ask you to join me in support of NAMI and help give the gift of hope to the millions of individuals and families affected by mental illness.

Thank you,

*Hugh Laurie*

Even though NAMI Columbus is a 501c3 non-profit organization, it is not listed as a "partner" of United Way. But you can still earmark your United Way contribution to go to NAMI Columbus simply by writing it in on your donation card. The more NAMI Columbus does not have to spend time fundraising, the more time we can spend supporting, educating and advocating for citizens in our area.

*Editor's Note: Hugh Laurie has been open about his experience with depression. This is why he decided to help NAMI. This message was pulled from the national website.*



Welcome to a New Year!

Let me ask you some questions for the New Year. How do we as people of faith reach out to our people in their places of worship? How should we let them know of the wonderful programs offered through NAMI Columbus? I need your help. If you are interested in helping answer these questions and forming a team (or teams) to deliver faith outreach, please call or e-mail me. The time has come to reach out and let them know we are here. Call 706-577-0361 or e-mail: [tigingga@yahoo.com](mailto:tigingga@yahoo.com).

*Rev Tony Bankhead*  
Faith Outreach Coordinator



# Columbus

Our Area's Voice on Mental Illness

P.O. Box 8581, Columbus, GA 31908, (706) 320-3755

### 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 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 (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, 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](http://www.nami.org/join) (\$35.00 by credit card).