

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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**NAMI Columbus**

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[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  
24/7/365  
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



**Anka BHL ACT Team**

706-225-2301

## Overcoming cultural obstacles to treatment

### Speaker: Dr. Benjamin Roy

**Monday, July 16, 2012**

**Education Meeting 6:00 PM**

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

Stigma is the number one reason why people suffering with mental illnesses refuse to get treatment. People with mental illnesses are often shamed by erroneous societal beliefs into thinking that they are flawed individuals, or that having a mental illness is somehow a sign of moral weakness or despicable character. This stigma is exponentially higher in minority communities. Whether it be due to religious beliefs, cultural factors, distrust of the medical community, or the misinformation about mental disorders, many minorities simply refuse to accept the notion of mental illness. With education and greater public awareness, we are slowly starting to discredit a lot of the negative perceptions about people living with mental illnesses, but there is still a long way to go.

Many people only get treatment after their lives have spiraled out of control due to factors like alienation from family members, job losses and financial problems, or problems with the justice system. The delay in beginning treatment usually leaves a much steeper hill to climb than if the disorder had been diagnosed and treated much earlier on.

For the July educational meeting, Dr. Benjamin Roy, will be our guest speaker as we commemorate NAMI's National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. July's commemoration is in honor of the late author, Bebe Moore Campbell, who penned the critically acclaimed book "72 hour-hold". This book focused on her adult daughter with mental illness and her family's struggle to get her treatment. The topic for our monthly meeting shall be "Overcoming cultural obstacles to treatment". Dr. Roy is the medical director at Americanwork, Inc. one of the community service providers here in Columbus Georgia. He has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the City University of New York City College, and received his medical degree from the Howard University College of Medicine.

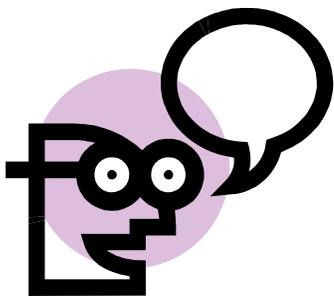
Please come and join us for this much needed discussion. When we can overcome the cultural barriers to treatment, we ultimately help take away the stranglehold that stigma has had on the lives of all people living with mental illnesses.

*Stephen O. Akinduro*



## Upcoming Events

July 2012	August 2012
16 Monthly Education Program 16-20 Columbus Police Dept. CIT 24 NAMI Basics Begins (6 weeks)	06 Mental Health Court Graduation 20 Monthly Education Program 20-22 International CIT Conv.- Las Vegas, NV 27-31 Muscogee County Sheriff's Office CIT TBD Candlelight Walk WCGRH, 9pm
September 2012	October 2012
02-08 Suicide Prevention Week 06 Stop a Suicide Today Day 06 Family-to-Family Class Begins (12 wks) 08 World Suicide Prevention Day 17 Monthly Education Program 30 P2P – Begins (10 weeks)	TBD NAMI Ga Walks (Atlanta & Waycross) 7 -13 MIAW (MI Awareness Week) 09 National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness 11 Depression Screening & Bipolar Awareness 15-19 Columbus Police Dept. CIT 15 Monthly Education Program 26-27 NAMI Cols Semi-annual Yard Sale 27 Make a Difference Day TBD NAMI Basics Begins (6 weeks)
<b>Support Groups</b> <b>Every Monday night, 6-7:30 pm</b> Family/Friend <u>and</u> NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups <b>Every Saturday 1-2:30 pm</b> NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group <b>Meeting Locations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups meets at The Bradley Center's Multipurpose Room (use 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Parking Lot)</li> <li>Family/Friend Support Group meets at the CONTACT Training Building, 1520 22nd Street</li> </ul>	



## Frankly Speaking

Hello members,

In the past few weeks there has been a flurry of activity in NAMI Columbus. We have picked up 2 new NAMI Connection support groups. One at the Muscogee County Jail, in addition to the other two we already facilitate there. And we have also set up a semi-weekly group at the new Bradley Center Crisis Stabilization Unit which opened July 1st, at midnight. This group will commence the first week of August. Special thanks goes to facilitators Bonnie Holmes, Sherri Carmack, and Clay Baum for stepping up to take on these new challenges. This endeavor brings us closer to the forefront of being one of the most necessary and utilized assets for the mental health community in Columbus, Georgia. However, it also puts a strain on our facilitator resources. So now I'm asking for more volunteers to make the commitment to become facilitators themselves. As time goes on we will need to add on more support groups and we must have trained people ready to fill in and take these groups on. Please consider yourself as a candidate for training and let Sue Marlowe (Signature Programs Coordinator) know of your interest in participating.

We should also thank Stephen Akinduro for obtaining Dr. Benjamin Roy to address cultural barriers to treatment for our July educational meeting in honor of National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. Great job Stephen!

Thank you all,

*Frank Dunford*

Frank Dunford  
President, NAMI Columbus



- DO you know what every candidate's position is on mental health issues?
- What candidates believe MATTERS.
- NAMI will be closely monitoring the candidates.  
# # #

One of our own, NAMI Columbus member Stephen Akinduro, was published in the most recent NAMI National Newsletter, *the NAMI Voice*. Stephen has written many articles for OUR newsletter, but now NAMI National has recognized his talent for expressing himself so well. Our affiliate is very lucky to have Stephen as such a talented and active member.

## Overcoming the Shame and Stigma

By Stephen O. Akinduro, NAMI Columbus



When I was a teenager, I wondered if other people were in on some big secret that they were not sharing with me. Why wasn't everyone just as miserable as I was all the time and what was the secret to their joy? Was I the only one

wearing the mask I had to wear every day just to survive? After unsuccessfully trying to overcome my misery with willpower, sexual promiscuity, self-destructive habits and even religious fervor, I had virtually lost hope of ever experiencing a fruitful and joyous life. At my worst, my depression was so severe that I likened it to a vacuum cleaner that sucked out 99 percent of the joy and hope out of your soul, leaving you just enough to survive but not enough to enjoy living.

Depression is a living hell, like having to experience the worst grief you've ever had to face, day after day. "When will it end?" was the question I kept asking myself. I quickly came to the conclusion that suicide would be the only way to end my misery. But something held me back — not just the fear of death, but also knowing that taking my life would bring an immeasurable level of pain to my family and friends. My family had, after all, been down that road before. I lost my mother to suicide when I was 8-years old. She was only 34-years old when she died and had struggled with clinical depression for most of her life. Her depression was exacerbated by the alcohol she used to try and drown the pain of a very abusive relationship with her husband, my dad.

I was very reluctant to get treatment because of the shame and stigma associated with mental illness. I had associated mental illness with the word "crazy" and I didn't want that label. I realized that the stigma was even greater in the African-American community, where I had heard statements like, "Oh, mental illness is just something white people use to

excuse bad behavior." My dad is Nigerian and I lived in Nigeria with him for 15 years, moving there from Boston in the late 1970s. While I was there, I realized that the common belief was that religious fervor and dedication to God were all I needed to cure any ills. I dove headfirst into my Christian faith, getting rededicated to Jesus, rebaptized and becoming very active in lay ministry. After none of this brought any lasting relief, I became so disillusioned with God I almost lost my faith completely.

I received my initial diagnosis of major depression after a suicide attempt, not too long after graduating from college. My current diagnosis is bipolar II depressive type. It has taken me losing jobs, failed relationships, financial woes (including bankruptcy in my 20s), and so many other negative effects from my untreated disorder to finally realize that I needed to stick with treatment. I am gradually starting to feel less ashamed of struggling with a mental illness, having learned that I am not my disorder. I am a human being first, who happens to struggle with an illness. I am no more defined by my illness than a person with high blood pressure is not defined by that condition.

NAMI has been a priceless asset in my recovery process. Before I found NAMI, I thought I had to suffer in silence because I was rarely around people who were authentic enough to share their own struggles with mental illness. NAMI has shown me that mental illness does not have to be a death sentence and it is not anything which I should be ashamed. Mental illness affects people from every walk of life, race, gender, creed and sexual orientation. I can honestly say that NAMI has been a crucial lifeline in my recovery because mental illness seems to be one of the few disease categories where stigma still unfortunately prevails in our society.

Today, I am happy to say I pay it forward as a NAMI "In Our Own Voice" presenter and a Peer-to-Peer mentor. Anyone who struggles with mental illness should get plugged into NAMI. It will really help you along your journey of recovery.

**National Minority**  
Mental Health Awareness Month  
JULY



# Columbus

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

## Support Our Support (Groups)



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 (low income)
- 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](http://www.nami.org/join) (\$35.00 by credit card).