

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

ACT, MCRT and BHL

Monday, November 18, 2013

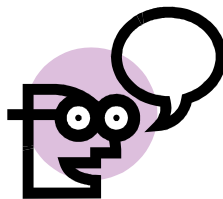
Education Meeting 6:00 PM

4411 Rosemont Drive, Columbus

We will be having representatives from ACT (Assertive Community Treatment), MCRT (Mobile Crisis Response Team) and from BHL (Behavioral Health Link—Georgia's Crisis and Access Line) at our monthly educational meeting on November 18th. They will explain the services they offer, what the eligibility requirements are, etc.

Mental health care services seem to change rapidly, so it's difficult to stay up to date. This will be your opportunity to learn what services are available for yourself or a loved one. If you are a NAMI Columbus teacher or facilitator, or a CIT Officer, it's very important that you are aware of available services in order to share with others. We hope to see you at the meeting.

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



Frankly Speaking

Hello all,

As I write this it is Veteran's Day and I'm compelled to not only take a moment to thank all of our veterans for the risks they have taken and sacrifices that they have made throughout the generations, but also to exalt those members of NAMI Columbus who are serving our soldiers with their inspiring dedication to healing the invisible wounds of war. Phil Corbett, a veteran himself, and our Director of Military Affairs has spearheaded the effort to bring support to the soldiers. Stephen Akinduro has joined him in one of the most successful efforts to bring down the stigma that plagues mental illness that I could ever have dreamed of. Together, they have presented In Our Own Voice to nearly 1000 soldiers this year. Many thanks goes to Denise Stephens M.S., Suicide Prevention Program Manager and Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) of Ft. Benning for her assistance in setting up these events. Denise has been an advocate for NAMI since the moment she met us and we have found a true friend in her. Despite slow participation in our Ft. Benning support group, the soldiers are beginning to trickle in to reap the benefits of the great peer support that Phil has to offer there also. And if you have visited the NAMI.org site this week, you'll see Phil on the front page as he is being featured for his work with the veterans. While we're talking about veterans, I'd be remiss not to acknowledge Clay Baum for his work at the Veteran's Dorm and the Mental Health dorm in the Muscogee county Jail. For nearly 2 years now, Clay has facilitated these two separate groups by himself every week, almost without fail. Please take time to thank these people for their vital work. Also remember that Veteran's Day is only one day of the year. But all of our soldiers, past and present, will be veterans every day for the rest of their lives. So any day is a good day to tell them.....thanks.

Sincerely,

Captain Marvel

Frank Dunford

aka./ Frank Dunford, President

Upcoming Events

November 2013	December 2013
04 Mental Health Court Graduation (<i>You are cordially invited to attend at 5 pm at the Columbus Government Center, Plaza Level</i>)	No Monthly Education Program
11-17 Mental Health Wellness Week	01 NAMI Cols Holiday Party
18 Monthly Ed Program & Board Election	09 Columbus Probation Office CIT
18-22 Muscogee County Sheriff's Office CIT	
23 National Survivors of Suicide Day	

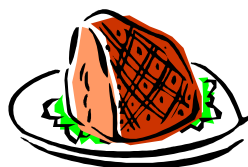
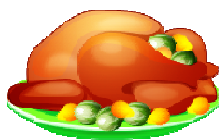
“Open” Support Groups:

Every Monday night, 6-7:30 pm Family/Friend and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups **meets at New Horizons CSB, 4411 Rosemont Drive**
every Saturday 1-2:30 pm NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group; and **meets at The Bradley Center's Multipurpose Room**



*You are cordially invited
 To our annual
Holiday potluck party
 Sunday, December 1, 2013
 6:00 - 8:00 pm
 Columbus Hospice Community Room
 7020 Moon Road
 Columbus, Georgia 31909*

Every year NAMI Columbus members and friends have gathered the first Sunday in December to celebrate the holidays and our successes from the current year. NAMI Columbus will supply turkey, ham and beverages. We ask you to look through your recipes and supply side dishes and desserts. We have so MUCH to celebrate, please plan on joining us again (or for the first time).



“It has always been one of my passions to help soldiers with mental illness.”



[Read More](#)

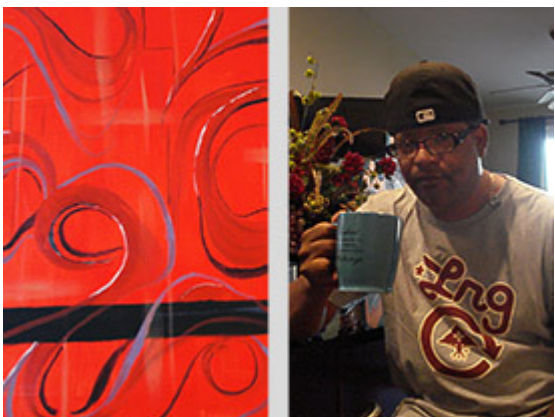
Phillip's Story

Growing up was really tough because I always felt that there was something different about me, but I was too afraid to face it. If I had known what I do now, I could have easily skipped the dark years, which involved lots of self-destruction with heavy drug usage and self-harm. I wasn't the type of kid that could deal with being punished because I punished myself more than anyone else ever could. That's where cutting played a huge role because when I would get punished, I felt that I had to harm myself just to prove to myself that *my* punishment was more severe. Kids shouldn't think like that. Now I am an adult and I've learned what it's like to live with bipolar disorder and later, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

“As long as there is war, there will be soldiers who need to talk to someone, so I'm trying to be that conduit ... I self-medicated for many years to deal with the highs and lows of living with bipolar disorder. That didn't go over so well. I lost my apartment, my car, my health and my self-worth. I got somewhat of a diagnosis shortly after I joined the Army in 1999, but I was only given medicine to fight the broad symptoms of bipolar disorder without any fine-tuning. I figured joining the Army would solve everything. And while it helped a lot, I still wasn't letting go of all my baggage. All my issues ended up catching up with me and I started having really bad manic episodes. I thought everyone was against me and wanted to see me fail, so just about everyone was a potential enemy. Mixing those manic episodes with tons of alcohol really wasn't the greatest idea and it put me over the edge.

I left Fort Carson in Colorado to go to Iraq in 2003. I didn't really care much about my life, so while I was positive that I would die there, I was OK with it. When I didn't die, it sent me into a panic. I went on to Korea after that and all the symptoms of PTSD started to appear. I never noticed anything—my wife was the one who caught it. Things like screaming at night, cold sweats and waking up every hour were just a few of my issues that she helped point out. Sometimes I would have an angry outburst and the next second I'd be in tears.

My mental health records were lost when I went from Fort Carson to Korea, so I had to wait until 2007 to receive a diagnosis. However, it came at the perfect time because for once I was trying to be serious about mental illness and actually take my meds on time. It's been a rocky road, but finding NAMI is what made the lasting changes in my life. Since joining NAMI in 2010 I have completed NAMI Peer-to-Peer training, become a facilitator and now present for NAMI's In Our Own Voice (IOOV). Many soldiers and veterans have approached me after my presentations and asked me how to get involved with NAMI, but at the same time told me how they felt all alone with their illness and terrified of letting anyone know they needed help. Hopefully the more I present, the more they will feel comfortable opening up.



But the icing on the cake has been becoming the NAMI Columbus' Director of Military Affairs at Fort Benning, Ga. It has always been one of my passions to help soldiers with mental illness. We all know that PTSD is running freely through our military as war lingers on. As long as there is war, there will be soldiers who need to talk to someone, so I'm trying to be that conduit at Fort Benning. As with anything new, it has been a slow start but I'm still determined because I could be the reason a soldier doesn't take his or her own life or get mixed up with drugs or domestic violence.

I also have been an artist my entire life and I really hope to get accepted into more galleries someday. Art is what helps me to relax. It's something I've been able to turn to instead of self-medicating with alcohol. Painting has been very rewarding over the years, but I don't feel

that I have made it quite yet. My art is like my connection with NAMI: I learn something new every session and I get better each time I go back.

NAMI really helped me to be social again. I used to just stay inside all day and play video games but now my day isn't complete if I don't go out and do something. I've met a lot of very warm-hearted people through NAMI. The first time I ever went to a meeting, I found people just like me and that went a long way. Now I'm trying to give back to NAMI what it gave to me.

New Rule Requires Equal Treatment for Mental Health



By Ron Honberg, NAMI Director of Policy and Legal Affairs

November 8, 2013

A landmark moment for mental health coverage has taken place. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a long-awaited **“final rule” dictating that mental health be covered equal to physical health.** The rule finally provides the clarity that is needed to move forward

in implementing mental health parity. This is the final aspect of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act that was signed into law in 2008.

One important feature of the rule is that it requires insurers to have financial limits (co-payments, deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses) equal to those of physical conditions. The rule also makes it clear that treatment visits for mental health and substance abuse have no greater limitations than for other medical conditions.

Additionally, the rule requires equity in the criteria that insurers use to make decisions about care. For example, insurers cannot use criteria for denying or limiting inpatient psychiatric treatment that are any more stringent than criteria used for other forms of inpatient medical treatment.

The rule requires insurers to be forthright and transparent about the criteria they use to approve or deny care. This is fundamentally important for individuals and families to navigate the complexities of insurance.

Finally, the new rule makes it clear that parity applies not only to medical treatment but also to vital services and supports essential for many in recovery, including rehabilitative services, case management and residential treatment.

"This final rule breaks down barriers that stand in the way of treatment and recovery services for millions of Americans," said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "Building on these rules, the Affordable Care Act is expanding mental health and substance use disorder benefits and parity protections to 62 million Americans. This historic expansion will help make treatment more affordable and accessible."

However, it is important to note that issues remain that will need to be resolved and details need clarification.

NAMI is disappointed that the federal government has not yet indicated how parity requirements apply to managed care plans offered through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The Administration has promised that they will issue guidance on this important topic in the near future. This is critically important because millions of people living with mental illness are covered through these plans.

Currently, 60 percent of Americans affected by a mental health condition do not receive treatment. With rules requiring parity, we hope that more Americans will receive the care they need and deserve.

NAMI Executive Director Michael J. Fitzpatrick reiterated the significance of these rules in a statement earlier today. "The regulations are a crowning achievement. They are the result of a 20-year bipartisan campaign by individuals and families affected by mental illness to end unfair discrimination."

NAMI will provide further information and guidance about the new rule in the coming days and weeks—but **today is a day to celebrate.**



SueNAMI Says

I visit the NAMI National website almost every day. It's the only way I can keep up with the fast-changing world of mental health. I thank God for the internet. It's because of the internet that NAMI has been able to make much faster progress than we did in the 80's and 90's. But the internet just isn't enough – it takes PEOPLE to make progress. Imagine my surprise when late last week I was looking at the front page on the website and I thought to myself WOW, that guy in the picture looks familiar. Then I realized that it was Phil Corbett in the picture. One of our very own from here in Columbus, Georgia was on the national website! (*You can read Phil's article on page 3 of this newsletter.*)

I remember the days when I first found NAMI Columbus. In 2001 my mother and I were taking the Family-to-Family class so we could learn how to help my nephew. There were about 35 or 40 members of NAMI Columbus. I remember thinking every week in class that I wanted to join NAMI Columbus and help Doris Keene (our President at the time) to help our organization grow and offer more. Back then we had one meeting a month and the only educational offering from NAMI National was the Family-to-Family class. As our family tried to help my nephew Scott, I grew angry at how hard it was to get services. We had Commissioners that were ordered to cut the budget, as other state budgets and pet projects grew in size. We had hospitals that were ordered to close, while community services were shrinking and more and more consumers were finding themselves in jails and prisons.

Fast forward to now and it's hard for me to believe all the offerings that come from NAMI National and NAMI Georgia. 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.

NAMI offers many educational programs. Many of our members tell their story like Phillip did on the website or in his In Our Own Voice (IOOV) presentation. We have other members presenting IOOV besides Phil. Stephen Akinduro, Kristine Walls, Katherine Miller and I are presenters too. The more people tell their story, the more stigma we can erase and the more hope we can spread. It also takes people facilitating support groups. Robert facilitates at the Probation Office, Sherri facilitates in the Crisis Stabilization Unit and Clay goes to the jail. Wherever there's a need, NAMI members have stepped in to fill the jobs. We have teachers of Family-to-Family, and NAMI Basics, 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 who put 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.

When I hear people talk about what NAMI has done for them, it makes my heart swell. I remember how far we've come and I appreciate the progress. It's similar to the progress I've made in my own journey of recovery. I've come from thinking I was "just a family member of NAMI" to considering myself a well rounded member of NAMI. I'm a family member and a consumer. I've come from not realizing that I had a mental illness, to totally embracing it. It's made me more compassionate (most days) and less judgmental (most days). I LOVE it when I see and hear members getting better and beginning to pay it forward to help others get the help they received.

The person I really appreciate these days is our President, Frank Dunford. I attended a National NAMI Convention one year and I heard someone say "until we get the *normals* on our side, we're not going to make progress". Frank isn't a consumer OR a family member. Frank signed on to help NAMI Columbus after he took our Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. He doesn't tell you all the things he does for NAMI while also working a full time job. He amazes me with his compassion, and patience. Many newcomers to our support groups have first spoken with Frank. He takes the time to listen and demonstrate NAMI caring and support. He has become my hero. I hope you'll take a moment and thank Frank for all he does for us and for being willing to take on the job of leading us. I once heard someone say that leading an affiliate was like "herding cats". It's a hard job, but Frank always seems to do it with a glad heart. He always lets us know we are not alone. He is the epitome of everything NAMI represents.

~~ Sue Marlowe



Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, GA 31908
(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).