



DATES AND EVENTS

SHARE AND CARE

Do you need someone to talk to? Would you like some of your questions about mental illness answered? Our support group for family and friends of the mentally ill meets Tuesdays at 6:00 PM at Arden House, 1552 Colorado Street, Glendale, at the corner of Colorado and Lincoln. We encourage you to come. Enter through the front or rear entrance. Parking is available behind the building or on the street.

MONTHLY NAMI MEETINGS AND EVENTS



December 6, 2005 – Speaker/Business Meeting

Instead of a speaker, we plan to have a regular Share and Care from 6 pm to 7:30 pm and then celebrate the holiday season with pizza, salad, and something to drink. We hope you will join us, old members and new mixing and sharing and caring in an informal setting. And perhaps we will have some fun entertainment.

December 27, 2005 and January 3, 2006

Last regular Share and Care of 2005 and first of 2006. Since mental illness doesn't take a holiday, we will be here, just in case anyone wants to drop by.

January 16, 2006

Martin Luther King Day.

Join NAMI members from Los Angeles County in a rally outside the Twin Towers at sundown on Monday, January 16, 2006, as they protest the treatment and criminalization of the mentally ill. More information will be available in the January *GAMIgram*.

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jonée Shady

Last month I wrote about how I was about to go visit my brother Nicky to celebrate his 43rd birthday with him. Well, I am happy to report that it was a most enjoyable visit and I am actually looking forward to making the trek to Atascadero again before the end of the year. Due to our conflicting schedules, my husband was not able to go with me at the same time, so I suggested that he go alone on my brother's actual birthday and that I would go the next day. That way, he would have two visitors.

I called my husband after he visited to see how my brother responded. My husband chuckled and stated that they had actually had a good time. He did say that Nicky claimed to have turned 74 years old on this birthday and my husband wasn't sure if Nick meant it or if this was one of his delusions. He said that they had laughed and played cards. My husband also said that he was glad that he finally had gone to see his brother-in-law.

As it turned out, Nicky didn't have two visitors but three. A good friend of mine, who had met my brother once, decided that she would make the drive with me and visit my brother, too. I had never really thought to ask someone because one never knows how our relatives might respond. I must say that he was so happy to see us and was not anxious that my friend was with me. We proceeded to converse and play cards and truly had a delightful time. I did ask him how old he was and he responded "74", so I guess he must be for now. I can deal with this delusion.

I also asked him what meds he was taking and he was able to articulate the drugs. He stated that he had a chance to be moved to Patton or to some residential care. I stressed that he would need to continue to take his meds if he wanted to move. He nodded and said that he had planned on continuing his meds. I took a chance and asked what his diagnosis was and for the first time he stated, schizophrenia. He went on to say that they didn't think that he had any sort of mental illness though. Schizophrenia happens, as you get old. You know what? I will live with that delusion, too.

I realize that my message seems to be the journaling of my dealings with my brother but these visits only emphasize the importance of family when one has a mental illness. I know that many of us take so much abuse from our loved ones but I feel that no matter what,

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MOVIE REVIEW: IN HER SHOES

Jonée Shady

In Her Shoes is the story of two sisters, played by Cameron Diaz and Toni Collette, who are ultimately best friends but are so opposite that all they really have in common is their shoe size. Their mother dies when they are very young and their father did not allow them to have a relationship with their grandmother, Ella, played by Shirley MacLaine. Ella had a daughter - Maggie (Diaz) and Rose's mother - who suffered from bipolar disorder. She has always felt that she failed her daughter and fears that her daughter's death is her fault. Ella never lets herself even think about it.

I recently saw this movie and I was pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed it for many reasons. One of the reasons I want to commend this film is for portraying a family whose members have all been affected in different ways as a result of a loved one suffering from a mental illness. While mental illness is not the focus of this film, I thought the subtleness of how the mother's illness was dealt with differently by all those involved was portrayed with compassion and understanding. Not only did you get the feeling that this family didn't even know how it had affected them, possibly because it was never talked about, but you also gained insight to the difficulty the mother must have had trying to raise a family and at the same time, monitor her illness.

We know that there is mental illness in many families. We must share and help fight stigma so that we can lessen the shame that so often accompanies this illness. More portrayals such as this one is one small step in fighting stigma and showing compassion for those who are affected.

www.namiglendale.org

Check it out to find the latest *GAMgrams*, updates on Family to Family classes, helpful links, as well as information about our meetings and how to join.



The *GAMgram*, the Community's Voice on Mental Illness, is published by NAMI Glendale to educate its members and the general public about issues affecting the mentally ill.

President: Jonée Shady
Editor: Jane S. Hancock

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT continued

they truly love us and we could be the key to stabilization and recovery. Nick has never been able to share medical information with me in the past. I have always been the enemy, right?

I believe he has begun to gain some insight and once again it gives me hope. Hope that one day, I will be able to sit down and ask, "How are you feeling today?" And he can reply, "Much better, thank you. How about you?"

Please have a great holiday and thanks for all your support over the past year.

RESOURCE INFORMATION

- ❑ (PMRT) Psychiatric Mobile **Response Team**, (626) 2582004 for **crisis management**, Monday-Friday 8 am – 5pm. At other times use the Access Line.
- ❑ Access Line, 24-hr: (800) 854-7771 for information and consultation, and for Psychiatric Mobile Response Team **After Hours** and **Week ends**.
- ❑ (MET) operates 5 PM to 1 AM. Call Local Sheriff Station (or 911 if dire emergency) to request MET response. For general information: (562) 9037530.
- ❑ Family Advocate: John Griffin (213) 637-2311.
- ❑ LA Police/Mental Assessment Response Team System – wide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART.)
- ❑ Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) call (911) to request the MEU response.
- ❑ IF YOUR LOVED ONE IS ARRESTED CALL: DMH Jail Mental Health Services: John Davis, District Chief (213) 229-9991.
- ❑ Inmate Information Center (213) 473-6080 or (213) 473-6100.
- ❑ Jail Inpatient Unit: Neil Ortego, MD (213) 893-5391.
- ❑ Suicide Prevention Center, Crisis Line 24hrs 7 days (310)391-1253.
- ❑ **Friendship Line**: this is a toll free telephone help-line, run by people with mental illness seven days a week, 365 days a year. This line offers Peer to Peer Support information about mental health Resources and connection to crisis lines.

***Happy Holidays from NAMI
Glendale***

**DBSA GLENDALE - A SUPPORT GROUP
for those suffering from
depression, manic depression, bipolar disorder
Glendale Adventist Medical Center
1509 Wilson terrace, Glendale
Tuesdays/Thursdays 6 – 8 pm
dbsaglendale@earthlink.net
626.358.6587 or 626.794.9751**

FIGHTING STIGMA

Jonée Shady

As advocates, one of our goals is to fight stigma. Most of us do that by not feeling shame when talking about our ill relative and being able to do so at anytime. I realize that this in itself can be so difficult for families and understandably so. Others do it by writing letters to the editors of newspapers, producers of television and film or by attending various demonstrations. And many do it by providing education to those who have misconceptions about mental illness.

In April, I had the opportunity to see Billy Crystal in his Tony Award winning performance of "700 Sundays," a show that will soon play here in LA. I had paid a premium price for the sold-out show and was really enjoying it up until a certain point in the second act. Almost near the end of the show, Billy was talking about an evening when his mom came home late. His mother had taken a job as a secretary for a psychiatrist. When Billy inquires as to why she was late, his mother replies, "Oh, you know those schizophrenics, they like to be billed twice." The line got a chuckle from the audience but I remained silent. For the rest of the show, I was composing a letter in my head that I was determined to send to Mr. Crystal to let him know how distasteful that line had been and ask that he remove it from the show before it started touring. (The show was closing in New York that week and the letter would have reached him after the closing.) You see at the end he said that the show changed nightly and he was planning to tour the country. I thought "great," I can get him to change that line and also educate him by explaining that schizophrenia was not multiple personality among other information I felt he should know about the illness.

Needless to say, I never took the time to write that letter and now the show is coming soon to this city. Well, don't I still have time? Not so. The other day, I saw the book of the show at Border's Books and sure enough, I opened the book and saw the line in print. Now all I can think is, well maybe his mom really said it and maybe he does think it is funny. But I don't and I am sure that many of you don't either.

So the question becomes for myself, why did I procrastinate in writing that letter? I call myself an advocate and I am very proud of the work we do with NAMI but that show sold out for its entire run and no one has pointed out how tasteless this joke is. I am disappointed in myself for not writing that letter but I admit this now because I do feel that we, as an organization, as an affiliate, and as individuals can make a difference in fighting stigma. Instead of wasting energy being hard on myself, I should remind myself that we have long way to go and we need to continue to advocate and fight stigma any chance we get, even if we doubt it could make a difference. Eventually, it will.

IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR DUES!

Find the Perfect Gift and Help NAMI, Too!

During this holiday season, every purchase you make through Amazon.com can help NAMI improve the lives of people living with mental illness. Here's how it works: For everything you purchase, from books, CDs, DVDs, toys, apparel – basically, anything Amazon.com sells – NAMI will automatically receive a percentage of the total sale (6 percent on average.)

You'll get the convenience of shopping online with one of the Web's largest retailers, and at the same time you'll be helping NAMI help others, all at absolutely no extra cost to you.

You can also visit the NAMI Store at any time (all year long) to make purchases through Amazon.com that also benefit NAMI. You can even do it through our website—NamiGlendale.org.

So enter Amazon.com and start shopping or browse their selections of holiday gift ideas below.

Tapes and DVDs: *The Aviator*, *Monk*, *Stateside*, *Down Came the Rain*, Brooke Shields, *A Beautiful Mind* (DVD), *The Hours* (DVD), *The Caveman's Valentine* (DVD), *My Sister's Keeper* (VHS).

Fiction: *72 Hour Hold*, Bebe Moore Campbell; *I Know This Much Is True*, Wally Lamb; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Mark Haddon; *The Best Awful*, Carrie Fisher.

Biography: *Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness*, Joshua Wolf Shenk; *Divided Minds: Twin Sisters and Their Journey Through Schizophrenia*, Pamela Spiro Wagner and Carolyn Spiro, M.D.; *Will's Choice: A Suicidal Teen, a Desperate Mother, and a Chronicle of Recovery*, Gail Griffith; *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed: And Other Things I've Learned*, Alan Alda; *Skywriting: A Life Out of the Blue*, Jane Pauley; *Fear Is No Longer My Reality*, Jamie Blyth.

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WHAT THOSE WHO KNOW SAY TO CAREGIVERS

Psychologist Richard Schulz of the University of Pittsburgh Medical School, who has studied the emotional and physical toll on those providing care, found high levels of clinical depression, anxiety and increased mortality.

Dr. Robert Butler, professor of geriatrics at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York notes, "A consequence of caregiving is you could become the second patient "

NAMI Glendale members say, "Take care of yourself. Get away. Take a vacation."

Family-to-Family Classes Begin

The Family-to-Family course, sponsored by NAMI Glendale, begins on January 9 and runs 12 consecutive weeks from 7:00-9:30 p.m. in Glendale. If you would like to register for this class, please contact Jonée B. Shady at sh8djb@earthlink.net or call 323 461-3891 x 243 daytime or 323 610-1009 evening only. No charge for the class.

If you have already taken Family-to-Family and would like to be trained to teach the course, there will be a training on the weekend of January 27th. The training will be at the Claretian Center and all meals and accommodations are provided. Please contact Sharon Dunas at 310-471-2341. Space is limited so call quickly!

Nuts and Bolts: NAMI Family-To-Family Education Course Description

NAMI Family-To-Family Education Program consists of a series of twelve classes for the families of persons with serious and persistent brain disorders (mental illnesses). These classes represent a new concept and curriculum. In this model, the course co-teachers are family members themselves, and the course has been designed and written by an experienced family-member mental health professional. The course balances education and skill training with self care, emotional support and empowerment. Important components of the course are:

- Information about Schizophrenia, Major Depression, Bipolar Illness, Borderline Personality Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and co-occurring Brain Disorders and Addictive Disorders.
- Coping skills; handling crisis and relapse.
- Listening and communication techniques.
- Problem solving and limit setting; rehabilitation.
- Understanding the actual experience of people suffering from mental illness.
- Self-care; learning how to recognize normal emotional reactions among families to chronic worry and stress.
- Basic information about medications and their side effects.
- Information about connection with appropriate community services and community supports.
- Advocacy; getting better services, fighting discrimination.

The NAMI Family-To-Family Education Program is designed for the families of persons who have been diagnosed with serious and persistent mental illness, as well as those who exhibit behavior that strongly suggests such a diagnosis. The course is not appropriate for individuals who are themselves suffering from one of these mental illnesses.

Excerpts from NAMI Stigma Busters

Stella March

From December 4, 2005, through February 4, 2006, local ABC-TV stations will be showing--at their discretion--Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness, a one-hour documentary about stigma, spirituality, and recovery that features interviews with several NAMI consumers and family leaders.

Local stations will decide for themselves whether and when to broadcast the documentary. Local broadcast dates are listed on the Shadow Voices Web site, along with a list of the "voices" included in the documentary and excerpts from their interviews.

If your ABC station is not listed, please contact the station manager or programming director through the ABC network Web site to encourage them to air Shadow Voices, an ABC "Vision and Values" documentary produced by the National Council of Churches, before the February 4 deadline.

It is also important to thank stations already on the list, even those stations that have scheduled the documentary to air after midnight or before dawn. Expressions of community support for even marginal time slots will help influence later programming decisions involving mental illness topics. Let stations know that people are eager to see the film.

Copies of the documentary will also be available after December 15, 2005, in VHS (\$19.95) or DVD (\$24.95) format, plus shipping and handling. Call Mennonite Media at 1-800/999-3534 for more information.

Old vs. New Medications: Stories Wanted

A recent National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) study has suggested that "new generation" antipsychotic medications are no more effective than older medications in treating schizophrenia, raising concerns that the study will be used to restrict open access to newer medications under Medicaid or managed care.

NAMI wants to hear from consumers or family members describing the difference that newer medications have made in their lives. Please send your short, personal story to storybank@nami.org, including your name, age, city and state, telephone number, diagnosis, treatment history, and relevant details.

NAMI will consider all stories for use in testimony, media interviews, or other advocacy efforts. All submissions remain confidential. They will not be used without further contact and direct authorization.

Updates

Thanks to StigmaBusters's efforts, Target Stores is withdrawing from sale two pajama sets for girls with images of a bunny in a straitjacket and the names "Happy Bunny Psycho" and "Happy Bunny Crazy." Thank you, Target, for listening to our concerns.

Several NAMIs won "Halloween Horror" victories, last month, securing promises from operators of local haunted house "insane asylums" not to repeat the theme in the future. Special congratulations to NAMI Florida, whose efforts since 2004 resulted in Universal Studios Orlando quietly eliminating offensive elements from this year's Halloween attraction.