

GAMIGram



Volume 20 Issue 3

NAMI Glendale

March/April 2005

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

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

We begin at 6 pm with a shortened Share and Care session. After a break for refreshments, we convene our monthly business/speaker meeting. On March 1 we will welcome William Horan, Phd.D, an Assistant Research Psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry at UCLA. His research investigates emotional, social, socnitive, and neurocognitive processes in schizophrenia and how impairments in these processes affect clinical and community functioning. He will provide an overview of the types of cognitive difficulties often experienced by people with schizophrenia and their impact on functioning in daily life and recent advances in the treatment of these cognitive difficulties.

Karen Cornelius, who has met with NAMI Glendale before, will come for the caring and sharing and stay at the end to discuss current research ongoing in this area.

SAVE THE DATE. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2005
Fundraiser Dinner at Shakers in Glendale. Come support NAMI Glendale. Bring friends, neighbors, family, strangers.

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Speaker. Lynn Brandstater.
CEO, Verdugo Mental Health.

Lynn will talk about

services for consumers at VMH,
day programs for client coalition,
clients helping clients program,
programs and services to help family members,
and services presently offered in the community.

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jonée Shady

I finally received a letter from my brother, Nick, after a somewhat long lapse in correspondence. I was so happy to see the familiar handwriting and return address on that business-sized envelope amongst all the usual daily mail. I eagerly opened this letter only to be disappointed in the shortness and the message it contained. Below are the exact contents: grammar, punctuation and all.

Dear Jonée,

Hi, how are you? Are you okay. I had a heart attack. I don't feel so good What's new? What have you been doing. I've been watching a lot of T.V. Can you come visit me. Do you still want those songs? I got a few. We can make a record. I have some good songs. I saw the superbowl. My Team won. Happy Valentine's day! Have a good day.

*Love
Leo*

My reaction to his opening sentences is yeah, what's new? I wonder, is he ever feeling good? Can I go visit? Sure but you spend less time with me than the time it takes to drive there. You've been watching a lot of TV; well, so have I. I don't remember asking you for songs? I am not interested in making records; that's your thing. The Super Bowl? I didn't realize you even liked sports. You never did before. Happy Valentine's Day to you too, I sent you a card with money and stamps. Did you get it? By the way, since when do you call yourself Leo? that was Dad's name. We've always called you Nicky.

Of course, I could never write the above reaction to my brother. He has his reality and I have mine but unfortunately, sometimes the two cannot be mixed. I read this letter and I remember how sick my brother truly is and how hard it must be for him to get up in the morning, after all what does he have to look forward too. I also wonder just exactly what are they doing there to treat his symptoms?

I don't mean to insinuate that nothing in this letter is real. My brother does jot down lyrics to songs, most not so good, but to him they're great. Who does that harm, really? His name is Leo but has never been called that. However, being that it is his legal name, it is what he is called in the institutions where he has spent most of his

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WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT continued

adult life. And so what if he doesn't mention the card and cash I sent him. He told me to have a good day and he means it and I can have a good day and most likely will have a good day. I am not ill.

This letter tells me that my brother really isn't doing so well and reminds me of the importance of supporting him in the best way I can. I am the link to the world outside and the only family that he is in contact with and I must continue to advocate for him and others like him. I don't know why my path has taken me here but it has and we must fight together and have hope, even when things seem hopeless. So I will write to my brother and I will tell him that I wish he felt better and proceed to give him news of my reality. I will wait for a reply and hope that he's improved and I will try to find time to make that long drive to Atascadero even if our visit is a short one. It's the least I do, right can?

Dear Nicky,

I was so happy to hear from you. It's been awhile. I'm sorry you're not feeling well. It's been raining...

DUES FOR 2005 ARE DUE!

\$30.00 PER INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP MAKES YOU A MEMBER OF THE STATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Make checks payable to NAMI Glendale and mail to Membership Chairman, Kay Connus, c/o Verdugo Mental Health, 1540 E. Colorado, Glendale, CA 91205.
GAMlgram only - \$10.00

Or better yet –

Come to a meeting and hand-deliver the check.



The GAMlgram, 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.

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NOTES FROM MHSA CONFERENCE**Jonée Shady**

I attended the MHSA (Mental Health Services Act) implementation conference on February 12. Since NAMI was instrumental in getting this Act (Prop. 63) passed, I would hope that NAMI would be just as instrumental throughout the implementation process. What I found out at the conference is that there have been various stakeholder meetings throughout the counties where discussion has taken place and recommendations for funding for different groups have been heard. To be honest, the whole process seemed rather confusing and I realize that even with groups like NAMI, the communication is not always clear.

One of goals as advocates is to change many of the ways in which are loved ones and others with severe brain disorders are treated. The goal of recovery along with a fair chance to lead honorable productive stable lives can be realized with adequate treatment and access for all. But as in any field, change and reform can be often times difficult.

Even though the clock is ticking on the first phase of this implementation process, I have listed the suggested ways that your voice can be heard.

Attend Countywide Ad-Hoc workgroup meetings.
http://www.dmh.co.la.ca.us/documents/ad_hocgrp.pdf

Contact your Service Area Advisory Committee representative
<http://www.dmh.ca.lo.ca.us/documents/SAACmtg.pdf>

Attend your local SAAC meeting

See above website

Contact NAMI's or other organizations' stakeholder representative
<http://www.dmh.co.la.ca.us/documents/MasterDellList.pdf>

Attend LA County Mental Health Commission public hearings on MHSA Implementation.
<http://www.dmh.co.lo.ca.us/mhc/meeting.htm>

Remember you can't do what you don't know. We family members play an important role in the fair treatment of our ill loved ones. We need to get our voices heard so that we can make the important changes necessary for the system to be effective.

Small Item of Great Importance

Our own Niki Davis was the Keynote Speaker at the MHSA Implementation Conference at East LA College on February 12. The conference, sponsored by SEIU, was free to anyone interested in the implementation of Prop. 63. Nikki spoke of getting our voices heard so that society and our political leaders will recognize the importance of recovery models and research for those with serious brain disorders. A small community from New York and San Francisco was able to spread the word about the importance of finding a cure for AIDS. Kudos Niki for your important and most heartfelt words.

Position Paper for Los Angeles County NAMI Affiliates

In an effort to develop a strong, cohesive NAMI voice in the County of Los Angeles, the NAMI Los Angeles Coordinating Council has some recommendations for a position paper. NAMI LACCC encourages all affiliates to review these recommendations and decide if they accept them.

The goal is to leverage NAMI's voice in the most powerful way. Separate we are weak politically; united we are powerful.

As we get universal acceptance, then we can move forward and communicate the NAMI position to all actors outside our membership, including LA DMH, the Board of Supervisors, the press, as well as NAMI stakeholder representatives.

The first five recommendations are listed as top priorities. Five more recommendations, while not considered absolute top priority, are considered significantly important.

Please consider these recommendations and decide if you accept them as written.

TOP PRIORITIES

- Expansion of Outreach Programs into the Homes. AB 2034 programs have demonstrated the efficacy of outreach programs, but they are limited to homeless and jail populations. If an outreach program can be developed for consumers residing in the community, those who live with their families, for example, but who are not seeking care, this would be very helpful. It is wrong for the County of Los Angeles to ask family homes to act as medical facilities; it's wrong for consumers to be ignored, and it's wrong to let so many families be held hostage by the mental illness of their loved one.

- Expansion of Jail Diversion Programs. The deplorable rate of incarceration of the mentally ill for behavior generally a result of their medical condition must be addressed. Housing people with a mental illness in jails and prisons is an abomination. The court system has demonstrated a willingness to divert individuals into treatment programs if and when they are available.

- Expansion of the Mental Health Court Project. The DMH advisors to the court are considered an integral part of the expansion of jail diversion program. They provide the court system with unbiased knowledge of jail diversion opportunities and can provide the court with impartial advice regarding mental health issues in an adversarial system while educating judicial participants into the nature of mental illness. The Mental Health Court Project is currently woefully understaffed.

- Expansion of LPS Services. While involuntary treatment should never be anything but a last resort, unfortunately there is still a small but significant percentage of people suffering with a mental illness who do not respond to the best that involuntary outpatient treatment has to offer. LPS services allow the person suffering with a mental illness to stabilize their illness under monitored conditions and offer some their last, best hope of recovery.

- Creation of Step Down Facilities from IMDs. Currently, graduates of the IMD system are asked to leave a highly structured environment and go into a very low structured environment like a Board & Care or their family's home. A Step Down facility would provide the needed transitional setting to better guarantee that a person leaving an IMD will be able successfully to re-integrate back into society.

- Expansion of Supported Housing. The shortage of acceptable housing alternatives is the huge bottleneck to proper care and long-term recovery. Means should be explored to increase housing choices that would include a broad range of alternatives from Step-Down Facilities, that provide necessary transitional support for people leaving an IMD to independent living options, where a person can acquire the greatest measure of freedom while, perhaps, still receiving some assistance. The key is to find the most appropriate housing to fit an individual's needs and to make sure that housing is available.

- Expanded Supportive Employment. More flexible job options need to be created for people with a severe mental illness. In addition, supportive services to help people find meaningful work must be developed and made available. Research shows that employment creates a stronger sense of self esteem and a greater stake in recovery.

OTHER IMPORTANT PRIORITIES

- Expanded Indigent Services. With roughly 30% of Los Angeles County having indigent status, it's paramount that this under-served population at least receive basic services before any more elaborate programs are implemented. Currently, indigent are not served in contracted clinics and must be redirected to county operated clinics. This reduces access to care due to the large distances clients must travel, often by public transportation.

- Expansion of the Family Advocate Office. Currently there are roughly 50 parent advocates in DMH children's system of care. For adults, we only have two. The responsibilities of the family advocate office are significant. They include acting as ombudsman in the

Please turn to Page 4.

In The Book Corner

What to Do When Someone You Love Is Depressed
Mitch Golant, Ph.D., and Susan K.

Recommended by Debra Dills.

This new book in the library covers what to do when someone you love is depressed. It also goes into what depression is and what therapies and treatments there are. One section deals with the impact the depression of a loved one has on a caregiver or family member. I think that this book would be good for someone who feels a bit overwhelmed in their situation and needs a general guide as to how to handle it.

POSITION PAPER continued

system, agents of culture change, and political voices on policy committees. Two is a ridiculously small amount.

With a larger Family Advocate Office, an attempt to change the culture in DMH and other service providers regarding family issues could be undertaken. Currently, service providers often demonstrate a complete lack of sensitivity to the trauma families suffer when a member suffers from a severe mental illness. Also, family members should be included in the treatment team, not routinely dismissed as unimportant. Evidence-based research suggests that family inclusion is important as medication compliance in recovery. Clinicians need to learn simple techniques to encourage family involvement with the permission of the consumer.

- A Medication and Mental Illness Education Program for Clinicians and General Practitioners. Non-medical clinicians and general practitioners often demonstrate a woeful ignorance regarding medications and mental illness issues in general. This ignorance can often compromise care. A program should be developed to increase the knowledge level of these clinicians and medical doctors.
- More Dual Diagnosis Facilities. People with a mental illness self medicate at an alarming rate. More facilities, like Portals, that recognize the need of addressing both the mental illness and the drug addiction are sorely needed.
- Expanded Education and Outreach to Law Enforcement. Often police officers are the first point of contact with the system for people with a mental illness. Increased education for law enforcement is necessary to ensure that safe outcomes occur when contact is made and to help police act as agents of positive change in the life of a consumer/client.

NAMI LA SPONSORS FAMILY TO FAMILY CLASS

March 22 from 7 – 9 PM
Edelman Mental Health Center
11080 W. Olympic Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90064
Call Georgia Shutan 310.306.4562

NEWS FROM STIGMABUSTERS

Airing on Tuesdays at 9:30 ET, "Committed" is a new comedy about the relationship between "Nate," described as "obsessive" and "Marni," who is "eccentric." No connection to mental illness occurred until last week, when Nate took Marni to visit his mother (Valerie Harper) for the first time.

Nate's mother was shown living in a plush mental hospital or group home, referred to alternately as an "asylum," "mental spa" and "loony bin." She is an "in your face" social activist, involuntarily committed because she threw red paint on a gorilla at the zoo to protest its wearing fur. Nate was reluctant to introduce Marni to his mother because he is "ashamed of her." During their visit, Nate's mother dismisses a woman who brings a silver tray with a glass of water and a pill, saying "Not now, Olivia, I'm talking." To great laughter, a big burly attendant dressed in white arrives to make sure she takes the pill. He runs his finger under her tongue to make sure she isn't faking. Marni sneaks Nate's mother out of the home in order to win her friendship and takes her to lunch. "She really enjoyed using real utensils again," she tells Nate. After his mother is returned to the home, Nate says, "It's make your own sundae night, so she's happy." He expresses reluctance to have children: "The crazy stops here!"

Please contact NBC and the show's producers:

The plot line about Nate's "crazy" mother is hurtful and outrageous.

Stop making people with mental illness and their treatment the butt of jokes.

Stop trivializing serious issues like involuntary commitment, suicide risk, and other painful traumas that people endure in real life.

Stop undermining the U.S. Surgeon General and President Bush's New Freedom campaign against stigma.

Producers and Writers:
Eileen.Heisler@nbc.com
DeAnn.Heline@nbc.com

Jeff Zucker, President, NBC Universal TV Group
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112
Jeff.zucker@nbc.com

A SUPPORT GROUP

for those suffering from
Depression, Manic Depression, Bipolar Disorder
Glendale Adventist Medical Center
1509 Wilson Terrace, Glendale
Thursdays from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Contact Stacey at 818.559.3672 for information
Chapter Website:
http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DBSA_Glendale

techniques are effective and accessible ways of helping us move beyond impasses in our lives toward personal growth and positive change. Our lives can be understood through the roles that we play in our own stories. Painful experiences and self-defeating behaviors can be transformed into a sense of meaning and purpose through the re-writing of life narratives.

The program will begin with an experiential exercise of relaxation, visualization, and fast flow writing. Music will be used to facilitate the writing process. ***Bring a pen and paper.***

Rachel Ballon, Ph.D., M.F.T. is a psychotherapist and international writing consultant, who has taught writing as a therapeutic tool to mental health professionals and health care practitioners in a variety of settings including UCLA, UC Irvine, CSUN, and conferences worldwide. Since 1997, Dr. Ballon has conducted weekly groups in journal writing for women with cancer at the UCLA Ted Mann Family Resource Center. She has been in private practice as a licensed psychotherapist in West Los Angeles for the past twenty-six years, successfully using writing therapy to revise the personal narratives of her clients. Dr. Ballon is also a screenwriter, poetry therapist, teacher, and author of four widely-acclaimed books - *Blueprint For Writing: A Writer's Guide to Creativity Craft and Career*, *The Writer's Sourcebook: From Writing Blocks to Writing Blockbusters*, *Breathing Life Into Your Characters: How to Give Characters Emotional and Psychological Depth*, and the recently published *Blueprint For Screenwriting: A Writer's Guide To Story Structure And Character Development*. She uniquely incorporates elements of successful screenwriting (such as, structure, plot, character transformational arc, theme, dialogue) into her therapeutic writing work with clients.

Admission is free. No reservations required.

Next program: **March 7 - Theater Discipline in Mental Health - Margaret Ladd, of the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, who is an acclaimed actress and founder of the Imagination Workshop (IW). The IW was chosen to present its work at the annual conference of the American Psychiatric Association in Spring 2003. Ms. Ladd was recently honored with a California Arts Council Lifetime Achievement Award.**

Sponsors and Purpose of Series: This lecture is part of the Creative Arts and Healing Series sponsored by the UCLA Pediatric Pain Program and the Salamander Fund, in association with the UCLA Ted Mann Family Resource Center, the UCLA Collaborative Centers for Integrative Medicine, UCLA Extension, and Inside Out Community Arts. The series will explore a variety of ways in which poetry, art, music, dance, drama, writing, and drumming can enhance health and unleash personal insight. Each program will be practical in nature and appeal to both hemispheres of the brain via

UCLA Creative Arts and Healing Series

Monday, February 7 – Stories We Live, Stories We Tell: Healing Ourselves Through Writing
7 – 9 p.m. NPI Auditorium at UCLA

When we read our own words or resonate with those of others, emotions may arise.

Writing is a powerful way to tap the unconscious, liberate repressed emotions, encounter vulnerabilities, and explore our different selves. Therapeutic writing

experiential learning, live demonstrations, case studies, scientific evidence, and occasional presentations by young visual and performance artists. The series will serve as a first step in launching an educational outreach program at UCLA that will offer training in innovative ways of working with youth, as well as programs that will directly engage youth in constructive self-reflection and expression.

Parking and directions: Parking will be \$7, and parking permits for the Center for Health Sciences parking lot can be purchased from the kiosk on Westwood Plaza, which can be found by continuing straight ahead through two traffic lights after you enter the campus on Westwood Blvd. (Westwood Blvd. becomes Westwood Plaza on campus). The kiosk will be located in the middle of the road and you will pass the entrance to the auditorium on your right as you are headed towards the kiosk. The parking attendant will show you the closest place to park, which may be Lot 9 to the right of the kiosk or the Doris Stein Plaza parking lot which can be found by going back to where you entered the campus from Westwood Blvd. and turning left at the second light as you backtrack. It is also possible to park at the Medical Plaza parking lot, which can be accessed by turning right at that same light. General driving directions to UCLA can be found at <http://www.ucla.edu/map/>. The auditorium entrance is on the ground (or "C") level of Westwood Plaza, the second set of glass doors north of the main entrance to the Neuropsychiatric Institute. The Neuropsychiatric Institute Auditorium is in Room C8-183 NPI, at 720 Westwood Plaza.

For more information, please e-mail pingho@ucla.edu or call 825-5300.