



NAMI SAN ANTONIO NEWSLETTER

January, 2009

A Note from the Editor

I sincerely hope you had a joyous, peaceful, and meaningful Christmas--and a fun Dec 31st.

A major benefit of Christmas for me was slowing down for a time to reflect on how much gratitude I have in my association with NAMI. What a relief it was to find you. Sticking around, I am astounded at the work ethic of NAMI volunteers, and the selflessness of your activities. Maybe it's because most of you are parents. With other loved ones, perhaps the caring approaches that of a parent. This is indeed a special organization addressing a special, not so nice, problem.

I am often reminded of what Betty Fulenwider said, passed on by her husband, Jerry: "If we don't do it, who will?"

2009 is going to be a challenging year in many ways. "Charge" is used in NAMI literature to describe the third stage of accepting mental illness. It is, in my opinion, so corny yet is the precise word to reflect what we must do, because who else will? So here are some resources tireless NAMI members have provided so we can move ahead:

Family to Family class starts Monday evenings 6:30pm on **Jan 12**.

Peer to Peer classes start at *Our House Clubhouse* on Saturdays Jan 10 and Thursdays evenings on **Jan 8**

In Our Own Voice presenter training **Jan 10 & 11**.

For all these classes, you can call our office.

The NAMI Board requested monthly newsletters, so that will begin starting with this issue.

The January general membership meeting on Jan 13th will sponsor **Mark Carmon**, Chief Administrative Officer of The Center for Health Care Services. The meeting will also be our **2009 NAMI WALK** Volunteer Information Meeting. It's a great opportunity to volunteer to help and get a small gift. See You There!
Paul

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



To see more pictures of the "Party of the Year", the NAMI San Antonio Christmas party held on December 9th, see page 4.

Thought for Today:

"Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm."

Winston Churchill

For 2009, introducing the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, and his family



“Improving Mental Health Care: Mental illness affects approximately one in five American families. Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are coming home with record levels of combat stress. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that untreated mental illnesses cost the U.S. more than \$100 billion per year. Barack Obama is a supporter of the bipartisan Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007, and, as a state senator, Obama helped pass a mental health parity bill that requires coverage for serious mental illnesses to be provided on the same terms and conditions as are applicable to other illnesses and diseases. As president, Obama will support mental health parity so that coverage for serious mental illnesses is provided on the same terms and conditions as other illnesses and diseases. For veterans, Obama will improve mental health care at every stage of military service—recruitment, deployment, and reentry into civilian life.”

barrackobama.com, accessed Dec 23, 2008

Dear Editor: Long-term health care insurance is now available for the mentally ill. My health insurance through teacher retirement has been excellent, but I have continually been told I am ineligible for long-term benefits simply because I am “mentally ill.”

Finally, TRS (through my agent) has allowed me to apply. There only one company in the U.S., Penn Treaty, which offers long-term health car insurance for the mentally ill.

Sincerely,
Molly Burke

People do not live by bread alone. They need buttering up once in a while.

Robert Henry, Humorist

Families Often 'Lost' In Trauma Of Mental Illness

When someone has a heart attack, "you say, honey, you lie down right here. I'm calling 911," says Joyce Burland, director of the Education, Training, and Peer Support Center at the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**.

But when someone starts exhibiting signs of mental illness such as acting erratically or dangerously, many families are "lost," stigmatized and frightened, says Burland, also a clinical psychologist with an adult daughter who has schizophrenia.

"We call it going down the rabbit hole," she says.

Britney Spears was taken to the UCLA Medical Center's psychiatric hospital last week under the glare of the media and reportedly was placed on an involuntary 72-hour hold under California penal code 5150, which allows law enforcement or medical personnel to confine someone "when any person, as a result of mental disorder" is deemed a danger to oneself, and/or others or is "gravely disabled."

People.com and the Associated Press now report her stay has been extended for two more weeks.

And on Monday, a Superior Court commissioner extended the temporary conservatorship she had granted Britney's father over her affairs until Feb. 14. Superior Court Commissioner Reva Goetz also appointed a physician to evaluate whether Spears, who is in a psychiatric ward, was competent to make decisions.

The details of what is wrong with Spears and what prompted her latest hospitalization remain unknown, but the case offers the opportunity to examine problems families routinely face when a loved one needs some kind of help for behavioral problems.

Problems include everything from a person resisting treatment to the family facing a society that doesn't understand mental illnesses are biologically based brain disorders, just like Alzheimer's or Parkinson's diseases.

A Common Problem

The National Alliance estimates about one in 17 Americans suffers from a serious mental illness, and mental illness affects one in five families. But as common as it is, families often are in the dark because mental illness is not on their radar the way cancer or heart problems are, Burland says.

Often, they don't even know the symptoms.

That's what happened to Sarah O'Brien, 30, of Takoma Park, Md., who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder 12 years ago after an incident in which she lost touch with reality. But she looks back and realizes she was exhibiting less obvious symptoms — from obsessively picking at her face to taking drugs — years before that.

Yet not even she recognized her own symptoms.

"I blamed everything on my parents or thinking I was at a horrible school," says O'Brien, who now works with the National Alliance on Mental Illness to help others with mental problems. "I was always blaming stuff on something outside myself."

No one else recognized it "because mental illness was not on someone's radar screen — and because there was so much stigma. To people looking in, I was probably selfish, reckless and moody. The reality was that I was suffering inside. I wouldn't wish it on anyone."

Once a person or one's family recognizes a potential problem, getting help is the next step. And it's often a difficult one.

Often the person suffering from the mental illness does not understand that she or he is sick, says Ira D. Glick, a physician and psychiatry professor at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

"If you go break your leg and run into the doctor, the doctor will put a cast on it and give you medicine for it," Glick says. "You say, 'Thank you. Thank you.'"

"In our field, when somebody has bipolar disorder or anxiety disorder or depression or schizophrenia, what do they say? What do most people say?"

"There's nothing wrong with me. I don't need this treatment.'"

That is why it is so important to have family involvement, Glick says. "We see the family as a partner in the treatment team. It's the patient, family and doctor all working together to make a diagnosis, set goals and carry out treatment."

But because it is so difficult under most state laws to have a person hospitalized, families often have to wait until there is a crisis, Burland says.

"You must wait until they meet the criteria for hospitalization ... in most states they have to become so gravely disabled that their life is in danger," she says. "And then you have to call the police or you have to call the crisis team at the hospital to come into your house and take your family member to the hospital. And I want to tell you that it's one of the most traumatic events that will ever happen to you."

The ordeal is compounded because of the stigma associated with mental illness, Burland says.

"Families say this is the only illness in the world where you don't get a covered dish. People don't call, don't inquire. The cultural understanding of mental illness is either that it's their fault for getting ill, or it's the fault of their family."

Families often "beat themselves selves up horribly," says Judith Orloff, author of *Positive Energy* and a psychiatrist and assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of California-Los Angeles. "They come to blame themselves. They think it's their fault that this person is mentally ill." That is why it is so important to have compassion for them.

"Try to stay away from judging so harshly," Orloff says. "Send any positive energy or thoughts."

For more information, go to www.nami.org.

Some Facts About Illness, Recovery

Here are some important points about mental illness and recovery from the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

- Mental illnesses are biologically based brain disorders. Contrary to popular myth, they cannot simply be overcome.

- Mental illnesses are not related to a person's character or intelligence.

- Mental disorders are widespread. About one in 17 Americans have some form of serious mental illness; mental illness affects one in five families.

- Four of the 10 leading causes of disability are mental disorders, according to the World Health Organization.

- Younger and older adults are particularly susceptible to mental illness. But mental illness can strike anyone.

- Untreated mental illness can lead to disability, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness and suicide. The cost of untreated mental illnesses to the United States is more than \$100 billion a year.

- Treatments a combination of pharmacological and psychosocial care and support improve symptoms and quality of life for 70% to 90% of people with serious mental illness.

- The sooner a mentally ill person can be treated, the faster he or she can recover, minimizing the effects of his or her illness.

- Stigma erodes confidence that mental disorders are real, treatable health conditions.

Janet Kornblum, **USA TODAY** Feb 2, 2008



Another view of of the party. You should have been there...

Face of Mental Illness



*SELF PORTRAIT
WITH BANDAGED EAR
by Vincent van Gogh
1853-1890*

The celebrated artist's bipolar depression is discussed in *The Key to Genius* and *Dear Theo: Autobiography of Van Gogh* by Irving Stone.

Knocked Out

I was about to leave the house on an errand, and my husband was getting ready for a dental appointment. "I wish we could trade places," I said, knowing how much he dreaded the coming ordeal.

He watched as I gathered our newborn onto my left arm and pick up a package with that hand. I flung a diaper bag and purse over my right shoulder, grabbed our two-year-old with my free hand and wrestled the car keys from him.

My husband shook his head. "No, thanks," he said. "A least where I'm going they give you anesthesia."

Linda Chiara

Mark your calendar!
January 13th, 2009, 7 PM

Membership Meeting

**Our Guest: Mr. Mark Carmon
Chief Administrative Officer, CHCS**



2nd Tuesday of the month, NAMI-SA membership meeting in the Parish Hall to the rear of Christ Episcopal church, 510 Belknap, 7:00 PM



Support Groups

NAMI-San Antonio has support group meetings that are facilitated and based on the principals of support. We provide individuals with an opportunity to share fears, insecurities, successes, approaches to problems, and to reinforce good and appropriate coping skills. Problems may not be solved at a single meeting, but members know that they are not alone and can return for continuing support.

Mondays: 12:00 pm

Just for Men Peer Support Group
5802 South Presa - Sack lunch provided

Mondays: 1:00 pm

Consumer Support Group - Among Friends
5802 South Presa
Phone: 210-436-8018, ext. 307

Mondays: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance San Antonio
Methodist Specialty and Transplant Hospital
8026 Floyd Curl Drive, Classroom One
Contact: Kathy Franklin, 210-945-0689

Mondays: 7:30 pm

Family/Consumer Support Group* [See "**Faith-based**" below]
Bethel Christian Fellowship Church, 8308 Fredericksburg Rd
Contact: Pastor Michael Lopez, 210-680-8019

Tuesdays: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Faith-Based Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance*
Southeast Christian, 210 South Grimes Street
Contact: Willie Ingram, 210-315-1298/375-6745
ingramwc65@yahoo.com

Wednesdays: 6:30 pm

Travis Park United Methodist Church, 230 E. Travis,
226-8341; Support group serving homeless, addicts and
people with mental illness,. Dinner served.
For mental illness group forming, contact Mark Stoeltje,
210-798-1619, marks@ourhousesa.org

Wednesdays: 12:00 pm

Consumer Support Group
Center for Healthcare Services
5802 South Presa
Contact: 210-436-8018, Ext. 307

Thursdays: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Faith-Based Family/Consumer Support Group*
Copernicus Community Center, 5003 Lord Road
Contact: Paster Stanley Wilson, (Baptist)
Abundant Life Christian Fellowship; 210-648-3504

1st Monday: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Family Support Group*
St. Benedict Catholic Church (Forming)
Contact: Maria de la Garza

1st Monday: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Family Support Group*
San Fernando Catholic Church
Contact: Frances Machado, 210-735-6794
mmachado101@aol.com

1st Monday: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Family Support Group
St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church
Contact: Mary Baird, marybaird@sbcglobal.net
210-216-3125

1st Monday: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Family Support Group*
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church
13715 Riggs Rd, Helotes
Contact: 210-734-3349 or 521-9161

1st Wednesday: 7:00 pm

Coping with Anxieties Peer Support Group
(including depression, OCD, and others)
Downtown San Antonio Public Library
5th Floor, Room 5.1
Contact: Christopher Johnson 210-262-9407
lockyoleri@yahoo.com

1st Thursday: 6:30 pm

Parents of Bipolar Children's Support Group
University United Methodist Church
5984 DeZavala, Room 210
Contact: 210-496-3370

1st Saturday: 10:00 am

Family Support Group
University Health Center, 1055 Ada Street
Contact: Pat Adams, 210-533-3080

2nd Wednesday: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Family Support Group*
St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
102 Lorenz Road, Parish Hall, Parlor Room
contact: Homer Arias, arias@chcs.hhscn.org
Jane Briggs, 210-691-9695,
jebriggsmba@yahoo.com

New - Faithbased Mental Health Ministry

Messiah Lutheran Church*
9401 Dietz Elkhorn Road, Boerne, Texas 78015
Contact: Ministry Ldr, Kathy Giardinelli, 830-755-4300

2nd Wednesday: 7 pm - 8:30 pm

Family Support Group
St. George Episcopal Church
6904 West Avenue, Conference Room
Contact: 210-342-4261

2nd Friday: 11:00 am

Schizophrenics Anonymous
Downtown San Antonio Public Library
5th Floor, Room 5.1
Contact: Camille, 210-436-8018, Ext. 307

2nd Saturday: 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

Family Support Group
University Methodist Church, 5984 DeZavala, Rm 210
Contact: 210-344-7509

3rd Monday: 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Mental Health Support Group*
Holy Rosary Church, 239 Havana
Contact: Teresa Barajas at 210-434-9216
tere_amiga2002@yahoo.com

3rd Monday: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Family Support Group*
Little Flower Catholic Church
Contact: Luis Santos, telfoncito@hotmail.com

3rd Tuesday: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Mental Health Ministry Group*
St. Stephen's Catholic Church
2127 S. Zarzamora, Church Hall
Contact: Mary May, 210-224-1420 after 6:00 pm

3rd Tuesday: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Family Support Group*
Universal City First Baptist Church
1401 Pat Booker Road, Faith Building, Room 102
Contact: 210-658-6394

3rd Wednesday: Please call for time

Family Support Group
Southwest Mental Health Center (SMHC)
8535 Tom Slick, SMHC Dining Hall
Contact: Carol, 210-582-6451

3rd Thursday: 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Family Support Group
Alamo Heights United Methodist Church
825 E. Basse Road, Room W105
Contact: 210-734-3349

3rd Saturday: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Spanish Family Support Group
San Juan de los Lagos Catholic Church
3231 El Paso St.
Contact: Mrs. Lopez 436-8018 ext. 306

4th Monday: 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Family Support Group*
St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church
1602 Thousand Oaks Drive, Room 204, Christopher Hall
Contact: Mary Baird, 210-599-7465;
marybaird@sbcglobal.net

4th Friday: 11:00 am

Schizophrenics Anonymous
Downtown San Antonio Public Library
5th Floor, Room 5.1
Contact: Camille, 210-436-8018, Ext. 307

***Faithbased Support Ministries (see astericks)**

The Faithbased Mental Health Initiative is a collaborative effort of the Bexar County Mental Health Task Force and NAMI San Antonio.

Goal: To have churches become welcoming and supportive places for people with mental illness and their families and part of the safety net. For classes for people with mental illness and their families, call NAMI San Antonio, 734-3349, Fax 734-9596, e-mail namisat@aol.com

Catholic

Forming.Santo Nino, 5655 Rigsby Ave., 78222.
Contact Valerie Salazar, 210-262-8448

Forming Family Support Group (targeting January, 2009)
St. Brigid's, 6907 Kitchner
For more information, call Catholic Core Team's Carmen Ortiz, 210-521-9161

St. Paul, 1700 blk. St. Cloud Road at Sutton Drive.
Contact Catherine Tomaselli, chachakit@hotmail.com, or Sister Lourdes Leal, 733-7152

Evangelical/Interdenominational/Independent

Bethel Christian Fellowship, Pastor Michael Lopez,
210-680-8019. Home visits, prayer by phone
For ministry information, contact Sylvia Luna, 393-3664,
sylvialuna1962@yahoo.com

Presbyterian

Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church
407 North Calaveras (& Salinas)
210-433-9551
Pastor Rob Mueller is bilingual and offers spiritual counsel to members affected by mental illness.

Join NAMI today!

We at NAMI want you to know that you are not alone. We want to share with you the **community of hope** that we have found through this remarkable organization.

As a member, you will receive the NAMI-SA Newsletter, NAMI Texas News, NAMI Advocate and be eligible to borrow books and tapes from the extensive NAMI-SA library. All donations and contributions are tax-deductible. Special memberships are available for unemployed or low-income persons. Call our office for more information.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS _____
Telephone(H) _____ (W) _____

___New member ___Renewal

Enclosed are my dues for:
___Family/Individual(\$35.00)
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Enclosed is my contribution: \$ _____

I heard about NAMI-SA from _____

___I will volunteer to serve for NAMI-SA
___Please contact me for corporate, foundation, or grant support.

Please make checks payable to "NAMI San Antonio" and mail to:

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P.O. Box 15348
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NAMI SAN ANTONIO NEWSLETTER—January, 2009

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The NAMI San Antonio Newsletter is published monthly by the National Alliance on Mental Illness—San Antonio. The newsletter provides a forum for information and dialogue. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the writer, and not of NAMI-SA or its Board of Directors.

Mailing Address: See above.

Website: www.nami-sat.org

Location: Christ Episcopal Church
510 Belknap
Rm 224

Office Hours: 9 am to 5 pm, Monday thru Friday

¹ McLean Hospital, Belmont, MA, study of the Harvard Brain Tissue Collection Center supply of deceased consumers’ and their families’ brains to treat, and someday cure, mental illnesses.