
The community's voice on mental illnesswww.NAMIWNC.org

First NAMI Family-to-Family class at Charles George VA

On August 30th, ten Veterans Administration-affiliated graduates were handed their "Certificates of Completion" for the NAMI Family-to-Family education course. This was the first collaboration between the Asheville VA and NAMI WC. This free 12-week class is designed for caregivers/family members of those living with mental illness. It is just one of NAMI's signature programs offered locally by the Western Carolina affiliate; however, it was not offered in the VA system until a Memorandum of Understanding was completed between VA and NAMI headquarters.

Classes are comprised of information sessions, sharing and exercises. The subjective component includes empathy and communication workshops, self-care for the caregiver, the recovery model and fighting stigma - a major objective for all NAMI programs.

"I think the whole course was great. Everyone whose loved one has just been diagnosed should get to take it. You had answers to questions I didn't know how to ask. I feel like this was one of the best things I could have done to be able to understand my son's view," was the evaluation of one class member.

NAMI "Certificates of Completion" were presented to the graduates by Dr. Carole Rivers and Dr. Elizabeth Huddleston, the director and assistant director, respectively, of the Charles George VA Center's mental health division. The class was taught by NAMI volunteer Florence Rowe and NAMI/VA volunteer and veteran Jim Duffy, who received "Certificates of Appreciation" from the VA.

NAMI WC leaders impressed with accomplishments of NAMI Greenville

For a couple of years, our NAMI WC Board has wondered about the scope of programs offered by NAMI Greenville, SC. On August 31, NAMI WC Board member Tracey Turner, Executive Director Christine Smith and I had the pleasure of visiting with NAMI Greenville Executive Director Kelly Troyer and Program Director Fletcher Mann. Four staff members serve Greenville County through this affiliate. Ms. Kelly and Fletcher shared the NAMI Greenville story in detail.



(left to right) Tracey Turner, NAMI WC Board Member, Christine Smith, NAMI WC Executive Director, Kelly Troyer, NAMI Greenville Executive Director, Fletcher Mann, NAMI Greenville Program Director

(Continued page 3)

The Emotion Project at MAHEC

Tracey Turner, NAMI WC board member, will present The Emotion Project, a mental health advocacy presentation at MAHEC (Mountain Area Health Education Center).

The presentation will be October 25 at 6:00. The Emotion Project walks you through her 45 year-long battle with the undiagnosed dual diagnosis of alcoholism and mental illness. As the presentation unfolds, she expresses the very personal emotions of this journey through embellished bears. These cease to be stuffed bears and allow an opportunity for the audience to experience the power of emotions in the process of illness to recovery.

MAHEC is behind the Doubletree Hotel and TGI Fridays on 119 Hendersonville Road. Entrance is just south of the hotel. A light buffet will follow. Requested donation: \$10.

NAMI
WESTERN CAROLINA

Address:

356 Biltmore Ave
Suite 207

Asheville, NC 28801

Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday

10am—6pm

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828-505-7353

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Housing for those with Mental Illness

Adult care homes, originally designed as homes for the elderly and that now offer housing to people with mental illness, are being scrutinized by North Carolina because of a conflict with the federal regulations governing how the state pays for their care. Medicaid will not pay for care for the mentally ill in facilities that have more than half of the residents with a primary diagnosis of mental illness. Those residents would have to be moved to other housing. There are now 52 facilities in North Carolina at that level. There is one in Western Carolina.

These homes and their residents will be assessed starting in the next few months. Client assessment is done only with the client's permission.

Lanier Cansler, secretary of the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) said, "We're working on this constantly. The problem is there's no easy solution."

Mental health organizations and advocates are concerned that some of the affected residents will end up in emergency rooms, jails, homeless shelters or on the street. This problem is yet another result of the state's mental health reform ten years ago.

Please contact the office of DHHS to voice your concern: DHHS, Attention: Steve Jordan, 3001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-3001 or DHHS, Attention: Secretary Lanier Cansler, 2001 Mail Service Center,

Raleigh, NC 27699-2001. Phone: 919-855-4800.

Email: contactdmh@dhhs.nc.gov.

Subject Line: Adult Care Homes/Mental Health.

Thank you to the *Asheville Citizen-Times* for information in this article.



MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

Observed October 2-8



This annual event was a great opportunity to provide information about mental health and the various services available in our area. NAMI WC had information tables at the Asheville YWCA, Biltmore Town Center YMCA, AB-Tech, UNCA, Warren Wilson College, Blue Ridge Pride Festival and the VA Medical Center.

Dual Diagnosis presents a "Double Whammy"

Dual Diagnosis is a term used to describe those individuals who experience both a form of mental illness *and* a substance abuse addiction. Recent statistics report the prevalence of this population is greater than 50%. Greater strides need to be made to bridge the gap between the two forms of services: mental health *versus* substance abuse. More collaborative efforts are required by the various disciplines to promote comprehensive services for this growing population. We need further education and enhanced supportive services for families and caregivers who deal with the crises of this very challenging group.

NAMI WC is taking a lead in making the effort to engage collaboratively with local substance abuse facilities. Executive Director Christine Smith and other NAMI members give weekly talks on mental health at Neil Dobbins Center and have started a monthly talk at Julian S. Keith Alcohol Drug Addiction Treatment Center. Additional Connection support group facilitators plan to start a Dual Diagnosis support group in Asheville in January.

A big thank you to our office volunteers!

Jesse, KC, Justin, Kristi, and Luna and to our speakers at Neil Dobbins and ADATC: Christine, Greg, Doran, Joe and Tracey.



NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Toni Delaney, Jim Duffy, Bill Kinschner, Florence Rowe, Christine Smith, Tracey Turner, Jesse Davis, Graphic Design

CFAC offers you an opportunity to make a difference in vital services

The Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) needs your involvement. CFAC advises the Board of Western Highlands Network (WHN) which is responsible for providing mental health/ I/DD, and substance abuse services in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania and Yancey counties.

Members of CFAC review services and procedures in their county and have a strong relationship and input with the decisions of the WHN Board. Currently, CFAC has openings for members from Buncombe, Henderson, Mitchell, Transylvania and Yancey counties. Contact Shelia King, CFAC liaison, at kingo717@westernhighlands.org for an application or call Tracey Turner, Membership Chair, at 828-285-8910.



Western Highlands Contact Information

Western Highlands Network, 356 Biltmore Ave., Asheville, NC 28801, www.westernhighlands.org, manages mental health, substance abuse and intellectual/developmental disabilities services in Buncombe, Yancey, Henderson, Transylvania, Rutherford, Polk, Mitchell and Madison counties. For routine needs weekdays call 828-225-2800. After hours and on weekends call toll-free 1-800-951-3792.

NAMI WC leaders impressed with accomplishments of NAMI Greenville

(continued from page 1) Like us, NAMI Greenville has been a NAMI Affiliate for over 20 years. With the help of a sizeable financial gift from a member family, NAMI Greenville opened its office in North Greenville in 2005. When Kelly became Executive Director in 2007, her first priority was to build the capabilities of the Affiliate Board. Today Board members link NAMI Greenville to the county in many areas. One Board member is a psychiatrist; another is an executive with Michelin Tire; a third is a Greenville County school administrator. In 2008, Fletcher joined the staff and has developed the leadership to offer over 70 nights of support groups per year in multiple locations in Greenville. The NAMI Greenville team has also made it a priority to launch two other NAMI affiliates nearby.

I could write a lot more about the accomplishments of NAMI Greenville in serving those who live with a mental illness and those who love and care for them. Instead I close by praising Kelly, Fletcher and team in being good examples of NAMI's Standards of Excellence. In 2012 NAMI Western Carolina and all 1100 NAMI affiliates nationwide are being challenged to sign an Affiliate Pledge and to commit to work to achieve these standards. Take a look at them at www.nami.org/excellence NAMI Greenville is leading the way, and we hope to follow closely in their footsteps. The beneficiaries will be our members and all others that we serve in Buncombe, Madison, and Yancey counties. *(Bill Kinschner, NAMI WC Board President)*

Sixteen new Connection facilitators complete training in Asheville

NAMI WC hosted a Connection Support Group Facilitator's training in early October. Sixteen people from around the state were trained to facilitate groups for consumers. Trainers were Christine Smith, Executive Director of NAMI WC, and Mike Weaver, a member of NAMI NC and NAMI National's Board of Directors.



Snatching Respite

*I sit here frozen
like some gear jammed in the wrong position.
I am unable to touch the source of this paralysis.
The fan blows a cool breeze across my legs.
I feel sensation to the skin
but not the soul.
My mouth is dry.*

*Without warning, I am laughing. Oh sweet
respite.*

*And then, again, I feel blank.
Not like paper or canvas
but like some dense footing
for an enormous, towering building.*

Outside I see a squirrel chase the cat.

Oh a moment's respite.

~Anonymous

New Therapy Approach?

Writer Rainer Maria Rilke suggests not just telling about the pain and misunderstanding of our mental illness but, instead, singing it. By that he means writing about it as a therapy. Courage to express our suffering can serve us well. There have been several poems in the last few newsletters. Shape your responses into a poem or in a journal. You may want to follow the guidelines he suggests and submit a poem or brief entry about how you feel. The space in the newsletters is limited so we suggest you keep your entries short.

Here are the guidelines:

- What painful things do you most want to speak about?
- What is it you can no longer avoid?
- What do you want to courageously sing about?
- Where have you become "glued together"?
- What do you want to invite into your life right now?

Deadline for Winter 2011 newsletter – December 28. To submit, email namiwnc@yahoo.com or drop off your submission at the NAMI WC Office, 356 Biltmore Ave, Suite 207, Asheville, NC 28801.



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FACEBOOK!**



Keep up with our happenings at
www.Facebook.com/NAMIWesternCarolina

National Alliance on Mental Illness Western Carolina

MISSION STATEMENT

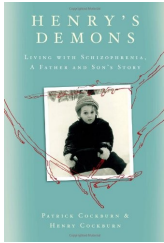
NAMI WC strives to 1) provide support to family members and consumers, 2) serve as a center for the collection and dissemination of information about mental illness, 3) foster public education, 4) develop coping skills for families and consumers, 5) advocate, and 6) aid community support services.

Sing-A-Long with Richard Sackett is held on the second Thursday of the month at 7 pm, at North Asheville Library, 1030 Merrimon Ave. Bring an instrument, bring your voice and have a good time! Call Richard at 777-0783 or NAMI at 505-7353.



We're Going Green!

Sign up to receive your NAMI Western Carolina newsletter electronically by sending an email to:
NamiWC.newsletter@gmail.com.



Book Review: Henry's Demons by Patrick and Henry Cockburn (Scribner's, 2011)

Schizophrenia, love it or leave it, but some can't leave it so they must embrace this mental illness with much trepidation, patience, and, hopefully, the recovery model.

Such is the case of this true account of his son Henry's bizarre behavior, slow acknowledgment of a brain illness, and reluctant acceptance of medication, by English journalist Patrick Cockburn. He chronicles his family's emotional ups and downs along the way with Henry in separate chapters recording his perception of his journey.

Typical of this disease's progression, Henry, a gifted artist and college student, starts hearing voices. He is soon having conversations with trees, exploring dangerous places, living alone in the woods in cold weather, and needless to say, coming to the attention of the police. He is hospitalized many times wherein kind nurses bath him and remove ticks and fleas. All along he feels he is doing fine, doesn't need medications and consequently keeps running away.

Henry's professor mother, his younger brother and father Patrick are in constant fear of Henry's dying. They place him in private hospitals, but eventually find the free, public health care system to be the most responsive and effective for their son. After his mother pleads with him he stops refusing or "cheeking" his medications and, after about eight years, he starts on the road to recovery and independent living.

In recommending this book, I realize that lots of NAMI folks are familiar with the general pattern of Henry's slowly coming to grips with his schizophrenia. So why torture oneself with yet another account, assuming one is aware of the how this illness manifests itself? The reason is that this book is particularly well written in non-clinical language by a famous journalist in such a way as to convey how it feels to be a family member of a mentally ill child. The chapters written by Henry when he is lucid are harrowing and fun at the same time. He is masterful at escaping from secure facilities in search of his freedom, and is in some ways a true artist. Also, of note is how the English system responds to Henry in his travails. Sorry to say, way better than ours.

This book may be found in the NAMI Western Carolina library. (Jim Duffy)

NEW! Join our NAMI WC book club!

You are invited to be founding members of our Book Club. This is an opportunity to meet new people and discuss your favorite books. As in all book clubs, members will get together, select a book to read, and then meet to talk about it. Get into some lively conversations and have some fun! Call our office, 505-7353, and we will help get you started.



Mark your calendar for our annual Holiday Dinner December 20th

A NAMI WC tradition continues with the Holiday Dinner that replaces our monthly third Tuesday meeting. This dinner will be 6-8 pm Tuesday, Dec. 20 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Merrimon Ave. at East Chestnut St. A CIT Officer of the Year will be honored as well as the NAMI WC Volunteer of the Year.

Please bring a dish to share. Ham, turkey and beverages will be provided. Call 505-7353 to help with setup and cleanup. This also is when we collect large size sweat clothes, personal products (soap, shampoo, etc.), stationery and stamps to brighten the holidays for the residents of Broughton Hospital.



Letters to the Editor:

I have noticed that there is practically no attendance to the NAMI WC General Meeting over the last few months. What's up with that? Does NAMI have fewer members or are the speakers not drawing people, or is the time wrong? I know that if I'm not already there for support group that it's hard to get out of the house and go. When I attend, the speakers mostly have something interesting to say that has something to do with my life or else for someone I know. I'm afraid that if the attendance doesn't improve, NAMI will stop doing them and I want to hear what the speakers have to say. Can something be done? E.D.

Dear E.D.: Actually our membership has grown, but, yes, low attendance has been a problem for several months now and we are trying to figure out why. We continue to have speakers on an interesting range of mental health topics including PTSD, suicide prevention, sexual trauma, the use of service animals, children's mental health, housing, and in October attorney Cynthia Alleman will speak about guardianships, wills and powers of attorney. We would like to hear from our readers what is keeping them away (day? time?) and what topics they would like covered. Call us at 828-505-7353 or email namiwnc@yahoo.com.

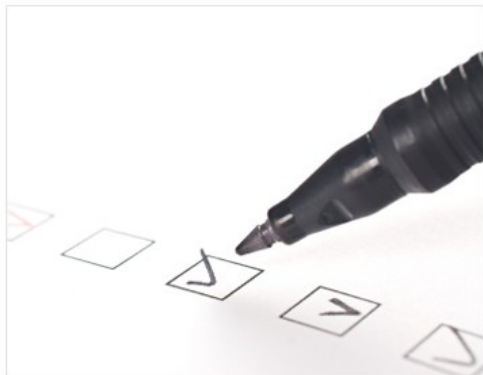
I worked on the WALK. It was great but I wonder how much NAMI WC made. Seems like if we go to the effort, the membership should know what our help has raised for us. M.B.

Dear M.B.: Good question! Between sponsorships, WALK donations, the silent auction/raffle and food sales we made almost \$9,000. After sharing 50% with NAMI North Carolina as contracted, we made \$4,500 for the affiliate. In 2012, we will sponsor a Western Regional WALK independent of NAMI NC. One reason for the change is that now we will be free to choose our own date for the WALK so that it doesn't compete with the many other fundraisers that are held in Asheville in the Spring. Look out for a Fall 2012 WALK!



Troubleshooting and Self-Care

These handy checklists can be cut out, folded and kept in your wallet, purse or even on the fridge. Business card versions are available at the NAMI WC office.



NAMI Western Carolina

Troubleshooting Checklist

- *Take slow deep breaths thru your nose. Breath out slowly.
- *Say something positive to yourself:
 1. "I will be all right."
 2. "This is a chance to confront these feelings."
 3. "I can let these feelings pass."
- *Imagine a peaceful scene.
- *Accept the feelings and let them go—don't fight them.
- *Focus on something in your immediate environment. Touch it. Be interested in it.
- *Move around—let your body use up its adrenalin. If you can't move otherwise (for example, you are riding a bus), contract and relax your muscles.
- *Speak to someone.

Self-Care Checklist

- *Have I been getting enough rest?
- *Have I been eating properly?
- *Have I been dealing with feelings (e.g., anger, hurt, frustration, guilt) in a self-caring way?
- *Have I been accepting rather than resisting (fighting) things that are beyond my control?
- *Have I coped with physical discomfort (e.g., premenstrual stress, cold or flu, pain, etc.) without overreacting?
- *Have I maintained a positive, self-caring attitude about myself?
- *Have I maintained an awareness of my freedom to live in the here and now (and avoided "what if" thinking)?

NAMI Western Carolina

(828) 505-7353

www.namiwnc.org

Education, Advocacy and Support for family members, friends and people diagnosed with a mental illness

NAMI Western Carolina Asheville Support Group and General Meeting Schedule October 2011—December 2011

All meetings are held at our office at **356 Biltmore Avenue** next to St. Joseph Campus of Mission Hospitals.

All 90-minute support groups are free of charge. Groups are on a drop-in basis.

Check the Support Group Calendar page on our website for updates www.namiwnc.org

NAMI WC gives peer-to-peer support, not led by mental health professionals.

Monday, October 10 - 11am - Connection

Tuesday, October 18 - 6 - 7:30pm - Connection & Family/Caregiver Support Groups. General meeting follows 7:30 - 8:30pm. Speaker: Cynthia Alleman, Attorney. Topic: Guardianship, Wills, Powers of Attorney

Monday, October 24 - 11am - Connection

Saturday, November 5 - 10am - Connection & Family/Caregiver Support Groups

Monday, November 14 - 11am - Connection

Tuesday, November 15 - 6 - 7:30pm - Connection & Family/Caregiver Support Groups. General meeting follows 7:30 - 8:30pm. Speaker and Topic: TBA

Monday, November 28 - 11am - Connection

Saturday, December 3 - 10am - General meeting and ELECTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS> Connection & Family/Caregiver Support Groups to follow.

Monday, December 12 - Connection

Tuesday, December 20 - Holiday Party 6 - 8pm - St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Merrimon Ave. at East Chestnut St. Potluck. Bring something yummy to share. Ham, turkey and beverages provided. No support groups will be held.

Monday, December 26 - 11am - Connection

NAMI CONNECTION SUPPORT GROUPS

NAMI Connection is a recovery support group for people living with mental illness in which people learn from each others' experiences, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding. Room 207

FAMILY/CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

For family members/loved ones of someone living with a mental illness.

Room 315

*NAMI Connection and
Family/Caregiver groups are held
separately.*

Weather Cancellations: If there is severe weather in the Buncombe County area, support groups will be cancelled.

NAMI WESTERN CAROLINA: 828-505-7353 www.namiwnc.org NAMI WC is an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. NAMI has over 1,100 affiliates across the country who engage in advocacy, research, support and education. NAMI members are families, friends and people living with mental illnesses such as major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder and borderline personality disorder.

NAMI FAMILY-to-FAMILY EDUCATION: free 12-week course for families/caregivers of persons with serious mental illness. Studies demonstrate the evidence-based class provides better understanding of these disorders and coping skills. Pre-registration required. Call 828-299-9596 or email rohaus@charter.net

NAMI BASICS: six free, education classes for parents/caregivers of children/adolescents with an emotional problem or who were diagnosed with a mental illness. Child care is provided. Pre-registration required. Call 828-258-5359 or email sharonpitts1@gmail.com

IN OUR OWN VOICE: free presentations by people with mental illness in recovery to dispel stigma and show how consumers can reclaim productive lives. Includes video, personal testimony and discussion. To schedule a program, call 828-232-0438 or email namiwc.voice@charter.net



WESTERN
CAROLINA

The community's voice on mental illness

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Asheville, NC 28814

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MISSION: NAMI WESTERN CAROLINA strives to 1) provide support to family members and consumers, 2) serve as a center for the collection and dissemination of information about mental illness, 3) foster public education, 4) develop coping skills for families and consumers, 5) advocate, and 6) aid community support services.

Join NAMI Today!

NAMI-WC depends on you to further our mission to improve the quality of life for all persons affected by a serious mental illness. Your membership means that you care about what we are doing in advocacy, education, and support and share our vision for a better world for better with mental illness and their families. Especially now with the frustrations and challenges of "Mental Health Reform," advocates need to be heard.

Your dues are shared with NAMI national and NAMI NC and entitle you to receive publications and information from all NAMI levels. If you've not renewed or joined yet, please do so today. Thank you for making a difference.

Join or Renew Your Membership

I would like to be a member of NAMI-WC and am enclosing my check for membership and/or contribution.

Please check if membership is: New Renewal

\$35 One-year membership Individual and Family \$ ____ Additional Contribution

\$3 Open Door Membership for those with limited means

*Mail checks payable to:
NAMI WC, P.O. Box 8046
Asheville, NC 28814*

Name

Address

NAMI Western Carolina is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. All contributions are tax deductible.

City State Zip