



NAMI BLUE RIDGE FAMILY ALLIANCE

Newsletter

January 2007

Upcoming Meetings Visitors Welcome

Informal Support Group Meetings

First Thursdays from 5:30pm – 7:00pm

- January 4 • February 1 • March 1
- April 5 • May 3 • June 7

Speaker Meetings

Third Thursdays from 5:30pm – 7:00pm

**Thursday, January 18, 5:30pm – 7:00pm
Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT)**

Tom von Hemert is a criminal justice planner for the Thomas Jefferson Area. He will discuss the CIT program that is coming to C'ville. CIT is a community partnership between police, mental health consumers and family members.

****Additional Speaker/Note time & location****

**Monday, January 22, 4:30pm – 6:30pm
Albemarle County Office Building
Lane Auditorium, 2nd Floor on 401 McIntire Road
Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT)**

Major Sam Cochran, CIT Coordinator for the Memphis Police, will explain CIT. CIT was originally developed in Memphis, where Major Cochran worked closely with the Memphis NAMI group.

**Thursday, February 15, 5:30pm – 7:00pm
Trusts and Financial Planning for the Mentally Ill**

Are you concerned about the financial future of a mentally ill family member. Attorney Jim Vitt will discuss trusts and other estate planning for mentally ill family members. Would you like to know how to obtain government benefits such as SSI, SSDI and Medicaid rather than disqualifying your loved one from these benefits?

**Thursday, March 15, 5:30pm – 7:00pm
On Our Own**

Will Gallick is Executive Director of On Our Own, arguably the most successful consumer-run organization in Virginia. Mr. Gallick will discuss On Our Own's new directions and explain ways in which consumers may become active in the community.

****Additional Speaker/Note time & location****

Thursday, March 22, 10am

City Council Chambers, 605 E. Main St.

How to Stop Screwing Up: A Substance Abuse Memoir

A candid discussion on recovery with WMRA Public Radio reporter Martha Woodroof (How to Stop Screwing Up: 12 Steps to Real Life and a Pretty Good Time). [Hosted by Mental Health Association]

Thursday, April 19, 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Ask the Doctor about Medications

Dr. David Moody, Medical Director for Region Ten, will update us on medications for treatment of serious mental illnesses.

Thursday, May 17, 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Family Members Need Help Too

Kathy Hughes is a professional counselor with Region Ten whose work includes teaching the Mutual Education Support and Advocacy (MESA) classes for family members and friends of persons with serious mental illnesses. Kathy will lead us in a discussion of how caregivers can help take care of themselves and the other family members affected by the mentally ill family member.

**Our Annual Pot Luck Picnic
Mark Your Calendar**

Join us at our annual picnic on Thursday, June 21 from 5:30-7:00pm at the Blue Ridge Clubhouse, 100 Burnett Street. Please bring a dish to share, and we will provide drinks and cookies. NAMI participants, their family members and Region Ten senior managers will join together in this informal atmosphere. RSVP to Sally Rinehart at 296-2519 or srinehart0945@cs.com.

NAMI BLUE RIDGE FAMILY ALLIANCE

[a 501(c)(3) organization]

Charlottesville, VA 22903

Voice Mail: (434) 970-1257

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NEWSLETTER

Editor: April Ballard
Circulation: James and Shelah Scott

This newsletter is published bi-annually. Persons wishing to contribute an original article are asked to contact the editor.

Monticello Avenue site
<http://avenue.org/brfa>

Charlottesville Community Calendar
www.chvillecalendar.com

***** New Location *****

Our meetings have moved to a new Region Ten location at 500 Old Lynchburg Rd. From I64 Exit 120, take 5th Street Extended south (away from Charlottesville) for about a mile to Old Lynchburg Rd on the right. (You passed the new county office building on your left.) Turn right on Old Lynchburg Rd and then right again at the first driveway. The new Board Room is in the administrative building at the rear of the property.

What's new:
Resources, Announcements

Center for Mental Health Services

Online mental health publications. Topics include children and families, rural mental health, services research and faith and spirituality:

Available at: <http://nmhicstore.samhsa.gov/publications/browse.asp>

National Institutes of Mental Health

Online resource publications. Mental health topics include short and direct introductions, fact sheets and summaries as well as more comprehensive surveys of mental disorders and research.



Available at: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/pubListing.cfm?dID=0>

Annual Dinner Meeting

Save the Date: January 17th, 2007 - 6:00 pm

Social Hour, Dinner, and Meeting at the Omni Hotel

Speaker, Dr. David L. Shern

President and CEO of Mental Health America

With more than 30 years of distinguished service in mental health service research and system reform, David L. Shern, Ph.D. is one of the nation's leading mental health experts. Prior to joining Mental Health America, Dr. Shern served as Dean of the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, one of the largest research and training institutes in behavioral health services in the United States. He founded and directed the National Center for the Study of Issues in Public Mental Health, a National Institute of Mental Health- funded services research center. Dr. Shern received his Bachelors of Science, Masters, and Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Call the MHA to book your ticket or for further information-434-977-4673

**Charlottesville Daily Progress
Sunday, December 10, 2006**

Mental Illnesses Characterized by Loneliness, Stigma

"Tis the season to be jolly" - a thought often far from reality when we are caring for or living with a family member who has a serious mental illness. NAMI, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, estimates that one in ten families will be affected by such an illness. The problems that accompany these illnesses can be severe and persistent. Consider these situations that have brought family members to our NAMI chapter in Charlottesville:

- A son in his twenties believes his friends and family work for the CIA and may kill him;
- A bright young daughter's mania compels her to take to the streets, where she is arrested and jailed instead of receiving the hospital care she needs;
- A wife feels threatened by the "tapes and screens" that have been "tracking" her and decides to leave town;
- A delusional young mother abandons her daughter to live with an abusive alcoholic.

The stories continue, often long and heart breaking, some with happy endings, others tragic. The specific situations above were caused by one of three common mental illnesses: 1) depression; 2) bipolar disorder, a mood disorder characterized by periods of mania intermixed with depression; and 3) schizophrenia, a thought disorder which may involve paranoia, hallucinations and/or delusions. Unfortunately, brain disorders are often more complex than this simple taxonomy suggests. An individual may have both persistent thought and mood disorders, a condition sometimes diagnosed as schizoaffective disorder. The illness may also include obsessive-

compulsive and other personality disorders. Symptoms often overlap, change, cycle, subside or worsen unpredictably.

Diagnosis can be difficult. The individual may need to try more than one medication, and each medication may need several weeks to become effective. The medications have side effects, and patients often stop taking their medications prematurely. Hospitalizations may be long, repeated and frustrating, or hospital stays may be too short to help.

The good news: millions of Americans with mental illnesses are receiving treatments that allow them to lead full and productive lives. (The success rate for medications treating depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia surpass that for treatment of many serious physical medical conditions, including heart disease.) The bad news according to NAMI: around eight million mentally ill Americans are not receiving adequate care.

One major roadblock to the treatment of mental illness is stigma. Too often we fear and shun those whose behavior is either difficult to understand or socially unacceptable. For the mentally ill, the loneliness and stigma are often more difficult to address than the illness itself. For the family members, stigma suppresses open discussion of their family situation, at the very time when they are struggling to understand the unpredictable and even bizarre behavior of their son or daughter or spouse.

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Our society is reducing stigma in some areas. Depression is now an acceptable subject of conversation. A person suffering from depression can talk about this mental illness without any negative repercussions. Medications for the treatment of depression, such as Prozac and Zoloft, are even advertised on television. Yet bipolar disorder and schizophrenia with their troubling behavior remain off limits, reminiscent of our attitude toward breast cancer forty years ago. We have come a long way in our understanding of breast cancer and its treatment. Hopefully, greater understanding of serious mental illnesses and their treatment will overcome stigma here also. Remember that the brain is an organ in our body, and all our organs are subject to disorders. Fortunately, brain disorders are treatable like other "physical" illnesses and should be recognized as such!

There are few venues for learning first hand about bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, but NAMI is one such venue. NAMI members share their difficult experiences, learn what helpful resources are available in the community and generally help each other cope. Since its founding twenty-five years ago, NAMI has helped millions of Americans learn more about mental illnesses and has reduced the barriers to treatment and services.

Our local NAMI chapter, called the Blue Ridge Family Alliance, welcomes mentally ill individuals and especially their family members to participate in our program. We have support group meetings on the first Thursday of each month from 5:30-6:30pm. We host speakers at educational meetings on the third Thursday from 5:30-7:00pm. Please call us at 970-1257 or visit our web site, www.avenue.org/brfa, for more information.

***** 2007 Annual Dues Notice *** Please Respond by March 1st *****

To update our mailing list, we need your help! You can help by returning the application form included herein. We may need to delete from our mailing list the names of those who have not responded during the past year.

The next notice will be January 2008. Thanks you so much for your continuing support!

NAMI - BRFA Membership Application Form

I (We) wish to join ____ or
renew ____ membership in:
____ NAMI-BRFA dues \$ 5

I wish to support NAMI-BRFA's work to improve the quality
of life for people with serious mental illnesses. I have
enclosed my additional tax-deductible donation of
\$_____.

Total dues and contribution: \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (optional) _____ and/or e-mail _____

Please make checks payable to NAMI-BRFA and mail : c/o James H. Scott Jr., Treasurer 250 Pantops Mtn.
Road,
Apt. 5325
Charlottesville, VA 22911