



# The Iris

*Support, Education, Advocacy*

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**NAMI Wake Contact Information:**

**www.nami-wake.org**

**919-848-4490**

Wake County Human Services'

Access Center

919-250-3133

NAMI NC Helpline

1-800-451-9682; M-F 8:30am-5pm

The famous artist, VanGogh, understood his illness as "an illness like any other." He painted, *Irises, while institutionalized. It has become a symbol of hope and courage for people with mental illnesses.*



## From the President's Desk

*-- Gerry Akland, President*

### *Improving the partnership...*

## Thanks to the Raleigh Police Department

NAMI Wake County, Wake County Human Services, and Wake County law enforcement agencies have worked together to establish and operate a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program in Wake County. To date, 522 officers have been trained to spot people in a mental health crisis and to de-escalate situations if possible.

In another partnership with Wake County, off-duty Raleigh police officers, under a contractual relationship, have provided security for the Wake County Crisis and Assessment Center on Falstaff Rd for many years, and this arrangement has continued with the move to the new WakeBrook Facility on Sunnybrook Rd. As some of you know, this is the first place most people in a mental health crisis are taken by police as part of the involuntary commitment process. Others go voluntarily to the facility (or are taken by a friend or family member) to obtain an assessment when they are experiencing a crisis.

With the move to WakeBrook, police officers are now being required by Chief Dolan to take the week-long CIT class. This additional training affirms the importance of Officers having the benefit of this excellent training as they interact with people who are in crisis in order to keep both themselves and the person with mental illness from harm.



## Are you stressed out? Think you could be depressed?

NAMI Wake, Wake County Human Services, and community mental health providers are partnering to offer peer-led support groups for people who are experiencing mild to moderate depression and stress. A support group is a group of people with similar problems or concerns who meet regularly to discuss their problems and support one another by demonstrating understanding and empathy because of shared experiences.

The groups will offer a setting in which persons facing difficulties have a safe place near their communities to voice their concerns and explore options for making positive changes in their lives.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you may be interested in attending one of these groups.

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness

- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment

If your symptoms are severe or if you have thoughts of suicide, you should contact your mental health provider or the Wake County Access Center on 919-250-3133.

Support Groups are forming now in Fuquay-Varina, Cary, Raleigh, and other locations. You can sign up to receive additional information as group organizers work out specific locations and times for the meetings by emailing [aakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:aakland@nc.rr.com) or calling 919 848-4490.

## Interested in joining a NAMI Wake Comedic Improvisation Workshop?



I'm a student at the University of Chicago. While I'm on summer vacation, I'm volunteering with NAMI Wake County. I'd like to invite you to take a class in comedic improvisation. Improv--its common nickname--is a well known type of comedic entertainment involving performers making up scenes and characters off of the top of their head. That's right, unlike traditional theater there is no script; the performers are free to create an infinite number of scenes using a process that builds trust and camaraderie, not too mention laughter. You can be anywhere, doing anything, being anyone, and you get to make people laugh doing it! Many famous comedians have been trained in improv, including Stephen Colbert, Amy Poehler, Steve Carell and Tina Fey (among many more).

Improv builds a strong bond amongst performers who learn to trust one another as they dive into a completely mysterious scene and build characters, an environment, and relationships before their (and the audience's) very eyes. Or, if none of that sounds like your cup of tea, it makes you super fast at thinking on your feet. It is truly one of the most organic and hilarious experiences, perhaps even more so for the performers than the audience, cause let's face it, being an astronaut forced to work at a bowling alley now that the space shuttle program has been cancelled, or traveling around the world (or back in time!) to the most mundane and ordinary attractions is just more fun than watching someone do all those, AND MORE, amazing things. And if you don't think those sound exciting or funny (I'm just one guy), then please sign up and share your great and humorous ideas. There's no charge. I'm thinking a one or two week workshop in August that runs 2 hours a day, 5 days a week. Students should be at least 15. Please send me an email if you are interested in learning more or signing up. Brent Rappaport, [brappaport14@gmail.com](mailto:brappaport14@gmail.com).

National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder  
**Family Connections Class**  
 Coming to Wake County in September

Family CONNECTIONS is a research-based, manualized 12-week course for family members with a relative with **borderline personality disorder (BPD)**, or symptoms of the disorder. Developed by Dr. Alan Fruzzetti and Dr. Perry Hoffman, the program seeks to provide the most current information and research on BPD, to teach coping skills based on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and to develop a support network.

Modeled after NAMI's Family-to-Family program, Family Connections classes are led by family members trained during a weekend training retreat. Gerry and Ann Akland attended the training in April 2011 and are organizing a class which will begin in September 2011.

The effort of Family Connections is coordinated by the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder (NEA-BPD); with preliminary research supported by the National Institute of Mental Health.

Family Connections includes:

- Education on BPD
- Research on BPD
- Skills training based on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) in the context of a supportive group environment.
- The information presented is based on effective treatment theories and practices, and the latest research findings to provide the foundation for a better understanding of this complex disorder.
- For parents, spouses, adult children, and siblings of someone with borderline personality disorder.
- Based on effective treatment theories and practices, and the latest research findings to provide the foundation for a better understanding of this complex disorder.
- To help participants obtain the latest knowledge and to develop skills for their own well-being.
- An adaptation of a decade of professionally-led Dialectical Behavior Therapy family groups, these institution-based programs are now brought into the community and are led by trained family members.

Course Content - Topics Addressed Include:

Education on BPD	Emotion Regulation Skills
Research on BPD	Effective Communication Skills
Family Perspectives and Experiences	Validation Skills
Relationship Mindfulness Skills	Problem Management Skills

This class is taught by family members and is not a therapy group. Data from NIMH research documents that family members experience a decrease in depression, burden, grief and an increase in empowerment after taking this class.

We are especially interested in helping family members who have relatives who are in DBT therapy now or who have benefited from the therapy.

***If you are interested in learning more, please contact Ann or Gerry Akland [aakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:aakland@nc.rr.com) or [gakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:gakland@nc.rr.com) or 919 266 0766.***

# Support Program Can Help Caregivers Cope with Relative's Mental Illness

NIMH

A free, nationally available program can significantly improve a family's ability to cope with an ill relative's mental disorder, according to an NIMH-funded study published June 2011 in *Psychiatric Services*, a journal of the American Psychiatric Association.

## Background

The Family-to-Family (FTF) education and support program is a free, 12-week course offered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). FTF is offered throughout the United States, in two Canadian provinces and in three regions in Mexico. With more than 3,500 volunteer teachers, it is supported by local donations or municipal funds. Since 1991, 250,000 family members have participated in the program. It is the most widely available education and support program for family members of individuals with mental illnesses.

Two previous studies suggested that FTF reduces caregivers' stress and helps them gain a sense of empowerment over their situation. For this most recent evaluation of the program, Lisa Dixon, M.D., M.P.H., of the University of Maryland, and colleagues aimed to determine its effectiveness using a randomized controlled trial. Half of the 318 participants were assigned to the program immediately after enrolling in the study, while the other half were waitlisted for the program for at least three months (control condition). Those who were waitlisted were free to seek assistance from other sources.

Participants were interviewed at the beginning of the three-month program and again three months later. They were asked about their problem-solving and coping skills, their overall distress level and worries about their ill relative's situation. They were also asked about their sense of empowerment to manage challenges within the family, the mental health system, and the community. They were also tested regarding their factual knowledge about mental illness.

## Results of the Study

Compared to the waitlisted control group, FTF participants showed significantly greater improvements in coping with their ill relative's condition by learning more about the illness and gaining a sense of empowerment in the family,

service system and community. FTF participants also showed increased acceptance of their family member's illness as well as improved problem-solving skills, compared to those who were waitlisted. Results also suggested that FTF participants' overall sense of emotional distress eased.

## Significance

The researchers concluded that FTF effectively enhances coping skills among families of people with mental illness. These results echo those found in the previous qualitative studies. The researchers suggest the program can positively influence how family members solve problems and "navigate emotional difficulties" surrounding their loved one's illness.

## What's Next?

Additional research is needed to conclusively determine if the positive effects of FTF can improve the outcomes of the individuals with mental illness for whom the family members were taking the class.

## Citation

*Dixon LB, Lucksted A, Medoff DR, Burland J, Stewart B, Lehman AF, Fang LJ, Sturm V, Brown C, Murray-Swank A. Outcomes of a randomized study of a peer-taught family-to-family education program for mental illness. Psychiatric Services. 2011 June. 62(6):591-597.*

## How can you sign up for a class?

NAMI Wake is forming a class which will be starting in the next couple of months. Contact Susan Hadley 787-5999 to learn more.

## Volunteers Needed

*Would you like to help NAMI make a difference  
in our community?*

*Here is a way you can help.*

### **Newsletter Crew – Ongoing Each Month**

Do you have a few hours to spare to help get the Iris ready to mail out? It's an easy job but vital to our organization. We have a lot of fun – come join us!! We get together at Highland United Methodist Church to attach mailing stickers and organize the letters in the mailing boxes. The date for the mailing crew is usually the first Friday of each month.

If you are interested in helping, let me know.

### **Other Volunteer Opportunities**

NAMI-Wake has volunteer opportunities that present themselves, and we need just the right person to fit the job. If you have been looking for a place to get started, please give me a call. I would love to hear from you and have your name and volunteer information on file.

Rita H. Tolley  
NAMI-Wake Volunteer Coordinator  
Ritalolley123@nc.rr.com  
919/215-0401 (Cell)

# Wake County Jail Population with Mental Illness

One of the harsh realities of the current mental health failures over the past decade is that more and more of those with mental illness end up in our jails and prisons. The incarcerated population with mental illness has steadily increased in our state as the system reduced the number of state psychiatric hospital beds and more recently with the closure (or semi-closure) of Dix. In Wake County, even with full implementation of the CIT program (intended to be a jail diversion program), more and more of the jailed population have mental illness diagnoses or symptoms. This is evident in the jail statistics for FY 2010/11 provided by the forensic unit of Wake County Human Services (WCHS). During this period, 3480 mental health assessments were done by mental health nurses in the jail (11.2% of the jail population). This was an increase over last fiscal year of 24.7%. In other words, approximately 11 people are arrested in Wake County every day with symptoms of mental illness sufficiently noteworthy to require a mental health assessment. How will they survive the stress of this environment? When they are released, will the mental health system be available to provide community care? Who will keep them safe? Institutionalizing those with severe mental illness still has its advantages over jail and the cruel world without sufficient supports.

Gerry Akland

**August Education Meeting Cancelled**  
**So everyone can take a little summer break!!**  
**See everyone in September.**

Conference Room, 2nd Floor by Church Office, Highland United Methodist Church, 1901 Ridge Rd, Raleigh

**NAMI Wake Groups Meeting at  
 Highland United Methodist Church**

1901 Ridge Rd., Raleigh, NC

**FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS**

(Family & friends of people with mental illnesses)

Rooms 202 & 204

**NAMI Connections Group**

(People with mental illnesses)

Room 206

***Both Support groups meet from 7-8:30 p.m.  
 on the first three Mondays of each month.***

For more information about support groups,  
 contact:

- Gordon Gogola (gogolags@hotmail.com),  
 phone 601-3996
- Jeanne Harris, phone 850-0406

**NAMI Wake Groups Meeting at  
 Garner United Methodist Church  
 Senior Center**

201 Methodist Drive, Garner, NC.

**NAMI Connections Group  
 (People with mental illnesses)**

**6:30 - 7:30 pm on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th  
 Thursdays of each month.**

Call Marc Jacques for information  
 919-803-5813

Interested in attending a

**PEER to PEER Education Class?**

Call Marc Jacques for information  
 919-803-5813

**Support for Families of  
 Children & Adolescents**

Are you a family member or caregiver for a child under the age of 18? If so, NAMI Wake will be starting a new class in September which may interest you. In addition, there are monthly support group meetings. Contact: Heidi Cranford heidi3623@nc.rr.com

**Les Girls Social**

**August 27, 12:00 noon**

**Golden Corral, 6129 Glenwood Ave.**

*This is a social opportunity for consumers and family members. Everyone is invited. Lunch is Dutch-treat.*

**UNC Research Study**

Research subjects needed to study the effects of treatment with the natural hormone oxytocin on symptoms of schizophrenia, especially difficulties in social relationships and social functioning as well as psychotic symptoms. You may be eligible if you are diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder (depressed type) and are between the ages of 18-65.

Subjects continue on their usual medication and are given either oxytocin or placebo nasal spray to take for 12 weeks. The study involves 6 outpatient visits to either UNC or the North Carolina Psychiatric Research Center in Raleigh.

Compensation, parking, and mileage reimbursement are provided.

For more information and to see if you are eligible for this study, please call: 919-966-3915.

*Paid Advertisement*

*While NAMI Wake accepts and publishes advertisements and articles from vendors regarding their products and services, NAMI Wake does not endorse those products or services.*



The Raleigh Office would like to say, "Thank you" for all the work you do to support people with mental illness in our communities.

At TPFC, we are here to help and support people's needs, so please let us know if we can help you or someone you care about.

Community Support Team

Peer Support Group  
(Psychosocial Rehabilitation)

Targeted Case Management

Outpatient Therapy

Call today to schedule a confidential intake and assessment at 919 896 7536 or visit [www.tpacenter.org](http://www.tpacenter.org) for more information.

**Turning Point Family CARE, PLLC**

## Advertise your Mental Health Services

NAMI Wake County wants to help you advertise your company or organization's mental health services. This newsletter is distributed monthly to over 2,000 individuals, families, organizations, and businesses. Most of our subscribers are either people with a mental illness diagnosis, family members of people with a mental illness or mental health providers.

Each month, we will publish up to 2 pages of advertisements. All content must be related to mental health. Advertisements will be included on a first come, first serve basis. The following costs apply:

¼ page, 1 time, \$100 each (\$50 NAMI-Wake member)

½ page, 1 time, \$200 each (\$100 NAMI-Wake member)

Website:

Display Advertisement (3.75 " x 4") and link on website:  
1 month, \$100 each (\$25 member)

This statement will be prominently placed in the newsletter and on the webpage:

*While NAMI Wake accepts and publishes advertisements and articles from vendors regarding their products and services, NAMI Wake does not endorse those products and services.*

NAMI Wake County  
P.O. Box 12562  
Raleigh, NC 27605-2562

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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Raleigh, NC  
Permit No. 1533



August 2011

FIND US ON FACEBOOK - WE WANT TO BE YOUR FRIEND

## **NAMI Wake is looking for a Treasurer**

If you have professional managerial experience, a degree in accounting, or work as an accountant, we encourage you to apply to serve on the NAMI Wake Board as the Treasurer. If interested in being considered, please send your resume and statement explaining your interest as well as the estimate of the hours you plan to allocate to NAMI Wake each month.

NAMI Wake is a 100% volunteer organization, and our volunteer Board members provide much of the staffing for the organization. Send to Gerry Akland, [gakland@nc.rr.com](mailto:gakland@nc.rr.com).