



The Iris

Support, Education, Advocacy

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From the President's Desk

-- Gerry Akland, President

Depression

Our guest speaker this month is Terry Clapacs, MD, a psychiatrist who trained at Duke Medical School and practices in Raleigh with North Raleigh Psychiatry. He will be speaking on depression and holding an "Ask the Doctor" session (See page 6 for details.) This is a very important topic because there are so many people suffering from this illness.

Depression often appears as feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, but it can also appear as anger. Symptoms may focus on themes of guilt, inadequacy, worthlessness, self-hate or there may be symptoms of agitation, irritability, loss of energy, inactivity and general loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed.

Holidays can be a time of celebrating friendships, shopping, eating and overall feeling of fun and excitement. But for some, the holidays can be a time of serious feeling of depression. This condition is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). It occurs in people who have normal mental health throughout most of the year except during the winter. Its prevalence in the adult U.S. population has been estimated to occur in 1.4 percent in Florida to 9.7 percent in New Hampshire (Friedman, 2007). For us, it is a reminder that this season is a time to be alert for symptoms of depression and to seek professional help if it becomes a major obstacle to our normal activities.

SAD is but one type of depression. According to NAMI Facts, major depressive disorder of all types affects 6.7 percent of adults, or about 44,243 adults living in Wake County. Major depressive disorder is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Women appear to develop depression at about twice the rate as men. About 4 percent of adolescents and 2 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 12 develop depression.

The good news is that depression can be effectively treated for most people with medications and counseling. Studies have shown that antidepressant drug therapy combined with counseling/psychotherapy has better results than either therapy alone. It is also worthwhile to note that antidepressants usually take several weeks before their effects can be noted. In contrast, the side effects usually show up immediately and generally diminish in time. Common side effects include diarrhea, dizziness, headaches, dry mouth, nausea and sweating.

I look forward to seeing you on Jan. 24 for Dr. Clapac's presentation.

Iris Editor & Webmaster

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aakland@nami-wake.org

Submissions Welcome
aakland@nc.rr.com

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.*



Dix - 2011



Some have reported that Dorothea Dix Hospital has closed its doors. But there are still about 30 patients there—low level “forensic” patients who have been ordered confined to a mental hospital by the court. Other patients have been transferred to Central Regional or Cherry. The Governor has said that she wants to privatize care for all forensic patients and locate them on the Dix property.

This is what our Governor wants to do. But the question I have is this. What is needed to provide people with severe mental illness a safety net and to keep them from encountering the criminal justice system in the first place. The answer is not simple, and I certainly don't have all the answers. But I do know there are not enough beds for “high acuity” patients, those that our local community psychiatric units like UNC Neuroscience and private hospitals like Holly Hospital will not admit because of their symptoms. These are the patients that must wait for days and sometimes weeks in hospital emergency rooms.

I also know that community services such as supported housing and routine outpatient psychiatric care are not accessible to many who need them. Until adequate services are available, specialized hospital beds will continue to be needed. Most community hospitals are not equipped or interested in caring for these very ill patients, even with state-provided funding.

NAMI Wake and a number of other NAMI affiliates around the state believe the state should continue to operate Dorothea Dix as a specialty hospital for these high acuity patients until our community public mental health system demonstrates that people are no longer waiting for days in emergency rooms.

We are hopeful that when the new state legislature convenes later in January, elected representatives from across the state will listen to our pleas to restore the funding for Dorothea Dix Hospital and to keep it operating as a state op-

erated specialty hospital for people with severe mental illness. A bill is being drafted by the Wake County delegation to keep Dix open. But we have a lot of advocacy work ahead of us to let members of the Legislature from across the state know why doing

so is important. That's how we are going to get enough votes to pass this important Bill. We need everyone possible to be a part of this effort. Contact me (aakland@nc.rr.com), and I will get back with you about specific advocacy efforts. You can also help by doing the following:

- 1) write a short note to your state senators and representatives and thank them for all their efforts to provide mental health services in North Carolina. You can find their contact information on the NC General Assembly website: <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/>.
- 2) tell your friends, your church leaders, co-workers, and others how important Dorothea Dix is to our community and to the State. Ask them to write their letters to their representatives and the governor. Ask your mayor to get involved with saving Dix for those with mental illness. Ask your County Commissioners, Sheriff, and Police Chiefs to contact elected officials on behalf of keeping Dix open.
- 3) write letters to the editor to continue asking the community to get involved with saving this valuable resource for those with mental illness.

We will continue to push for keeping Dorothea Dix Hospital as a hospital to serve our needs. And we need your help.

Contact: Ann Akland, Advocacy Chair, aakland@nc.rr.com or 919-266-0766.

Recovery from Mental Illness

Those First Steps By Marc Jacques

As a person in recovery from schizophrenia my peers and their family members often ask me what I did to recover. My journey of recovery and my age make my experience to some extent appreciated but I continually talk about those first steps since they are the most helpful to anyone newly diagnosed with any mental illness. I have seen a time when psychiatrists told us we'd be forever sick to a time now when the federal government openly recognizes and promotes recovery. Recovery's history is filled with many folks like me who refused to conform to the societal expectations of our illness and struggled for physical, emotional and mental health which over the years evolved into the expression "wellness."

Before I was involved in the recovery movement there were others who laid the foundation for the change in thinking about mental health recovery. To them I am thankful and lucky because in the 1980s I was hospitalized in a transitional period. Folks just before me were hospitalized essentially forever and due to the power of the concept of recovery mental health systems changed. Now we are inclined not to use long inpatient stays. Problems back then were that there was not a network of community supports or recovery activities and many of us cycled in and out of institutions with all the troubles that implies.

Therefore a comprehensive recovery orientated service system is essential to the health of the entire community and saves both money and lives. Nevertheless, the first steps for recovery are the same now as they were then. First, change your thinking. Saying "Believe you can recover" seems overly simplistic but your mindset actually influences all your future recovery behavior. Quoting complex behavioral science, believing you'll get better you will invest more in wellness activities. Understandably, it's a complicated issue because to believe we can recover we must overcome the half-truths we were taught and accept new insights. We need to get around that deep seated self-stigma about being helplessly mentally ill too. Mental illness is a brain disorder and while there is currently no cure. with the right supports people get better. Recovery is a process and not an event. After accepting you can get well you're not automatically recovered, but you have set in motion a series of actions that will achieve a better quality of life. Change your mindset; involve yourself in recovery activities; begin your own journey to wellness.

Once you've made the commitment to yourself to get better, the second most helpful recovery tip is wellness education. Try first WRAP, Mary Ellen Copeland's - Wellness Recovery Action Plan because it teaches ways to intervene in our cycle of illness and apply self-help techniques to not end up in crisis. Check with your local mental health system to find out when Mary Ellen's WRAP workshop is being offered near you. Don't just stop at WRAP, move onto the Pathways to Recovery strength-based workbook written at the University of Kansas by a team of both consumers and providers. Participate in NAMI Peer to Peer programs and join a peer support group like NAMI connections. It is a tremendously important step to stop focusing on what you can't do and go forward with your strengths.

Medications are vital to my recovery, but please understand that the medications given us for mental illness do not cure us. What they do is reduce our symptoms so we can focus on the other stuff in our lives, like taking care of ourselves and learning the coping skills needed to offset our problems. Over-medicated I lost about eight years of my life to that tired feeling that would not allow me do much of anything. Medication is not one size fits all, everyone reacts differently; assertively advocate for the therapeutic dose that works best for you. Make informed choices. Talk openly and candidly with your psychiatrist and ask that they work with you on your recovery.

Finally, use the internet or library and find a role model who has a mental illness like yours and has an outstanding life. John Nash a person with schizophrenia won the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize in economics. We are movie stars, artists, writers, billionaires, astronauts, US Presidents, Executive Directors, Doctors, Psychiatrists, judges and legislators; there are role models for every diagnosis. This will help you recognize that people with mental illness live valued lives; that we are employed in every imaginable job and with treatment people overcome their difficulties. Figure out for yourself that a mental health diagnosis does not smother all your chances for success.

Am I Alone?

By Robert Bullock



Am I alone?
 I get a funny feeling.
 It comes from deep inside.
 I get all mad and angry,
 wanting to go and hide.
 My doctor calls it depression;
 my mom says it's just me.
 But the thoughts and feelings
 no one will ever be able to see.
 Some say I'm pyscho.
 Some say I'm weird.
 It's like I'm a different person,
 and the old me just disap-
 peared.

I get really edgy.
 I want to commit suicide real
 bad.
 Then I get a headache
 followed by the feeling sad.
 I wish I could get help.
 I wish
 it would go away.
 Maybe if I keep
 praying real hard it will some-
 day.

Volunteers needed for CIT Training

January 24-28, 2011

If you have been curious about the CIT training program, this is your chance to participate and find out all about it. The class is held at the Wake Tech Public Safety Training Center at 321 Chapanoke Rd. It is in the south part of Raleigh towards Garner.

We need volunteers to help with the refreshments for the officers. This involves making coffee and putting out refreshments during the classes. You can volunteer for a morning or afternoon shift and you get to sit in on the class while you volunteer. The officers really appreciate it.

If you are available the week before the class, we need volunteers to help put together the books for the officers to use during the class. We will do that either Thursday or Friday during the day.

The officers have a graduation ceremony on Friday afternoon and we need someone who is willing to take pictures. You don't need to be a professional photographer, just someone with a digital camera and software to download and edit the photos. You would need to be there from 2:00 – 3:30.

If you are interested in helping out, call or e-mail me at the address below and let me know when you are available.

Thanks to all the volunteers who make this program possible.

Rita H. Tolley
 NAMI-Wake Volunteer Coordinator
 Ritatolley123@nc.rr.com
 919-662-0764

A Special Place Where I Belong

by Kristen Akland



The year was two thousand and five. I remember it as if it were yesterday; I was a youngster of twenty-five. I was stripped of my self-confidence and was trying to break free of an emotionally abusive relationship.

Club Horizon, a psychosocial rehabilitation program located in Knightdale North Carolina, was founded in two thousand and four. I was an original member there, but never really got into the program. This changed when I decided to visit the program one day in September of 2005.

There were a lot of new members there –people like me. I immediately felt welcome. To my surprise people liked me—not for anything superficial. They liked me for me.

Eventually, my self-esteem increased to a level where I felt I could escape my troubled relationship. I did not need him anymore. I had friends at Club Horizon who treated me with the respect I deserved. I finally felt I belonged somewhere. I looked for such a place all my life.

Club Horizon isn't just about socializing. There are three guarantees in the fountain house model, they include: "The right to meaningful relationships, the right to meaningful work and the right to a place to return." My self-esteem reached new heights. Every morning at Club Horizon, the day is started with a morning meeting. During this meeting, tasks are assigned and such. I actually led those meetings a good-

majority of the time. I was assigned "outreach" as my main task because I could relate well to the other members. "Outreach" is checking on members who haven't attended in a while.

The program offers a wide variety of opportunities to members. A member bank is available to members to help them learn to budget money. Socials are planned by members for after hours socialization throughout the month. Since most members live in group homes, this allows members to get out and enjoy life on a level that might otherwise not be possible. People who want to continue their education, e.g. to obtain a GED, are encouraged and supported in their efforts. People who demonstrate they are ready for a job by participating in the work of the club house are assisted in finding and keeping a job by clubhouse staff. Until that time, club members, help by preparing lunch, working in the snack shop, working in the member bank, or other tasks.

I don't know where I'd be today if Club Horizon were not part of my community. I don't even want to think about it. I truly believe it has changed many people's lives just as it has changed mine. I am only one story of many.



Help the UNC School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, learn about Schizophrenia

Conte Center Brain Mapping Project

For 9-18 year olds with a Mother, Father, Brother, or sister with Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective Disorder

call:
1-866-914-9679
Using State of the Art:
MRI
EEG and
Clinical Assessments

visit www.nami-wake.org
for more information.

Monthly Education Meeting
Highland United Methodist Church
Rm. 202, 1901 Ridge Rd., Raleigh

January 24, 7-8:30pm

Dr. Clapacs practices General Adult Psychiatry, with an emphasis on medication management and supportive therapy. He is experienced and skilled in the treatment of a wide range of psychiatric problems, including depression, bipolar disorder, panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety and attention deficit disorder. Dr. Clapacs has been with North Raleigh Psychiatry since 2003 and has been practicing Psychiatry in the Triangle area since 1996. He is a graduate of Duke University Medical School and the Duke Psychiatry training program. He lives with his wife and three children in Durham.

Everyone is welcome!



Guest Speaker
Terry Clapacs, MD

Topic: Depression

Short Presentation
Followed by
“Ask the Doctor” session

FAMILY SUPPORT
GROUPS

(Family & friends of people with mental illnesses)
 Rooms 202 & 204

NAMI Connections Groups*

(People with mental illnesses), Room 206

Highland United Methodist Church
 1901 Ridge Rd, Raleigh, NC

All 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

New Family-to-Family Courses

NAMI Wake has two F2F Classes starting soon. A new class in Family-to-Family is forming for a January 8th start and another begins in February. These free classes continue for twelve weeks from 9:30 to 12:00 on Saturday mornings. You will meet other caregivers with a loved one who lives with mental illness. One previous class member has “more clarity regarding my consumer’s illness.” Another member wrote: “This is obviously a course built from much experience--as evidenced by duration of sessions and course, organization and presentation of material, size of class, education materials, break time for individual interaction. I looked forward to every week.” I have experienced some difficulty in getting in touch with some who agreed earlier to attend the January class. If you think you are registered for class and have not received notification of class location, please call me to clarify your standing as a class member--Susan Hadley (787-5999). Notice to past class members--If you find some library materials you forgot to turn in, call me for arrangements to return them.

Upcoming Learning Opportunities

NAMI NC 2011 CIT Conference, February 11, 2011

4/8 - 4/10 2011 Connections & Support Group, Basics, Raleigh, Contact Brenda Piper: 919-788-0801, 800-451-9682 or bpiper@naminc.org

Time to Join NAMI for 2011!

2011 Family Membership Form -- NAMI Wake County

If your name and address are correct on the mailing label (on reverse), check here

OR you can complete the form below.

Number in household represented by membership

Name: _____ Membership \$35.00

Address: _____ Donation _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ - _____ Total \$ _____

Home Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Work Phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

NAMI Wake County is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization. The TOTAL you send us is fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Please check this box if we may share your E-mail with NAMI NC:

We are all volunteers. Check here if you would like to volunteer .

Relationship to Consumer	Race (Please check all that apply)
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult child of person with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native
<input type="checkbox"/> Person with a MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian American
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent of adult with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent of child under 18 with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Sibling of person with MI diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/> White

Join NAMI Today!

At our annual membership meeting on November 22, the members ratified a goal of 350 members for 2011. We have **179** as you read this, so we have a long way to go. Please help by joining today and become a member until the end of 2011. You can join by filling out the form at the top of this page and mailing your check or by going electronically to our web site, www.nami-wake.org.

NAMI is a three-level organization. When you join NAMI Wake County we pay your dues to

NAMI national and NAMI North Carolina. Dues for your whole family are only \$35 for the year for all three levels. We want EVERYONE to be NAMI members, so we offer an "Open Door" membership beginning at \$3 or whatever more you can afford.

NAMI Wake County is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, so your dues and donation are fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

contact: Tom Hadley, thadley@nami-wake.org

Les Girls Social

NEXT MEETING

January 22 11:30am

Golden Corral, 6129 Glenwood Ave.

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

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 soon in which you might be interested. In addition, there are monthly support group meetings. Contacts: Heidi Cranford heidi3623@nc.rr.com
Chary Sundstrom chary@nc.rr.com

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January 2011

On Average during the months of July, August & September 2010,
EVERY DAY there were 55 people across NC who waited
for more than 24 hours in an emergency room, crisis center, or
hospital psychiatric unit for treatment in a state psychiatric hospital--Central Regional, Dix, Cherry, or Broughton. These hospitals
are where the "high acuity patients" go--those who have especially
difficult to treat symptoms. On average, they each waited a total
of 2.7 Days.

**Help advocate for more state-supported beds for
high acuity patients by contacting
Ann Akland, Advocacy Chair, aakland@nc.rr.com**