



NAMI

Sacramento Newsletter

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Sacramento's Voice on Mental Illness

February 2009: Issue No 7.2

General Meeting

Monday, February 9

Pat Pavone, the new NAMI Sacramento Board President, will address the membership about the state of the organization, our accomplishments for 2008 and our goals for 2009. We really need your input. To entice you to come to the meeting, **we will be giving away several door prizes**, including a Valentine Gift Basket! Please plan to attend.

Monday, March 9

Linda Ellis, Director of Nursing, Turning Point Community Programs and a regular contributor to this newsletter, will speak on managing medication in a recovery model.

Meeting Location

SMUD Headquarters Auditorium
6201 S Street, Sacramento 95817

Time

General Meetings start at 7:30 p.m.



Contact Us

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3440 Viking Drive, suite 125
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(916) 364-1642

NAMI Sacramento e-mail address:
office@namisacramento.org

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An Attraction Fatal to Proposition 63

by Rose King

"An overall documented plan for the development and implementation of the MHSA does not exist." Final Report, Department of Finance, Office of State Audits and Evaluations June 2008.

No Plan to Expedite Implementation.

According to a Performance Audit of MHSA implementation, the Department of Mental Health had distributed only \$726 million of the \$3.2 billion collected by March 2008 for county systems. Four years after enactment of Prop 63, there is no known strategy for expanding California's mental health Systems of Care and providing new prevention services. Absent a plan, DMH has not disbursed adequate funds to meet the purpose of the MHSA or the expectations of those deprived of decent services today.

Last month, in response to questioning at a Senate hearing, DMH Director Dr. Steve Mayberg informed legislators that \$2.5 billion in MHSA trust fund monies could be captured in a "sweep" of the mental health account. The billions idling in the capitol

fund are an overwhelming attraction, potentially fatal to the MHSA, as the Legislature and administration seek to pay the state's massive debts. Republican lawmakers recently developed a deficit reduction proposal, which would hijack \$3.9 billion of MHSA funds, including anticipated 2009 revenue. On New Year's Day, the worst fears of clients, families, advocates, and counties materialized when Governor Schwarzenegger followed up with a new budget plan that raids the MHSA trust fund for \$226 million to supplant a general fund item.

Special Election Could Divert MHSA Funds.

Voter approval would be necessary to divert MHSA funds, and plans for a Spring election have been under discussion for months. NAMI California testified at the Senate hearing in December, along with many other organizations, in opposition to invading MHSA funds. The proposals have not gained momentum, but the threat has not diminished, and voter response in a special election would be unpredictable.

➤ *continued on page 4*

Teen Speaks about Mental Illness to Help Others

by Marylee Shrider, *The Bakersfield Californian*, December 12, 2008

There she sat, smiling up at me, her sweet spirit intact, her proud mom by her side. Five years after having a psychotic episode, Ashley Nommensen is well on her road to recovery. She is outspoken about mental illness and is a founding member of Outspoken Young Minds, a peer support group for teens and young adults dealing with the stigma and fear of mental illness.

Ashley Nommensen has fought hard against bipolar disorder for four years, but when I bumped into her last week amid the hustle of the holiday season, she looked positively joyful.

I hadn't seen Ashley since last December, when she was the topic of a column I wrote about her struggle; about the grief the disorder caused her family and about the shortage of mental health resources for children and teens in Kern County. If Ashley's name doesn't ring a bell, it may be because her mom asked last year that I not identify her daughter to protect her from the stigma of mental illness.

Stigma? Who cares about some stinking stigma? Not Ashley. Not any more.

The pretty Stockdale High School senior doesn't have time to worry about

➤ *continued on page 6*



Support Groups

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento

See: www.dbsasacramento.org

Contact: *Andrea Hillerman* at andrea@mhasc.org or (916) 366-4601; or *Marilyn Hillerman* at marilynhillerman@yahoo.com or (916) 648-1358.

Dual Recovery Anonymous Group

Every Monday from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Clean and Sober Building, Loaves and Fishes, 1321 North C Street, Sacramento.

Call *Susan Young* at (916) 236-7679 for more information.

Early Psychosis Family Support Group

For families with a member who has a newly diagnosed brain disease. Imaging and Research Center Conference Room, UCD Med, Center, 4701 X Street, Sacramento. Call for information.

Call *Jane Du Bet* at (916) 734-2964 for more information.

Emotions Anonymous

For people working toward recovery from emotional difficulties. Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Wellness Center, 3815 Marconi Ave., Sacramento, or Thursdays from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 1615 Morse Ave., Sacramento. Meet in the choir room.

Contact (916) 366-0699 or see : allone.com/12/ea/

NAMI Family Support Group, Natomas

Held on the second Thursday of each month from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Natomas Service Center, 3291 Truxel Road #26 (corner of Truxel and San Juan), Sacramento 95833.

Call facilitator *Pat Pavone* at (916) 397-7831 for more information.

Obsessive-Compulsive Support Meeting (OCD)

Every Monday from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Sutter Center for Psychiatry, 7700 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento.

Call *Jim* (916) 223-6541 or *Steve* at (916) 456-8239 for more information.

OCD Kids Sacramento

For kids 18 and under and their families. Provides support through sharing of experiences. Meetings also attended by a therapist experienced in treating OCD. 1st Sunday of the month from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Kaiser Permanente Point West Clinic, 1650 Response Road, Sacramento, 95815 .

See: www.ocdkids.com

Recovery, Inc., Self-Help Mental Health Meetings

Promotes a cognitive-behavioral approach to managing symptoms and changing attitudes and behavior. Groups meet weekly.

Contact: www.recovery-inc.com

Call (916) 483-5616 for meeting locations.

Sacramento Borderline Personality Disorder Non-BP Support Group

For people who have a family member or

friend who suffers from Borderline Personality Disorder. Held on the second Tuesday of each month from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Location to be announced.

Call *Lee Gassaway* at (916) 421-7354 or contact www.meetup.com

Social Skills Group

For teens and adults who feel socially awkward or shy. Sponsored by Fall Creek Counseling, 5900 Coyle Ave. suite D, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Contact: www.sacramentopsychology.com

Call *Dr. Debra Moore* at (916) 344-0900

Meetup.com Groups

You may find other informal groups that keep their own schedules at www.meetup.com.

NAMI Sacramento does not necessarily endorse the organizations and groups listed above. This information is offered as a convenience to our newsletter readers.

Go to NAMI Sacramento's web site at www.namisacramento.org for an extensive list of resources and crisis help available in the Sacramento area.

Upcoming Events

Sacramento Police Department Weightlifting Event Benefiting NAMI Sacramento

Sunday, February 22. See details on page 3 of this newsletter.

NAMI National Conference in San Francisco

July 5 - 9. Learn more at www.nami.org/convention/

Important Notice

NAMI programs should not be used to replace the specialized training and professional judgment of mental health professionals. We cannot, and will not, assume the role of a physician or therapist.

NAMI cannot be held responsible for the use of the information we provide. Please always consult a trained mental health professional before making any decision regarding treatment of yourself or others.

Educational Meetings

Family to Family Education Classes

Offered twice a year, spring and fall.

☎ www.namisacramento.org

For the current class schedule see the Sacramento NAMI web site or call (916) 647-6931.

Peer to Peer Education Classes

☎ www.namisacramento.org

The NAMI Peer-to Peer education course is a nine-week experiential recovery course for any person with serious mental illness.

General Interest Meetings

Sacramento Mental Health Board Meeting

Held the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Sacramento Mental Health Treatment Center (Media Room), 2150 Stockton Blvd., Sacramento.

NAMI Sacramento Board of Director's Meeting

3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. conference Room 1B, 3331 Power Inn Road, suite 140, Sacramento, CA 95826.



Message From The President



I told myself that "I never want to be the President of another Board of Directors." Unfortunately, I also told my husband. He laughed and said, "Pat, never

say never." Now I find myself as your new Board President and I owe my husband a dinner at the restaurant of his choice!

From the members' perspective, my election to this job is both good and bad. The good news is that I have past experience. I was the Board President for the Board of Directors for the Sacramento Court Appointed Special Advocates organization for two years from July 1, 2004 until June 30, 2005. So, I have a pretty good idea of exactly what I am getting myself into. The bad news is that this is going to be a very challenging year, and I expect everyone in the organization to pick up an oar and start helping me row like hell to get NAMI upstream against a very heavy current. These are tough times for everyone and unless we all pull together, we will be lost. I know all of you have extremely demanding, even tragic, personal situations. That is at the core of our need for NAMI. But if we want to have NAMI Sacramento this time next year, then we will have to dig deep and find a way to turn our individual experiences into a collective strength that will move us forward and keep us alive and thriving.

With that brief introduction, I will ask each of you for three things right now:

1. Come to the General Meeting on Monday, February 9th to listen to my "inaugural address" and give me your thoughts on how to keep NAMI strong in these difficult times.
2. Send me the name and address of at least one person/business you know who could become one of the following: (a) a new member, (b) a new donor, or (c) a new sponsor of our organization.

3. Tell me what you can do personally to help NAMI Sacramento by volunteering your time and talents. (A list of volunteer opportunities is on page 7 of this newsletter).

I am confident that with your help our Board of Directors will be successful and that we will find a way to keep our programs going and our organization strong. I'd like to end with a quote from Sandra Day O'Connor, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice, which I believe speaks to the strength of our collective efforts.

"We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something."

*With gratitude,
Pat Pavone*

Sacramento Police Department Sponsors Weight-Lifting Event to Benefit NAMI Sacramento

The Sacramento Police Department is sponsoring a weight-lifting Contest on Sunday, February 22 at 11:00 a.m. at 2010 3rd Street, Sacramento. The speaker at our November General meeting, Lt. Cara Westin of the Sacramento Police Department, is organizing the contest, all lifters will be public safety employees and retirees from the police, fire, sheriffs and corrections departments. The event is open to all spectators and the proceeds of the event will benefit NAMI Sacramento. Please support those who support us, and plan to attend - and stop by NAMI's booth at the event.

Family to Family Phone Number Changed

Lynn Cathy, Coordinator for the Family to Family program, has informed us that the Family to Family phone number has changed. The new number is (916) 647-6931.

Webmaster Sought by NAMI Sacramento

NAMI Sacramento is looking for a volunteer to phase in as webmaster of our web site, because our current webmaster is preparing to leave the area. Our web site is our link to the world - the primary source of information and connection for those seeking NAMI's help and services. Expertise in maintaining a web site with Dreamweaver template libraries is required, the ability to prepare and place graphics is desired, and programming skills would be a wonderful plus. If you have these skills and are interested in doing a very important service for NAMI Sacramento while gaining some valuable experience, **please** contact Linda Beilharz at (916) 638-2221.

2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Caroline Prod,
caroline@namisacramento.org

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pavone@surewest.net

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(916) 875-5644

Andrea Hillerman, Adult Consumer Advocate,
(916) 875-4710

Dave Schroeder, Family and Youth Advocate,
(916) 875-4183



Proposition 63, from page 1

Given California’s fiscal crisis, and the magnitude of unspent MHSA funds, legislators and voters may consider it only fair to use some money to minimize other hardships, such as cuts to many health and social service programs.

Today, Governor Schwarzenegger proposes to effectively exploit his own administration’s failure to properly implement the MHSA. Because DMH has not yet streamlined the funding process or complied with directives from administration auditors, the governor would take advantage of his agency’s mismanagement by using the money for other purposes. And he wants the voters to overlook the bureaucratic bungling responsible for delayed funding and accumulated revenue.

While state policymakers contemplate schemes to divert mental health monies, more community services are eliminated, county budget cuts reduce personnel and access, and decent treatment is even more restricted for people with serious mental illnesses. In Sacramento County, where my three family members are dependent upon public mental health, clients already wait five months between doctor appointments, and have minimal contact with a service coordinator, whose caseload likely prohibits outreach or follow-up. For two young family members, the poorly funded system also denies access to Transition Age Youth programs, which could maximize recovery options.

Sound the Alarm.

Prop 63 could be reversed before it is even implemented. The mental health system was in a state of emergency four years ago when voters supported action. And yet, DMH appears deaf to the sound of the alarms and screaming sirens. The Oversight and Accountability Commission created by Prop 63 operates with a similar absence of urgency and attention to the continuing crisis. Legislators failed to respond when informed of the unfavorable MHSA audit by the Department of Finance in June 2008, and some are pleased to learn that funds are available because they have not been appropriately disbursed.

To maintain any hope for progress, I believe decision-makers must hear from the people who have endured the state’s long-standing neglect and unfulfilled promises,

and who would now pay for the reinstatement of discriminatory mental health policies. And they must hear from our County Supervisors and Mental Health Directors who see the results of official negligence.

As a first step, advocates must assume that the administration, responsible agencies, and legislators do not really know the consequences of denying treatment. They do not know of the daily and nightly struggle to find help, to manage symptoms, to be alone with severe and unrelenting crises, to live with chaos and fear and uncertainty, and to witness or experience the prospects of recovery slip away month after month, year after year when there is no access to the right services. They do not know the despair that leads to a suicide every other day in Sacramento County, the loss of a precious life, and the lifelong grief for survivors.

NAMI Sacramento Stories Can Help Protect the Integrity of MHSA.

For some time, the NAMI Sacramento newsletter has solicited stories from members, asking that consumers and family members share personal experiences and be willing to talk to the press. I believe these stories are essential to make the case for responsible management and funding of Prop 63 mental health services. We have to break the conspiracy of silence and stigma that keeps the tragedies private, which sweeps the painful losses under the rug, and enables mistreatment, negligence, and outright malpractice when it comes to health care for mental illnesses.

I urge members to send their stories to their NAMI chapter, and urge Sacramento NAMI to urgently pursue their plans to publicize the truth. I will be submitting my story, still hoping that responsible leaders will listen and act.

Rose King is a political and policy consultant, a family member of individuals with serious mental illnesses, and has served on numerous Boards of Directors related to community mental health, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness of California. As Chief of Staff to Lieutenant Governor Leo McCarthy, Rose initiated a state Task Force on Serious Mental Illness. She served as an executive and principal consultant to State Assembly, Senate, and U.S. Congressional leaders, as a consultant to the Joint

Committee on Mental Health Reform, the Assembly Health Committee, and Subcommittee on Mental Health, and was a principal partner in development of the Mental Health Services Act. In 2005-06, she served as consultant to then-Attorney General Bill Lockyer during his tenure as a member of the MHSA Oversight and Accountability Commission..

A final note: Last November NAMI California released comments from members throughout the state, describing typical conditions and the disappointments of MHSA implementation. Typical comments were: *“Caseworkers overloaded... psychiatrist and nurse appointments further and further out... prescription refills authorized for many months with no medical monitoring... a person should not have to pretend to be suicidal to get into a hospital.”*

In failing to implement Prop 63, California would reinstate the long-standing discrimination against treatment for mental illnesses. In the words of the Little Hoover Commission’s report in 2000: *We do not tell cancer patients to come back if and when their disease has metastasized. But we turn mental health clients away and tell them to return when their symptoms are so severe and persistent that they cannot meet their own needs, and may no longer recognize that they even need care.*

The disjointed implementation of Prop 63 has not changed this reality for the nearly 700,000 Californians seeking help from the public mental health system today.

Host An “In Our Own Voice” Presentation

In Our Own Voice is an anti-stigma presentation given by consumers to all types of community audiences, large and small. The focus is on living well with mental illness. If your group is interested in hosting a presentation, if you would like to become a presenter, or if you would just like more information on the program, please contact Kathleen Derby at the NAMI Sacramento office: (916) 364-1642; office@namisacramento.org



MMIS: Medical Myths Investigative Services



by Linda Ellis RN, MN
Director of Nursing,
Turning Point
Community Programs

Myths, invented ideas or concepts, by their very nature, have been around for so long that they take on a life of their own, just like some popular TV shows. I would like to briefly describe 5 *medical* myths, but, first, let me start off by confessing that I have believed some of these myths myself.

Myth: People should drink at least eight glasses of water a day.

Reality: Dr. Vreeman, an Indiana State University School of Medicine researcher who thinks this myth can be traced back to a Nutrition Council in 1945, stated that there "is no medical evidence to suggest that you need that much water." However, one of the Council's recommendations actually stated that fluid contained in food, especially fruits and vegetables, as well as in coffee (*although it acts as a diuretic causing you to urinate more*) and soda should be included in the recommended 64 ounce total. More importantly, drinking excess water can be dangerous, resulting in water intoxication, hyponatremia (*a condition that brought my brother with schizophrenia to the hospital on two occasions*), and even death. Dr. Finkbeiner, from the Department of Urology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), suggests following a simple rule: if your urine does not *look* like water, but is dark yellow or golden brown, drink more fluids.

Myth: Use of waterless hand sanitizers promotes resistance to naturally fighting off germs that can cause infections.

Reality: Dr. Allison Aiello, an epidemiologist at the University of Michigan, said that handrubs do not cause your body to resist fighting infection. However, not all sanitizers are the same, so read the label. The active ingredient should be *alcohol*, occurring in a variety of formulations, i.e., ethyl, and must contain a minimum of

60%. Anything lower than that is not effective in killing micro-organisms, but, rather, mobilizes the bacteria, spreading them around the hand instead of killing them. Your *first* choice should be soap and water, but when they aren't available, i.e., grabbing a quick lunch, using someone else's phone or keyboard, hand sanitizers make a good substitute.

Myth: Reading in dim light ruins your eyesight.

Reality: You may have done this and experienced eye strain, difficulty in focusing, perhaps, or a decreased rate of blinking leading to dry eyes. But alas, these effects go away when you stop reading. So, reading in low light is unlikely to cause a permanent change on the function or structure of the eyes. More importantly, for people with certain conditions, i.e., diabetes (occurring at a high rate in individuals with severe and persistent mental illness), cataracts, and glaucoma, proper lighting is important, according to Dr. Rachel Bishop of the National Eye Institute.

Myth: Feed a cold; starve a fever.

Reality: A common cold is caused by a viral infection located in the nose (and not by cold, wet weather – another medical myth!). Foods rich in nutrients may help you recover from an illness more quickly and may prevent one altogether, so it's wise to eat, if you can. Some of these nutrients found in a variety of fruits and vegetables (preferably raw or cooked with as little liquid as possible) include antioxidants, beta-carotene, vitamins C and E, and bioflavonoids to name a few. Eating protein-packed foods is essential to the immune system to fight off viral and bacterial infections. Choose lean sources like skinless chicken, lean beef and turkey, beans, and soy. And Grandma's chicken soup, according to Dr. Philip Kern of UAMS' Division of Endocrinology, helps clear nasal congestion as well as thin mucus so you can better cough it up. In addition, research shows it may have a mild anti-inflammatory effect easing cold symptoms. Drinking fluids, especially hot tea, is important when you have a fever in order to

prevent dehydration because of the fluid loss from sweating.

Myth: Cracking your knuckles causes arthritis.

Reality: There's no evidence, according to Sanjiv Naidu, Penn State professor of orthopedics, that knuckle cracking causes arthritis in the joints. Knuckles, the joints that connect your fingers to your hand, are surrounded and lubricated by synovial fluid, a thick, clear liquid. When you crack them, the bones of the joint to pull apart, causing a gas bubble to form in the joint. The popping sound is the breaking of the adhesive seal in the joint. A couple of reports associated the repetitive motion of cracking with damage to ligaments that surround the joint and dislocation of tendons. A study, cited by The Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center, found that after many years, habitual knuckle crackers may have reduced grip strength compared with people who don't crack.

I hope you learned something as I presented just a few of the many medical myths that are out there. If you're willing to risk dispelling more myths, enter *medical myths* in your search engine....and have fun reading!

Disclaimer: The purpose of this article is not to dispense medical advice nor in any way meant to be construed as diagnostic or prescriptive. Always check with your physician before beginning any new program or trying any of the items discussed here.

Update on Changes in SSI Rules Available on Our Web Site

An update on changes in SSI rules that took effect on January 1, 2009 is available on the NAMI Sacramento web site. The update was prepared by Baron Miller, a San Francisco attorney who specializes in estate planning for families of the mentally ill. NAMI Sacramento does not warrant the content of the update, but provides it as a convenience for our members.



Teen Speaks, from page 1

other's misinformed opinions on mental disorders - she's too busy making straight As and changing her world. And she's busy helping other teens change theirs.

Her condition now controlled with medication and determination, Ashley is a founding member of Outspoken Young Minds, a peer support group for teens and young adults struggling with mental health issues and a project of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Kern County.

In the year since the program began, Ashley has become an energetic advocate for OSYM, speaking to civic groups and high school counselors, even appearing on a public television special on high-risk teens in South Carolina, where her older sister attends college.

"She captivates an audience when she tells her story," says Russ Sempell, a local therapist and president of the Kern NAMI chapter. "They're absolutely glued to her when she tells her story about when she first got sick."

Ashley was only 13 when a series of traumatic events, including a cruel hoax perpetuated by a classmate and the departure for college of her much-loved older sister, collided to catapult the bashful girl into a full-blown psychotic episode. Five months later, doctors at the child psychiatry department at UCLA diagnosed early onset bipolar disorder.

Ashley says her ultimate goal is to make a difference in the lives of other teens who are "suffering and ashamed because of their brain disorders."

"I'm still trying to get the confidence to be wholly me, but I've never been ashamed to talk about it," says Ashley.

Good thing too, because she'll be talking about little else when she, mom Mickie Nommensen and Sempell present their new program at the national meeting of NAMI in San Francisco in July.

OSYM is the first and much-needed youth program of its kind in the country, says Sempell. "There are more than 37,000 kids in the Kern High School District, and we figure up to 8 percent have some kind of mental health condition," he

says. "Up to now, there's been no outreach for these kids, who feel damaged and often don't talk to anyone about it."

There are only 12 young people in OSYM at this time, but there is room for more, says Sempell, who screens referred clients before inviting them to attend.

As for Ashley, she plans to enroll at CSUB [California State University Bakersfield] next year and major in - what else? - psychology. In the meantime, she promises to keep spreading the word that mental disorders are no cause for shame and that "normal is just a cycle on the washing machine."

"There are too many kids who have issues that still need help," she says. "For us, OSYM is awesome."

Governor's 2009-2010 Budget Proposal

*from Grace McAndrews,
Executive Director, NAMI California*

Governor Schwarzenegger has released his 2009-2010 budget and full details can be found at www.dof.ca.gov. The budget is 80 pages long; the Health and Human Services section begins on page 22. Pages 24 and 25 detail the most important cuts [to the mental health community] and the raid of Prop. 63 funds which NAMI California will oppose. The Governor proposes to:

Eliminate certain Medi-Cal optional benefits for adults, including dental, optometry, and psychology,

Suspend the June 2010 Cost of Living (COLA) increase for those on SSI/SSP,

Raid Prop. 63 funds to the tune of \$226.7 million (requires voter approval).

NAMI will keep you posted as the process moves forward. Be prepared to take action upon short notice.

Thanks for all you do for this great cause.

MHSA Community Forums

The Division of Mental Health of Sacramento County will hold several Community Educational Forums in February and March to collect community input and data to assist in determining what key community mental health needs and priority populations are most important to the Sacramento community, as required by the Mental Health Services Act. The locations will be available approximately two weeks prior to the date of each forum. For more information contact Mary Drain at (916) 875-4639 or DrainM@SacCounty.net or MSHA@SacCounty.net. Also visit the Sacramento county MHSA web site at www.sacdhs.com/MHSA.

The February and March Forums will be:

Psycho-Social Impact of Trauma

February 2, 2009, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Children and Youth At Risk of Juvenile Justice Involvement

February 17, 2009, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Stigma and Discrimination

February 25, 2009, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

For Youth, By Youth

March 6, 2009, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Children and Youth At Risk of School Failure

March 18, 2009, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m.

SAMHSA Report Examines Impact of Mental Health Self-Disclosure

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released a report which reviews existing public health literature on how people who receive mental health services can be affected when they disclose this fact to others. Entitled "Self-Disclosure and its Impact on People Who Receive Mental Health Services," the report, which is also based on a series of interviews with individuals involved in this process, examines the potential benefits and risks of this experience.

The report looks at a range of factors that may influence how effectively and beneficially this information can be disclosed in different settings (the family, the workplace, etc.) To download a copy of the report or to order a print version, please see: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/sma08-4337/>



The Doctor's Corner

Dr. Robin Zasio is a local Licensed Clinical Psychologist and owner of the Anxiety Treatment Center at: www.AnxietyTreatmentExperts.com, www.CognitiveBehaviorExperts.com or www.YourGreaterGood.com.

She addresses mental health questions submitted by NAMI Sacramento members, consumers, and readers.

Submit your questions to:
✉ drrobin@sierrabg.com

Dear Dr Robin,

I have a son who is struggling with panic attacks. He found a therapist who he really likes, and seems to be doing much better since he's been seeing him. While I do not pry into the details of their therapy, my son has shared that his therapist has revealed that he too has experienced panic attacks and can relate to some of his experiences. My son indicates that he finds this helpful. My question to you is whether I should be worried about a therapist sharing personal information with a client, and will their own personal experiences similar to their clients cloud their ability to effectively help them?

Peter

Dear Peter,

This is a great question Peter. The first thing to remember is that therapists are not exempt from having personal problems, stress, or crisis. Likewise, they may have experiences that are similar to the concerns or issues that their clients are addressing. This is actually what makes us all "human" if you will. In this light, all of us are on the same playing field. One perspective is to understand that therapists simply have training to help others who are struggling in life, and need help and answers to work through these difficulties.

So, as I move toward answering your concerns, my question would be to wonder about the intention of the therapist. If they are engaging in a relationship where they are working through their own issues with the client, then yes, this would be completely unacceptable and unethical. However, if they are demonstrating em-

pathy (an ability to be able to relate to others feelings/experiences), and through this process the client can feel understood, then this can be very healing. If you think about it, how nice is it to talk to someone whose experienced similar situations? My guess, based on your son sharing that he is benefiting from the therapeutic process, is that the later is happening.

In my own practice, I feel very comfortable expressing empathy toward a client at times when I have experienced similar circumstances. I have confidence in my profession, and the training that we receive in our educational system, that therapist's know when this can be useful and not in the clients best interest.

If ever there are any concerns about a therapist that you would like to explore, keep in mind that that they are governed by specifically designated boards. For Marriage Family Therapist's (MFT) or Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) you can contact the Board of Behavioral Sciences at www.bbs.ca.gov. For Licensed Clinical Psychologists (Ph.D., Psy.D.), you can contact www.cpapsych.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robin

Wanted: Volunteers to Share Their Stories and Help Others

NAMI Sacramento is seeking volunteers to share their stories - their experiences and perspectives - about how mental illness has affected their lives. We are looking for individuals who are willing either to appear on camera or to be interviewed by a print journalist. By sharing actual stories, we can increase awareness of the many problems and shortcomings of the mental health system. The more aware the public is, the more likely resources will be utilized and solutions found.

Become a NAMI Volunteer

NAMI is currently recruiting volunteers for the following positions:

- Family to Family class teachers, English and Spanish speakers wanted
- Family to Family Class Coordinator
- Event Photographer
- Family Support Group Leader
- NAMI Walk Planning Committee Member
- Webmaster

Training and guidance will be provided for all of these volunteer positions. If you can help, please contact Pat Pavone at pavone@surewest.net or (916) 359-2366.

Shop Online and Support NAMI Sacramento

NAMI Sacramento is participating in a new program that allows you to give financial support to NAMI while you shop online - at no cost to you!

Goodshop.com is a completely easy and painless way to help NAMI while shopping online. Go to www.goodshop.com. Type "NAMI Sacramento" in the box asking for the name of the charity you wish to support. Choose the store from the dropdown box - there are over 700 of them including Amazon, Macy's, Nordstrom, Sears, Eddie Bauer, Home Depot, and Flowers.com to name a few. You will be immediately connected with that store's website - where you shop and order just as usual. That's all there is to it. You don't need to register or give any information. Goodshop will automatically donate a small percentage of what you spend to NAMI Sacramento.

March Newsletter Contributions

We welcome submissions to the newsletter. The due date for the March newsletter will be February 9. Submit to Belinda Beckett at nimabima@aol.com. Submissions may be edited.

NAMI Sacramento Membership Form

Please join us! Join others in your community dedicated to improving the lives of people with mental illness in the Sacramento area. Become part of our grassroots revolution and make a difference! Either detach and mail in the membership form below, or join online at www.namisacramento.org/membership. Collecting this information helps us to serve our members better. Your information is treated confidentially and will never be shared outside of NAMI. Please print clearly.

Name: _____ Address/City/Zip: _____

(circle one)

Home/Work/Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

(check one)

Your relation to the consumer:

- I'm a consumer
- Family member
- Friend
- None, just interested

Ethnicity:

- Asian
- African/Black
- Hispanic/Latino
- Caucasian/White
- Other
- Decline to state

If you are a consumer, please enter your primary diagnosis:

- ADHD
- PTSD
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Dual diagnosis
- Unknown
- Major depression
- Other
- OCD
- Decline to state
- Panic disorder

If you are the consumer's family member, please enter your family relation to the consumer:

Membership type:

- Consumer, \$15
- General, \$35

Newsletter preference:

- E-mail
- Postal mail
- Both
- Don't send

You can help! Volunteer with NAMI Sacramento:

- Contact me about volunteer opportunities

Please consider an additional donation of:

- \$100 or more
- \$50-\$99
- up to \$50

Make checks payable to NAMI Sacramento. Mail to NAMI Sacramento Membership Chair, 3440 Viking Drive, suite 114, Sacramento, CA 95827. NAMI Sacramento thanks you for your support. Your donations directly help those with mental illness.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NAMI Sacramento Chapter
3440 Viking Drive, suite 125
Sacramento, CA 95827-2844



Sacramento, CA

Permit No. 01903

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