President’s Message

We invite you to register for our 8-week Family-to-Family at the Lankenau Medical Center in Wynnewood, beginning March 11. (See additional information below.)

We hope you will join us for our spring programs:
- Interactive Workshop, **Balancing Compassionate Kindness with Limit Setting**, on Sunday, March 22, 2-4 p.m. at Ardmore Presbyterian Church
- Interactive Forum, **Ask the Experts** on Sunday, May 3, 2-4 p.m. at Ardmore Presbyterian Church. (See additional information below.)

We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers who make it possible for us to offer so many excellent free services. If you would like to volunteer with us, please consider joining one of our committees. Information and the form to sign up are available at https://namimainlinepa.org/home/volunteer-nami-pa-main-line/. Our Education, Support and Outreach Committee will be meeting on Thursday evening, March 5; if you would like to join us, please complete our volunteer form by Monday.

Ingrid Waldron, President

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**NAMI Main Line PA Activities**

**Event:** **Family-to-Family (F2F) Education Course**  
**Date:** Beginning March 11 and meeting one night per week for 8 weeks  
**Place:** Lankenau Medical Center in Wynnewood  
**Note:** Family-to-Family (F2F) is a course structured to help family members understand and support a relative diagnosed with a serious mental illness while maintaining their own well-being. The course is taught by trained volunteer family members who know what it’s like to have a loved one with a serious mental illness. F2F is offered as a community service without charge. **Registration is Required.** More information is available at [https://namipamainline.org/support/family-to-family-education-basics-programs/](https://namipamainline.org/support/family-to-family-education-basics-programs/). For questions or to register, please contact Judy Green at 610-668-7917 or F2FMainLine@aol.com.

**Event:** Main Line NAMI Interactive Workshop: **Balancing Compassionate Kindness with Limit Setting**  
**Date:** Sunday, March 22, from 2-4 p.m.  
**Place:** Ardmore Presbyterian Church* (5 W. Montgomery Ave. in Ardmore)  
**Note:** This workshop will address a common difficulty when you have a loved one with mental illness – when to emphasize kindness and when to emphasize limit setting, and how best to combine these approaches to help your loved one and to care for your own well-being. The workshop will include opportunities to work in small groups to develop your ability to use both compassionate kindness and limit setting to enhance the well-being of you and your loved one. The workshop will be co-facilitated by Sarah Freudberg (Family-to-Family facilitator) and Ingrid Waldron (affiliate President). Registration not required.
Event: Main Line NAMI Interactive Forum: Ask the Experts
Date: Sunday, May 3, from 2-4 p.m.
Place: Ardmore Presbyterian Church* (5 W. Montgomery Ave. in Ardmore)
Note: Our Ask the Experts panel will answer your questions about mental illness, treatments, community supports, and related topics. The panel will include psychiatrist, Dr. Larry Real, Medical Director at Horizon House and Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Community Psychiatry Fellowship program, and Kathy Laws, Program Manager of the Montgomery County Family and Youth Division for Mental Health Partnerships, where she leads the Family Mentor and Advocacy Network, as well as the Family Empowerment and Satisfaction Team. Registration not required.

Event: Bryn Mawr Family Member Support Group
Date: Typically meets on the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m.
Place: Bryn Mawr
Note: For family members of people with mental illness. For more information, including location and room number, please contact the group facilitator, Diane, at 610-247-4545.

Event: Havertown NAMI Family Support Group
Date: Meets on the third Tuesday of every month from 7-8:30 p.m.
Place: Presbyterian Church of Llanerch* (211 Lansdowne Rd. in Havertown, PA, 19083)
Note: This is a free, confidential and safe group of families helping other families who live with mental health challenges. In this support group, families join a caring group of individuals helping one another by utilizing their collective lived experiences and learned wisdom. Family members can achieve a renewed sense of hope for their loved one living with mental health challenges. For more information, please contact Nora at nora@huntjohnson.org.

Event: NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
Date: Meets weekly on Tuesday evenings
Place: Bryn Mawr
Note: This is a free, peer support group for adults living with mental illness, run and led by NAMI-trained facilitators. You will gain insight from hearing the challenges and successes of others in a confidential setting. By sharing your experiences, you can gain hope and you can develop relationships with a group dedicated to productive discussion. The group encourages empathy and fosters a sense of community. For more information on the location and time of our meetings, please contact Danielle Sulpizio at (484) 880-0660 or Ed Kane at (484) 744-0860.

Event: Parent Peer Support Group
Date: Meets weekly on Wednesday evenings from 6:45-8:15 p.m. (This group will not meet on 1/1/20.)
Place: Wayne Presbyterian Church*, Room 207, 125 E. Lancaster Ave, Wayne
Note: This is a free, peer-led support group for parents with a middle school through young adult child who is challenged with mental health symptoms. This non-denominational group is facilitated by Nancy Dever and Debbie Gillespie. Please contact Nancy Dever at psadfacilitator@gmail.com or text 610-574-3319 to set up a time to talk.

*Although some of our events are held at religious institutions, they are non-denominational and open to people of all beliefs.

Other Local Activities and Events

Event: Community Documentary Screen and Panel Discussion of Voices of Grief: Honoring the Sacred Journey
Date: Sunday, March 1, at 2 p.m.
Place: Main Line Reform Temple (410 Montgomery Avenue in Wynnewood)
Note: Voices of Grief shares a fresh perspective on the ways we navigate through grief. Wisdom from authors, grief experts and spiritual teachers is woven through personal stories of loss to explore the roles of community, compassion and connection. A discussion will follow the screening. This event is free and open to the community. Please RSVP at http://petersplaceonline.org/news-events/voices-of-grief/.

Event: NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
Date: Meets on the first Monday of each month, from 6:15-7:45 p.m. (Next meeting on March 2.)
Place: William Jeanes Memorial Library (4051 Joshua Road, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444)
Note: NAMI Montgomery County is sponsoring this free peer support group for adults living with mental illness, run and led by NAMI-trained facilitators. You will gain insight from hearing the challenges and successes of others in a confidential setting. By sharing your experiences, you can gain hope and you can develop relationships with a group dedicated to productive discussion. For more info, call (215) 361-7784.

Event: **NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group**  
Date: Meets on the **1st and 3rd Saturdays** of each month, from 10-11:30 a.m. (Next meeting on **March 7**.)  
Place: NAMI Montgomery County Office (100 W. Main Street, Lansdale, PA 19446)  
Note: NAMI Montgomery County is sponsoring this free peer support group for adults living with mental illness, run and led by NAMI-trained facilitators. You will gain insight from hearing the challenges and successes of others in a confidential setting. By sharing your experiences, you can gain hope and you can develop relationships with a group dedicated to productive discussion. For more info, call (215) 361-7784.

Event: **It Comes From Within: Living with Bipolar Illness** Book Discussion and Signing  
Date: Sunday, **March 8**, at 5 p.m.  
Place: Narberth Bookshop (221 Haverford Ave. in Narberth)  
Note: Join Michael Solomon at the Narberth Bookshop for an evening of hope, humor, healing and insight as he shares his new book written with Gloria Hochman. For more information, call 610-664-1112.

Event: **Montgomery County Certified Peer Specialist Training Information Session**  
Date: Friday, **March 13**, from 1-3 p.m. or Thursday, **March 19**, from 6-8 p.m.  
Place: Montgomery County Human Services Center (1430 DeKalb Street in Norristown, entrance on Fornance Street), meet in the Board Room on the 1st Floor (3/13) or the Community Room on the 1st Floor (3/19)  
Note: Hear directly from a panel of Certified Peer Specialists describing their experience with taking the training and working in an agency/organization providing Peer Support. You will learn more about Certified Peer Specialist Training, understand the selection criteria for training, and develop an understanding of Peer Support in Montgomery County. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Donna Vaughn at 610-278-3791 or dvaughn1@montcopa.org.

Event: Mental Health Partnerships’ **Adult Daughters, Sons and Siblings Educational Support Group**  
Date: Meets on the **3rd Tuesday** of each month, **March 17** and **April 21**, from 7-9 p.m.  
Place: Belmont Behavioral Hospital, Room 139  
Note: This group is intended for adults who have/had a parent or sibling with a mental health disorder. The group will begin with a discussion about *Maintaining your Boundaries with People Who Feel Entitled* in March (April's topic is to be determined), and will be followed by a support group. No fee. Registration is preferred, but not required. Contact emanion@mhphope.org or 267-507-3863.

Event: **Webinar: Peer Support Services for the Health and Wellness Needs of People with Mental Health Challenges**  
Date: Wednesday, **March 18**, from 1-2:30 p.m.  
Place: Online webinar  
Note: Co-hosted by the Temple University Collaborative, this webinar was developed at the Illinois Institute of Technology through the Chicago Health Disparities Center and the International Association of Peer Supporters, made possible through grant funding from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). This webinar will review: health and wellness among people with mental health challenges; the benefits of peer support services; program development using community-based participatory research; summary of PCORI outcome research on peer services; and implementation for peer support services. Session participants will benefit by receiving practical guidelines on setting up these programs (including service manuals) and learning ways to engage policymakers in supporting these kinds of services. [Click here](http://www.mhphope.org) for more information and to register.

Event: Mental Health Partnerships’ **Morning Families, Partners & Friends Educational Support Group**  
Date: Meets on the **3rd Thursday** of every month, **March 19** and **April 16**, from 10 a.m.-noon  
Place: 1211 Chestnut Street, 11th Floor Conference Room, Center City  
Note: This group is intended for families and friends of individuals with any mental health or substance use condition. The group will begin with a discussion on the Community Support Program in March and will be followed by a support group. No fee. Registration is preferred, but not required. Contact emanion@mhphope.org or 267-507-3863.

Event: Mental Health Partnerships’ **Evening Family, Partners, & Friends Educational Support Group**  
Date: Meets on the **4th Tuesday** of every month, next meeting on **March 24** from 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Place: Belmont Behavioral Hospital, Room 139
Note: The group will begin with presentation on Transitions: A New Year & Broader Group Focus and will be followed by a support group. No fee. Registration is preferred, but not required. Contact sjjohnston@mhphope.org or 267-507-3874.

Event: Alternatives to Suicide Support Group
Date: Meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, from 6:30-8 p.m.
Place: NAMI Bucks County Office - 1432 Easton Road, Suite 2D, Warrington, PA 18976
Note: The opportunity to talk openly about suicide and feelings of deep emotional distress with others who have or are experiencing similar struggles can be a powerful way to support people to move through those darkest places. During groups, people share their successes and their challenges, provide support for one another and strategize and share ideas for coping with difficult life circumstances. People are encouraged to come both in times of strength and challenge. Individuals need not identify as being in 'crisis' in order to attend. This is a group for people who are thinking about dying, or are trying to support someone else who is in that place. For more info, go to www.namibuckspa.org/alternatives.

Event: Getting Off the Emotional Rollercoaster
Date: Begins on Wednesday, March 25, and meets once a week for 10 weeks from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Place: Philadelphia (location provided upon registration)
Note: This class is for family members, partners and friends of adults with bipolar, major depressive, or borderline personality disorders. This workshop will help you respond, not just react, so you can get your life back on track and under better control. You will learn key insights about mental health disorders, as well as important skills such as emotion regulation, self-care, validation, limit setting, suicide/violence prevention, and responding to self-injury. For registration or additional information, please contact TECinfo@mhphope.org or 267-507-3870. This program is free if you or your loved one lives in Philadelphia.

Event: Bedlam Preview Screening & Panel Discussion
Date: Tuesday, March 31, at 6:30 p.m.
Place: WHYY (150 N. 6th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106)
Note: Learn about the national crisis surrounding the care of the seriously mentally ill through intimate stories of patients, families and medical providers. Preview the documentary Bedlam, then hear a panel discussion on America’s mental health crisis featuring Bedlam’s director, psychologist Ken Rosenberg, and local mental health advocates. Tickets are required for this free event. Tickets are available at https://us.e-activist.com/page/16796/event/1.

Event: Screening of A Beautiful Day Tomorrow
Date: Wednesday, April 1, at 7 p.m.
Place: The County Theater (20 E State St, Doylestown, PA 18901)
Note: Join suicide awareness and mental health advocate Gabriel Nathan on an inspiring road-trip as he collects stories of suicide loss and attempt survivors in his 1963 Volkswagen Beetle (a Herbie the Love Bug replica). This charming documentary is a hopeful road movie that will educate, inspire, and continue the conversation about suicide in America. This screening is sponsored by Brooke Glen Behavioral Hospital. Followed by an in-person Q&A with the filmmakers. Admission is free. Click here for tickets.

Event: Mental Health Advance Directives Training
Date: Wednesday, April 8, from 3-6 p.m.
Place: NAMI Montgomery County Office (100 W. Main Street, Suite 204 in Lansdale)
Note: In this training, you will learn about the different types of mental health advance directives, define who is able to make a mental health advance directive, learn relevant terminology, and understand the steps to make your own or help someone else make a mental health advance directive. This event is free and open to participants over 18 years of age. Space is limited. Please RSVP to office@namimontcopa.org or 215-361-7784.

Event: Supporting an Adult Child in Moving Beyond Addiction
Date: Beginning in spring and meeting once a week for 6 weeks from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Place: TBD in Philadelphia
Note: This is a skill building workshop to help parents feel more hopeful and effective in motivating an adult son or daughter, while also taking care of themselves. The workshop is free if you or your loved one lives in Philadelphia. For those outside the city, the fee is $180 per person. For more information and to register, please contact Mental Health Partnerships at emanmion@mhphope.org or 267-507-3863.
News You Can Use

For information about support groups for family members and for individuals living with mental illness in Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties, see Support Groups by County in Southeastern Pennsylvania page. For support groups sponsored by NAMI Main Line PA, please go to http://namimainlinepa.org/support/support-groups/.

Learn more about how to obtain government services, including mental health care, health insurance and disability income, for a person with mental illness at https://namipamainline.org/info-resources/how-to-get-services/. For an introduction to services in Southeastern Pennsylvania, see https://namimainlinepa.org/services-in-sepa-2/intro-to-services/.

Resources for Coping with Mental Illnesses (https://namimainlinepa.org/info-resources/mi-help/) has links to many useful articles on these topics:
- Helping a Loved One with Mental Illness
- Mental Health Screening Tools
- Mental Illnesses and Treatments
- Practical Help
- Youth
- Self-Care and General
- Criminal Justice

To prepare for and try to prevent a crisis, see https://namimainlinepa.org/resources-for-coping-with-preparing-for-and-preventing-a-crisis/, which includes information about involuntary commitment and HIPAA and lots of additional helpful information.

Leadership Development Program for Families

PA Parent and Family Alliance, is accepting applications for a Leadership Development Program for Families. This is an excellent opportunity to locate and build family involvement. Learn more at https://www.paparentandfamilyalliance.org/leadership-development-program.

This training is for parents/primary caregivers who have raised or are raising children who have social, emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges and who are interested in becoming active in leadership positions to make a difference in mental health issues affecting children and young adults as well as parents new to leadership and organizing or those who are just getting started.

Families will learn how to have a direct impact in an area you they passionate about, valuable leadership skills and how to find and engage other parents/families in your area and/or with similar concerns.

What to expect:
- Support working on issues in mental health/children/young adult focused areas of your choice
- Mentoring opportunities
- Monthly virtual coaching video conferences
- Networking opportunities
- Two day out of town retreat (State College area) March 29 and 30, 2020 (costs covered)

For more information contact Christina Paternoster, of the PA Parent and Family Alliance at cpaternoster@alleghenyfamilynetwork.org.

Registration Open for 2020 NAMI National Convention

Join the nation’s largest gathering of mental health advocates as we share, learn and network around important mental health issues in Atlanta on July 15-18, 2020.

Each year, the convention connects and inspires people looking for resources, research, support services and recovery strategies. Join NAMI and embrace the theme — Together Toward Tomorrow — and celebrate NAMI's 40 years of support, education and advocacy.

More information about the convention, including registration and the call for proposals, can be found at https://www.nami.org/convention.
• Seek out family-friendly clinicians. For advice on finding a mental health professional, see [https://namimainlinepa.org/choosing-the-right-mental-health-professional/](https://namimainlinepa.org/choosing-the-right-mental-health-professional/). For local recommendations, call Main Line NAMI at 267-251-6240.

• Try to obtain agreement about communication with your loved one’s clinician during times when your loved one is stable. To increase your chance of success in developing an agreement with your loved one, see advice at [https://namimainlinepa.org/communicating-with-a-loved-one-who-has-a-mental-illness/](https://namimainlinepa.org/communicating-with-a-loved-one-who-has-a-mental-illness/).

• You can provide information to your loved one’s clinician, even when the clinician can’t provide information to you due to HIPAA.* Be informative, factual and concise. If possible, fax or email information to the provider for accuracy of communication. You may want to keep a document with a running history of your loved one’s mental illness and treatment; you can make periodic additions while your memory is still fresh. Do not expect your loved one’s clinician to help you deal with your upset; support groups ([https://namimainlinepa.org/support/](https://namimainlinepa.org/support/)) or your own therapist, friends and family are more appropriate for this purpose.

• Summaries of HIPAA regulations indicate multiple circumstances when a health care professional can provide you with information about a loved one with mental illness. This is especially true if your loved one does not object or if you have legal authority to make healthcare decisions for your loved one. Even if these conditions do not apply, the health care provider can share information with you under some circumstances. For example, if you are “involved with the health care or payment for care of your family member or loved one”, then a health care provider can share patient information “if you can help prevent or lessen a threat of harm to the patient or others”. Helpful summaries of HIPAA regulations are available at:


* “HIPAA in no way prevents health care providers from listening to family members or other caregivers who may have concerns about the health and well-being of the patient, so the health care provider can factor that information into the patient’s care. In the event that the patient later requests access to the health record, any information disclosed to the provider by another person who is not a health care provider that was given under a promise of confidentiality (such as that shared by a concerned family member), may be withheld from the patient if the disclosure would be reasonably likely to reveal the source of the information. 45 CFR 164.524(a)(2)(v). This exception to the patient’s right of access to protected health information gives family members the ability to disclose relevant safety information with health care providers without fear of disrupting the family’s relationship with the patient.” (Pages 5-6 in [https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/hipaa-privacy-rule-and-sharing-info-related-to-mental-health.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/hipaa-privacy-rule-and-sharing-info-related-to-mental-health.pdf))

### Two Antidotes to Stigma

By Katherine Ponte, BA, JD, MBA, CPRP


Stigma had a lot to say about me. “She’s bipolar. She’ll always be sick. She can’t function normally, work, make decisions or take risks.” It reduced me to a child. It destroyed my self-esteem and self-worth. It made me feel hopeless and helpless. Because of this, I refused my diagnosis, help and treatment. I lost a lot of years to it – not to the illness itself, but to the struggle with stigma.

Stigma can be harshest for those of us who experience psychosis. Society often views us and portrays us to be the *most* dangerous, unpredictable and least likely to recover.* We are often the scapegoat for social ills like gun violence. We are sensationalized and generalized in the media. It makes us feel alienated and misunderstood.

Even some doctors hold stigmatizing views against those of us with severe mental illness. The most damaging stigma I ever encountered was when my past doctor told me, “your bipolar will only get worse.” I was left without hope. I had no say in my care. She gave me no respect. I was treated like a disease, not a person. She said to me “you are bipolar roman numeral number one.” It is devastating to feel stigma from the person who is supposed to help you get better.

Thankfully I’m in recovery now. My current psychiatrist does not make me feel stigmatized. He respects me and lets me have a say in my care. Stigma harms me less, but I still must remain vigilant. My experience has shown me many forms of stigma and how to fight against it. Here are the two ways I believe are the most effective.
**Coming Out With Our Diagnoses**

I'm in recovery now thanks to someone’s brave act of coming out. While in the hospital, I learned of a woman living with schizophrenia who shared her own message of recovery with the public. I was shocked. I never knew recovery was possible until I saw her. All along stigma told me this could never happen to me. In an instant, her message inspired me, it sparked my hope that had long been dormant. It motivated me to work as hard as I could to reach recovery.

Our self-esteem and self-efficacy have been battered by stigma, but it can be restored by coming out. We should not be ashamed nor afraid. By coming out, we can connect with each other and people who don’t understand mental illness. We can show them that we are wonderful people, not much different from them. We can replace their discomfort, distrust and fear with empathy and compassion. We can replace myths and stereotypes with facts, let others know that mental illness can be treated and managed. It is the most effective anti-stigma approach.

We need campaigns that spread these peer examples. We can’t wait for recovery to come to us. Countless people living with mental illness can benefit from the relatable examples of others living with mental illness whether those peers are struggling or well.

Sadly, coming out is not an option for many, due to personal circumstances and stigma’s many potential adverse consequences for basic human needs like well-paying jobs, safe housing and quality health care. Some may benefit greatly as I did, some may not. It’s a deeply personal and private matter. And once you’re out, you’re out. We must all think carefully about disclosing our diagnoses, and online resources can even help with the process. However, part of this decision is understanding the potential positive impact we can have.

The impact of peer examples on me was so profound that it inspired me to come out, even with one of the most stigmatized conditions – severe bipolar I disorder with psychosis. Sharing my experience furthered my recovery by increasing my sense of self-empowerment, self-esteem, self-worth and support from others. By inspiring and supporting others, coming out will also contribute to combating stigma in our society. My impact compounds as it influences others to share their stories, who then influence others, and so on.

**Leading Our Community**

The mental health community is a large community. However, very few of our leaders have a condition themselves. Many leaders of organizations representing people with mental illness have seen it firsthand through a friend or a relative who has mental illness. But knowing someone who has mental illness and having mental illness are not the same.

Only we know what it’s like to live with mental illness. We know our wants and needs best. Our mental health system would be much better if we were more involved. But again, stigma has prevented us from coming forward and representing ourselves. And staying out of the important conversations only perpetuates and intensifies certain stigmas about people with mental illness.

We need to speak more for ourselves. We need to assume our power and pursue our goals. We welcome and value the respectful guidance and counsel of our allies, but we need to increasingly lead the way in advocating for and supporting our community. We are at our most powerful when we’re standing together.

I wish many things for my community that I love very dearly. Sadly, our history is filled with cruel and dehumanizing treatment. Once we were cast off by society – discarded in asylums, locked up, isolated, immobilized, even lobotomized and sterilized. Now, many of our peers are in jails and prisons or living in extreme poverty on the streets. We must not let stigma silence the cries of our community to allow these wrongs to continue. We must advocate for each other.

I wish all people with mental illness, whether we’re struggling or well, will be accepted, respected and fairly treated. It’s time for individual and social change that recognizes our humanity. We are capable of recovery. We can and should have full and meaningful lives.

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**Thank You to Our Generous Donors**

If you would like to make a contribution to our affiliate, please go to [http://namipamainline.org/donate-here/](http://namipamainline.org/donate-here/) or use the included form. A contribution is a good way to mark anniversaries, weddings and other special occasions, to show appreciation, or to express sympathy for the loss of a loved one. In addition to donating directly to our affiliate, we welcome donations through your workplace United Way campaign (code 214).
We are grateful to the following donors who made contributions in December, 2019 and January and February, 2020.

General Contributions:
- Anonymous (12)
- The Dever Family
- Gwen Gold
- Peter Johnson
- Donald Haupt
- Larry Real
- Michael Solomon

Judy Green made contributions in honor of:
- Ari Felber
- Nancy and Bob Helfman
- Talya Lewis
- Edie Mannion
- Larry Real
- Kristine Songster
- Ingrid Waldron
- Robert Weinstein

Donations made in memory of Robert Julian Murphy:
- Jeffrey Green

Donations made in memory of Rosalie M. Zubyk:
- Anonymous (6)
- Marta Dybowski
- Debra Paikoff
- Kelley Shepherd

To join, renew your membership, and/or make a donation, please fill out this form and send it with your credit card information or check made payable to NAMI PA, Main Line, 320 Woodley Road, Merion Station, PA 19066-1413 or go to http://namipamainline.org/sign-up/.

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