



NAMI-Champaign County

In This Issue:

Navigating Internet Sources.....	page 1
President's Corner.....	page 2
Book Review.....	page 2
Schizoaffective Disorder Explained.....	page 3
NAMI-UIUC.....	page 3
Consumer Corner.....	page 4
Membership form.....	page 5

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Navigating the NAMI Website: How to Log into the Information Superhighway

by Ben Axelrod

NAMI national's website is very large and contains a wealth of useful information. There are many news articles, discussion forums, and email updates that can be accessed on nami.org. This is an easy introduction to a few features of the national website as well as our local website that everyone should know about.

The first step is to log into the national website with your username and password. If you are a member of NAMI, then you should already have an account ready to be activated. To log in for the first time, you will need your *NAMI Advocate* magazine. On the address label, to the right of your name you will find a ten digit number. This will be your log in name, and your last name will be your password. Now from the national homepage (<http://www.nami.org>), click Sign in in the left frame. If you are not a NAMI member, click free registration and fill out the form and access all the same information. There is also sign in help on the page if you need it. Once logged in, it is recommended that you change your login name and password to something easier to remember. Click myNAMI in the left frame, and then the myProfile tab.

Email updates: You can receive periodic emails from NAMI about current events related to mental illness, new information for a particular mental illness, advocacy issues, consumer support, fighting stigma, and much more. After sign in: click myNAMI in left frame. Manage the various email updates under the myPreferences and mySubscriptions tabs. Don't forget to click Save Changes or Submit at the bottom of the page after you have made your selections.

Forums: Join the NAMI community through online discussions. These 32 discussion groups (plus 4 in Spanish) cover a wide range of topics. After sign in: click Communities in left frame, then All discussion groups in the text. From there, select the group that interests you. If you subscribe to the group or to an

individual discussion, you will get an email when someone posts a new reply.

Advocacy: Find out the latest national mental health issues. You can also download and print fact sheets aimed towards policy makers. Under Take Action at the top of the screen, select Contact Your Representatives. Click View list of issues near the middle of the screen to see the list of fact sheets for policy makers. I highly recommend checking this out. Or fill in your zip-code at the bottom of the screen to get the contact information for your representatives from the local level all the way up to the president. Similar to this are issue spotlights. Under Inform Yourself at the top of the screen, select About Public Policy. Then Issues Spotlight.

I have tried to provide our local website (<http://namichampaign.nami.org>) with information as comprehensive as the national site, though focusing on local instead of national efforts. Unfortunately, it may also be a little confusing. So here are a few of the important pages that and how to get there...

Upcoming events: This page is updated approximately once a month. Check back often to find out what's going on around town and to see who the upcoming speakers will be at our monthly meetings. Click Calendar at the top of the screen, then Upcoming Events in the left frame. We don't use the calendar they support because it is difficult to keep it updated.

Brochures: I have compiled a short list of the best websites where free informative brochures can be found. Click Education in the left frame, then Brochures.

If you get lost: Clicking the various links at the top of the page and elsewhere will change the links listed on the left side of the screen. To go back to our front page, click Home at the top of the screen. To see a list of every page on our website, click Site Map at the bottom of the list on the left.

Upcoming Events:

February 26: Family-to-Family class begins, and will run for the next 12 consecutive Saturdays from 9-11 am at MHC on Fox Drive. To join this class, please call Rita at 469-7325.

March 13: Support Group 3 to 4:30 pm at Mental Health Center for people with loved ones with mental illness. Call Steve or Shirley Schaefer at 356-6434 for more information.

March 14: General Meeting 7-9 pm at MHC on Fox Dr. ~ Speaker Peter Tracy from the Champaign County Mental Health Board

April 11: General Meeting 7-9 pm at MHC on Fox Dr. ~ Speaker Julia Reitz, State's Attorney

April 23: NAMI-WALK at Centennial Park 9:30 am to noon. Contact Mary Ann Midden 398-8655.

May 9: General Meeting 7-9 pm at MHC on Fox Dr. ~ Speaker Sandy Lewis, the CEO of the Mental Health Center of Champaign County

President's Corner

By Fannie Griffin

This past December, NAMI-CC member Barb Tomscha wrote to the Curves corporate office requesting a poster titled, "Sane Woman vs. Crazy Voices" be removed from every Curves franchise. The very next day she received a reply from the director of customer relations who was duly apologetic, halted shipment of the poster, and requested franchisees discontinue displaying the poster. Barb proved that one person could have enormous impact. Lately the media has given a lot of attention to the Crazy About You Bear produced by the Vermont Teddy Bear Company. The bear came with a straightjacket and commitment papers. Initially the company rebuffed NAMI-Vermont's objections to the product, but after meeting in person with NAMI members, the CEO agreed to cease manufacturing the bear and stated, "From the respectful, human discourse, I learned a lot about the significance of stigma in the mental health community and the plight of real people who suffer from mental illness." These two stories are of special importance right now, because so many resources for people with mental illness are threatened due to the crisis of our state and national budgets. As Martin Luther

King, Jr. observed, when a nation goes to war it is the poorest citizens who suffer the most. We members of NAMI-CC can make a difference by letting our lawmakers and government officials know that we will not tolerate removing one more service from people who are disenfranchised and vulnerable. We have the power as individuals and members of an organization that is almost a quarter million strong to write letters/emails, make phone calls, give speeches, contact the media, and do every thing we know how to protect what we believe is fundamentally right in a civilized humane society. It is fiscally, morally, and ethically irresponsible to deny treatment to people with mental illness and it is our place to spread that message. It is easier to keep services than get them back, so we must act swiftly. Keep in mind the words of Edmond Burke, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."



Past and present NAMI presidents celebrate at the December meeting.

A Book Review

By Christine Leonards

On the Edge of Darkness

Conversations About Conquering Depression

by Kathy Cronkite

"It's about time we began to talk about this thing: It's a much better cause than politics."

According to the National Institute of Mental Health an estimated 22.1% of Americans ages 18 and older – about 1 in 5 adults – suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder. In other words, if you are out to dinner with four other people; odds are one of you at that table is suffering from a mental disorder. Despite these statistics, there is still stigma attached to mental disorders; a stigma that causes alienation and shame, forcing many sufferers to live in silence or worse; remain untreated.

Someone in the grips of a Mental Disorder can feel totally alone and isolated. Whether it is a recent diagnosis, or recurring illness they may feel scared, confused and unsure of what is suddenly happening to them. When you are dealing with a mental illness yourself, or you know someone who is, it is a painful and difficult time. It is important to tap as many support systems as possible.

'*On The Edge of Darkness*' by Kathy Cronkite is a collection of personal reflections about living with and conquering depression from some of America's most celebrated actors, journalists, and politicians. It is a useful book in understanding mental illness from many perspectives. "I have aimed to

make this book as useful to as wide an audience as possible," acknowledges Kathy Cronkite. Public figures like CBS News anchor Jim Jensen; TV personality Joan Rivers; actor Rod Steiger, and novelist William Styron are just a few personalities that have contributed accounts of their battles with mental disorders. The book also contains excerpts of information from medical professionals.

The importance of this book is that it is not just filled with medical experts pointing out facts of mental illnesses and giving textbooks solutions. These are real people, with real experiences living with very real illnesses. The book is divided into chapters dealing with the many facets of depressive disorders and perfectly balances the personal accounts with expert medical advice. The stories are personal, often painful, sometimes humorous but always informative. '*On the Edge of Darkness*' proves that it is okay to admit that you have a mental disorder and that you can still have a great life. "I don't know. Across the country, one in five has a mental disease. It's about time we began to talk about this thing: It's a much better cause than politics," said Rod Steiger. The book shows that mental disorders are not selective, are not uncommon, and most importantly, are survivable.

Schizoaffective Disorder Explained

by Zarah Axelrod

Schizoaffective disorder is by far the most complicated mental illness to comprehend. Schizoaffective disorder is a combination of schizophrenia with a mood (affective) disorder. There are two types of Schizoaffective disorders, Bi-polar type and Depressive type. Each type simply means that the person is being diagnosed with schizophrenia and bi-polar or schizophrenia with depression-hence the newly named diagnosis of Schizoaffective disorder. In order to meet the diagnosis criteria for Schizoaffective disorder, the patient must exhibit the symptoms of both schizophrenia and a mood disorder at the same time during one episode or no more than 3 days apart.

The descriptions of the two types of schizoaffective disorders below are from schizoaffective.org. For a full description of diagnostic criteria, please refer to the DSM IV-r.

Schizoaffective Disorder, Manic Type

Is a disorder in which schizophrenic and manic symptoms are both prominent in the same episode of illness. The abnormality of mood usually takes the form of elation, accompanied by increased self-esteem and grandiose ideas, but sometimes excitement or irritability are more obvious and accompanied by aggressive behavior and persecutory ideas. In both cases, there is increased energy, over activity, impaired concentration, and a loss of normal social inhibition. Delusions of reference, grandeur, or persecution may be present, but other more typically schizophrenic symptoms are required to establish the diagnosis. People may insist, for example, that their thoughts are being broadcast, stolen, or interfered with, or that alien forces are trying to control them, or they may report hearing voices of varied kinds or express bizarre delusional ideas that

are not merely grandiose or persecutory. Careful questioning is often required to establish that an individual really is experiencing these morbid phenomena, and not merely joking or talking in metaphors. Schizoaffective disorders, manic type, are usually florid psychoses with an acute onset; although behavior is often grossly disturbed, full recovery generally occurs within a few weeks.

Schizoaffective Disorder, Depressive Type

Is a disorder in which schizophrenic and depressive symptoms are both prominent in the same episode of illness. Depression of mood is usually accompanied by several characteristic depressive symptoms or behavioral abnormalities such as retardation, insomnia, loss of energy, appetite or weight, reduction of normal interests, impairment of concentration, guilt, feelings of hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts. At the same time, or within the same episode, other more typically schizophrenic symptoms are present; patients may insist, for example, that their thoughts are being broadcast, stolen, or interfered with, or that alien forces are trying to control them. They may be convinced that they are being spied upon or plotted against and this is not justified by their own behavior. Voices may be heard that are not merely disparaging or condemnatory but that talk of killing the patient or discuss this behavior between themselves. Schizoaffective episodes of the depressive type are usually less exaggerated and alarming than schizoaffective episodes of the manic type, but they tend to last longer and the prognosis is less favorable. Although the majority of patients recover completely, some eventually develop a schizophrenic defect.

NAMI-University of Illinois-UC

NAMI-Champaign County is thrilled to announce the recent formation of a NAMI on Campus at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The goals of NAMI-UIUC include raising awareness, reducing stigma, providing support, compiling a resources list, and advocating for people with mental illness. NAMI-UIUC is dedicated to serving people on campus, but hope their efforts will eventually have a global impact. Their immediate focus is establishing their organization, however, they have plans for a mental health awareness week in April. They are also looking forward to participating in the NAMI-Walk.

One must be affiliated with the U of I as a student, faculty, or staff to become a member of NAMI-UIUC, which currently has approximately 45 members. Membership dues are \$3 a year. NAMI-UIUC meets about twice a week for an hour. However, they haven't established a set meeting time yet. For more information email to namiuiuc@gmail.com or contact the president, Jim Monti at monti@uiuc.edu. Also, log onto our website <http://namichampaign.nami.org> and click NAMI-UIUC for updates on NAMI-UIUC.

Seasonal Affective Disorder: SAD

By Zarah Axelrod

Seasonal Affective Disorder, commonly referred to as SAD is a depression that comes and goes with the fall and winter seasons. Roughly a half million people suffer from SAD every year. The cause of SAD is often attributed to the shortened and gray daylight hours during the winter. Diagnosis of SAD is made after a patient experiences three consecutive years of the symptoms of SAD which include: disturbed sleep or oversleeping, lethargy when awake, craving and over eating (often sweet foods) weight gain, irritability, social phobia, guilt, anxiety, decreased libido, depressive mood (apathy, feeling miserable, lower self esteem, feeling hopeless or despair).

SAD is common in the northern hemisphere, but almost unheard of nearer the equator. SAD can strike at any age, but most commonly in early adulthood. Treatment for SAD includes the use of light therapy, which uses special light boxes to create the brightness to make up for the lack of daylight the body normally absorbs. Some cases of SAD require SSRI medications such as Prozac to help the patient cope and recover. Many psychiatrists would recommend the combination of light therapy and medication to treat SAD. For more information on SAD you can visit www.sada.org or www.nmha.org.

Public Relations Committee Update

by Fannie Griffin

Every Thursday evening from six to seven the Public Relations committee meets at the Mental Health Center on Fox Drive to discuss events and make plans. We have been successful at increasing the name recognition of our organization in the community and our membership is also increasing, so things are going well. We ordered another hundred silver ribbon pins to sell, because we ran out of our first one hundred pins. We have given away hundreds of pamphlets and we are working on getting a NAMI-CC pamphlet printed. We gave away over 500 NAMI-CC bookmarks and our newsletter goes out to almost five hundred recipients. The people who are active in our PR committee have lots of good ideas and the meetings can be pretty entertaining. Not only do we get our work done, but a nice camaraderie has developed. It has been a way to keep abreast of our activities and events out in the community that are relevant to our cause, especially the Mental Health Court discussions.

NAMI-CC received a \$250 anonymous donation, a \$100 donation from Roberta Axelrod to show appreciation for her daughter-in-law Zarah's dedication and hard work for NAMI, a \$75 donation from Kay Bridgeford, and a \$25 memorial donation from Dave and Becky Grady.

NAMI-WALK 2005

by Zarah Axelrod

The NAMI-CC Walk has been scheduled for Saturday, April 23, 2005 at Centennial Park in Champaign from 10 am until noon. Registration will begin at 9:30 am and will be at the main pavilion in front of the pool. The two mile long course will stretch all the way from Kirby Avenue to John Street, going up Crescent Drive and down Kenwood Drive, but a one mile course is also available. The NAMI-Walk is an opportunity for us to make ourselves visible to the community as an organization that provides support, education, and advocacy for people who have mental illness. This is really a great chance to spread awareness about NAMI and raise money to continue our important work. Mary Ann Midden has done a great job as chair of this committee since she has prior experience with walks. Richard Brandt and Alison Meanor have been working hard to secure donations. Walkers can fundraise for NAMI by asking friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow church or organization members to sponsor their participation. Walkers will receive a raffle ticket for participating, and for each extra \$25 walkers raise, they will receive an additional raffle ticket. Prizes for the raffle will be items donated from local businesses, and the amount and value of prizes will vary. This is going to be a really fun event!

Consumer Corner by Alison Meanor

Debbie Workman has a remarkable recovery story. She suffered a nervous breakdown (a time of chronic depression and anxiety) after her youngest child moved out. The stress of managing multiple restaurants and raising four children as a single mother caught up with her. After years of being "super mom" and super-responsible, Debbie ended up homeless, living out of her car. Unfortunately, Debbie's family and friends offered little support. They were scared of her dramatic change and did not know how to deal with her. "Without family support, one is reluctant to reach out to others because you're taught not to," she remarks.

Fortunately, Debbie did reach out. The staff at the respite center became her main support. Her initial recovery spanned two years, during which time she was prescribed effective medications and had intensive therapy three times a week. Debbie stresses that it is important to have emotional needs met and to have someone with whom to talk confidentially—whether in a support group or therapy. Although Debbie still struggles with depression, she takes medications that help reduce anxiety and allow for clear thinking. She recognizes that she

has become the supportive friend to others that she did not have. Additionally, Debbie has learned recovery skills that she actively uses and teaches to others.

Once stabilized, Debbie was hired at the Mental Health Center at Park Street as a recovery advocate. She is proactive in the recovery of others and her focus is teaching consumers about WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan). Debbie encourages us as consumers to be actively involved in our treatment plan because "our opinion counts!" She currently teaches WRAP at psychosocial rehabilitation (PSR), the respite center, and recently at Provena's in-patient psychiatric unit. A personal reward for Debbie is to provide WRAP groups for people in respite, since she herself had an extended stay there when she was homeless.

Debbie and I met when I first started PSR at the MHC. She has seen me recover from a debilitating depression into a stable place, acknowledges the transformation she's seen in me, and openly supports my continuing recovery. Debbie and I are currently serving as "consumer liaisons" for the reconstruction of Illinois' mental health system, which proposes a consumer-focused, recovery-oriented system of psychiatric care. As Debbie says, "One door opens, and more opportunities come."

NAMI-Champaign County's success depends on the help of members to volunteer.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone # _____ email _____

Please check off as many of these activities you are good at and enjoy doing:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephoning | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Math | <input type="checkbox"/> Typing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing | <input type="checkbox"/> People Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baking | <input type="checkbox"/> Creating Artwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | |

Please check off as many of these activities you would like to help with:

- ☐ Being a support group co-leader
- ☐ Getting training for and teaching Family-to- Family, Visions for Tomorrow, or the Peer-to-Peer class (circle which one)
- ☐ Willing to give speeches to community organizations
- ☐ Community outreach- sitting at a booth and providing the public with info
- ☐ Work on the newsletter (writing / editing)
- ☐ Write Grants and work on fundraising
- ☐ Replenish NAMI pamphlets around town
- ☐ Answer phone calls from people with questions about NAMI
- ☐ Running errands, such as mailings
- ☐ Writing letters to legislators or newspapers
- ☐ Help with the NAMIWALK
- ☐ Contact media outlets about NAMI events
- ☐ Work on the legislative committee
- ☐ Other _____

If you are interested in learning more about these projects or helping, than please contact Fannie Griffin @ 352-2064 or come to a Public Relations meeting (every Thursday at 6 pm at Provena Centerpoint on Fox Drive).

Please return this at a NAMI meeting or mail to NAMI- Champaign P.O. Box 1514, Champaign, IL 61824-1514

Membership Form

NAMI Champaign County is a non-profit, self-help, organization. If you would like to become a member or renew your membership, please fill out this form and return it with the appropriate membership dues. Members of NAMI get the NAMI Advocate, the NAMI-IL and local newsletter, as well as access to our lending library. Mail to: NAMI-Champaign P.O. Box 1514 Champaign, IL 61824

I would like to:

_____ Become a member of NAMI

_____ Family/Professional (\$35) _____ Consumer (\$3) _____ Department (\$250) _____ Organization (\$1,000)

_____ Change my contact information _____ Renew my membership

_____ Sign up for the mailing list _____ Remove my name from the mailing list

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip: _____

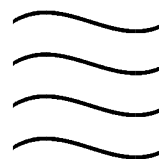
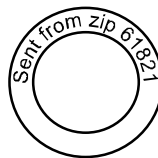
I would like to support NAMI-Champaign County in continuing important work in the community.

I am enclosing a tax deductible donation of \$ _____.

(Please make checks out to NAMI-Champaign County and mail to P.O. Box 1514, Champaign, IL 61824)



NAMI - Champaign County
P. O. Box 1514
Champaign, IL 61824-1514



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If you are interested in sending a
monetary donation, please write
the check out to NAMI-
Champaign County and send it to
the NAMI-CC P.O. Box above.
Thank you for your support!



Mental Health Resources and Services

Champaign County

NAMI-Champaign County
P.O. Box 1514
Champaign, IL 61824
Fannie Griffin 352-2064
<http://namichampaign.nami.org>
Email: namiccprez@sbcglobal.net

Times Center
217-398-7785
70 E. Washington St. Cham. IL 61820

GROW Inc.
217-352-6989

Depression & Bi-Polar Support Alliance of C-U (formerly CAMDA)
217-344-7901 Sten Johansen

Crisis Line (24 hours)
217-359-4141

**Mental Health Center
Consumer Relations**
217-366-5180 Linda Baker

First Call for Help Champaign
217-352-6300

Illinois Suicide & Crisis Hotlines
1-800-784-2433

Illinois Public Aid
217-782-1200

Social Security/Disability SSI
217-398-5399
101 S. Country Fair Drive Ch.

The Pavilion
217-373-1700 or Psych. 217-373-1850
809 W. Church, Cham. IL

**Champaign County Healthcare
Consumers/ Campaign for
Better Health**
217-352-6533

Family Service Self-Help Center
405 S. State St., Cham. IL
217-352-0099

Wellness Group
217-366-5180 Linda Baker

Survivors of Suicide Support Group
217-373-2430

Emotions Anonymous (12 Step)
217-352-3632

Socialization Group for the Chronically MI
217-379-4302

Other Counties

Ford County
Community Resource & Counseling Center 217-379-4302

Piatt County
217-762-5371

Vermillion County
Crosspoint 217-442-3200

First Call for Help Rantoul
217-893-1530

NAMI Contacts

NAMI-Illinois
1-800-346-4572 <http://il.nami.org>
218 W. Lawrence Springfield, IL 62704

NAMI-IL Children & Adolescent Resource Center
217-522-1403 Holly McCaffrey

NAMI-National Headquarters
1-800-950-NAMI www.nami.org
2107 Wilson Blvd. Suite 300
Arlington, VA 2201-3042