



nami

Cheyenne

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Cheyenne

April-May 2009

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Calendar:

Educational Meetings

- **April 2, 7:00 PM** How NAMI works and formation of Nominating Committee.
- **May 7, 7:00 PM** In Our Own Voice presentation

Support Group Meetings

- **April 16, 7:00 PM**
- **May 21, 7:00 PM**

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Mindfulness and Positive Coping Skills

Carolyn Leavitt spoke on Positive Coping Skills and Mindfulness for the March 5th educational meeting. Ms. Leavitt has been a therapist for over 30 years and is currently involved with Peak Wellness Center's residential inpatient treatment program for men.

Mindfulness is living one day at a time, being in the present and fully aware. Not coping with or being swept away by emotional turmoil is the major challenge in living one day at a time. Ms. Leavitt works with her clients to enable them to handle their big emotions in a positive manner, and not get swept away by them. For instance, cravings are really an obsession. The idea is to learn how to lessen the obsession, or negative emotional response to a situation. "The only thing you have control over is how you react", according to Carolyn. Mindfulness requires one to concen-

trate on what they can do about a situation at that moment, and not be anxious about what may, or may not, occur in the future. Mindfulness is like adjusting to a strong wind—bracing and bending oneself, rather than trying to be unyielding. A structured daily life and reduced stimulation helps one control behavior.

Carolyn reminded everyone of the Serenity Prayer, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference".

Ms. Leavitt feels meditation is a positive coping skill which allows a person to calm their mind and throw off external cares. Meditation and therapy work on one part of the brain; medication on another part of the brain. One should start meditation

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CONTACT US!

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SAMHOP Presentation

Martha Mullikin, the new Substance Abuse and Mental Health Ombudsman Program (SAMHOP) director, gave the attendees at the February 5th educational an overview of this statewide program and her goals for it. Ms. Mullikin became the Ombudsman

last Fall when the program's scope was expanded to include substance abuse. Formerly, the program was known as the Mental Health Ombudsman Program.

Martha sees the ombudsman role as

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Mindfulness and Positive Coping Skills (Contd.)

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with a few minutes a couple times a day of just breathing in and out. As you become more accomplished keeping your mind clear and calm, then you can increase the length and frequency of your meditation. If at any time your thoughts become anxious or worried, return to just breathing in and out.

Negative emotions take the form of sadness, fear and substance abuse. A good way to handle sadness is to talk to someone about your feelings. It is

best to face fear a bit at a time, provided it is an irrational fear. Substance abuse is another negative emotional response which one must face head on. Carolyn said, "It is the heroic journey that makes you courageous".

A person needs to develop compassion for his or herself, according to Carolyn. People do the best they can with the skills they have. It is the therapist's challenge to give them more skills, so they can do better.

SAMHOP Presentation (Contd.)

(Continued from page 1)

one of a problem solver. She considers "her bag" one of problem solving, so it appears to be a good fit. She believes it just takes a little effort to alleviate or solve most situations. Ms. Mullikin is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and a Certified School Counselor. Her years as a school counselor give her extensive experience working with individuals and families that have mental health and substance abuse issues. For instance, one of her clients was about to be evicted from his motel room for not keeping up with his bill. The person needed an address and phone to receive other State services and obtain employment. Ms. Mullikin mediated with the motel a payment plan the client could afford and was acceptable to the motel.

The SAMHOP office usually is contacted via phone call and it is diligent about making the call a positive experience for those reaching

out—not being put on hold or the call not being returned. The data from client contacts is kept confidential, but it is needed to ascertain the services needed and develop program improvement. It is also used to justify the program and her position. Martha said she has a good working relationship with the Wyoming Attorney General's office. Her office makes recommendations to the Dept. of Health to pass on to the Legislature.

The SAMHOP is currently attempting to set up satellite positions in Evanston, Casper, Riverton and Sheridan. The main office is in Cheyenne. The satellite positions would involve about one hour's work per week. Likely candidates would have some training in mental health and substance abuse, e.g., Certified Nursing Assistants. All referrals would still be handled by the Cheyenne, but the part-time ombudsman would handle any local "leg-work" needed.

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"It is the heroic journey that makes you stronger." -

Carolyn Leavitt

NAMI Gives Wyoming an 'F'

For more on this

see:

http://www.nami.org/gtsTemplate09.cfm?Section=Grading_the_States_2009

SAMHOP Presentation (Contd.)

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The SAMHOP can help a client with appointments, referrals for treatment, mediation, information and support to help people speak up for themselves and resolve their own issues. The SAMHOP can't provide financial assistance, dispense medication, place clients in medical facilities, or provide legal advice. Ms.

Mullikin can be contacted at 307 632-5591 or toll-free at 888 857-1942. Email is:

samhop@bresnan.net

The office is available on the Internet at: www.wyoguardianship.org
The mailing address is:

SAMHOP
PO Box 2778
Cheyenne, WY 82003

May
is
National
Mental
Health
Month

New Board of Directors to be Elected June 4th

At a board meeting on March 19th it was determined from the NAMI of Cheyenne Bi-Laws that a new Board of Directors needs to be finalized at the June 4th educational meeting. A nominating committee will be formed at the start of April and its task will be to enlist a slate of candidates by May 4th. The June 4th meeting for

the election of the next Board will be a general business meeting of all members of NAMI of Cheyenne. The Bi-Laws stipulate that 25% of the membership must be present to make the election valid..

The names of the candidates will be published in the next newsletter.

Please make your selections known!

Educational and Support Group Meetings

Educational meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 3005 Thomes, in Cheyenne. The meetings start at 7:00 PM and typically last an hour.

On **April 2nd** there will be a overview of how NAMI works at all its levels. The election process of the local's officers will be discussed. If necessary, a Board of Directors nominating committee will be formed..

On **May 7th** there will be an In-Our-Own-Voice presentation. Two consumers will discuss their struggle

with mental illness—their “dark time”—, then how they progressed to being better.

Support group meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

At the start of the meeting attendees break into two groups—one for family and friends, and a second one for consumers—provided there are enough attendees for each group. Support group meetings start at 7:00 PM and normally last an hour and a half.



NAMI of Cheyenne Membership Application

TYPE	COST	AMOUNT ENCLOSED
<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer/Open-door	\$ 5.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Profession	\$35.00	_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Please remove me from the mailing list.

Make checks payable to and return form to:

NAMI of Cheyenne
604 East 25th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82001

Affiliate memberships expired at the end of March. Please renew your membership, if you haven't already done so.

**NAMI Wyoming
Statewide
Conference**

May 1st-2nd

**Ramada Plaza
Riverside
300 W. F Street
Casper, WY 82601**

To Register, contact
NAMI Wyoming at:
888 882-4968, or
307 265-2573, or
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