



## 6 Common Myths About Mental Illness

1. **Mental illnesses are not really real, they are just reflections of a character flaw:** This is such a common misconception that it not only prevents people from getting professional help, it actually increases the level of guilt that people with mental illnesses face when they cannot just "will themselves" out of their problems.
2. **If you are a person of strong religious faith, you will not have a mental illness:** This is another very unfortunate myth that is very common in very religious circles. The thinking goes like this, "if you are sincerely dedicated to God and doing all that you should do to obey Him, then you will never suffer this kind of turmoil." Nothing could be further from the truth. Walk into any house of worship, and I can guarantee you that there are people there who are suffering, some in silence, depending on what their religion teaches about mental illness. Thankfully, many more churches and religious institutions are realizing that mental illness is not always a case of "demon possession" or unrepentant sinfulness, but that there are physiological and psychological reasons behind the pain that require attention from a trained professional.
3. **Mental illnesses are simply "excuses" that people use to justify bad behavior:** While it is true that sometimes people hide behind the banner of an illness to justify bad behavior, this does not negate the fact that addictive behavior and many other forms of self-destructive habits are very often rooted in untreated mental illness. Too often, instead of addressing the root issues, we are so focused on the bad behavior that even when the person just "stops" whatever destructive thing they are doing, they often just swap addictions, or bad-habits, because the core issues were never really addressed.
4. **Taking medication for a mental illness means you are "crazy":** This is one that I am all too familiar with. For too long, when my doctor would suggest that I try anti-depressants for my condition, I would quickly turn down his offer, because I thought that the minute that I took medication, I was conceding that I was insane or "crazy". But then I thought to myself, "would I fault a diabetic for taking their medication or insulin shots? Would I fault a person with high blood pressure for taking their prescribed pills?" This stigma when it comes to medication has left many people suffering when there are suitable alternatives to help them along the healing path. Medication is not necessarily the end-all, be-all of treatment, but it sure can help if your doctor deems it to be necessary.
5. **Self-help is all you need to overcome mental illnesses:** I can't tell you how many self-help books I have read over the years trying to "will" myself out of my struggle with depression. I read everything from the secular books to the Christian or spiritual books. Many had some helpful information, but the bottom line for me was that I was trying to will myself out of my mind state, and it just did not work. It has taken a healthy combination of therapy, medication, support groups and the love of family and friends to keep me healthy mentally.

## Upcoming Events

### Mon., June 22nd

- 7:00 p.m.** – Reception/ **7:30 p.m.** Compare two different mental health rehabilitation and treatment programs in Atlanta, Room 258.\*

### July 6-8<sup>th</sup>

- NAMI National Conference, San Francisco Hilton Towers, San Francisco, CA

### July 17-19th

- NAMI Georgia Trainings, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA

### Mon., July 27th

- 7:00 p.m.** – Reception/ **7:30 p.m.** Learn about electrical brain stimulation in the treatment of depression, Room 258.\*

\* Dunwoody United Methodist Church, Activities Bldg, 1548 Mt. Vernon Road, Dunwoody

\*\* Alpharetta First United Methodist Church, 69 North Main Street, Alpharetta.

## NAMI Walks

You're invited to the kick-off luncheon for NAMI Walks. Come learn how to be an effective Team Captain, a Walker and other ways to join with NAMI Georgia to reach our goals.

### Metro Atlanta

July 16, 2009

Check in: 11:00 AM; Lunch starts at 11:30 AM.

The Salvation Army

2090 North Druid Hills Rd, NE

Atlanta, GA 30329

**RSVP by July 10 to:**

Jean Dervan 770-234-0855

[jdervan@nami.org](mailto:jdervan@nami.org)

**South Georgia**

July 31, 2009

Check in: 11:00 AM; Lunch starts at 11:30 AM.

Satilla Community Services

310 Williams Street

Waycross, GA 31503

**RSVP by July 10 to:**

Leslie White 912-449-7245

[lwhite@satilla.csb.ga.us](mailto:lwhite@satilla.csb.ga.us)

6. **There is a one-size fits all answer to mental illnesses:**  
If there is one thing that I have learned in my own struggles with clinical depression, it is that there is no one-size fits all mode for treatment. What works for one person, may not work for another. And although this can be somewhat frustrating in our "twitter" crazy & instant-results-oriented world where we expect instant results now, there is a degree of patience required in finding the appropriate treatment regimen.

~ Stephen Akinduro, reprinted from NAMI Columbus

## Job Opportunities

### NAMI Georgia

NAMI Georgia is looking to fill a new position of Executive Assistant on or about July 6, 2009. The Executive Assistant will provide support and organization for the Executive Director. The Executive Assistant's primary role is to ensure close coordination and implementation of the Executive Director's priorities, and to assist in strengthening and coordinating with NAMI Georgia's staff and volunteer base, and outside organizations. More information is available on the website. Go to the "About Us" page and click on "Employment Opportunity".

### Georgia Department of Human Resources

The Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR), Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD) is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Director of Consumer Relations and Recovery. Please email your cover letter and resume in Microsoft Word format to: [mhddad@dhrrjobs.com](mailto:mhddad@dhrrjobs.com).

## Facilitator Training

If you are a born educator or facilitator, NAMI wants you. NAMI Family-to-Family, Peer-to-Peer and Family Support Group facilitator training is now scheduled to be held at Mercer University in Atlanta **July 17-19, 2009**. All instruction and course materials, hotel (double occupancy) and food are free to class participants. Please call and make your reservation for training as soon as possible.

**For Facilitator as well as Family-to-Family Courses in metro Atlanta contact:**

Jean Dervan, Program Director, NAMI Georgia  
[nami-ga@nami.org](mailto:nami-ga@nami.org) 770.234.0855

## NAMI Stigma Buster

### People All-stars: Vote for Matt

Help fight stigma and raise public awareness of the mental health needs of veterans-- in People magazine! NAMI leader Matt Kuntz, who is featured in the latest [NAMI Advocate cover story](#), has been nominated to be one of People magazine's "All-stars Among Us." Earlier this year, he was selected to ride President Obama's inaugural train as an "ordinary American" who has done "extraordinary things."

Please visit the [People All-star Web site](#). Nominees are grouped under the names of major league baseball teams. The top vote-getter for each team will be honored at the MLB All-star Game in July. The person with the most votes overall will be featured in People magazine.

To cast your ballot: 1) select the Pittsburgh Pirates emblem and 2) vote for Matt. It's that easy. Each person can vote up to 25 times. Why Pittsburgh? Because a NAMI SW Pennsylvania member made the nomination! Help spread the word! Balloting ends June 24!

## NAMI Northside Atlanta

NAMI Northside Atlanta is an affiliate of NAMI Georgia and NAMI National. The National Alliance on Mental Illness is a non-profit, grassroots support, education and advocacy organization for families and friends of the mentally ill.

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## NAMI Northside Atlanta Board

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Together we make a difference. The Board represents your interests and encourages your active membership and participation. If you have ideas, a special talent or a couple hours a month to volunteer, we want to hear from you. Board meetings are open and are held prior to the Education Meeting at 6 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month. Contact Jerry Bishop, [bishopjerryo@bellsouth.net](mailto:bishopjerryo@bellsouth.net).

## Welcome New Members

- Claire Ho
- Pamela Schuble



## GA Crisis & Access Line 24/7

1-800-715-4225  
[www.mygcal.com](http://www.mygcal.com)