



# NAMI – GREATER DES MOINES

## AFFILIATE AND SUPPORT GROUP NEWSLETTER

February 2006

*“Support, Education, and Advocacy”*

<p><b><u>Education and Support Group Meetings</u></b> are generally the 1<sup>st</sup> <u>Sunday</u> of the month from 2 - 4 PM at Iowa Lutheran Hospital, Level B conference room. Dates on Sundays other than the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month are due to holidays or other special scheduled events. (Coffee and cookies are provided.)</p>		<p><b><u>Business and Committee Meetings</u></b> are the 2<sup>nd</sup> <u>Thursday</u> of the month at 4 P.M. at the NAMI-Iowa Office.</p>	
<p><b>Feb. 5</b></p>	<p>The topic is “bipolar disorder”. Nancy Hale, B.S., R.N. – will give a presentation on bipolar disorder and the new Bipolar Genetics Study at U. of Iowa</p>	<p><b>Feb. 9</b></p>	<p>We will be discussing and planning around the following topic areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education</li> <li>2. Advocacy</li> </ol>
<p>Feb. 14 - Noon</p>	<p><b>Ceremony of Hope</b> at Westminster Presbyterian Church Chapel at Beaver and Franklin Avenue Sponsored by the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Des Moines. Call 244-9411</p>		
<p>Weekend of March 3-5</p>	<p>Family to Family <b>Teacher</b> training – Expenses paid by NAMI-Iowa. Location to be announced. Please contact Carol Porch at 319-351-4398 or leave a message at 800-417-0417 or e-mail <a href="mailto:porch@avalon.net">porch@avalon.net</a> for further details. <i>To date, 87 Iowans have completed the teacher training.</i></p>		
<p>March 8</p>	<p><b>The Virtual Hallucination Machine (VHM)</b> (from Jansen Pharmaceutica) will be available for Des Moines Police Dept. officers to experience in a training exercise. (NAMI-GDM arranged for this)</p>		
<p><b>March 12</b></p>	<p>The topic is “schizophrenia”. The meeting will be at an alternative location – “Out of the Shadows” -1 hr movie presentation &amp; panel of experts &amp; dessert will be served (free event). <b>Reunions for Family to Family classes, Peer to Peer classes, and Visions for Tomorrow classes. Contact your classmates!!</b> <i>More information is forthcoming.</i></p>	<p><b>March 9</b></p>	<p>We will be discussing and planning around the following topic areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Fundraising</li> <li>4. Special Events</li> </ol>
<p>Thursday, March 9</p>	<p><b>Family to Family class starts (12 weeks)</b> Call NAMI-Iowa office to sign up – 254-0417. 6:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. at the NAMI-Iowa office, 5911 Meredith Drive, Suite E, Des Moines. <u>Severe mental illness is traumatic to the entire family - you might consider asking other family members to attend with you—a friend, a parent, spouse, a sibling, or one of your children (must be at least 14 years old). 1000+ persons in Iowa have completed the course.</u></p>		
<p>Wednesday, March 29</p>	<p><b>Advocating Change Day</b> – at the State Capitol – more details forthcoming.</p>		
<p><b>April 2</b></p>	<p>The topic will be “self mutilation”.</p>	<p><b>April 13</b></p>	
<p><b>May 7</b></p>	<p>The topic will be “veterans issues”.</p>	<p><b>May 11</b></p>	
<p><b>June 4</b></p>		<p><b>June 8</b></p>	
<p>June 28- July 2</p>	<p><b>NAMI National Annual Convention</b> – “Changing Minds, Changing Lives, Keeping the Promise” at Washington (D.C.) Hilton Hotel. Check <a href="http://www.nami.org">www.nami.org</a> for more information and early bird rates.</p>		

Mental illnesses are biologically based brain disorders. They cannot be overcome through “will power” and are not related to a person’s “character” or intelligence.

Mental illness can strike anyone. It knows no age limits, economic status, race, creed, or color.



### **WANTED – YOUR IDEAS - YOUR INPUT**

In order to give our full attention at our Sunday meetings to education and support, we are scheduling a separate day and time devoted to the business side of NAMI-Greater Des Moines. **We invite everyone** to join the Board of Directors and Officers to discuss and plan for NAMI-Greater Des Moines at our Thursday meetings.

## **MENTAL ILLNESS: THE FACTS**

*From NAMI: In Our Own Voice*

Mental illnesses are brain disorders. They are not defects in someone's personality or a sign of poor moral character or lack of faith. They certainly do not mean that the ill person is a failure. Chemical imbalances in the brain, from unknown or incompletely known causes, are much of the reason for symptoms of mental illnesses.

Mental illnesses are like other organ diseases in which body chemistry changes. The abnormal chemistry of mental illnesses affects brain function the same way that too little or too much of other body chemicals damage the heart, kidneys or liver.

A heart attack is a symptom of serious heart disease, just as hearing voices, mood swings, withdrawal from social activities, or feeling out of control are common symptoms of a mental illness.

Mental illnesses can affect people of any age, race, religion, education or income level. As you read this, five million people here in the United States are dealing with serious, chronic brain disorders.

Major brain disorders include schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic-depression), major depression, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

There are many points on the continuum of wellness, and different degrees of recovery that can be reached with medication, therapy, and a strong support system.

*Mental health problems are real, common, and treatable. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness – taking care of yourself is an act of strength.*

### **Acceptance**

*From In Our Own Voice*

Learning to accept the reality of having a serious mental illness is quite a challenge. It can be hard for anyone to come to terms with having a serious illness, no matter what it is, but acceptance is essential to beginning recovery.

While there is nothing you can do to change the fact that you have a mental illness, you decide how to respond to it. You can make choices that will help you lead the life you want. Please remember – you are not your illness, you are living with an illness!!

With acceptance, you can again begin to take control of your own life. Being a victim is not acceptable.

*Recovery is possible. With the right treatment and support, you can lead a full and productive life.*

### **Mental Illness is Highly Treatable**

*Iowa 2010 Strategic Plan*

Up to half of all visits to primary care physicians are due to conditions caused by or made worse by mental or emotional problems. People with depression are 4+ times more likely to have a heart attack than those without such a history. Roughly 37% of alcohol abusers and 53% of drug abusers also have at least one serious mental illness.

The treatment success rate for schizophrenia is 60%; bipolar disorders 80%, major depression 63%. This contrasts with the treatment success rate for heart disease, which ranges from 41% to 52%.

## **Iowa numbers**

*Iowa 2010 Strategic Plan*

According to federal rates of mental health prevalence and incidence reports, Iowa has close to 108,000 adults (ages 19 and above) with a serious mental illness.

The incidence of a serious emotional disorder among children and adolescents age 0 to 18 is 10% to 12%, with an estimated total of 85,000 children in need of mental health intervention.

### **Psychiatrists in Iowa**

In 2005, the Iowa Dept. of Public Health reported there are over 200 psychiatrists in Iowa, of those 148 are in private practice.

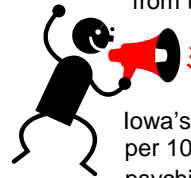
108,000 adults + 85,000 children = 293,000 people  
-or roughly 10% of the state's total population

293,000 people/148 psychiatrists =  
1980 potential clients/psychiatrist

High caseload per doctor creates burn-out. Some are ready to retire. Some move to other states to find a practice that allows them to have a decent personal and family life.

Two-thirds of Iowa's counties have no private-practice psychiatrists, state records show.

Iowa has 6.6 practicing psychiatrists for every 100,000 residents, according to 2001 statistics, the latest available, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. That ratio is worse than in all but three other states: Idaho, Nevada, and Mississippi.



Iowa's numbers fall short of the 10 psychiatrists per 100,000 residents in the Midwest and 14 psychiatrists per 100,000 in the U.S. population.

In addition, a chunk of Iowa's specialists are nearing retirement age. About 35% of mental health professionals are 55 or older, according to a May 2005 survey by the State Department of Public Health.

What can Iowa do to create an environment to attract more mental health professionals?

With the high rates of success for treatment of mental illness – we need to make every effort to create a mental health system with enough providers to enable each afflicted Iowan and their families to receive the services they need to achieve the highest possible level of recovery.

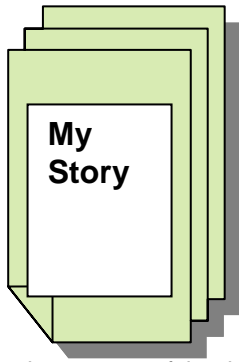
### **Shortage of Mental Health Professionals**

One of the legislative issues highlighted by the Mental Health Advocacy Coalition is to address the shortage of mental health professionals in Iowa.

All counties in Iowa (except for metropolitan counties) have been identified as mental health shortage areas.

Not only is the state lacking a sufficient number of psychiatrists, but also other levels of mental health professionals, including, but not limited to – clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, etc.

Talk or write to your legislators about this issue.



### The Mental Health Advocacy Coalition is asking for Your Help.

We would like to compile stories that illustrate mental health issues. These can be anecdotes or human interest stories which help to identify important mental health issues and problems – stigma, lack of access to services, your story and struggle in dealing with mental illness, mental health problems of returning soldiers, importance of the right medications, lack of funding, etc – real stories of Iowans.

Copies of your stories should be sent to CeCe Arnold at [ncrlcca@mchsi.com](mailto:ncrlcca@mchsi.com). The person sending the story should “de-identify” information in the story for replication purposes but still provide attached identifying information to CeCe in case she needs to contact you. Anyone with writing skills who would like to help with this project should send an e-mail.



### Need Help Paying for Medicine?

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance can give you a helping hand. Call 1-888-477-2669 or visit [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org) to see if you may qualify.

### Peer to Peer



Peer to Peer is a 9 week course for individuals with severe brain disorders. Each 2 hour session in taught by a NAMI Iowa team of three trained “mentors” who are personally experienced at living well with mental illness.

Participants come away from the course with a binder of hand-out materials, as well as other tangible resources such as: an advance directive, a “relapse prevention plan” to help identify feelings, thoughts, behaviors or events that may warn of impending relapse; information on how to organize for intervention; mindfulness exercises to help focus and calm thinking; and survival skills for working with providers and the general public.

Class topics include: stigma and discrimination, relapse prevention planning, story telling, language, emotions, addictions, spirituality, medication, coping strategies, decision making, relationships, empowerment, and advocacy.

Call the NAMI-Iowa office to sign up for Peer to Peer– 515-254-0417.

*Mental illnesses can profoundly disrupt a person’s thinking, feeling, moods, ability to relate to others and capacity for coping with the demands of life.*

### Drug Discount Card

Polk County residents without full health insurance coverage can save on prescription drugs under a county sponsored drug discount program. Discounts average 20% and can be used at more than 100 pharmacies throughout the county.

The cards are available at the county health department, Broadlawns Medical Center, senior citizen centers and other sites. There are no income or age restrictions. While anyone can use the cards for drugs not covered by an

insurance plan, the program targets those without insurance. For a complete list of card locations or a list of participating pharmacies, call 286-3895.



### [www.polk.ia.networkofcare.org](http://www.polk.ia.networkofcare.org)

The web site contains information and resources regarding mental health in Polk Co. Some of the topics are community announcements, nation-wide news, services (who are providers?), library, legislate (state and national legislation), E-mail service to contact your state and national legislators, links, insurance (plans available), support & advocacy, emergency services.

*Investing in effective community mental health services saves families, lives and dollars.*

### SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

**Every Monday evening** – 6:30 – 8:00 P.M. – the Support group meets at the Mercy Franklin West Conference Room (enter West side entrance) – 48<sup>th</sup> & Franklin, Des Moines. This is a support group for both family members and consumers.

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month** – 7 P.M. – For depression and anxiety disorders only – WestView Church, 1155 SE Boone, in Waukee. Call Julie at 710-1487 or E-mail at [candlesinthedarkness@mchsi.com](mailto:candlesinthedarkness@mchsi.com)

**Every Tuesday afternoon** – 1:30 to 2:30 P.M.- A consumer support group meets at Res-Care located at the Hammer Medical Pharmacy building at 602 E. Grand. Come early at Noon and have a hot lunch.

**Every Tuesday evening – 8-10 P.M.** - Recovery Inc., a self-help group for people who have nervous and mental troubles – at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 3120 E. 24<sup>th</sup> St., Des Moines – Call 266-2346.

**Thursdays** from 11:00 A.M. to Noon - Anger Management class at Res-Care located at the Hammer Medical Pharmacy building at 602 E. Grand. A hot lunch is provided at noon.

**Every Thursday at 2:00 P.M.** - Recovery, Inc. - a self-help group for people who have nervous and mental troubles – at Central Iowa Center for Independent Living, 666 Walnut St., Des Moines – Call 237-0232

**Every Thursday evening – 7:45 – 9:45 P.M.** – Recovery, Inc. - a self-help group for people who have nervous and mental troubles – at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church, 1020 34<sup>th</sup> St., in West Des Moines. Call – 277-6071

**Every Saturday morning** – 10 A.M. A group of people who have depression will meet at Lutheran Church of Hope, 925 Jordan Creek Parkway, Call 222-1520, ext. 175.

**Every Saturday afternoon** – 2:00 – 3:30 P.M. – the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance meets at Iowa Lutheran Hospital – University at Penn Avenue – Level B – private dining room. This is a support group for consumers.

**Do you know of other support groups in the Des Moines area that we should list in our newsletter?**

**1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)** is a 24 hour crisis line sponsored by the Kristin Brooks Hope Center. For more information, visit [www.hopeline.com](http://www.hopeline.com)



## Not Just an “Adult” Health Problem

*Iowa 2010 Strategic Plan*

Mental illness constitutes one of the greatest threats to the health and well being of children and adolescents. 1 out of 5 children and adolescents has a mental health problem that can be treated.

At least 1 in 10 has a serious emotional disorder, but only 33% of children with mental disorders receive treatment.

Early detection can prevent mental health problems from worsening. No other illnesses damage so many children so severely.

In 2001, parents were forced to place 12,700 (nation-wide) in welfare or juvenile systems to receive needed mental health care (trading custody for services they could not afford).

Suicide is the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for youths aged 10-14, 3<sup>rd</sup> among those between 15 and 24, and 2<sup>nd</sup> among 25 to 34 year olds.

For youth between 15 and 19, suicide rates have tripled since the 1950's. These startling statistics become understandable when one realizes that as many as 1 in 33 children and 1 in 8 adolescents have clinical depression.

Of those that die by suicide, approximately 90% had a mental disorder, and 40% had visited their primary care doctor within the month before their suicide.

50% of students with severe emotional disorders drop out of school. Mental health is essential to learning.

Untreated mental illness among youth leads to school failure, delinquency, substance abuse and entrance into the criminal justice system.

65% of males and 75% of females in the juvenile justice system have at least one psychiatric diagnosis

Children and adults have co-occurring mental and addictive disorders. These cases are the hardest to treat. Problems are more serious and difficult to treat.

Substance abuse increases the severity of the psychiatric symptoms.

Too many treatment centers only address the substance abuse. Studies have shown higher treatment success rates when both the addiction and mental disorders are addressed. Only 19% are treated for both. 29% are not treated for either.

### **Garrett Lee Memorial Act**

The Garrett Lee Memorial Act was authored by a senator from Oregon who lost his 22 year old son to suicide. This federal legislation was passed unanimously in October 2004 – A suicide prevention bill – and provides grants to fund college mental health programs and state suicide prevention strategies. In recent legislative action – funding will be \$27 million.

### **Is Iowa poised to apply for a grant?**

NAMI has campus affiliates at the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, University of Northern Iowa, Kirkwood College, and Central College.

The NAMI on Campus program allows for students to take action to raise awareness and education on campus, as well as provide a support group for students with a mental illness, and help make referrals to resources for students.

The National Institute of Mental Health recently finished a study that found half of all cases of mental illness are apparent before the age of 14, and 75% of them before the age of 24.

With these alarming numbers, it is essential that college campuses have multiple resources for students with mental illnesses, and that people receive treatment as early as possible.

In a recent nationwide survey, NAMI found that 1 in 3 college students has endured prolonged bouts of depression, while 1 in 4 experiences suicidal thoughts or feelings.

*“I feel like I am at the bottom of a deep well. I try to climb out. I try everything I can think of to move up, even an inch. Sometimes it feels like it's working, like I'm raising myself out of this pit. Yet, every time I seem to be making progress, something happens, and I fall back to the bottom. Sometimes, I just want to end it.” ---Member of fraternity*

**NAMI IOWA supports the need for early identification and suicide prevention education within our educational system.** We support the expansion of screening programs such as Columbia University and others are using to refer persons to seek the help needed.

*Early diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems can help children and young adults reach their full potential.*



### **Information for Educators “Breaking the Silence”**

(from BTS brochure)

Mental illness has never been more treatable, but there is a deafening silence about it in our classrooms.

People keep quiet about mental illness. They don't talk about their brother who hears voices, their mother who stays in bed because of her depression, or the counting rituals they themselves do before they can leave their house. But they should.

Scratch the surface and you will find that almost everyone has a relative or knows someone who has a mental illness. But few speak out about it out of shame. There is still a terrible stigma which surrounds mental illness, which is reinforced by violent or comic media images.

So our children become hidden victims. Afraid to speak about their illness, or unable to recognize the symptoms, they may deteriorate for years before getting treatment.

**Breaking the Silence** (BTS) is a teaching package that includes lesson plans, games and posters on serious mental illness for three grade levels: upper elementary, middle school, and high school. Through stories and activities students learn the warning signs of mental illness, that mental illness can be successfully treated, and how to recognize and combat stigma. BTS is designed to put a human face on mental illness, replacing fear and ridicule with compassion.

To get a FREE copy of the Tool Kit and BTS, visit [www.btslessonplans.org](http://www.btslessonplans.org)  
Email: [btslessonplans@aol.com](mailto:btslessonplans@aol.com)  
Phone: 516-326-0797

*Doesn't it make sense to have mental health education a mandatory part of the Iowa educational system?*



Sign up for the next **“Visions for Tomorrow”** class. It is an 8 week course (1 night a week for 2-2 ½ hours) for parents, foster parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents who have serious emotional disorders.

Curriculum includes types of mental illnesses and emotional disorders as well as instruction on coping skills; dealing with schools; communication; medication; rehabilitation, recovery, and transition; and advocacy. Call the NAMI office to sign up – 515-254-0417.

### Useful Sources of Information on Mental Health

**Schizophrenia Digest** – subscribe at [www.szdigest.com](http://www.szdigest.com)

**Bp Magazine (Bipolar)** – subscribe at 1-888-834-5537 – Each is \$20 per year for 4 issues.

**Harvard Mental Health Letter** 877-649-9457

Subscription is \$72 per year.

**Treatment Advocacy Center Catalyst** newsletter

E. Fuller Torrey, M.D. – President 703-294-6001

Web site: [www.psychlaws.org](http://www.psychlaws.org)

E-mail: [info@psychlaws.org](mailto:info@psychlaws.org)



***Many of you have been receiving our newsletter even though you are not members.***

***Would you please consider joining our organization to help support our activities?***



### **VHM Machine at DM Police Dept.**

VHM means virtual hallucination machine – a virtual reality experience to give the user an idea of what it is like to have a hallucination.

The program was developed with the assistance of approximately 50 people suffering from schizophrenia.

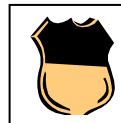
On Jan. 15, Charlie Tomlinson of Jansen-Pharmaceutica and Teresa Bomhoff, NAMI-GDM, brought the VHM machine to the Des Moines Police Dept. Officer Kelly Drane and Nurse Mary Elliott of the Des Moines Mobile Mental Health Crisis Unit were our hostesses-both very gracious and committed individuals.

Approximately 10 law enforcement personnel participated in the exercise. We had pleasant conversations both before and after each person completed the 10 minute experience to discuss their impressions.

Unfortunately the machine broke down after about 2 hours of use. Many more officers and personnel wanted to participate so we have scheduled another date to bring the VHM machine back.

We will visit the DM Police Dept. again on March 8 and try again to make the experience available to all who wish to participate.

Many thanks to the DM Police Dept. and the Des Moines Mobile Mental Health Crisis Unit for making this training exercise possible and for their hospitality.



### **CIT Conference in Minneapolis**

The First Annual Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team Conference will be offered in Minneapolis, MN, from Feb. 27 to March 3. It is sponsored by the Barbara Schneider Foundation and the Minneapolis Police Dept. Both parties created the first CIT unit in Minnesota.

Attendance for the 1<sup>st</sup> day conference is \$75.00 and includes all presentations, lunch, afternoon, snack and free parking.

Speakers will talk on topics including CIT training, the overlap of mental health and public safety response, communication and de-escalation skills. It will also include breakouts on: combat stress, traumatic brain injury, scenario role plays in CIT training; hospital vs. jail; responding to childhood and adolescent disorders.

Participants can attend the first day only – or attend for the full week. 40 hours of CIT training will continue Tuesday-Friday of the same week. Cost for all 5 days is \$400.

Training will be geared around a framework to identify mental health and related problems and the skills to respond to them appropriately and effectively.

Also included in the CIT training will be a full menu of topics including mood disorders, thought disorders, anxiety, developmental disabilities, suicide by cop, pharmacology, self medication and the family experience. There will be a panel of consumers who have been responded to by law enforcement when they were in mental health crisis, site visits to hospital psych wards and more.

Call Mark Anderson, Executive Director, Barbara Schneider Foundation – **612-801-8572** – for more information and registration forms, if you are interested in attending.



### **What is the Rainbow Center?**

The Rainbow Center offers rehabilitation for persons with mental illness, based on the clubhouse philosophy. The club is divided into 2 work units. Each unit works consistently to complete the daily work of the Rainbow Center. The program also provides members with a social community and the opportunity to participate in our Transitional Employment program.

Work areas are in clerical, education, kitchen, administration, transitional employment, banking, and social activities.

Tours are provided throughout the week by appointment. Referrals are accepted from all sources. Documentation of mental illness as a primary diagnosis is needed for eligibility. The Rainbow Center reserves the right to select members who will benefit from its safe, unstructured, independent program. Call 243-6929 or email: [rainclub@aol.com](mailto:rainclub@aol.com) for more information.



Many thanks to Dan Flaherty, Family Advocate, with the Polk Co. District Attorney's office for speaking to the NAMI-GDM affiliate and support group on Sunday, January 8.

Dan presented a program on civil commitment. One of the main messages was that civil commitment is a civil action to obtain medical assistance, not a criminal action. He was very thorough in explaining the 4 statutes and 1 Supreme Court rule that address commitments and explained the 5 different standards.

Statute 229 of the 2005 Iowa Code addresses seriously mentally impaired or serious mental impairment.

Statute 125 of the 2005 Iowa Code addresses chronic substance abuser

Statute 812 of the 2005 Iowa Code addresses incompetence.

Statute 222 of the 2005 Iowa Code addresses mental retardation or mentally retarded.

Rule 2.22(8), Iowa Rules of Criminal Procedure addresses elements of not guilty by reason of insanity or diminished responsibility.

Dan very patiently explained many more details and answered questions from the audience.

Dan handles over 300 civil commitment cases a year and represents the family or other concerned person.

Should you need to visit with Dan about a personal situation – please call 286-3348.

**Vilsack Seeks to Expand Mental Health Parity**

*Per Statehouse News 1-18-06*

Under last year's limited mental health insurance parity law, any private or public group health insurance plan with over 50 enrollees must provide coverage for at least seven mental health disorders specified in the statute.

Now Governor Vilsack is proposing an expansion of that mandate to include substance abuse addiction disorders, plus 3 additional categories of mental illness – panic, paranoia, and eating disorders.

In essence, the Governor wants to enact the more expansive parity law he initially proposed last year, before it was pared-down through legislative negotiations.

Vilsack says this new proposal will have minimal fiscal impact. To underscore the point, he offers to exempt any group health plan that can show that this mandate causes their rates to increase by 3% or more, something that was not in last year's bill.

The Governor's proposal is based upon research suggesting that society as a whole loses billions of dollars from untreated mental illnesses, and that most of these illnesses can be successfully treated.

Similarly, parity advocates point to research indicating that a dollar spent on addiction treatment ultimately saves \$7 in medical and social costs.

*Please note the Mental Health Advocacy Coalition is recommending inclusion of PTSD (post traumatic stress syndrome), substance abuse, anorexia, pre and post-natal depressive disorder in women, and emotional disorders afflicting children and adolescents.*



**Morning Has Broken: A Couple's Journey Through Depression**

Model Emme and her husband, Phil Aronson have written a book chronicling his struggle with depression and to share insights on what got them through.... how their marriage survived depression.



**Veterans' Head Injuries Present Unique Challenges**

Although the survival rate of American military personnel is far higher than in past wars due to improved technology, the injuries suffered by these soldiers and marines that would have otherwise proved fatal are presenting medical professionals with unique challenges. In particular, of the 16,472 injured military personnel as of Jan. 20, more than 1700 had head and brain injuries, half of which are severe enough to permanently affect their behavior, mood, memory and ability to work. Medical treatment for brain injuries as a result of the war in Iraq are expected to cost \$14 billion during the next 20 years according to experts.



**Divided Minds  
Twin Sisters and Their Journey Through Schizophrenia**

Carolyn Spiro, M.D., and Pamela Spiro Wagner have written a riveting true story of identical twin sisters and their duel with mental illness.

Growing up in the fifties, Carolyn Spiro was always in the shadow of her more intellectually dominant and socially outgoing twin, Pamela. But as the twins approached adolescence, Pamela began to suffer the initial symptoms of schizophrenia that did not culminate until her freshman year of college at Brown University where she had her first major breakdown. Exceeding everyone's expectations, Carolyn graduated from Harvard Medical School and forged a successful career in psychiatry. The story is told in the alternating voices of the sisters. Pamela is a writer and poet.



**BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY TO SEE WHAT TYPE OF MENTAL HEALTH COVERAGE YOU HAVE**

There have been reports of severe restrictions in mental health coverage. Know what your situation is and if needed – change policies to obtain adequate coverage.

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### Interrupting the Hallucination Process

- Establish a trusting and interpersonal relationship; be consistent and honest. You need to talk about the hallucinations before the person is actively hallucinating.
- Look and listen for evidence of hallucination. There are usually some signs that the person is beginning to hallucinate. For example, the person may look around the room as if checking to see if someone is speaking to him/her, or the person may laugh for no apparent reason.
- Focus on the hallucinatory cues with the consumer and elicit the consumer's observations and sensations. It is important to be honest. For example, say to the consumer, "I noticed you were looking around the room, are you hearing voices? What can I do to help you?" Talk to the person who is hallucinating to find out how serious the hallucination is. If you can talk to the person long enough, the hallucination may pass. However, if the hallucination continues for a long time or if the person may cause harm to him/herself or others, it is best to get the person professional help.
- If asked, point out simply that you are not experiencing the hallucination. Remember, the hallucination is the consumer's reality. Do not say that what they are seeing or hearing is not real.
- Speak slowly and in brief sentences. You may also need to repeat yourself several times before the person can process what you are saying. Therefore, it will be difficult for him/her to process stimuli.

Source: "Understanding and Communicating With a Person Who is Hallucinating," a videotape produced by Moller, M.S.N., A.R.N.P., C.S., Mary D. (1989). This tape is available in the NAMI-Iowa library.

**Please help to support us** whether it is through payment of dues or attending meetings or both!

### RESEARCH PROGRAMS



The Dept of Psychiatry at the U. of Iowa has been awarded a federal grant to study the genetics of recurrent, early-onset **depression** as well as a genomic study of **bipolar** disorder.

**Our speaker on Sunday, Feb. 5, is a contact person for both studies – Nancy Hale, B.S., R.N.**

The toll free number to call if you are interested in participating in either study is (888) 850-8531.

The individual with the illness will be asked to complete a diagnostic interview and answer brief family history questions. Participants will be asked to donate a small blood sample for DNA testing.

Scheduling is done to best suit the participant. Weekend and evening appointments are available for those who need them. Compensation will be provided.

#### ALSO

University of Iowa researchers invite participants for studies of schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder. Ongoing studies include the following areas: antipsychotic medication studies, weight gain and wellness studies, studies of medications that may improve memory and thinking, and a study of non-medication treatment of auditory hallucinations.

Participation is voluntary. There are no charges for any of the study procedures or medications. Some studies involve medications or procedures that are not FDA approved and are considered experimental. Compensation is available for your time and travel expenses.

Toll free inquiries may be made at 800-777-8442. Ask for Jane Kerr or Tim Holman.

#### NAMI – GDM Membership Cards

For those of you who have renewed your membership for 2006, we have membership cards waiting for you at our next meeting on Sunday, Feb. 5.

All persons paying for a new or renewal NAMI-GDM membership will receive a membership card.

Please detach, complete, attach check, and mail to NAMI-GDM Treasurer – Don Jayne, 1291 16<sup>th</sup> St., West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

- For Renewal of NAMI – GDM dues for 2006  
 To become a NAMI-GDM member in 2006



Checks should be made payable to NAMI-GDM.

### IT'S TIME

Dues are as follows:  
(please check one)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 Individual/Family  
(\$10 national, \$10 state, and \$15 local)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$3.00 Consumers/Limited Income

City, State, Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$40.00 Professional

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*We look forward to seeing you in 2006!!*

*Be part of a movement to create awareness of the facts of mental illness – it is a human issue, a health issue, a community issue. At our meetings, you can meet, share, and care with others who are living with mental illness, as well as obtain information about mental health resources, meet speakers knowledgeable about mental illness, have access to informational resources and legislative issues.*

## Research on NAMI's Family to Family Educational Program

Lisa Dixon, M.D., at the U. of Maryland, School of Medicine has received a \$2.2 million 4 year grant from the National Institute of Health to study the benefits of participating in a NAMI Family to Family education program to enable people to effectively handle the mental illness of a relative or loved one. The research team will work with programs in Maryland. As part of the study, Dr. Dixon will also investigate the benefits to patients of having a family member participate in the program. "We anticipate that the patients will have better outcomes because their family members will have a clearer understanding of their diagnosis and an arsenal of coping mechanisms at their disposal," says Dr. Dixon.

**If you would like to attend a Family to Family class –** please call NAMI-Iowa 254-0417. The next class starts March 9 and is filling up fast. We are limited to 25 participants per class.

**If you would like to become a Family to Family teacher –** Please contact Carol Porch at 319-351-4398 or leave a message at 800-417-0417 or e-mail [porch@avalon.net](mailto:porch@avalon.net) for further details.

### Abraham Lincoln

On Jan. 16, the History Channel and NMHA sponsored a program on Abraham Lincoln who had a life long struggle with depression. Americans know Abraham Lincoln as the emancipator of slaves, the man who held together the Union in its darkest days. But few know the Lincoln who battled suicidal thoughts and at times called himself "The loneliest man in the world."

Here are some of the common threads that enabled Lincoln to face and overcome his obstacles:

- **Positive outlook:** Staying hopeful and positive is key to recovery from any setback. In fact, hardships may help us become stronger and wiser. As British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once said, "What appear to be calamities are often the sources of fortune."
- **Perserverance:** To bounce back from adversity, it's vital to stay focused and firm. We often need to fight for ourselves to get what we need to recover.
- **Service to others:** By helping others, we can in turn help ourselves. We can gain perspective on our own plight as well as feel a sense of purpose.
- **Sense of humor:** There is nothing more important than a healthy sense of humor in dealing with adversity. The ability to laugh helps us to get through the most difficult times. Winston Churchill, another leader who experienced depression, once said, "If you are going through hell, keep going."
- **Self-knowledge:** The more we inform ourselves about our situation, the better we can handle the ups and downs we face. Without knowledge, we have less control over our own future.
- **Staying connected:** Hardships are not times to go through alone. Support from friends and family is an important part of overcoming any adversity. As Lincoln once said, "I am a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down."

If a person's personal battles – whether health-related or situational – become too overwhelming, he or she should always seek help from a mental health professional. There is nothing shameful in reaching out for help. Lincoln did.

To learn more about mental illness, call NAMI Iowa (515-254-0417) or visit their office library at 5911 Meredith Drive, Suite E, Des Moines, IA 50322-1903. Check out the online resource NAMI website, [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), for information on research, disorders, treatments, medications and other topics.

From: NAMI-Greater Des Moines  
An affiliate and support group of NAMI-Iowa  
5911 Meredith Drive, Suite E  
Des Moines, Iowa 50322-1903