



# NAMI – GREATER DES MOINES

## AFFILIATE AND SUPPORT GROUP NEWSLETTER

July 2005

*“Support, Education, and Advocacy”*

Meetings are the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month from 2 to 4 P.M.  
At Iowa Lutheran Hospital, Level B conference room.

2005 Dates	Event	Activity/Other information
July 10	NAMI-GDM affiliate and support group meeting 2:00 – 4:00 P.M.	“Stigma Busters” program- a drama group of consumers – will tell it like it is!
July 15-17	“Visions for Tomorrow” volunteer teacher training	Contact NAMI-Iowa if interested.
August 7	NAMI-GDM affiliate and support group meeting	We will be inviting a representative of the Des Moines Police Dept.
August 25	“Choices in Recovery” program and dinner at the West Des Moines Marriott	Free event sponsored by NAMI-GDM – more details forthcoming
August 29	“Family to Family” education course begins (12 weeks)	Contact Teresa Bomhoff or NAMI-Iowa

It has become apparent to the officers and Board of Directors of NAMI-Greater Des Moines that we need to **increase communication** to present and potential members and actively solicit your input to make the organization more effective for each of you. We presently have 41 paid members.

To start with, an **information packet** will now be provided to each member and new attendee at our meetings. It will contain information on contacts for mental health resources as well as a list of books and videotapes, programming ideas, NAMI education program pamphlets, and membership information. We will be making an extra effort to make sure new attendees are made to feel welcome.

<b><u>NAMI – Greater Des Moines</u></b>	
<b><u>President</u></b> – Teresa Bomhoff	274-6876
<i>E-mail: <a href="mailto:tbomhoff@mchsi.com">tbomhoff@mchsi.com</a></i>	
<b><u>Vice-President</u></b> – Vicki Adams	270-8253
<i>E-mail: <a href="mailto:vadams31@aol.com">vadams31@aol.com</a></i>	
<b><u>Treasurer</u></b> – Frances Ramsey	288-7520
<b><u>Secretary</u></b> – Linda Jayne	225-8912
<b><u>Board members</u></b>	
June Lavigne	287-1707
Marlene Foster	277-4155
Bill Darby	279-7032
<b><u>Mailings:</u></b> Mark Adams	556-8164
NAMI-Iowa office	254-0417
<i>E-mail: <a href="mailto:AMIIowa@aol.com">AMIIowa@aol.com</a></i>	

**THANKS!!** For several years, Herb and Frances Ramsey have faithfully brought numerous books and other information on mental illness to each of the meetings. We profoundly thank them for their contribution. Their “mini-library” will now join the NAMI-Iowa library at 5911 Meredith Drive, Suite E, Des Moines.



We have had 4 shootings of people in a mental health crisis in the last 6 months by law enforcement authorities. Is anyone bothered by this? There is a solution that law enforcement authorities everywhere can take – Crisis Intervention Training (CIT).

CIT programs are designed to educate and prepare police officers who come into contact with people with severe mental illnesses to recognize the signs and symptoms of these illnesses, and to respond effectively and appropriately to people who are experiencing a psychiatric crisis. Because police officers are often the first responders in these incidents, it is essential that they know how critical periods of mental illness alter behaviors and perceptions, can assess what is needed in the moment, and can bring understanding and compassion to bear when they are handling these difficult situations.

CIT training provides them with the skills to make a safer intervention for themselves, for the consumer in a crisis, for the consumer’s family and for the community. A key feature of the training teaches police officers effective methods of de-escalating the crisis situation and “reaching” the person in crisis. This approach allows consumers in distress to participate in the decisions about their treatment and facilitates consensus about the immediate safe course to follow.

The Des Moines Police Dept. has a mobile mental health crisis unit, but they do not have CIT training for their officers. Perhaps it is time for all Des Moines metro police departments to invest in this valuable training.

Findings of CIT program effectiveness are beginning to be replicated in outcome studies in states where the program has been instituted:

1. Criminal recidivism by mental health consumers is reduced.
2. The relationships between law enforcement and mental health care providers are improved.
3. Less than 1% taken to a hospital emergency room were found NOT to need emergency medical or psychological care
4. Officer injury rates are reduced.

Consumer injury rates and mortality rates are also reduced.

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For more information on this important topic – go to [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) – in the search option – type in CIT – and review the information available.

At the NAMI national convention last week – we learned NAMI will have a web based resource center on CIT at the nami.org website by 1-15-06.

There will be a National CIT conference in Orlando in May 2006.

By July 2006, there will be a model CIT curriculum on the nami.org website.

*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.*

#### **Timetable for NAMI-GDM business**

**October** – President appoints a nominating committee to select candidates for officers for the following year. The president is an ex-officio member of this committee.

**November** – Nominating committee announces list of candidates.

**December** – Members vote for candidates at the regular monthly meeting.

**January** – Installation of new officers

**February** – On a bi-annual basis, the organization shall file for renewal of its report for an Iowa non-profit corporation required by the Iowa Code chapter 504 A with the Secretary of State. This was last done 2-05. It will need to be done again 2-07.

**March** – Deadline for organization dues to be paid. Dues shall be sent to NAMI-Iowa, and will cover state and NAMI National dues.

#### **Volunteer Opportunity**

**Distribution of NAMI Educational Pamphlets and NAMI-GDM membership pamphlets** – There is a need to make sure all libraries, hospitals, clinics, and other locations have a consistent supply of pamphlets for the general public to access. If you would be

interested in delivering this information to a variety of locations, please contact Teresa.

#### **Upcoming Projects**

**Mental Health Resource Pamphlet or Booklet** – Both Ames and Iowa City have a pamphlet or booklet which they distribute to a wide base of providers, institutions, and the public. We need such a document for Polk County also. If you would be interested in developing this publication for NAMI-GDM, please contact Teresa.

**NAMI Walks** – We are hoping to have a 5K (2.2 mile) walk in the fall of 2006 or 2007. It may well be a combined effort of the GDM affiliate, the Ames affiliate, the Jasper affiliate, the Adel support group, and others as well. Talks are under way. This will be a fundraising event as well as an advocacy event to increase awareness and combat stigma. If you would be interested in helping, please contact Teresa.



#### **Stress Ails Caregivers**

Excerpted from New York Daily News, 2-17-04

Some family members are at increased risk for depression or anxiety, heart attack, stroke, muscle and joint problems, weakened immune systems and sometimes premature death. Those same family members also are prone to sleeplessness, fatigue, weight gain and gastrointestinal problems. Who are these individuals?

They are ordinary people who care for disabled or chronically ill family members or friends, sometimes for decades – without pay, training, and/or support from the health care system.

Regardless of their backgrounds or ages, they all face similar and often unrelenting responsibilities and stress compounded by lack of training, loneliness and confusion. Among the most vulnerable are elderly caregivers, long-term caregivers, and caregivers with existing chronic health conditions.

Caregivers should look out for such warning signs as sleeplessness, irritability, feelings of lost privacy or isolation, crying spells, difficulty making decisions and feelings of strain between work and family responsibilities.

Eight tips to help care givers live longer, healthier lives:

- 1) Recognize that your health is important, not just to you but to the person you care for.

- 2) Tell your own doctors about your care giving responsibilities and ask how it may affect your health.
- 3) Pay attention to your own medicine and checkups as carefully as your do for your loved one.
- 4) Seek help so you are able to rest and eat right.
- 5) Make sure you exercise every day. Taking a daily walk is a good start.
- 6) Reduce stress by taking even a short break to do something you really enjoy, either at home or outside.
- 7) Identify the sources of your stress, and call someone for advice about those specific problems.
- 8) Seek professional medical or mental health care if your situation becomes too overwhelming.

**Take the NAMI Family to Family educational course to obtain coping skills and information about mental illness.**



**Tips for Parents:  
How to Care for  
Your Child's  
Mental Health**

*Excerpted from NMHA*

*News 5-26-05*

1. Know your family's medical history so you can identify early warning signs.
2. Trust your instincts and pay attention to a child's complaints, such as "I don't feel well."
3. Stay attuned to changes in your child's behavior or activities.
4. Educate yourself on the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders. Separate "fact from fiction" by using credible sources with information based on medical science rather than rumor or opinion. Beware of extreme claims, such as antidepressants are "always dangerous" or "never effective." Ask your family doctor if you have questions.
5. Knowing that your child may need help is hard to accept. Don't blame yourself. Mental health problems are not a symptom of bad parenting. They are common and very treatable.
6. Seek help if your child shows signs of a mental health problem. Start with your pediatrician since ruling out any physical health problem should be the first step of your child's care.
7. Advocate for your child. If his or her provider does not recognize telltale signs, seek a second opinion. If your spouse cannot admit your child has a problem, continue to assert the truth: that she/he has an illness, but can get better. If you

- meet insurance hurdles, don't be deterred from getting your child help.
8. Discuss all available treatment options with your child's doctor, and carefully weigh all the risks and benefits associated with each treatment.
9. Stay attuned to how your child responds to treatments. Make sure she/he receives a thorough evaluation, continual follow-up and careful monitoring – particularly in the first several weeks – by your doctor.
10. Educate yourself about the warning signs of both mental disorders and suicide. Learn your child's earliest warning sign, like changes in sleeping and eating habits, irritability or poor school performance. Act quickly if you are concerned. Many people are afraid to discuss the issue of suicide for fear of "planting" the idea—it is better to be open and direct.
11. Do not abruptly discontinue or change treatments—it can lead to significant side effects.
12. Know that your child will get better.
13. Remember that the worst possible situation for a child with a mental health problem is to go without any treatment at all.

If a child has a headache for 2 weeks, parents take them to get checked out by a doctor – parents need to do the same if their child feels depressed.

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

***Did you know?***

**Drug Assistance Programs** – Many drug manufacturers have Patient Assistance programs! These programs are designed to help those who can't afford their medicines obtain them at no or low cost. [www.NeedyMeds.com](http://www.NeedyMeds.com) contains the most complete and accurate information on assistance programs available.

**FREE!** Subscriptions to NAMI Beginnings, a publication dedicated to the Young Minds of America from the Child and Adolescent Action Center is about children and adolescents living with mental illnesses. If you would like to receive future issues of NAMI Beginnings, please visit the NAMI Store at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) and sign up for your free subscription. Newsletters are mailed quarterly.

Subscriptions are free. Consider contacting the school counselor near you and letting them know about the free subscriptions. Previous issues are available for downloading from the NAMI web site.

**FREE!**  
**“BREAKING THE SILENCE”**  
**School Outreach Tool Kit**

Breaking the Silence (BTS) is an innovative teaching package that includes lesson plans, games and posters on serious mental illness for three grade levels: upper elementary, middle school, and high school. BTS meets national health education standards. 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.

BTS recently received funding to write and disseminate a manual that includes successful outreach strategies for bringing BTS and mental illness education into schools nationwide. The Tool Kit and a limited supply of BTS for training purposes are now available FREE of charge at [www.btslessonplans.org](http://www.btslessonplans.org).

The Tool Kit includes:

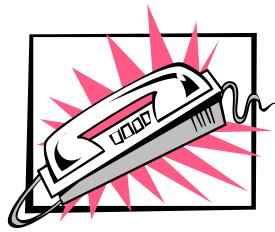
- Suggestions for organizing and funding a BTS educational outreach project
- Rationale for mental illness education
- Strategies for recruiting and training volunteers
- Suggestions for approaching colleges and universities
- Scripted dialogue useful with hesitant school personnel
- Mental illness facts, BTS testimonials, and other useful information.

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

**CINA LEGISLATION**

The Child in Need of Assistance legislation this year will allow some families who have a seriously emotionally disturbed or disabled child to seek assistance for their health costs without giving up their rights if the child has not been in trouble with Juvenile authorities. Parents were made to feel as if they were unfit parents when seeking state assistance in paying for services. This legislation mirrors other states language that was amended in years past. Please seek a copy of House File 538 for more information.



We will be conducting a **telephone survey** of present members, past members, and past drop-ins to our affiliate and support group meetings to assess what changes might be made to meet member needs

and increase involvement in our organization. Vicki and Mark Adams and NAMI-Iowa are assembling names and phone numbers for the survey call list.

1. Should we meet on a different day other than Sunday? (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday)

2. If we meet on a different day, meet in the late afternoon or the evening?

3. Should we meet at another location?

4. Of the 3 focus areas – support, education, and advocacy – how would you rank each in their importance?

5. How could we make the support function of our organization more effective?

6. Do you have suggestions as to education topics you would like to see offered?

7. Do you have suggestions as to advocacy projects you would be interested in?

8. Would a newsletter be of interest to you?

9. If not presently a member, what could the affiliate do differently which would entice you to rejoin?

The officers and Board of Directors will compile the results and inform you of changes to be implemented. Any changes would be implemented in September 2005.

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS!!**

**Every Monday evening** – 6:30 – 8:30 P.M. – the NAMI – Support group meets at the Mercy Franklin West Conference Room (enter West side entrance) – 48<sup>th</sup> & Franklin, Des Moines.

**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.

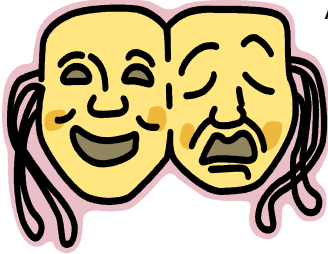
**NEW MAGAZINES!! (\$20/year)**

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

**Bp Magazine (Bipolar)** – subscribe at 1-888-834-5537

Both magazines are excellent resources for consumers, families, friends, and health care providers.

*Science – Support - Dignity*



At our next affiliate/support group meeting on Sunday, July 10, we will have a program by the **Stigma Busters**. It is an improvisational theater group.

Among people who have been treated for mental illness, most say that the biggest problem they face when they try to resume life in their community is simply their inability to be accepted by other people. They feel the sting of discrimination in almost everything they attempt. Many times they feel old friends are uncomfortable in their presence. They feel cut off from society. They are victims of the stigma that still surrounds mental illness. It is their most debilitating handicap.

**Stigma Busters** work to reduce stigma by showing the pain and laughter of their experiences using improvisational theater techniques. They meet every occasion with humor and courage, as winners, not victims.

The show is 40-45 minutes long and is directed by Thomas Perrine, a professional director and actor in the central Iowa area.

**Please join us on Sunday, July 10!**

### Membership

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

<b>NAMI –GDM dues are:</b>	
<b>Family/Individual</b> (\$15 local, \$10 state, \$10 national)	\$35.00
<b>Open Door Membership</b> (Limited Income)	\$ 3.00
<b>Professional</b>	\$40.00

If you wish to become a member, please send your check (made payable to NAMI-Greater Des Moines) To: Frances Ramsey, Treasurer  
200 Bell Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50315-192

### Available at the July 10 meeting

There will be copies of the executive summary for the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. Quote: "The Commission's findings confirm that there are unmet needs and that many barriers impede care for people with mental illnesses. Mental illnesses are shockingly common; they affect almost every American family. . . It can occur at any stage of life, from childhood to old age. No community is unaffected by mental illnesses; no school or workplace is untouched."

President Bush said, "Americans must understand and send this message: mental disability is not a scandal – it is an illness. And like physical illness, it is treatable, especially when the treatment comes early."

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  
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Des Moines, Iowa 50322-1903