



nAMI Orange County News & Views

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Orange County, NC

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Events:

3/12, SOS Support Group
 4/18, NAMIWalks Brunch
 5/2, NAMIWalks
 7/6-9, NAMI National Convention, San Francisco
 3/20-12, In Our Own Voice Training
 4/10-12, Peer-to-Peer Mentor Training

See page 6 for details

Contact Us!

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Better Mental Health Care, Better N.C. Economy

The following editorial by John H. Gilmore was published in the News & Observer on January 26, 2009 and is reprinted with permission of the author.

CHAPEL HILL -- Everyone has a hand out in anticipation of receiving some of the massive economic stimulus package expected from President Barack Obama's administration. Bankers, automobile makers, road and bridge builders, mortgage holders, small business owners and green energy suppliers are all in line.

I would propose another, perhaps unusual addition to the list of things that will stimulate the economy in North Carolina -- good mental health.

There has been much debate about how to fix our state's devastated mental health system. Using the economic stimulus package to build a better mental health system would actually go a long way toward improving the economic future of North Carolina.

A recent study in the American Journal of Psychiatry found that in 2002 alone, serious mental illness cost the United States \$193 billion in lost earnings -- that's about 25 percent of the \$750 billion economic stimulus package being proposed by Obama.

Lost earnings are just the tip of the economic iceberg of mental illness. The National Institute of Mental Health has estimated the total annual economic cost of mental illness in the United States to be about \$317 billion, when the additive costs of psychiatric care and disability benefits are

considered. This does not include the costs of prison and jails, in which an estimated 16 percent to 22 percent of inmates have mental illnesses. It also does not include the higher costs of medical care and early mortality associated with mental illness.

While mental illness accounts for more days of disability than all physical illnesses combined, North Carolina invests much less in its mental health system than other states; we rank 43rd in the nation in per capita spending on the treatment of mental illness.

A recent N.C. Institute of Medicine report found that fewer than 1 in 10 residents who abuse alcohol or other substances get treatment, even though substance use costs North Carolina's economy more than \$12 billion a year.

We should spend a portion of the stimulus package to rebuild North Carolina's crumbling mental health infrastructure. Stable, publicly run safety-net mental health clinics or clinical homes should be established in every community and provide modern treatments that are scientifically based and easy to access.

These safety-net clinics, needed before, are even more critical now that the faltering economy and state budget cuts will further disintegrate the already fragmented privatized public mental health system. Investment in a statewide mental health electronic medical records system would ultimately reduce costs and improve the quality of care.

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All money should be invested wisely, with a solid business plan based on accountability, reduced paperwork and administrative costs and with a clear understanding between the state and local communities about who is responsible for what.

The Government Office for Science in London has recently suggested that to prosper economically amid the demands and pressures of complex and rapidly changing times, countries must maximize their “mental wealth.” A critical part of the “mental capital” that a country or a state uses to build a better financial future is good mental health.

A decent mental health system that addresses the basic needs of the residents of North Carolina will pay for itself in reduced disability, improved earning potential and lower costs for medical care and incarceration. A decent mental health system will stimulate our economy by helping us all apply our mental capital to the challenges that lie ahead in these uncertain times.

(John H. Gilmore, M.D., is Thad and Alice Eure distinguished professor of psychiatry at UNC-Chapel Hill and director of the UNC Center for Community Mental Health.)

“We have lots of stories to tell, both about programs that have helped greatly . . . and of gaps and lapses in service that have led to outcomes that have cost us, our family members, our communities and the taxpayers of this state.”

Lessons from the Winter’09 Legislative Breakfast

by Gary D. Gaddy

The 200 or so citizens who attended this winter’s 31st Annual Legislative Breakfast for Mental Health not only had the chance to show their support for a better system of services for those with mental illness, but also had the chance to hear from nine state representatives and senators. These legislators, who are largely supportive of our aims, talked about how we as citizens and advocates can be more effective in getting what we want out of the state legislature. Following are some specific recommendations made by the legislators for counteracting well-financed professional lobbyists.

Visit over time: It is less effective when we show up in force but only once or twice a year for special lobbying blitzes. We should send delegations of our ordinary citizen-members throughout the year.

Target leaders: We should especially focus on house and senate leaders as well as committee chairs who have authority over spending priorities and bills that we care about.

Broaden your base: We should engage other groups who broadly share our interests and work with them, not compete with them.

Reach outside the Triangle: Our local delegation is largely sympathetic to us, so we need mobilize our friends and family

who live in other parts of the state to push for things that we, and they, want.

Be consistent in your message: We should have a specific action or set of actions that we agree upon, that we lobby for. Vague requests for more funding and better services may not get results.

Be concise in your presentation: You will likely not be given much time so make sure you make your points quickly and clearly.

Leave a message behind: It is a good idea to take a one-page document where you clearly spell out what you want to say (but may not get to say during your in-person visit.)

Include your personal story: It’s what we bring that no else can. And we have lots of stories to tell, both about programs that have helped greatly – and now may be in jeopardy of cuts – and also of gaps and lapses in service that have led to outcomes that never should have happened. Lapses that have cost us, our family members, our communities and the taxpayers of this state much more than it ever should have.

Remember that you do count: To paraphrase one legislator said, “It’s voters that elected us and that we represent, so they need to let us know what they think.” And while there are lots of paid lobbyists representing their interests, there are lots more of us than there are of them.

Doctors Discuss their “Faith at Work”

by Julia Trimmer

Psychiatry and spirituality are on parallel, but non-intersecting tracks, according to a psychologist, a psychoanalyst and two psychiatrists who spoke about reconciling their faith with their work. On Sunday, February 22, over 150 people attended the panel discussion at Binkley Baptist Church, sponsored by Faith Connections on Mental Illness.

The panelists told of the wide gulf that exists between mental health professionals and faith communities. Each panelist gave a personal account of their professional and spiritual or religious backgrounds. They spoke of common themes in the role of spirituality in mental health treatments.

Duke University’s Dr. Dan Blazer considered the lack of integration between the faith communities and mental health professionals a tragedy. “Mental health professionals have no idea about what’s happening with the faith communities, and also psychiatry has moved away from faith communities, as if they have nothing to do with brains. Faith communities have no idea about what’s happening in psychiatry and treatments these days.”

As a practicing psychoanalyst, Dr. Shirley Brazda felt that mystery is at the center of psychotherapy and religion. Most of her patients must deal with their ethical systems and ask, “What do I and you believe? What is your core moral system? And how do you live into that?” Dr. Brazda integrates her personal beliefs into her psychotherapy and will talk about them with her patients.

Although he attended seminary, and is now a psychiatrist in private practice, Dr. Mike Gammon almost never brings up religion with patients. More than anything else, he feels that being tolerant is most critical. He and his patients discuss all religions and he feels that “just having a spiritual dialog, God will be present.”

To psychologist Dr. David Cox, who works with brain injuries, healing itself can be mystical. When he watches patients

struggle and “come out the other side, you can’t deny that there’s something unseen or unknown going on there. Which is the definition of faith. Medicine can’t always explain it.”

To Dr. Cox, mind, body and spirit are inextricably connected. “Our society has created a false dichotomy between physical and mental illness.” He struggles with billing insurance companies and whether to provide a diagnosis of a physical or a mental illness. “What’s the difference? Does it matter?” he asked.

Moderator Dr. Tonya Armstrong set a respectful but inquiring tone as she submitted audience members’ questions to the panel. As the panel acknowledged the lack of overt support for mental illness in faith communities, Dr. Armstrong asked if the lack of conversation is related to some clergy not being comfortable seeking out mental health services. The panel agreed, while pointing out that clergy have huge demands on their time over and above counseling about suffering. Dr. Cox talked about “the myth that if your faith is strong enough, you wouldn’t need mental health services,” which can exist not just in individuals but in large institutions, such as religious hospitals.

Faith communities can help maintain relationships with those suffering from mental illness, both families and patients. Ministries of presence, such as Stephen Ministers, can recruit help from congregations. Dr. Brazda stressed that, “Making contact, being in a relationship, sticking with that person, riding it out, is so important. It’s really hard, and there isn’t much support for it.” Her religious beliefs support her capacity to do that.

Another event, where a panel of local clergy will speak on the role of faith communities and their role in supporting those with mental illness and their families, is planned for October 2009. To learn more about Faith Connections, email bgelder@bellsouth.net or call 919-968-8600.

“Making contact, being in a relationship, sticking with that person, riding it out, is so important. It’s really hard, and there isn’t much support for it.”

Volunteers needed for the NAMI-OC Board of Directors

NAMI-OC is staffed and operated completely by volunteers. When our board has vacancies, opportunities are lost and our affiliate cannot function effectively. Without a Membership Chair, our affiliate does not grow. Without a Publicity Chair, the community is not notified of our programs. Without a Consumer Representative, not all of our voices may be heard. The following positions are vacant and need to be filled.

Membership Chair

Sends meeting notices by postcard and email. Works with board members, committee chairs and coordinators to increase the membership. Mails affiliate materials to new members. Mails annual membership appeals and renewal reminders to members who don't respond to the annual membership appeal.

Consumer Representative

Represents interests/ perspective of consumers. Liason with consumers in the affiliate. Serves on NAMI NC Consumer Council or recruits a volunteer.

Publicity and Development

(Susan Spalt, our current publicity chair, has requested we seek a new chair for this position). Leads MIAW and similar projects in the community. Arranges for notices of affiliate events and Family to Family information to appear in newspaper calendars. Manages distribution of brochures, flyers etc to local clinicians, UNC Neuroscience Hospital and John Umstead Hospital. Maintains and updates affiliate brochure. Coordinates with website manager to keep website current. Coordinates annual NAMI-OC awards to direct care givers at UNC Neurosciences Hospital and John Umstead Hospital (Mary Margaret Flamer Award). Works to develop new funding sources for the affiliate.

For further details about these positions, contact Lisa Hamill at LisaHamill@earthlink.net or call 919-933-8941.

Join a new Positive Living Group as Part of a Research Study

Earn up to \$60 and Participate in a Free Positive Psychotherapy Group

If you . . .

- Want to get more meaning out of your life and move forward in your recovery
- Are interested in improving your satisfaction with your life
- Are between the ages of 18 and 60
- Have a diagnosis of schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder
- Have not been hospitalized in the past 6 months for psychiatric reasons

. . . then you may be eligible to participate in a study of the effects of positive psychotherapy on symptoms of

schizophrenia. The Group will meet for up to 10 weekly, one and a half-hour sessions. The group will be offered to you free of charge.

All participants can be paid up to \$60 to complete three assessments, which involve interviews about your attitudes towards life, symptoms, and emotions. Each of these assessments will take about one to two hours. The assessments will be done prior to, following, and approximately three months after the group.

To find out more about this study, please call Piper Meyer at (919) 843-5262 or email her at psmeyer@email.unc.edu

President Signs Economic Recovery Package Into Law

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the massive \$787 billion economic recovery and stimulus package. The bill, known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (HR 1), includes a broad range of tax cuts, aid to states and investments in health care.

There are a broad range of provisions that are expected to have a major impact on public programs and agencies serving children and adults with serious mental illnesses at the federal, state and local levels. These include critical investments to shore up safety net programs such as Medicaid, disability benefits, supportive housing and special education. The new law includes additional funding for medical research and health information technology.

A major focus of the new law will be spending funds quickly with some

requirements for agencies to obligate 60% of funds allocated within 24 months and 100% within 60 months. NAMI has developed a summary of the major provisions in the package of interest to people living with mental illness and their families. Updates will be provided as federal agencies announce specific plans for how funds are to be expended.

To express your views on the recovery package, or the recent actions on the FY 2010 budget, contact your Senators, Burr and Kay Hagan. All Senate offices can also be reached by calling 202-224-3121. NAMI's Legislative Action Center on the national website makes it easy to contact elected officials. Go to nami.org, select Take Action, and choose the Legislative Action Center.

Reprinted from a NAMI E-News release

Chapel Hill Mayor's Mental Health Task Force

Kevin Foy, the mayor of Chapel Hill, has established a new task force to investigate the state of the mental health system in our community. Chair Natalie Ammarell, PhD, states on the task force's blog site that their "challenge is to build a shared understanding of the issues and . . . to seek new solutions," as well as to increase awareness of mental health issues in the community. The task force will also be making "recommendations to the Town Council and County Commissioners regarding the future of mental health care services for residents of Chapel Hill and Orange County."

The task force's blog site at www.mentalhealthnc.wordpress.com offers a roster of task force members, more information about their purpose, and

meeting minutes. Summaries of the two "Listening Sessions" on February 24 and 25 are available, along with future meeting dates.

The task force offers those of us who care about local mental health issues a unique opportunity to participate in an important conversation about our own community. Moreover, the blog enables us to keep up-to-date with their progress and also to make our opinions known online, without attending a meeting or requesting permission to speak. Your ideas and feedback may help the task force make a necessary change or improvement right here in Chapel Hill. Check out the blog and be part of a community dialog on mental health.

Monthly support and program meetings on the second Saturday of every month except July, August and December are held at the Church of Reconciliation at 110 North Elliot Road in Chapel Hill. Our Open Support Group meets from 9:30-10:15 in a private room. From 10:30-11:30, our program is educational in nature, and most often features a speaker.

Calendar of Events

Thursday, March 12

Survivors of Suicide Support Group, 6 pm, United Church of Chapel Hill, 1321 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Chapel Hill. For more information, call Jodi Flick at 962-4988 or email joflick@email.unc.edu. If you plan to attend, please email Judith at judithmorse@nc.rr.com or Lee at carolinalino717@yahoo.com. For directions, see article on page 9.

Saturday, April 18

We invite you to walk with NAMI-OC for the Mind of America. This kick-off brunch is an opportunity for anyone who wants to create a NAMIWalks Team or learn more about NAMIWalks and the opportunities to participate in this exciting and fun event. Join us at the Church of Reconciliation, 110 Elliot Rd., Chapel Hill. At 9:30 a.m. Fellowship and refreshments in the Meeting Room or confidential sharing group meets in the Lounge (newcomers welcome). At 10:30 a.m NAMIWalks program begins, and brunch will be served at noon. This event replaces the second Saturday program..

Saturday, May 2

NAMIWalks for the Mind of America, Dorthea Dix Campus, Raleigh. To find out more about our 2009 Walk, visit www.naminc.org or contact our Orange County NAMIWalks captains, Gove and Barbara Elder, at gbelder@bellsouth.net or 919-967-5403. This event replaces the second Saturday program. If interested in the confidential sharing group, please call Else at 919-259-7095.

Monday – Thursday, July 6- 9

2009 NAMI National Convention “Creating a Healthy Future for Us All” in San Francisco. Highlights include: Celebrating parity with Paul Wellstone, Jr. July is Bebe Moore Campbell Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. Major presentation on metabolic syndrome. A wellness center where convention attendees can receive one-on-one advice. Dialectical Behavior Therapy presentation by Dr. Marsha Linehan, who will deliver the Research Plenary. Find program information, register for the convention, and make your hotel reservations on our special 2009 Convention Web site at www.nami.org/convention.

Upcoming Training

For more information about these sessions, contact Brenda Piper at 919-788-0801, 800-451-9682 or bpiper@naminc.org. To learn more about these programs, go to: NAMI.org, select Find Support, and then Education & Training.

Friday - Sunday, March 6 - 8

Family-to-Family Teacher Training, Raleigh NC

Friday - Sunday, March 20 - 22

In Our Own Voice Training, Hickory NC

Friday - Sunday, April 10 – 12

Peer-to-Peer Mentor Training, Goldsboro or Fayetteville, NC

Sixteenth Annual STEP Symposium: “Making It in the Community: What Works?”

CHAPEL HILL - Schizophrenia is an illness that is twice as common as Alzheimer's disease. More than 2 million Americans cope with this brain disease, which affects the ability to process information, organize thoughts and perceive the environment. An estimated one out of 100 people will develop schizophrenia in their lifetime.

To help raise awareness among allied medical personnel, individuals with schizophrenia and their families, and the public, the **UNC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE** DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY of the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine in conjunction with Central Regional Hospital is sponsoring a symposium on schizophrenia, the Sixteenth Annual Schizophrenia Treatment and Evaluation Program (STEP) Symposium on Saturday, April 4, 2009 at the William and Ida Friday Center at UNC, 8:00 am - 1pm. Breakfast buffet and lunch will be served.

The title of this year's symposium is “Making It in the Community: What Works?” Featured speakers will present an update on UNC's Center of Excellence in Community Mental Health, mental

health reform in North Carolina, Assertive Community Treatment, effective social work practices benefiting people with schizophrenia and their families, as well as an update on current effective medications. A panel discussion will also be held to discuss community living. Our guest speakers include John Gilmore, MD, UNC

Professor and Vice Chairman for Research and Scientific Affairs in the Department of Psychiatry and the Director of the new UNC Center of Excellence in Community Mental Health; Harold Carmel, MD, with Executive Psychiatry, PLLC and the former President of the North Carolina Psychiatric Association; Lee James, MS, with XDS, Inc., Barbara Smith, MSW, LCSW, UNC Co-Director of the Center of Excellence; and Brian Sheitman, MD, UNC Professor and Medical Director for the UNC Psychotic Disorders – Inpatient Unit and Center of Excellence.

CME and CEU credit offered. We request a \$25 registration fee. Scholarships will be available. For more information or to register, contact Janice Linn at 919-966-8990, or email jlinn@med.unc.edu

NAMI-OC Board of Directors

President: Lisa Hamill

Vice President: Gary Gaddy

Secretary: Mary Lynn Piven

Treasurer: Robert Weimer

Consumer Representative: Open

Family-To-Family Class Coordinators:
Gove and Barbara Elder

Membership: Open

Newsletter: Julia Trimmer

Programs: Virginia Hill

Professional Representative:
John Gilmore, MD

Publicity & Development: Susan Spalt

*Get to know others
in your community.
You can find ideas,
advice and support
from informed, local
sources.*

Community Resources

NAMI-Orange County Monthly Meetings

Held on the second Saturday at 10:30 at the Church of Reconciliation, 110 N Elliot Road in Chapel Hill (see Calendar of Events).

Confidential Sharing Group

Most second Saturdays from 9:30 to 10:30 am at the Church of Reconciliation, before the NAMI Orange program. Family members and consumers are welcome. Call 929-7822 for more information.

Mental Health Association of Orange County

MHA/OC administers programs to promote mental health and improve the lives of residents living with mental illness. The **Family Advocacy Network (FAN)** provides individual and group support for parents and caregivers of children with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges. The **Peer Parent Program** is a confidential support network for families of children with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges. **Compeer** matches volunteers one-to-one with a person who is in treatment for a mental illness. **Community Backyard** helps provide youth with mental health and substance abuse treatment needs access to services. For more information, call 942-8083.

UNC Center for Bipolar Disorder Family Support Group

Support for those who have a family member with bipolar disorder. Last Thursday of every month, 5:30 – 6:30 pm in room #5, first floor of UNC's Neurosciences Hospital. For more information, contact Kelly Smedley, RN, MSN at 919-966-3915.

Recovery Inc

Wednesday at 7 pm at Carol Woods and Friday at 10:30 am at Caramore Community, 550 Smith Level Rd. Chapel Hill. Structured peer support meetings cover methods for managing anger, reducing stress, controlling depression and anxieties. Call 918-3677 for information.

Call Center

Consumer-run call center. Monday to Friday a.m. to 6 p.m.. Focus on providing accurate information to consumers, families, professionals, and providers regarding access and other issues surrounding mental health reform as well as general mental health information and referrals. Call 1-800-897-7494 or email callctr@mha-nc.org.

Family-to-Family Class

NAMI educational program for families of persons with serious mental illness. Helps family members to better understand and support their ill relative while maintaining their own well being. Free 12 weekly classes. In Orange County contact Gove Elder (967-5403), in Durham Selde (225-0808) or Cheryl (531-7683).

Confidential Sharing Group

Every second Saturday from 9:30 to 10:30 am at the Church of Reconciliation, before the NAMI Orange program. Family members and consumers are welcome. Call 929-7822 for more information. Please contact Lisa Hamill at 933-8941 or email LisaHamill@earthlink.net.

Caramore Community, Inc.

Rehabilitation program for NC citizens over age 17 with severe mental illnesses. Provides employment and independent living training services. 550 Smith Level Rd. Chapel Hill. Call 919- 967-3402 or see www.caramore.org.

Duke Community Bereavement Services

Support for those who have experienced a loss due to suicide. Call 919-644-6869 for more information.

Club Nova

Providing Orange County residents with “a place to come for a sense of belonging, acceptance, friendships and opportunities.” Access to housing, meals, and a transitional employment program. Located at 103D West Main St. Carrboro. Call 919-968-6682 or see www.clubnova.org.

XDS-Cross Disability Services

Serves persons aged 17 and older with multiple disabilities of mental illness, developmental disabilities and/or substance abuse disorders. Multidisciplinary team provides a variety of services. Call 919-490-5503, browse to xdsinc.org, or email thava@xdsinc.org.

Resources on the Web

NAMI Orange County at www.namiorange.org

NAMI North Carolina at www.naminc.org and NAMI National at www.nami.org.

North Carolina Mental Health Association of Orange County at www.mhaorangeco.org

North Carolina Mental Hope at www.ncmentalhope.org. Links to many mental health related organizations, NC legislative issues, discussion groups, and support.

North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services at www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas

Psychiatric Advance Directives National Resource Center, at www.nrc-pad.org.

Episcopal Mental Illness Network at www.eminnews.org

Mental Health Ministries at www.mentalhealthministries.net

Pathways to Promise at www.pathways2promise.org

Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Loss Support Group

If you have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide and feel that you could use the support and understanding of others who have had the same experience, please consider coming to this support group. Attendance is not required each month; you can attend as needed. There are no fees required. The group meets on the second Thursday of each month promptly at 6 p.m. at the United Church of Chapel Hill in the Parlor Room, 1321 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Chapel Hill. The next meeting is on Thursday, March 12, 2009, at 6 p.m.

For more information about the group, please call Jodi Flick at 962-4988 or email joflick@email.unc.edu. If you plan to attend, please email Judith at judithmorse@nc.rr.com or Lee at carolinolino717@yahoo.com.

To find the United Church of Chapel Hill from I-40: Take NC 86 exit (exit 266), and turn south onto NC 86, Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. (historic Airport Road). Go 1.4 miles. Turn right into the United Church parking lot. If you miss the turn, turn right at the next traffic light on Homestead Road and proceed as below. From downtown Chapel Hill, go north on Columbia Street/ Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. for 2.6 miles. Turn left onto Homestead Road at the traffic light. After the Duke Power entrance, turn right on Northern Park Road. Pass another Duke Power entrance, and turn right into the United Church parking lot.



National Alliance on Mental Illness

*Join or donate
to NAMI-Orange
County today!*

Membership dues are \$35.00 for the calendar year (January-December). "Open Door" membership (\$3.00) is available for those with limited incomes. Your dues give you membership and newsletters from local, state and national NAMI organizations. Your additional donations are used to fund local programs. Make check payable to NAMI Orange County. Mail to NAMI Orange County, PO Box 4201, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-4201. Thank you for your support!

NAME _____ PHONE: _____ EMAIL _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

- Annual membership (\$35.00 regular or \$3.00 Open Door)
- Donation (tax deductible)
- # household members served by this membership
- I approve sharing my email address with NAMI-NC and National
- Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- Please remove my name from your mailing list
- YES! I want to help conserve paper, energy, and NAMI-OC postage dollars by receiving the NAMI-OC newsletter via email (Include your name and preferred email address and forward to namioclistserv@gmail.com or mail it to PO Box 4201, Chapel Hill, NC 27515.

NAMI Orange County is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is tax deductible.



An Affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness
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Helpline: 919-929-7822

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**Open Your Mind:
Mental Illnesses are
Brain Disorders**

Return Service Requested

