



Northern Illinois

Changing Minds

The Newsletter of NAMI Northern Illinois

November & December 2008

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Veterans & Their Families: A SAMSHA Priority

When Sgt. Dean Nist returned home to rural Somerset, PA, after Marine Reserve combat service in Iraq that included the battle of Fallujah, he found dealing with civilians difficult. "I ordered my wife and kids around like they were my Marines," he recalls.

Across the country, in Tucson, AZ, former Army Sgt. Abel Moreno returned home after combat service in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Initially, he found himself unable to land a job that paid enough to support his family.

The challenges facing Sgt. Nist and Mr. Moreno, along with troubling wartime memories and feelings of isolation from the civilians around them, added up to major stress. Before long, both veterans were using alcohol heavily to deal with the pressures of readjustment to civilian life.

With some 700,000 of their comrades now back in the United States, similar issues confront active duty military personnel, returning veterans, and their families and communities across the Nation.

To help, SAMHSA is making the reintegration needs of returning veterans a top priority in Agency efforts to promote mental health and to prevent and treat substance abuse. ...

Consequences of Trauma

"Anyone who has been in combat experiences trauma," says A. Kathryn Power, M.Ed., Director of SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS). Because the current conflicts lack clear front lines and rear guards, they are especially problematic, she adds.

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NAMI Northern Illinois

NAMI Northern Illinois would like to invite you to celebrate our 25th anniversary with us.

At our celebration we will be honoring local mental health clinicians and having dinner catered by Giovanni's. The cost for dinner will be \$7.50 per person.

**November 11, 2008 6:00 PM
 Mildred Berry Center
 8616 Northern Ave Rockford, IL 61107**

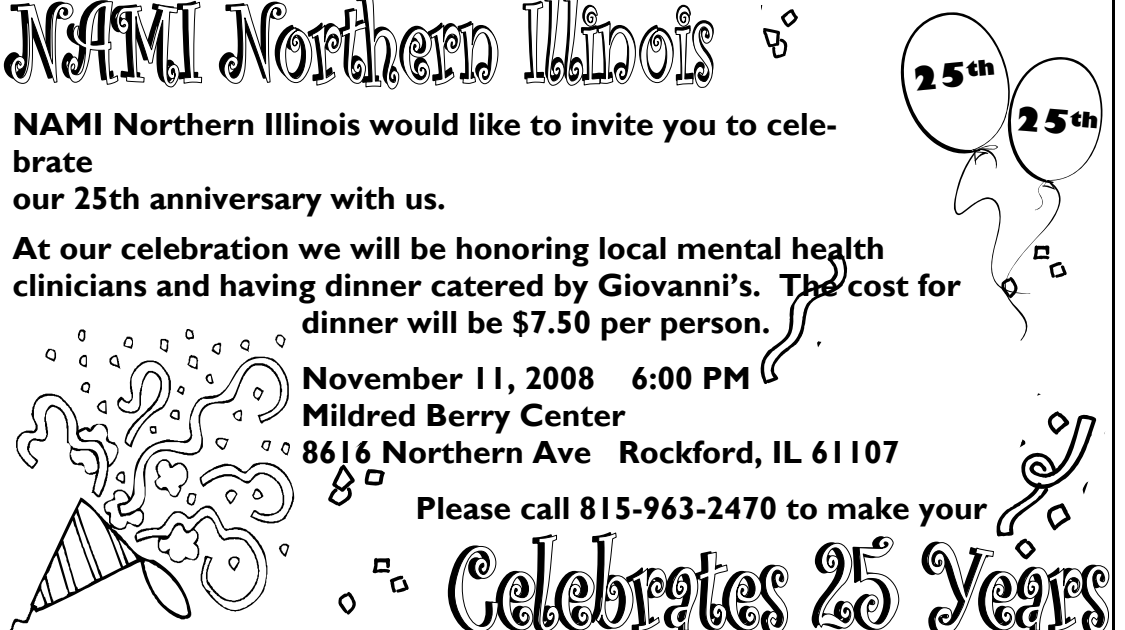
Please call 815-963-2470 to make your

Celebrates 25 Years

CONTACT US:

NAMI Northern Illinois
 P.O. Box 6971
 Rockford, IL 61125
 815-963-2470
 www.nami.org*

**The NAMI Northern Illinois website is being updated; check out the national website in the meantime.*



“With the help of family members and friends, Sgt. Nist and Mr. Moreno got their lives back in order.”

Veterans & Their Families: A SAMSHA Priority continued

In addition to the horrors of war, longer and multiple deployments, uncertainty of the length of deployments, and the relentless tension of counterinsurgency warfare compound the stress. “Many people can deal with trauma in a very normalizing way. They can respond and act with resilience,” Ms. Power says. However, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affects a substantial number of individuals and can seriously interfere with a person’s ability to function on a day-to-day basis. Sgt. Nist remembers a friend employed in a metal shop. “Every time they drop a sheet of metal, he just about goes through the roof,” Sgt. Nist says. “He’s severely into alcohol and misses 2 or 3 days of work a week.”

With the help of family members and friends, Sgt. Nist and Mr. Moreno got their lives back in order. Now, they are committed to helping other returning veterans do the same. Sgt. Nist, now a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard, serves as president of the Somerset County Military Family Support Group, a voluntary organization. He also was instrumental in organizing a local veterans’ center. Mr. Moreno is a staff member at

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BECOME A MEMBER—SUPPORT NAMI NORTHERN ILLINOIS!

NAMI Northern Illinois is a non-profit organization affiliated with NAMI, The National Alliance on Mental Illness.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Individual-\$30	Family-\$40 (please list family members below.)	Advocate-\$50 (for those who wish to make an additional donation.)	Open Door-\$5 (for those whose funds are limited at the present time.)
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Membership brings you these publications:

NAMI *Advocate* (quarterly) • NAMI Illinois *Stateline* (quarterly) • NAMI NI *Changing Minds* (bi-monthly)

Please list your name(s) as you wish it to appear in our membership roll:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



Northern Illinois

Membership Level : _____ Additional Donation: _____ Total enclosed: _____

NEW!!!
Now you may join NAMI online. Just go to www.nami.org, click “Take Action”, then “Register and Join.”

Please mail this form with your check to:
NAMI Northern Illinois • P.O. Box 6971 • Rockford, Illinois 61125

Thank you for your membership!

“You are not alone.”

Confused? Afraid? Alone?

Someone you love has a mental illness.
That's why there's NAMI's Family-to-Family
Education Course.

FREE!



Family-to-Family is a **FREE** series of 12 weekly classes structured to help family members understand and support an ill relative while maintaining their own well-being. The course is taught by a team of trained volunteer family members who know what it's like to have a loved one with **schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, borderline personality disorder, and/or co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders.** The course will focus on the following areas: diagnosis and characteristics of illnesses; medications; coping skills and emotional support; communicating and listening; understanding the experience of brain disorders; problem solving; recovery; advocacy; community resources. Over 50,000 family members have completed this course. We invite you to call for information.

Classes start February 25, 2009.

Stepping Stones

706 N Main St— Rockford, IL 61103

Please call NAMI Northern Illinois to register.

815-963-2470



What You'll Find At NAMI

- Friends who care and understand
 - Ideas that can help you take care of yourself and your family
 - A chance to share Your experience and learn from others
 - Information about brain disorders, treatment and services
 - Help. Hope. Healing
- You are not alone.

Mental Health, It's Part of Our Lives at Work

If you are employed and have a mental illness, you are not alone. According to the Wall Street Journal¹, one in five people in a typical U.S. office is likely to experience a mental illness each year. The onset of many mental health disorders comes between the ages of 25 and 40, when people are highly active in the workforce.

Work and Recovery

Experts increasingly acknowledge that work is a key factor in supporting mental wellness and warding off the symptoms of mental illness³. In a study of professionals (lawyers, engineers, physicians, managers and others) with severe and persistent mental illnesses, it was reported that work provided a distraction from the symptoms of their illnesses and contributed to better mental health.

Work is also an important path to recovery from a mental illness. Contrary to some of the myths associated with mental illnesses, people can and do recover from even the most serious mental illnesses. In fact, the treatment success rate for each mental illness (separately, and including schizophrenia) is higher than it is for heart disease alone.

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President's Letter

**“TWO
BIG
VICTORIES
that took
place in the
last few
months
(for mental
health)”**

“These are troubling times.” You probably have heard this statement numerous times during the past few months. News reports continue to be negative about the economy, state and federal government financial status remain dark. We hear of funding for mental health services being cut.

It does sound troubling, but amid all this bad news I would like to remind you of TWO BIG VICTORIES that took place in the last few months. Just recently congress approved the economic bailout bill and included in this bill was a new law that requires equal coverage of mental and physical illnesses. This requirement is the result of 12 years of passionate advocacy by NAMI and friends. The effective date, for most health plans will be January 1, 2010 and should improve coverage for 113 million people. It will make it easier for people to obtain treatment for a wide range of conditions, including depression, schizophrenia and alcohol and drug abuse. For decades insurers have set higher co-payments and deductibles, limits on hospital inpatient days and outpatient visits for mental health treatments. Frank B. McArdle, a health policy expert with a benefits consulting firm, is quoted as saying, “Now they will have to change their plan design.” *

Our second victory took place in June, of this year, when a new and much improved treatment standard took effect in our state. This new law expands categories of who may be subject to involuntary admission and there is a new definition of “dangerous conduct”.

Many of you may never have heard of the Treatment Advocacy Center (TAC). The founder, Dr. E. Fuller Torrey, author of *Surviving Schizophrenia* and over 30 other books, has worked with others to increase public awareness of the profound failure of our treatment system for individuals with severe psychiatric disorders. Over the last 10 years TAC has successfully helped modify laws in 18 states to help people with these disorders that have a history of non-compliance with treatment. Jonathan Stanley, a TAC board member, worked along with

Illinois advocates to make this happen in our state. For more information on their successes go to: www.TreatmentAdvocayCenter.org.**

In December we will be holding our election for 2009 NAMI Northern Illinois Board of Directors. A nomination committee has been formed and if you should be asked to serve, please consider saying yes. If you are not asked for some reason and would like to serve, please let me know, by calling 815-332-4744..

Jean Morrow
President, NAMI Northern Illinois

*Information from article in Oct 6 The New York times.
** Information from Fall 08 Catalyst Quarterly Newsletter of TAC

**Board of Directors
2008-2009**

Vicky Braun

John Burns

Beverly Capone

Mary Caruana

Robin Garvey

Jean Morrow

Bruce Parks

Eldon Wigget

Veterans & Their Families: A SAMSHA Priority *continued*

Vets4Vets, a nonprofit organization providing peer-to-peer services to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

Each wave of veterans, whether from World War II or Iraq, forms a special “brotherhood” with its own language, set of experiences, and feeling of community, Mr. Moreno says. Many issues are similar across the generations, but effective services for veterans require understanding the particulars of their generation’s experience.

“Veterans need a place to talk about feelings, to decompress, and also to know that others out there are feeling the same things,” Mr. Moreno says. “That keeps people from becoming isolated, self-medicating, and worse.”

For care providers who lack a military background, familiarity with the former service members’ culture, jargon, and concerns is an important element in building trust, adds Sgt. Nist.

“We’re very fortunate in our town that our mental health people here asked us, ‘Will you teach us how to understand you?’ ” Sgt. Nist says. “They told me, ‘We are not veterans. We are not going to pretend to know what you’re going through. We want to learn from you so we can help others.’ The first thing they need to do is let the veterans know they’re willing to help them. Then, they need to learn the language [and] how to deal with them.” ...

Community providers and their local communities face significant challenges. “Today, only about 30 to 40 percent of veterans who are eligible for care actually seek care from VA,” Ms. Power says. Mr. Moreno, for example, resisted getting help because, as a paratrooper trained to be tough and strong, he “didn’t want to look weak,” he says. Sgt. Nist notes that a roundtrip from Somerset for an appointment at the nearest VA facility “takes the whole day.”

In addition, troubling issues related to trauma can arise years, even a decade or more, after the event. Service-related health care benefits for National Guard and Reserve members, however, currently last only 2 years. Family members affected either by deployments or by issues related to returning veterans also may require mental health or substance abuse care in their communities. ...

By Beryl Lief Benderly

SAMSHA News, January/February 2008, Volume 16 Number 1

“Veterans need a place to talk about feelings, to decompress, and also to know that others out there are feeling the same things,” Mr. Moreno says.

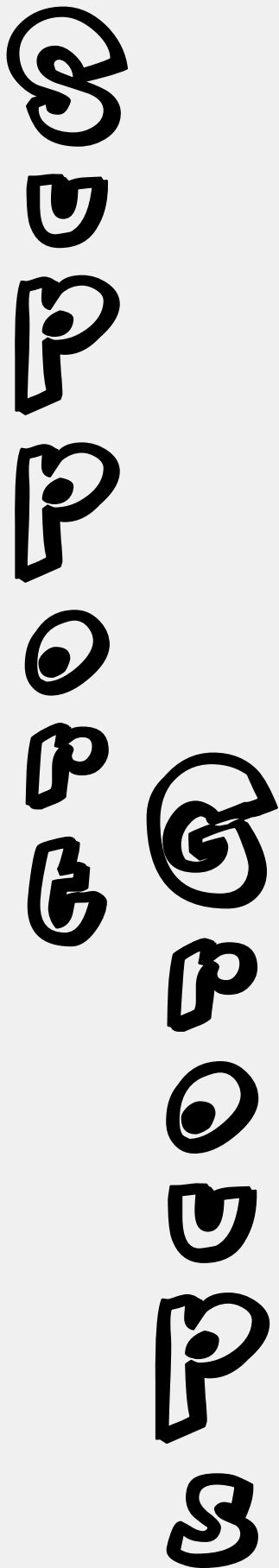
BOXES of HOPE

NAMI will be collecting money, and small gift items to fill the boxes for people who will be inpatients at all three hospitals during the holidays.

Appropriate items include: magazines, books, small amounts of candies and snacks, socks, etc.

If you would like more information how you can donate to Boxes of Hope please call NAMI Northern Illinois at 815-963-2470





NAMI Support Groups

Belvidere

This group is for family members of persons with mental illness. Meetings are held at Grandma's Restaurant, 329 Chrysler Drive in Belvidere. Meetings are held at 8:00 a.m. on the 3rd Monday of the month. Call Jean Morrow at 815-332-4744.

Family to Family

This family member support group meets at 7:00 pm on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, at 3300 Rural St., Rockford. Contact Mary Ann Holmes at 815-877-0670.

Park

This family member support group meets at 11:00 am on the 2nd Saturday of every month at North Towne Mall Swedish Pancake House. Contact Bev Peterson at 815-633-0582.

Bright Futures

A support group for family members of children and adolescents with emotional disorders. Meeting in the SwedishAmerican Conference Center at Mildred Berry Center, 8616 Northern Ave., Rockford, IL. Contact Robin Garvey or Audrey Cline, 815-332-6064, for dates and times.



Other Local Support/Education Groups

Group Hope

A Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) support groups for consumers, their families and friends.

BELVIDERE: Second & fourth Tuesday, 5:45 pm, Immanuel Lutheran Church,

ROCKFORD: Sundays: 3:30 pm, ABC Collision, 4141 Morsay Drive;
Mondays: 6:30 pm, Bethesda Covenant Church, 2101 E. State St.;
Wednesdays: 7 pm, Crash Collision, 4141 Morsay Drive;
Thursdays: 10:00 am, Carpenter's Place on Railroad Ave.;
Thursdays: 6:15 pm, Camelot Tower, 1415 E. State St., 9th floor.

ROCHELLE: Mondays 6:30 pm, Rochelle Hospital, Private Dining Room Downstairs

OREGON: Second & fourth Thursday, 6:30 pm, First Presbyterian Church, 200 S. 5th St.; one block south from 4th St. (Route 2)

FREEPORT: First & third Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Grace Episcopal Church 10 S. Cherry St. (Call 815-235-6171)

For information call Dr. Charles Smith
815-398-9628 .

Mental Health It's Part of Our Lives at Work *continued*

Over the last decade, the role of employment in fostering or hindering mental health has been increasingly acknowledged, and many employers are actively promoting mental health in the workplace. ... Employers who promote mental health by eliminating or cutting down on sources of stress through such methods as improving physical working conditions; creating more flexible working arrangements, such as job sharing, job rotation and flexible hours; and allowing employees more input into corporate planning and decisionmaking, can expect to reap benefits in reduced absences and increased productivity.

Disclosure

... There are some potential risks and benefits of disclosure. *If you decide to reveal the fact that you have a psychiatric diagnosis (possibly because you need an accommodation), here are tips that may relieve your anxiety and accomplish your goal of educating your employer:*

- **Provide the facts.** Many national mental health advocacy organizations (such as the National Mental Health Association and National Alliance on Mental Illness [NAMI]) and their local chapters provide fact sheets and information on specific illnesses, illustrating that recovery is truly possible no matter what diagnosis you have.
- **Demonstrate your success in the workplace.** A mental illness, like a physical illness, is just a part of who you are. Remind your employer of the reasons why you were hired in the first place—and why you are still a valuable employee.
- **Provide some suggestions and/or solutions.** If your mental illness has the potential to affect your job performance, provide an explanation to ease your employer's concerns. You might say, "I tend to get anxious when there's a lot of noise or when there are people hanging around my desk, but I find that a short walk gets me re-focused." Let your employer know if you will need an accommodation. Most accommodations requested can be beneficial to you and your employer by enhancing your productivity. ...
- **Leave the door open for discussion.** If your employer has questions about your illness or other information you have shared, make it clear that you may be willing to provide more information. By law, your employer must respect your right to confidentiality. ... It may also be possible to request an accommodation without characterizing it as disability-related. Employees should familiarize themselves with their employers' policies and especially with past practices regarding maternity leave, disability leave, sabbaticals, leave without pay, medical leave, leave for purposes of military service, jury duty, etc. It is very helpful if an employee can make a connection between the accommodation he or she is requesting and an accommodation made for another employee.

Seeking Assistance

Recognizing, and seeking assistance for, a mental health problem within the context of work can be daunting. Well-known entrepreneur and philanthropist J.B. Fuqua once expressed his fear that if people knew of his mental illness it might adversely affect his business or personal relationships. Other prominent business leaders, such as CNN's former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tom Johnson, have voiced the same concern. While the decision to disclose your illness is your decision, don't let it hold you back from locating the resources to overcome it. You may be able to find assistance through your company's health plan or Employee Assistance Plan. If your company has neither, contact your local mental health association or your local United Way.

SAMSHA's Resource Center to Promote Acceptance, Dignity and Social Inclusion
Associated with Mental Health.

“While the decision to disclose your illness is your decision, don't let it hold you back from locating the resources to overcome it.”



PO Box 6971
Rockford, IL 61125
Return Service Requested

Planning to move?
Please let us know your new address, so
Changing Minds can follow you to your new home!
Call 815-963-2470 or email
joebevrox@comcast.net

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Rockford, IL
Permit NO. 757

		Meeting Schedule	Page 8
November 2008			
11th 6:00 p.m.	<i>NAMI Northern Illinois' 25th Anniversary Special Celebration</i> The evening will include dinner from Giovanni's at \$7.50 per person and a special presentation recognizing mental health clinicians. Please RSVP by November 5, 2008 by calling 815-963-2470		Regular NAMI Meeting at Mildred Berry Center 8616 Northern Ave Rockford, IL 61107
25th 6:00 p.m.	Board of Directors Meeting		Stepping Stones 706 N. Main St. Rockford, IL 61103
December 2008			
2nd 6:30 p.m.	BOXES OF HOPE		Regular NAMI Meeting at Stepping Stones 706 N. Main St.
TBD 6:00 p.m.	Board of Directors Meeting		Stepping Stones 706 N. Main St. Rockford, IL 61103
January 2009			
6th 6:30 p.m.	"Mental Health Treatment in the Winnebago County Jail."		Regular NAMI Meeting at Stepping Stones 706 N. Main St. Rockford, IL 61103

Regular NAMI Meetings are Open to the Public