



# NAMI West Houston News

Affiliated with NAMI Texas, NAMI "The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness"  
and NAMI Metropolitan Houston  
~A grassroots coalition of families, consumers, and friends~

January 2005

## JANUARY MEETING

### “BREAKTHROUGHS IN THE RESEARCH ON FOOD AND MENTAL HEALTH”

**DATE:** Monday, January 17, 2005  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m. – Social and Refreshments  
7:30 p.m. – Announcements  
**SPEAKER:** Joan Iffland  
**PLACE:** Atria Assisted Living - Westchase  
11424 Richmond Avenue  
Main Dining Hall  
(OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)

Food has a profound impact on mental health. Researchers are finding that many mood neurotransmitters are also involved in appetite and satiety regulation. Find out how to avoid the highly processed sugars and flours that are now proven to cause mental imbalances.

Joan Iffland is a PhD candidate in the field of nutrition and addiction. Her book is *Sugars and Flours: How They Make Us Crazy, Sick and Fat* and her website is [www.sugarsandflours.com](http://www.sugarsandflours.com). She maintains a private food coaching practice in Houston in addition to writing and lecturing.

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Visit the NAMI West Houston website:  
[www.namiwesthouston.org](http://www.namiwesthouston.org)  
for more important information

# Happy New Year

!!!

## *President's Message*

*Bonnie Cord*

Welcome to a new year with NAMI West Houston. I have the honor and responsibility to be your new president for 2005-6. I have been a member of NAMI for two years, starting with the Family to Family class and moving on to more involvement. The education and support have been very helpful to me and my family, especially during times of crisis. New friendships with people who understand the difficulties of dealing with brain disorders have been a blessing.

During January your Board will be developing plans for 2005, possibly including a library, a walk, more classes, support groups, legislative efforts and more. Please let me or any member of the Board know of any ideas you have for improving, or problems you have had with, NAMI West Houston. And consider volunteering some of your time to help other families dealing with brain disorders.

Bonnie  
[bccord@swbell.net](mailto:bccord@swbell.net)  
713-984-2538

## *A Note of Thanks from your Past President*

*Carolyn E. Hamilton*

At the December Holiday Covered Dish Dinner, my last as president of NAMI West Houston, I was presented with flowers and an engraved clock. Thanks to all members and the NAMI West Houston Board for these gifts. Your support and the time you all have volunteered helping others, gives me hope for the future of so many persons needing help. Having been your president since 1995 brought me many friendships, education, support and networking with others in the mental health community. It has been a big challenge, as most affiliate presidents find, but with the help and support of the members of NAMI West Houston, we have moved ahead and succeeded in so many things.

I have also been president of NAMI Metropolitan Houston for the last few years and we recently had our first Strategic Planning. With the help from NAMI Texas through a grant from the Houston Endowment, a number of affiliates across the state have been able to have their first 2005 Strategic Planning meeting. NAMI Metropolitan Houston has formed four workgroups or committees: business development, human resources, program and services, and development (fundraising). Representatives from all member affiliates need to be represented to carry out next year's plan. Please email me [cehamilton@aol.com](mailto:cehamilton@aol.com) or call (281) 579-3750 to join one of the committees. The first quarterly report will be in March.

## Legislative News...

### Capitol Day – January 25 & 26, 2005

The Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians (TSPP) will sponsor Capitol Day in Austin. This will be a wonderful opportunity to come to Austin with your fellow advocates during the early part of the 79th Legislative session.

You will have the opportunity to attend an excellent workshop with communications specialist, Joel Roberts. He will lead the group into relevant and practical topics and challenge you to create solutions.

You will also have the opportunity to deliver your messages to your Legislators and their staff.

#### You must register by January 17 to attend.

If you will need a hotel, NAMI Texas suggests the

Drury Hotel:  
6711 I.H. 35 North  
Austin, Texas, 78752  
Phone: 512-467-9500  
<http://www.druryhotels.com/>

The room rates begin at \$71.00 and they offer an evening beverage and snack and also a substantial breakfast.

For more information contact Diana Kern, NAMI Texas Special Events Coordinator (512) 693-2000.

### “WALK INTO SUNSHINE” PLANNED FOR APRIL 23

Bear Creek Park Event to Raise Awareness, Funds

NAMI West Houston is organizing its first fund-raising walk to take place on April 23, 2005, at Bear Creek Park. This is a great opportunity for NAMI members, consumers, friends and others involved in mental health issues to come together not just to raise money, but to raise public awareness of NAMI and brain disorders.

Mark your calendars now for the “Walk into Sunshine.” Full details and sign-up information will be online at [www.namiwesthouston.org](http://www.namiwesthouston.org) soon and included in the next newsletter. We also need volunteers to help organize and publicize the event.

If you are interested, please call Bonnie Cord at 713-984-2538 or Fifi Wetherhead at 713-465-8518.

### VISIONS FOR TOMORROW TEACHER TRAINING

A Visions for Tomorrow Teacher Training will be held in Austin on January 28-30, 2005. Please contact Pennie Hall, Visions for Tomorrow Coordinator, at the NAMI Texas office for more information (512) 693-2000 ext. 108 or [pennie@texami.org](mailto:pennie@texami.org). Also, you can contact your local NAMI affiliate President.

### NEW Family-To-Family Education Classes Starting in February 2005

*This course consists of 12 weekly FREE 2½-hour sessions.\** It is geared toward family members of adult persons diagnosed with brain disorders, such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Communication skills, problem solving, coping skills, problem management, recovery, rehabilitation and more will help you understand and deal with mental illness in the family. Trained family member volunteers co-teach the classes.

Contact: Vi Napolitano (281) 893-2493 or Debbie Subke (713) 849-5637. *\*Pre-Registration is required*

### RENEW YOUR ANNUAL DUES

Due January 1, 2005; see renewal form on our affiliate page. Welcome to all of our new members. Thanks to many of you for renewing your annual dues in November and December. This makes life a little easier for John Anderson, our Treasurer, and Carolyn Hamilton, Membership, to update our membership records, before January 1, using the NAMI National Web Membership Program. Entering new members and renewing membership can now be done on line and when names, addresses, and dues payment is entered, the information automatically goes to our State affiliate. Invoices are printed out with the amount due and off the checks go to NAMI National and NAMI Texas. Life is easier for many of us that have struggled with taking care of our membership in our affiliates. Progress is great!

Also, much thanks from the NAMI West Houston Board for the extra donations that have come in with your dues. By making NAMI West Houston your *charity of choice*, you are helping others with severe mental disorders, in many, many ways.

This year we also received donations in memory of:

~ Stella Bonnette, Carol Hampton ~

### CONDOLENCES

Our deepest sympathies go to the family and friends of Stella Bonnette. David and Stella have been long time NAMI West Houston members. Stella would bring delicious casseroles and other tasty food to our covered dish dinners. Because of ill health, David, a Family-to-Family Education Teacher, Support Group Facilitator and one of the founding members of the Consumer Support Group NAMI C.A.R.E., has not been able to attend or participate in the affiliate activities. We miss them both.

To the Roger and Pam Gierhart family we want to express our sincere sympathy on the death of Roger's father, who had been ill for some time. Roger and Pam are very active members of NAMI West Houston, and Roger is our Program Chair.

Our thoughts and prayers are with these families.

## YOUR LETTER WILL INFLUENCE PEACE OFFICERS TRAINING

By Patsy Gillham

As NAMI members, you have a great opportunity to impact the way all Texas law officers will approach a person in a mental health crisis from this day forward.

Acknowledging the need for better mental health training for Texas law enforcement cadets, TCLEOSE, the state commissioners that oversee our officers, has expanded Basic Police Training to include a 16-hour course in mental health. It is representative of the more in depth, 40 hour CIT course offered by Officer Frank Webb. The course gives officers a more humanistic approach, appropriate language and pace to use when dealing with someone in crisis. We applaud them in their endeavors.

The House Committee on Law Enforcement is the Legislative Committee that oversees TCLEOSE and has the power to MANDATE courses that officers must take EVERY 4 YEARS, not just once, to meet their continuing education credit quota. Currently, and for many years, the committee has mandated Special Investigative Topics, Cultural Diversity, Racial Profiling, Asset Forfeiture, and Identity Crimes courses to be taken once every 4 years. We would like to see *De-Escalation Communication Training* be added to that list.

This past August, the Committee on Law Enforcement, received our request to do just that, and was presented with the new 16-hour cadet curriculum for them to review.

We now need letters from consumers and organizations to the chair of that committee to demonstrate the timeliness and relevance of such a course.

Please write to Chairman of the House Committee on Law Enforcement:

Rep. Joe Driver  
201 South Glenbrook  
Garland, TX. 75040

Your words will work wonders! Any questions please email me at [patsygillham@yahoo.com](mailto:patsygillham@yahoo.com)

### Mobile Community Outreach Team (MCOT) (713) 970-4663

The NeuroPsychiatric Center - **Mobile Community Outreach Team (MCOT)** is a mobile team designated to serve Harris County residents, children and adults who are: 1) in crisis 2) unable to access traditional, outpatient, psychiatric services, and 3) at risk for hospitalization. **MCOT** will provide skilled, in-field assessment and treatment for those consumers who have problems in accessing community clinics. In-field mental health care requires special sensitivity to the relationship between mental illness, family and the environment. **MCOT** will work diligently to apply this special sensitivity in assessment, treatment and linkage to on-going services after the consumer in crisis is stabilized.

**MHMRA Helpline - (713) 970-7000**

## GENETIC MUTATION TIED TO DEPRESSION, DRUG RESPONSE

By Antonio Regalado, Staff Reporter of  
*The Wall Street Journal, December 10, 2004*

Scientists have identified a genetic mutation that appears to make people more likely to suffer major depression and less likely to respond to treatment with antidepressants. The finding could lead to a gene test to identify such individuals, and possibly new ways to treat them. Studying the DNA of both healthy and depressed volunteers, researchers from Duke University in Durham, N.C., found that more than 10% of clinically depressed people had the genetic mutation and also didn't respond well to commonly prescribed drugs.

The Duke team appears to "have identified a nonresponsive subtype of depression," says Charles Glatt, a neuroscientist at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Glatt said if the finding holds up it would represent a significant breakthrough because doctors can't currently predict who will respond to antidepressant drugs.

About 20% of patients with major depression don't respond to antidepressants, according to Thomas R. Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Md., which funded the study. Dr. Insel said that scientists have had difficulty understanding the genetic basis for psychiatric illnesses, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, but had recently begun to make quicker progress.

The Duke researchers zeroed in on a newly discovered gene, known as TPH2, which is involved in the production of the neurotransmitter serotonin. Neurotransmitters are brain chemicals that transmit nerve impulses. In laboratory experiments, researchers identified a version of the gene that produced 80% less serotonin than normal.

Low levels of serotonin are known to be involved in depression and other psychiatric disorders. "Now we know there are genetic variants that can make a huge difference," said Xiaodong Zhang, a cell biologist at Duke University and lead author of the study, which was reported yesterday in the journal *Neuron*. Most antidepressant drugs, such as Eli Lilly & Co.'s Prozac, work by increasing serotonin levels. Dr. Zhang said the new gene finding could eventually lead to new types of drugs.

After identifying the mutant gene, the Duke group analyzed DNA from over 300 people to see if its presence was linked to symptoms of depression. Of 87 patients with major depression, nine had the mutated gene. Of those, seven had not responded to antidepressant drugs and two only responded to very high doses.

Write to Antonio Regalado at [antonio.regalado@wsj.com](mailto:antonio.regalado@wsj.com)

### DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR SUPPORT ALLIANCE (DBSA)

[www.dbsahouston.org](http://www.dbsahouston.org) or (713) 528-1546

## Focus On...

### What is a Healthy Lifestyle?

People have different ways of describing a healthy lifestyle. But for most, it means living life in a way that helps the person to be both physically and emotionally healthy. Many things go into creating a healthy lifestyle, including:

- Positive Relationships
- Appropriate Exercise
- Proper Nutrition
- Adequate rest

Wellness involves both choice and action. The choices you make each day, and the actions you take on those choices, can lead to a healthier lifestyle. Making positive choices in the areas of physical fitness, stress, work, relationships, medication, and nutrition - and then acting on those choices - promotes a sense of accomplishment and well-being.

There are other benefits from these choices, as well. Making a life-long commitment to a healthy lifestyle can reduce the effects of chronic mental illness, give you more energy, increase your self-esteem and confidence, and help you minimize symptoms of schizophrenia or your chances for relapse.

This article will help you identify your wellness needs and provide specific tips on how to improve your overall well-being through diet, exercise, and a responsible approach to substance use.

#### Health Problems Associated With a Poor Diet

The typical American diet can cause significant health problems, since it is high in fat, salt, and sugar and is apt to be low in fiber and vital nutrients. Even though most of us have healthy food options available, we tend to make poor food choices. Poor dietary habits, in combination with lack of exercise and high stress, have been connected to such health problems as obesity, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

#### Choosing a Healthy Diet: Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans were established by the Federal government to help people choose foods that will meet their nutritional requirements, promote health, support active lives, and reduce the risk of chronic disease. These Guidelines are meant to be simple and sensible suggestions for people trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- Guideline #1: Eat a Variety of Foods.
- Guideline #2: Balance the Food You Eat With Physical Activity to Maintain or Improve Your Weight.
- Guideline #3: Choose a Diet With Plenty of Fruits, Vegetables, and Grain Products to help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Guideline #4: Choose a Diet Low in Fat, Saturated Fat, and Cholesterol

- Guideline #5: Choose a Diet with Moderate Sugars Foods.
- Guideline #6: Choose a Diet with Moderate Salt and Sodium.
- Guideline #7: Avoid Alcohol.

#### The Role of Water in Good Nutrition

The importance of water in the diet cannot be overestimated. Healthy lifestyles that include exercise and a high fiber diet require plenty of water intake. Experts suggest eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily. For anyone participating in a regular exercise program, 9-13 glasses of water are recommended.

#### Dealing with Weight Gain Which Might Be Caused by Your Medications

Some of the medicines you are taking for your mental illness may increase your appetite. There are things you can do, however, to decrease your desire to eat. Here are some helpful hints on controlling hunger:

- Take a walk when you feel hungry.
- Drink a glass of water or other sugar-free beverage.
- Eat a rice cake or a half-cup of raw vegetables.
- Chew sugar-free gum or suck on sugar-free mints.

Know the difference between "mouth hunger" (the urge to use food to soothe feelings of boredom, nervousness, anger, sadness, or stress) and "stomach hunger" (your body's way of telling you it really does need food).

Many patients who gain weight while taking medications for mental illness do so because they had been homeless or jobless due to their illness and simply eat more as they get better. With medication, they may be able to work and buy regular meals (including fast food), and they may live in a residence where meals are provided.

A study was done recently on a program to control weight gain in 32 patients with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder. These patients had taken medications for at least one year and lived in an adult care facility for formerly homeless persons with serious mental illness.

The program consisted of health services (medical and psychiatric), nutrition care (a low-calorie diet and nutritional education), and supportive care. In general, as symptoms of schizophrenia improved, the patients paid more attention to their health and care. Their weight gain decreased as the result of the program, and this change occurred regardless of what medications were being taken.

The study concluded that a patient's diet appears to be a primary cause of weight gain, with the medication playing a much less important role. The study also suggested that mental health professionals should actively suggest diet and other lifestyle changes whenever they prescribe medications, which could cause the patient to gain weight.

Patients in the study took their medications 100% of the time, since they were being supervised. Thus, they got the full benefits of their medications, and as their symptoms decreased, their desire to care for themselves increased.

These patients proved to be very responsive to suggestions and activities regarding weight, blood sugar levels, and cholesterol levels. And as the patients began to see the program's benefits, they participated more actively and successfully.

Overall, the study strongly suggests that if patients follow their total treatment plan and develop healthy eating habits, medications should not cause any serious weight gain.

### Exercise

Although food and proper eating habits are essential to life, food alone cannot make you truly healthy. Exercise is also fundamental in maintaining a healthy body and an active lifestyle.

Exercise can help you mentally as well as physically. Psychological benefits such as a greater sense of well being, increased self-esteem, and decreased anxiety or depression have all been linked to exercise.

Benefits increase dramatically when exercise becomes a lifelong commitment. Experts continue to remind us that the many health benefits offered by exercise should cause us to make it a lifetime priority. Regular exercise helps to:

- Prevent heart disease (aerobic)
- Normalize blood pressure (aerobic)
- Regulate blood sugar
- Prevent bone mineral loss
- Support body structure
- Promote weight loss
- Promote flexibility

If you are over 40, unaccustomed to exercise, or have medical problems, be sure to see your doctor before undertaking an exercise program. Some of the medical problems that may require your doctor's OK before beginning an exercise program include:

- History of heart disease (heart attack, cardiac arrest, valve disease, congestive heart failure, myocarditis, or any other heart disease treated by a doctor)
- History of chest pain diagnosed as angina
- Any unknown cardiac dysrhythmia (abnormal heartbeats) or conduction defects
- History of stroke
- Use of medications for the heart or blood vessels during the last 3 months

### Tips for Getting Started

If you haven't been exercising, it's important not to start off too fast or too hard. If you overdo it, you are likely to end up feeling discouraged or causing strain, pain, or injury to yourself. Keep the following points in mind as you get started with your exercise program:

- Talk to your doctor before beginning a new program
- Begin gradually
- Give yourself a one-month trial period
- Expect some initial discomfort
- Try to focus on the process of exercise (rather than competing with others or yourself)

- Remember to warm up before you exercise, and cool down afterward
- Coordinate your eating and exercise (avoid exercising less than 90 minutes before a meal, and don't eat until 1 hour after exercising)
- Don't exercise when you feel sick
- Exercise with a friend

### Resources to Help You Get Started

There are many resources in most communities, ranging in cost from free to expensive. The key is to know how and where to look for these resources. Resources in your community could include the following:

**Parks and Recreation Centers:** These sometimes offer free or low-cost options for exercise (walking trails, softball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc.)

**Places of Worship:** Many churches or other places of worship have facilities, as well as organized teams that play throughout the year. This can be a great way to begin exercising as well as socializing.

**The YMCA:** Though not free, most YMCAs have wonderful facilities and trained professionals to assist you with your exercise program. And the "Y" is also another great way to meet people with similar exercise goals.

### When to Stop Exercising

If you experience any of the following symptoms during exercise- STOP and REST, and call your doctor if your symptoms persist:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Abnormal heart rhythm
- Pain in the chest under the breastbone, and/or down the arm
- Pain in the knees, feet, or ankles

### Keeping Up Your Motivation

Many times, we begin an exercise program and then gradually abandon it as time goes on. One thing is certain - in order to reap the full benefits of exercise, you need to continue exercising for a lifetime. If you stop exercising, much of the fitness you have gained will be lost within 2 weeks.

One way to increase your general level of exercise is to use routine activities in addition to your planned program. Routine activities are things like yard work, doing the laundry, and cleaning the house. Some suggestions for easily increasing your activity level through your daily routine include:

- Get off the bus several blocks from home and walk the rest of the way.
- Take the stairs instead of elevators and escalators.
- Find a mailbox 10 minutes away from your home or work and walk there to mail letters.
- Sit instead of lying down. Stand instead of sitting. Move in place instead of standing still.
- What are 3 things you could do to incorporate exercise into your daily schedule?

2003 Reintegration.com

# KIDZ KORNER

## LIVING WITH BIPOLAR AS A TEEN: SCHOOL

*By Dan, Guest Author*

One of the many challenges a teen with bipolar disorder faces is attending school. The ways things are handled vary depending on the school you attend. In a public school, for example, teens are eligible for all sorts of assistance, from having an aide to assist with their ever-changing moods to having their schedules and classes tailored to their emotional needs. Private schools are only required to accommodate teens with bipolar disorder under the Americans with Disabilities Act, in which case the school has to accommodate any physical needs, like medications during school and side effects from such medications. The last kind of school is home schooling, where all accommodations and needs can be met. Teens with bipolar *can* succeed in any of these schooling environments. This article will focus on living day to day in the classroom with bipolar disorder, stable or unstable, what to do if you lose control of your emotions, how to set up a support network and the importance of doing so, along with other important topics.

First, should you tell the school about your bipolar condition? Yes, you should.

Generally, this should be done before the school year starts. It is best to contact the guidance counselor, if available, or otherwise a principal, vice principal, or any other member of the administration. You should tell the school about your bipolar disorder and explain to them how it affects you in the classroom. At this discussion you should present any doctors' notes you have in regard to medication during school or accommodations needed due to medication side effects (such as needing access to water and bathrooms). Teachers should be notified before school starts about your bipolar disorder and how to handle things if you were to lose control of your emotions (discussed below).

Teens with bipolar disorder need a support system or network, whether they are stable or not; these can be set up with the school rather easily. You should meet with your guidance counselor within the first few weeks of school. Talk with the counselor in general about how things are going and discuss any problems you may be having inside or outside of school. Ask if the school has a Student Assistance Program, as you should know who the teachers and staff on the team are. If the school doesn't have a Student Assistance Program, you should make yourself comfortable with teachers and staff. If there is a teacher you feel comfortable in confiding in, you should by all means discuss how you feel or any problems with that person.

While with the guidance counselor, you should set up a plan in case emotions go awry in the classroom. An example of this would be if you put your head down on your desk in order to

collect your thoughts. You shouldn't be given any trouble from the teacher for this. If you should feel you can no longer stay in control of your emotions, you should be allowed to leave the classroom freely. No questions should be asked, as by this time your emotions are already stretched, and anything could set you off emotionally.

A safe spot should be established in the school, generally in the nurse's office. A safe spot is where a teen with bipolar disorder is allowed to go into a meltdown; also, efforts should be made to calm the teen down. The teen should be given the option of calling parents to talk and/or talk with a trusted adult in the building. Once the teen is calmed down, he or she should be given the option of returning to class. When returning to class, it should be at a time when the least amount of attention will be brought to the teen.

Having a meltdown or episode in class is one of the hardest and embarrassing things that can happen to a teen. Every measure should be taken so that you *don't* have an episode during class, but rather can leave the room in time without undue attention. However, if you do lose control of emotions during class time, you should quietly leave. If you are questioned by other students, you can just say that you didn't feel good and leave it at that. You should not feel obligated to tell your life story as to what happened, as most people simply won't understand.

These are just some suggestions and ideas for making life in high school easier for teens with bipolar. Some teens make it through high school without being affected much by their bipolar, while for other teens with bipolar disorder, high school may be four very long years. Arranging a good support network and making sure your teachers are aware of needed accommodations will help ease the way. Retrieved from: [http://bipolar.about.com/cs/kids\\_gen/a/teenbp\\_school.htm](http://bipolar.about.com/cs/kids_gen/a/teenbp_school.htm)

### Untitled

Everything is still. Is it really for real?  
I look at reality – it looks mentally ill.  
As I walk and I talk and I start to breathe,  
I look up to the sky and see the breeze in the trees.  
What starts to happen is the falling of leaves.  
I hear a sound – it's the buzzing of bees.

So I go inside to watch a little TV.  
All I see are the suits and the shapes of vanity.  
People smiling and profiling and professing their truths  
With babies, with bright colors and many a youth.

Now I wander outside to find a little peace.  
In sunshine and the blue sky I find freedom and release,  
Because I know one day I'll be living and all will be peace.  
In my mind and in my heart, in my soul I am pleased.  
No more heartache, no more voices, just a certain belief.  
I am healing and I am feeling the pain has finally decreased.

*Aaron Spencer, October 5, 2004*

## Did You Know.....?

Mike Wallace of "60 Minutes" fame, Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, and many other famous Americans suffer from or have a family member with a brain disorder.

Brain disorders are shrouded in stigma and discrimination. For centuries they have been misunderstood, feared, hidden, and often ignored by science. Only in the last few decades has the first real hope for people with brain disorders surfaced, and that hope has grown from pioneering research that found both a biological basis for brain disorders and treatments that work.

Brain disorders are treatable. The current success rate for treating schizophrenia is 60 percent. The success rate for treating bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression, is 65 percent, and for major depression it is 80 percent. Mental illnesses can now be diagnosed and treated as precisely and effectively as other medical disorders. But the stigma and the discrimination caused by that stigma remains.

Yours may be the one out of every five families in the United States that is or will be affected by a serious brain disorder. Such families face an unfair system that still treats them as "less than," "not as important as" or "not equal to" the rest of Americans. All Americans must help end the stigma and discrimination that linger despite the scientific proof that makes them groundless.

For more information contact NAMI, The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness. NAMI stands for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

NAMI Metropolitan Houston, 281-579-3750

NAMI West Houston, 713-984-2538 or  
[www.namiwesthouston.org](http://www.namiwesthouston.org)

NAMI Texas, 1-800-633-3760 or [www.namitexas.org](http://www.namitexas.org)

NAMI National, 1-800-950-6264 or [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSTORE GIFT WRAP PROGRAM** - Our sincerest thank you goes out to the generous volunteers during the month of December. Project volunteers raised over \$1,000 and contributed to the public awareness of NAMI.

Many thanks to the Community Relations Managers at Barnes and Noble Bookstore locations - Laura Workman, (Voss/Westheimer), Cherri Northcutt (Copperfield), and Thuy Hoang (Town & Country). Also, a special thank you to Fifi and Richard Wetherhead for rushing to the aid of the West Oaks location after a phone call from the manager of a cancellation of an organization that day. It was nice that he thought of NAMI West Houston and lucky that Fifi and Richard could wrap gifts for them.

Eileen Baker, Director of the Gift Wrap Program.

**We couldn't have done it without you!  
Thanks again!**

## 2005 NAMI NATIONAL CONVENTION

**June 18-21, 2005**

**Austin Hilton 1-800-HILTONS**

The Austin Hilton is the convention headquarters hotel. Rooms are \$112/single and \$122/double (plus room tax). When making reservations, be sure to tell them you are attending the NAMI Convention. Please check the web site for other suggested hotels.

The Multicultural Action Center is planning an Asian American/Pacific Islander Mental Health Symposium, an African American mental health track and a Spanish language track.

Registration rates after January 1, 2005 are \$195 member, \$125 Consumer and \$250. for Non-members. You may register on line. For complete convention information and to register visit [www.nami.org/convention](http://www.nami.org/convention).

### Free Newsletters:

**1. STAR CENTER 'RECOVERING TOGETHER' NEWSLETTER:** The NAMI STAR Center has a quarterly e-newsletter, "Recovering Together", that is co-produced with the Peer-to-Peer Resource Center at DBSA (Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance). The first issue included information about peer training programs, other CMHS-funded consumer/consumer supportor technical assistance centers, the Alternatives national consumer conference, and a new recovery tool. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit the STAR Center web site at [www.consumerstar.org](http://www.consumerstar.org) and click on the "Recovering Together" - Sign Up Now icon at left.

**2.** Sign up at [www.schizophrenia.com](http://www.schizophrenia.com) for a free monthly newsletter delivered to your e-mail address.

**3. BP Magazine** - Hope and Harmony for People with Bipolar. Check out this site for a free inaugural issue of BP Magazine:

<http://www.bphope.com/freeIssue.php?>

**4. NAMI MIO LATINO E-NEWS SIGN UP NOW!**

NAMI MIO (Multicultural and International Outreach Center) has recently created the NAMI Latino eNews. NAMI leaders can subscribe to this eNews service that provides bilingual information about issues relevant to the Latino community and mental health. To subscribe send an email to [NAMI\\_MIO@nami.org](mailto:NAMI_MIO@nami.org)

**5. NAMI Texas E-News:** If you are a member of a NAMI Texas affiliate and would like to keep up with all of the news of NAMI Texas, contact [Diana@texami.org](mailto:Diana@texami.org) and request that your name be added to the NAMI Texas E-News group.

**6. Reintegration Today:** Order your own FREE subscription of Reintegration Today journal; see [www.reintegration.com](http://www.reintegration.com) to subscribe.

**7. McMan's free Depression and Bipolar newsletter:**  
<http://www.mcmanweb.com/>

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**WEB SITES**

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) - NAMI National web site

<http://texas.nami.org> - NAMI TEXAS – Advocacy page holds all of NAMI Texas’ position papers, NAMI Texas Legislative Newsletter and other useful items.

[www.namiwesthouston.org](http://www.namiwesthouston.org) - NAMI West Houston – information on meetings, support groups, education classes and current events.

[www.dbsahouston.org](http://www.dbsahouston.org) - **DBSA (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance) of Houston** is a self-help non-profit organization serving individuals with clinical depression or bipolar disorder (manic-depression) as well as their families and friends. (713) 528-1546

<http://www.adda-sr.org> - **ADDA – SOUTHERN REGION (Attention Deficit Disorders Association Southern Region)** For meeting and support group information call (281) 897-0982

<http://familyaware.org/> - A nonprofit organization helping families, especially family members and friends of those with depression, recognize and cope with depressive disorders. The organization provides education, outreach, and advocacy to support families. On our web site, you can:

- read and e-mail Family and Expert Profiles;
- learn about depression, medical help, support groups, and books;
- learn how to help someone seek or manage treatment;
- learn to cope with family caregiver emotions.

<http://www.mcmanweb.com>. - **McMan’s Depression And Bipolar Weekly Newsletter**

[www.schizophreniadigest.com](http://www.schizophreniadigest.com) - **Schizophrenia Digest**

[www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com](http://www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com) - **National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder (NEA-BPD)**

<http://www.phrma.org/pap/> - **Free Meds For The Financially Challenged** - Directory of Patient Assistance Programs that PhRMA member companies offer to ensure their medicines are made available to those who can't afford to purchase them. A number of companies have pledged that no patients in need of their medicines will go without them. For additional copies of this directory, please call (800) 762-4636.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov> - **National Institute for Mental Health**

<http://www.mentalhealth.com> - A good website containing a great deal of information about all the various disorders, how to treat them, how to get help, complete contact information, etc.

[www.txhealthpool.org](http://www.txhealthpool.org) or [texasriskpool@bcbstx.com](mailto:texasriskpool@bcbstx.com) - Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool. Can't find health insurance? Have preexisting conditions? The Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool can help. 1-888-398-3927; TDD 1-800-735-2989

[www.reintegration.com](http://www.reintegration.com) **The Center for Reintegration**

[www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us) - Texas Legislature online

[www.senate.state.tx.us](http://www.senate.state.tx.us) - Texas State Senate

[www.house.state.tx.us](http://www.house.state.tx.us) - Texas State House of Representatives

**COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN**

Federal employees can enter NAMI West Houston’s **CFC #4062** on their pledge card. Your support is very much appreciated.

**NAMI West Houston**  
**NEW MEMBERSHIP or RENEWAL FORM**

All dues and donations are tax deductible. Membership includes annual dues to NAMI West Houston, NAMI Texas, NAMI National, and NAMI Metropolitan Houston plus newsletters.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2005

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

If family membership, list name of each above.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

NEW     RENEWAL

Individual/Family Membership Dues    \$25.00

Consumer or Limited Income    \$5.00

Supporter    \$50.00

Donation

Donation In Memory/Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks!                      **TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:    **NAMI West Houston**  
              **John Anderson, Treasurer**  
              **P.O. Box 218989**  
              **Houston, TX 77218-8989**

Are you a member of another local NAMI affiliate? \_\_\_\_\_  
If member of another local NAMI affiliate, will NAMI West Houston be your “HOME AFFILIATE”? \_\_\_\_\_

**HOME AFFILIATE MEANS NAMI WEST HOUSTON WILL PAY YOUR ANNUAL DUES TO NAMI TEXAS AND NAMI NATIONAL FOR YOU OUT OF YOUR \$25.00 ANNUAL DUES.**

*This newsletter is published by: NAMI West Houston, P. O. Box 218989, Houston, TX. 77218-8989,*

**Officers:**

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*Fifi Wetherhead, First Vice President*  
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*Phil Wendt*

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**EDUCATION CLASS INFORMATION**

**Family-To-Family Education Course:**

*This course consists of 12 weekly FREE 2½-hour sessions\**  
It is geared toward family members of adult persons diagnosed with brain disorders, such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Communication skills, problem solving, coping skills, problem management, recovery, rehabilitation and more will help you understand and deal with mental illness in the family. Trained family member volunteers co-teach the classes.

*New classes starting in early February 2005.*

Contact: Vi Napolitano (281) 893-2493 or Debbie Subke (713) 849-5637. *\*Pre-Registration is required*

**Visions for Tomorrow Education Course**

*This is a ten to twelve week educational course\** offered to direct caregivers of children and adolescents with brain disorders. Childhood depression, schizophrenia, ADD/ADHD, OCD, conduct disorder, PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder) are just a few of the disorders that will be covered. The materials also offer coping and communication skills, problem solving, rehabilitation and recovery. Trained family member volunteers co-teach the classes.

Contact: Robin Griffith (713) 957-3960.

*\*Pre-Registration is required*

**NAMI C.A.R.E. SUPPORT GROUP**

*(Consumers Advocating Recovery through Empowerment)*

**DATES: Sundays, 2nd & 4th of each month**

**TIME: 2:30-4:00 p.m.**

**PLACE: Pines Presbyterian Church, Room C**  
12751 Kimberley (Town & Country Mall area)

NAMI C.A.R.E. is a support group for individuals facing the challenges of recovering from brain disorders, also known as severe and persistent mental illnesses. All consumers/clients are welcome. Contact Vi Napolitano (281) 893-2493 for information.

**OCD SUPPORT GROUP**

An OCD (Obsessive/Compulsive) Support Group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays, at 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. at Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital, 7600 Beechnut, Classroom C, Concourse level. Call Richard McClain at (713) 527-9755 for more details.

**ST. JOSEPH CLUBHOUSE**

The Clubhouse is located at 3307 Austin and serves as a day center for people with mental illnesses to interact with one another and build the skills they need to live satisfying, productive lives, explained Sister Sara Kay Thompson, program director of the clubhouse.

St. Joseph Clubhouse is part of the Magnificat Houses, Inc. Housing is available also. For more information call Sister Sara Kay Thompson at (713) 523-5958.

**SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION**

**Family Support Groups**

The goals of a family support group are to provide emotional support to families, to provide insight into brain disorders (mental illness), and to learn how to more effectively cope with its impact on the family. Meetings are open to the public.  
**Please call to be sure the times for support groups are correct.**

**Family Support Groups for Families/Relatives with Adults dealing with a mental disorder**

**Time: Wednesday (first Wednesday of each month)**  
**7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Place: Pines Presbyterian Church, 12751 Kimberley at West Bough, Room C-10 (Town and Country area), near Bendwood Elementary School.**

**Contact: Carolyn Searles (713) 461-5269**

**Time: Wednesday (second and fourth of each month),**  
**7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Place: Bear Creek Community Center**  
Hwy 6 & Patterson Rd.

**Contact: Fifi Wetherhead (713) 465-8518**

**Time: Thursday (third of each month), 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Place: St. Peter's United Methodist Church, 20775 Kingsland Blvd., Katy, across from Taylor High School, in the Sanctuary, second floor, room 204.**

**Contact: Joyce Hess (281) 395-3582**

**Time: Sunday (second and fourth of each month)**  
**2:30-4:00 p.m.**

**Place: Pines Presbyterian Church, 12751 Kimberley at West Bough Room B (Town and Country area), near Bendwood Elementary School.**

**Contact: Vi Napolitano (281) 893-2493**

**Family Support Group for Parents and Direct Caregivers of Children and Adolescents**

with brain disorders/mental illnesses, such as childhood bipolar, depression, OCD, Schizophrenia, and other disorders.

**The support group will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday nights of each month, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, in the Learning Center, Rm. 204 Ella Lee. Enter through East Door near playground. Call Robin at (713) 957-3960 for more information.**

**NARSAD Artworks**

**GREAT GIFTS:** Supplies of note cards, silver pins and bookmarks are available throughout the year at our monthly meetings. NARSAD (National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression) has a creation of art works, all hand painted and created by persons with neurobiological brain disorders. Cards are available at the Monthly Meetings. For more information call Eileen Baker (281) 304-7704.