



NAMI

National Alliance on Mental Illness

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

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Serving Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy & Union Counties

Co-President's Corner ... *Joan and Bruce Stevens*

NAMI NCF is active in several arenas these days. We have a Process Writing Workshop in progress through July. As of this writing the group has met twice with four more sessions ahead. Participant response has been enthusiastic and positive. Some people have expressed interest in a future workshop especially for those who were not able to participate in the current one.

We are trying a first this summer! We're not waiting until December to gather as families to visit, eat and sing. Everyone is invited to a potluck IN LIEU OF our July PROP meeting and on a different day and time. See related article or our website for details.

Our NAMI affiliate is making plans to help "freshen-up" the Meridian CSU (Crisis Stabilization Unit) intake and visiting areas. The idea is to improve the atmosphere in those areas of the facility in some small but positive way. Specific plans are in the works in conjunction with Meridian folks. Our work hours will take into account peak in-take times as well as NAMI volunteers' schedules. If you are interested in helping with this project, contact Bruce or Joan Stevens (378-0886) or email CSUProject@NamiNorthCentralFlorida.org .

NAMI NCF has helped initiate a newly formed Clubhouse Coalition of District 3. Our coalition has begun long term plans to develop a local "Clubhouse" model of mental illness rehabilitation. The core healing process is based on standards established by the International Center for Clubhouse Development. We are working with DCF (Department of Children and Families), FACT (Florida Assertive Community Training), Meridian, and Vista to explore what needs to be done and how to accomplish it. The coalition is tweaking a business plan and developing an outline for an informative presentation for community leaders and stake holders like us. Tentative plans for the presentation include bringing in speakers familiar with the clubhouse model elsewhere in Florida, to educate community leaders, along with us, in order to facilitate the success of this ambitious, long term endeavor. NAMI volunteers will be needed at every "level" (time, energy, expertise...) of commitment for this. We'll keep you informed.



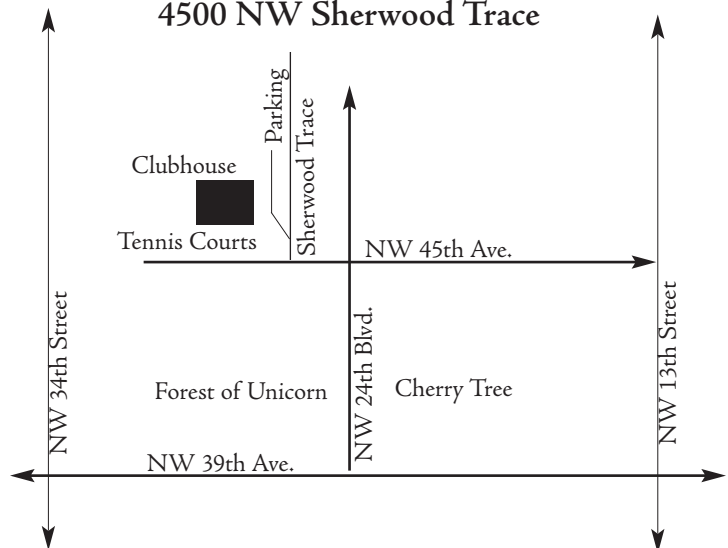
JULY MEETING

Our July meeting will be on Saturday, July 15th. It will be a special social time for NAMI families and friends. We will meet at the Forest of the Unicorn Club House in Gainesville for a covered dish dinner at 4:30. Bring a favorite dish or two to share - salad, meat, vegetable, or dessert. Also, please bring an appropriate serving utensil for your dish.

If you have a musical instrument and would like to join in an entertainment time, bring it along also. We might even do a bit of singing to celebrate the summer season!

If you would like to help with set-up or clean-up for this meeting, please contact Joan Stevens at 378-0886 or go to www.NAMIGainesville.org and scroll to the bottom. Click on the "email" icon. Write "July Meeting" in the subject line. Hope to see you there!

Forest of Unicorn Clubhouse 4500 NW Sherwood Trace



PREPARING FOR CRISIS

When a crisis does arise, family members must react minute-by-minute to a deluge of circumstances. It is not a time for efficient thought or strategizing, which is why preparation is critical. Now is the time to do research, gather materials, and reach out to key people in case the situation deteriorates, even while working on other fronts to avoid a crisis.

Build a CARE Kit

One thing a family can do to prepare for a crisis is build a CARE kit (Critical Advocacy Resources for Emergencies). In a three-ring binder, file box, or other easily-transportable storage system, create a “ready-file” of materials that you can quickly share with treatment professionals in time of a crisis.

Psychiatric history summary. It is unlikely that treating professionals will have immediate access to, or time to review, the full medical records of someone brought in for an emergency evaluation. A one-page summary of psychiatric history can be very useful. (And may also be useful as evidence in commitment hearings.) Keep at least five copies of this important document in your CARE kit, so it can be easily and quickly shared with more than one person in a short span of time. Keep it current (update it regularly) and short (one page is best) but be sure it contains the most critical information, including the following:

Full name
Current age
Psychiatric diagnosis
Age at diagnosis
Town or city of residence
Current symptoms
Current concerns (suicidal, homeless, missing, vulnerable, violent, abusing substances, other)
Psychiatrist’s name and number
Local service provider’s name and provider
Dates of previous hospitalizations and locations
Dates of previous arrests or jailings and charge(s)
Current medication name(s)
Past medication(s) that have helped
Past medication(s) that have not helped
Past history of symptomatic behaviors (e.g., running up huge debt, getting into car accidents, threatening family members, failing to care for basic needs)
Full name, contact numbers, and address for emergency contact person

RECENT PICTURE AND DESCRIPTION. Keep a recent picture of your loved one, a list of vital statistics (such as height, age, weight, hair color), and any pertinent physical medical conditions (such as allergies or diabetes). Ideally, keep these in a format that allows them to be easily faxed or e-mailed to police and mental health agencies. Leave space to add a description of clothing last worn in case that information is needed.

LIST OF EMERGENCY NUMBERS. Create, and periodically update, a list of emergency numbers.

COPIES OF IMPORTANT CRITERIA. Print out a copy of your state’s criteria for emergency evaluations and for civil commitments (as mentioned in the “research” section). That way if anyone along the way contradicts or misunderstands the law, you have a copy of it in hand.

PETITION FORMS. Get blank copies of involuntary commitment forms if your state permits this. Complete any nonincident-related information ahead of time. You may never have to use them, but at least you will have them ready.

MEDICAL RELEASE (if applicable). If possible, have your loved one sign a _release that allows you access to his or her medical information. If you have such a document, keep a copy in your CARE kit. (For more details on medical information and privacy laws, see the full story in this issue of Catalyst.)

ADVANCE DIRECTIVE (if applicable). Advance directives are legal documents that allow individuals with mental illnesses to dictate aspects of their care in case they become incapacitated by illness. These documents might include the designation of a person to make treatment decisions should the subject become incapacitated. The specific details of these legal documents vary widely from state to state. Most advance directives are immediately revocable, which is a significant limitation on the effectiveness of these instruments as that can allow individuals to nullify their previous treatment decisions even when suffering from impaired judgment. If your loved one has such a directive, keep a copy in the CARE kit.

MEMORIAL GIFT ...

NAMI NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA HAS RECEIVED OVER \$200 IN GIFTS IN MEMORY OF JUDY BOUSQUET'S MOTHER, RUTH HOVLAND WHO PASSED AWAY IN MAY. OUR SYMPATHY GOES OUT TO JUDY AND HER FAMILY.

WIRED resources!

www.NamiNorthCentralFlorida.org
or
www.NAMIGainesville.org

Did you know that you could join one of many NAMI's discussion groups. Here's your opportunity to read what others are talking about and to share your opinion and ask questions. There are over 40 different discussion groups you can join - such as Spouses of Consumers; Self-injury; Living with (a multitude of disorders); College & Young Adults; Consumer Employment; and Criminal Justice Forum. For more information or to join a group go to:
http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=all_discussion_groups&Template=/Forums/ForumDisplay.cfm

NAMI MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees are \$35 and are due during the first quarter of the year; however, you can join anytime! Checks should be made payable to NAMI North Central Florida. Mail your name, address, phone number, and email address to our treasurer:

Pat Warnock
5424 SW 91st Terrace
Gainesville, FL 32608.

Thank You to the Rob Kain Family

The Rob Kain Family of Draper, Utah have funded the past six of our Family to Family classes in honor of Rob's brother, Jeffrey, who suffered with bi-polar disorder. We sincerely appreciate their concern for the families of those suffer with mental illnesses!

The next Family to Family classes will begin Wednesday, August 16. This is a 12-week course for families of individuals with severe brain disorders (mental illnesses). The course discusses the clinical treatment of mental illnesses and teaches the knowledge and skills that family members need to cope more effectively.

The course is taught by trained family members. All course materials are furnished at no cost to participants. It will be held at the Civitan Regional Blood Center at 1221 NW 13th Street in Gainesville, Florida. We are now adding names to the waiting list. For information call :

Michelle 352-332-9881
Dianne 352-378-1798
Voice Mail 352-339-8640

People with a Mental Illness Enrich our Lives...

This is one of a series of informational bits about people throughout history who have had or whose family members have had a serious mental illness.

Margaret Trudeau, former wife of Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, has come forward with her personal struggles with bipolar disorder in order to encourage others to seek mental health care. At a recent benefit, she said:

"I'm here to encourage others who live with mental illness to tell them that the treatment works, that there is no shame in coming forward for help.

"If you feel you're being judged, and I certainly have always felt that I've been judged, you must ignore the unfair prejudice of society.

"If you feel there is no hope and the pain is too much to endure, remember how much you have endured and what bravery has taken. Use that courage to come forward for help."

Trudeau now is the picture of health, with a broad smile and flashing eyes. "Yes, I take medication, but I also exercise, eat well, live well, I don't abuse my body, I don't abuse drugs or alcohol, I have joy back in my life."



Margaret Trudeau

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<http://www.naminorthcentralflorida.org>

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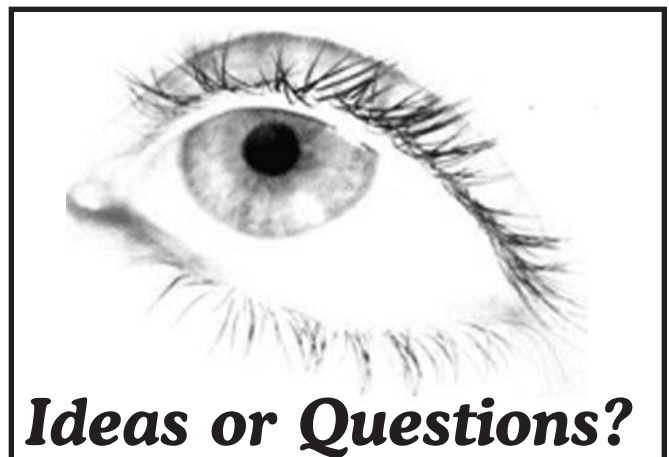
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Ideas or Questions?

Do you have an idea for an article or regular column you would like to see in our NAMI North Central Florida newsletter. Do you have something you would like to contribute? Do you have questions about our group or mental illnesses you would like to have addressed in the newsletter? Please let us know via email info@naminorthcentralflorida.org or call our voice mailbox at 352-339-8640. We'd like to hear from you!