



NAMI

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Alger/Marquette

NAMI Alger/Marquette Affiliate newsletter for Winter 2017/2018

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

By Cindy K Bertucci, Chairperson, NAMI Alger/Marquette

Hope this finds everyone well. Another year is almost over and entering into our winter months with the holidays in December. The holidays can be very stressful for someone with or without a mental illness. There are articles in this newsletter on that and also SAD (Season Affective Disorder) and how to cope. Winter can also be a very beautiful season for everyone that loves to enjoy so many activities there is to offer. Every year my husband and I always say we are going to go snow-shoeing but I seem to put that off. Not this year I need to get more exercise in the winter months which helps with dealing with any depression or mania I may go through.

This new year upon on has several hurdles our local NAMI Alger/Marquette Affiliate must complete. NAMI National is requiring all affiliates to re-affiliate. This is a long process and must be done by April 2018. The biggest hurdle is we must purchase liability insurance for Directors and Officers and General Liability which could come with an expense of \$400 to \$700 or more per year. We are a small affiliate and in order to be able to pay this every year we need help from all of you with ideas on how to raise more money. As of news on Wednesday November 29th, 2017 our local Yonkers Store will be closing in January 2018. This is sad news for our area to lose another store HOWEVER our main fund raiser was selling booklets for Yonkers Community Days. We usually raised approximately \$500 or more. We will be in more desperate need for more fundraisers if we want to stay an affiliate. There are several other things we must do, but right now the insurance is our biggest problem. If we do not do this by April 2018 we can no longer be an affiliate with NAMI. This means no support, educational meetings, family to family program and NAMI Walk/Picnic, newsletter etc. Maybe you have not been involved in any of the above but if the day comes when you may need us we could no longer be here, and that frightens me. I would not be doing as well as I am without my family, psychiatrist, psychologist and our local NAMI which has helped me in so many ways and that I am so thankful for. **I cannot imagine my life without NAMI.** We need your support to keep this going, such as more input in helping us continue and and with more fundraisers. We need more people to get involved in any of our programs including being on our NAMI Executive Board. This does not require a lot of time but we need new faces if we are going to continue. Please do not feel overwhelmed about this but I am so passionate about NAMI that I am asking for help in any form. NAMI Alger/Marquette has done many wonderful things for our community. We will be holding our Annual Meeting in January 2018 in which we vote to pass our bylaws, budget and we will be voting for officers. At this time the people that are in office and would like to run again are: President/Chair: Cindy K. Bertucci, Vice President: Susan Maynard, Treasurer: Cynthia Shaffer & Secretary: Lorna Hanks. If you would be interested in running for one of the above officers please contact Niki Richardson 906-458-1547.

Several Thoughts on Mental Illness from our Members

BELOW ARE SEVERAL RESPONSES CONCERNING MENTAL ILLNESS,

FROM A MOTHER WITH A SON WHO HAS A MENTAL ILLNESS & FROM A PERSON DEALING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS. WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR THESE RESPONSES & IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTERS PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

-Cindy

FROM A NAMI MEMBER:

DEAR NAMI SUPPORT GROUP FRIENDS. I AM THANKFUL FOR ALL OF YOUR SUPPORT WE GIVE EACH OTHER JUST BY BEING IN A PLACE WHERE THE SEEMINGLY IN EXPRESSIBLE CAN BE EXPRESSED ABOUT WHAT LIFE IS!

FROM A NAMI MEMBER CONCERNING HER SON WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS AND HAS MOVED AWAY:

I AM SORRY FOR NOT GETTING THIS ALL RIGHT BUT I AM YOUR MOM & YOU ARE MY LOVED ONE AND I AM THANKFUL FOR THAT. I AM YOUR MOM, GO AHEAD, ROLL YOUR EYES, FEEL THE URGE TO THROW SOMETHING BUT, FOR ONCE, AFTER ALL THE YEARS YOU DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR ME OUT. PLEASE. YOU SEE YOU ARE A ONE OF A KIND AND YOU HAVE BEEN A BIG PART OF MY LIFE, THAT IN ITSELF IS SPECIAL. I'VE HAD A ONE OF A KIND LIFE EXPERIENCE, YOU! I'VE BEEN SKETCHED FOR HAVING YOU IN MY LIFE. LIKE ANY OTHER EXPERIENCE LET'S JUST TAKE THE EXPERIENCE OF "RIDING A ROLLER COASTER" AS A METAPHOR TO DESCRIBE THE UPS & DOWNS, THE MOMENTS OF FEAR AND RELIEF THERE MAY BE MORE OF THAT BUT FOR NOW, ALWAYS WHETHER YOU ARE NEAR OR FAR, HERE OR GONE, YOU ARE ALWAYS IN MY HEART. IT MAY SOUND HOKEY BUT "I WAS ONCE LIKE YOU ARE NOW AND I KNOW IT IS NOT EASY AND I KNOW YOU HAVE TO (BE) AWAY & JUST DOING THAT IS A STEP, & CAN BE A STEP FORWARD & THANK YOURSELF FOR, HAVING DONE JUST THAT".

FROM A PERSON WHO HAS A MENTAL ILLNESS:

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH IS MAY, BUT FOR THOSE OF US WHO LIVE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS, WE ARE SO AWARE OF IT EVERY DAY. I 'M LOUD, I'M PROUD, I'M ANXIOUS AS ALL GET OUT AND BIPOLAR. I PASS AS PRETTY "NORMAL" THANKS TO YEARS OF HELP FROM FRIENDS, MEDS, THERAPY, AND A FAMILY THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNDERSTANDING AND COMPASSIONATE. NONE OF WHICH MEANS THAT LIFE IS EASY OR SIMPLE (OR NECESSARILY ALWAYS CHAOTIC). I'M LITERALLY ALWAYS GAME FOR QUESTIONS FROM ANYONE WHO WANTS TO UNDERSTAND MENTAL ILLNESS, BRING EM ON!!!!!!

FROM A NAMI MEMBER:

"OPEN YOUR HEARTS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS" 4 OUT OF 5 OF US HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPEN OUR HEARTS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS. A GESTURE O SUPPORT THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN HELPING US IN MANY ASPECTS & FUNDRAISERS FOR OUR LOCAL NAMI ALGER/MARQUETTE TO REMAIN IN THE NAMI FAMILY. HELP SUPPORT FOR OUR FAMILY, FRIENDS & LOVED ONES WHOSE LIVES ARE IMPACTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS.

Managing Holiday Stress

by Kay Colbert, LCSW

Stress is a normal physiological and emotional response that we have when the demands on us seem greater than what we can handle. When our stress becomes chronic or acute, our body responds in ways that can cause health problems and emotional distress. Stress is one of the most commonly reported causes of drug and alcohol use and is often cited as the number one cause of addiction relapse. Learning good stress management skills can be useful any time of the year, but is especially needed around the

holidays.

The time period starting from Thanksgiving and running through New Year's can make people feel unbalanced, especially for those in recovery. Many of us feel we have too much to do and too little time, we invite too many relatives to our house and spend too much money. We feel pressured and exhausted. The holiday season can trigger emotional highs and lows, which in turn can be a trigger for relapse for those in recovery from addictions.

We or our families may have impractical expectations about the holidays. We may be separated or estranged from loved ones. We may ruminate on resentments or personal losses. There may be memories of past over-indulgences. Perhaps we have relationship problems or family tensions. Recognizing the possibility for holiday blues in advance and developing an advance plan, will help you confront any unpleasant experiences and handle them in a healthy way.

This year, take a deep breath, step back and plan ahead for good self-care. Here are some suggestions:

Be realistic about your emotional, physical and time limitations and don't push yourself beyond them. This is not the time to start complicated projects. This may not be the time to travel. Be willing to share responsibilities – you do not have to do everything yourself. Make a schedule of how relatives and friends coming over can help out and let everyone know what it is. Plan ahead. Try not to have unrealistic expectations of "perfect" holidays. Your normal everyday routines can provide consistency.

Say no. Sometimes families do not celebrate in a healthy or positive way. This might mean you don't get together with your parents or with Aunt Sue. Do not put yourself in situations that will have temptations present. Practice saying "no, but if I change my mind I'll let you know."

Don't play games with your sobriety! Clients too often tell me they can be around people who use alcohol or cocaine or marijuana because "that wasn't my drug of choice." This is a risky strategy.

Be proactive. Learn to say no to alcohol and other drugs in a way that is comfortable for you. If your friends or family members cannot celebrate the holidays without drinking or drugging, tell them you're sorry, but you've made other plans. Set boundaries. Yes, you have the right to ask people not to drink around you.

Practice good self care. Set aside some quiet time every day. Eat balanced meals at regular times. Be aware of how much nicotine, caffeine (that includes energy drinks) and sugar you are consuming. Exercise at least a little every day. Sleep, 8 hours at night, and get up in the morning. Lack of sleep or odd sleep patterns can contribute to fatigue, stress and mood swings. If you are on medication, take it as prescribed.

Strengthen your support system. Make plans now to touch base with your sponsor, therapist, support group or church group. Don't skip meetings. Keep the phone numbers of your sponsor and at least 3 other recovery people in your wallet to call if you start to feel overwhelmed.

Create new sober ways to celebrate. Do something for others and participate in some sober activities

such as volunteering. Join the service work or holiday activities your local AA group has planned.

Do self-check ins often. Be aware of your body, your emotions, your thoughts. Know your “red flags” or warning signs.

Take a time out. If you begin to feel stressed, step outside or go somewhere quiet and spend a few minutes doing a de-stress activity. Starting with simple breath regulation can be helpful. It will immediately get oxygen to your brain and will slow down your heart rate and engage your body’s natural relaxation response.

- 1) Take several slow, deep breaths from your belly. Place your hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath. Count your breath in 1-2-3-4-5, hold for 2 counts and breath out slowly for 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 counts. Repeat 10 times.
- 2) Count down slowly from 20 to 0. Take a slow, deep breath IN on 20, then breath OUT slowly on 19, IN on 18, OUT on 17, and so on.
- 3) Rub your palms together for a few seconds, until they are warm. Then place your hands gently over your eyes. Feel the warmth and take deep, slow breaths in and out, saying “I AM” on the in breath, and “CALM” on the out breath. Do this 10 times.

Wishing you serenity, courage and wisdom for the holidays!

NAMI “FAMILY TO FAMILY”

SERIES TO HELP FAMILIES CARE FOR MENTALLY ILL LOVED ONES

Family members of individuals dealing with a mental illness may greatly benefit from a 12 week “Family to Family” education course to be offered by NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Alger/Marquette. The 12 week series of classes, which are free to the public, will be held Tuesdays starting either February 13th or February 20th from 6pm to 8:30pm at 129 W. Baraga Ave., Marquette.

The course will cover a broad range of topics, including information on Schizophrenia, Mood Disorders (Bipolar Disorder and Major Depression), Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and PTSD. This will be the 12th time this class has been offered in our area and is presented by trained family members to conduct the classes.

The course is designed specifically for parents, siblings, spouses, teenage and adult children, significant others and friends of people with a mental illness. This course also helps people understand that this is an illness and not something they can just “deal with it”, “shape up”, as most times they just have no control over their actions. Responses from previous family members who took the class are “I feel the course saved my family” “I no longer blame myself for my child’s illness”, “This course has given me a broader understanding of the diagnosis and more comfort in speaking about this to others”. With the tragedies of well know public figures dealing with bipolar &/or depression, we feel now more than ever this class is so important for families to learn more about the types of mental illness.

Please call to register for the classes by February 9, 2018 however we will accept new class members until either March 6th or 13th (will depend on when the first class starts). For further information or to register please call: Louise 906-235-0231 or Cindy 906-360-7107 **PLEASE CALL EVEN EARLIER IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND.**

NAMI ALGER/MARQUETTE UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

ALL MEETINGS/EVENTS BELOW ARE HELD AT 129 W. BARAGA AVE., MARQUETTE UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED (also known as the Baraga Place Conference Room)

MONDAY DECEMBER 11, 2017: SUPPORT GROUP MEETING 7 TO 9pm

TUESDAY DECEMBER 12, 2017: NAMI BOARD MEETING 2 TO 4PM

THURSDAY DECEMBER 21, 2017: SUPPORT GROUP MEETING 7 TO 9PM

NO EDUCATIONAL MEETING IN DECEMBER - HAPPY HOLIDAYS

MONDAY JANUARY 8, 2018: SUPPORT GROUP MEETING 7 TO 9PM

THURSDAY JANUARY 18, 2018: SUPPORT GROUP MEETING 7 TO 9PM

MONDAY JANUARY 29, 2018: EDUCATIONAL MEETING 7 TO 9PM SUBJECT:

From Kate: "Share Your Story" IN MENTAL ILLNESS PLEASE ATTEND AND SHE WILL TAKE QUESTIONS

ALSO IN JANUARY 2018, WILL BE HOLDING OUR ANNUAL MEETING WHERE WE WILL BE VOTING IN OFFICERS, BYLAWS, 2 YEAR BUDGET ETC. WE NEED YOU THERE. SEE MORE IN THE NEWSLETTER FOR WHO IS RUNNING FOR AN OFFICER IN NAMI ALGER/MARQUETTE

MONDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2018: SUPPORT GROUP MEETING 7 TO 9PM

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2018: SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

MONDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2018: EDUCATIONAL MEETING

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13TH OR 20TH WILL POSSIBLY BE THE START OF OUR NEXT FAMILY TO FAMILY CLASS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED OR NEED MORE INFORMATION PLEASE LET US KNOW SO WE CAN PLAN FOR THIS. SEE FAMILY TO FAMILY IN NEWSLETTER FOR MORE INFORMATION

AS STATED IN PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS WE REALLY NEED SOME INPUT AS FAR AS SUBJECTS FOR OUR EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS. THESE MEETINGS ARE FOR YOU AND WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN.

EMAIL ME: CKBertucci58@charter.net OR TEXT OR CALL ME AT 906-360-7107

-CINDY K. BERTUCCI

**Remember: Check Your
mailing label for membership
expiration date.**



*"Winter is a season of recovery and preparation."
--Paul Theroux*

**P.O. Box 262
Marquette, MI, 49855**