

WINTER 2015



NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, supports and research and is steadfast in its commitment to raising awareness and building a community of hope.

NAMI – BEAVER COUNTY is an educational, advocacy and support group for families, consumers, and professionals dealing with serious mental illnesses or brain disorders. We support each other by educating ourselves through research, attending conferences, and sharing this information with others. NAMI-BC members also offer support through our years of experience in dealing with these illnesses on a personal level.

Meetings are held at

NAMI BEAVER COUNTY OFFICE- 1229 3RD ST., BEAVER, PA. 15009

7:00pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month

March 19, 2015 (mental health video) April 16, 2015 (recap of Conference) May 21, 2015 (to be announced)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUSCRIBE TO NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL: carlabraund@namibeavercounty.com

VIEW MENTAL HEALTH VIDEOS AT NAMI OFFICE

NEW WEBSITE: www.namibeavercounty.com – check for notices and articles

NAMI SWPA SPRING CONFERENCE: Saturday, April 11, 2015 featuring Brandon Marshall of the Chicago Bears, Contact NAMI SWPA at 412-366-3788 or info@namiswpa.org

FAMILY TO FAMILY CLASS: Begins March 4, 2015, call or email to register

VALUE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: Adult Recovery Forum, Friday, April 17, 2015, www.vbh-pa.com

YOUTH SUPPORT COMMUNITY DAY: May 7, 2015, Beaver Valley Mall, contact Karen Edwards 724-624-7202 or kedwards@ahci.org

SURVEYS FOR CONSUMER/FAMILY SATISFACTION (CFST)TEAM regarding behavioral health services

Contact: CFST at 724-775-7650

NAMI.ORG – New Look – Check it Out !

NAMI AIR – APP for your iPhone or Tablet – Give and Receive Support

Contact Carla Braund at (724)888-6877 or carlabraund@namibeavercounty.com for questions or concerns regarding any of the events listed above.

Like us on Facebook !!!

IN THE NEWS....

From the Boston Globe, January 2, 2015..... Signed into law by President Obama in December 2014, the Achieving a Better Life Experience or “ABLE” act allows up to \$100,000 in a savings account without losing government benefits for persons with disabilities.

From NAMI.org, February 13, 2015..... The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act, supported by NAMI passed both houses of Congress and was signed by President Obama. This act expands suicide prevention programs in the VA by improving transitioning for exiting veterans, peer support, surveys of programs, and recruiting psychiatrists for the VA.

Stigma of Mental Illness in the Workplace

Danielle Dipre, DNP student
Dr. Janene Luther Szpak, DNP, PMHNP-BC
Robert Morris University

Work is almost never easy. But for those that live with a diagnosis of mental illness, work can sometimes range from difficult to nearly impossible, depending on the nature of their job and the severity of their condition. The problems that a person with mental illness faces in the workforce are often compounded by concerns about whether or not to reveal a diagnosis, deciding when that might be important, and facing the very real risk that doing so may lead to problems with the social stigma that is often attached to people with mental illness.

It is estimated that in any given year, 1 in 5 people will experience some sort of problem with mental illness. Given that statistic, it is not unreasonable to expect that there are people in your workplace that could fall into this category. Maybe it's you. Whether or not this is you, it is helpful to know how to navigate the work environment with respect to mental illness and the accompanying social stigma.

The first thing a lot of people face is the problem of silence regarding their diagnosis. It's very common for water cooler conversation to include discussions about a coworker's high blood pressure or their recent knee surgery, but almost no one would ever risk saying something along the lines of, "My depression is becoming more difficult to manage," or, "My psychiatrist decided to increase the dose of my antipsychotic medication." Why don't people say these things? Because they are afraid of being treated differently as a result of their mental health diagnosis. High blood pressure and diabetes are much easier for other people to accept. They usually don't come with pre-conceived notions about a patient's behavior, attitudes, or their competency to work. Mental illness does. The research on stigma related to mental illness is very clear. People with psychiatric problems are thought to be weak, more prone to violent acts, or it may be assumed that you aren't really sick at all, but rather just making excuses to get out of work. There is a great need to educate others about this stigma.

So, when is it a good time to reveal a mental health diagnosis? Some people might say, "Never." The problem with that decision is that if the condition is impacting one's ability to do a job effectively, the secrecy could lead to poor performance reviews, disciplinary action and even termination. When these negative consequences become a risk, it might be the right time to reveal a diagnosis. It will help an employer understand that their employee is not just being careless or lazy, and it can pave the way for work accommodations. It's important to remember that revealing a mental health diagnosis is not the same as sharing every detail of the condition or its treatment. It is also most likely going to remain an inappropriate discussion at the water cooler.

Mental illness in the workplace is a challenging thing, and it is best to approach the situation cautiously. While there is a large body of evidence that suggests stigma is broken down by education and personal contact, it is important to consider the potential risks and benefits of self-disclosure. Some people are very secure in their job, they are confident in their performance, and they feel very strongly that revealing a mental health diagnosis will demonstrate to their employer and coworkers that people with mental health problems are not "scary" or "crazy," but rather, can be effective and valued members of a team. This approach does not apply to everyone. There are many others that prefer to maintain their privacy or recognize the risk of negative consequences in their work environment and choose not to divulge their diagnosis. It's important to remember that every person's situation is unique, and as a result, making a decision about whether and when to reveal a mental health diagnosis is a very personal one.

If you or someone you know is considering whether or not to disclose a mental illness at work, there are many resources on the Internet to assist with and guide decision-making. A good place to start is the website for the National Consortium on Stigma and Empowerment, www.stigmaandempowerment.org. The Consortium is a research group dedicated to understanding stigma, and is led by Patrick Corrigan, PsyD, one of the most prolific researchers on the topic of stigma as it relates to mental health.

References

Ilic, M., Reinecke, J., Bohner, G., Hans-Onno, R., Beblo, T., Driessen, M., Frommberger, U., and Corrigan, P.W. (2012). Protecting self-esteem from stigma: A test of different strategies for coping with the stigma of mental illness. *Int J Soc Psychiatry*, 58, 246-257. doi:10.1177/0020764010392058

Pescosolido, B.A. (2013). The Public Stigma of Mental Illness: What Do We Think; What Do We Know; What Can We Prove? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 54, 1-21. doi:10.1177/0022146512471197

HEALTHY LIVING HINTS

12 POSITIVE STEPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

1. Think positive
2. Eat well and keep active
3. Learn new skills
4. Keep in touch with friends
5. Set personal goals
6. Get involved - volunteer
7. Talk about it
8. Ask for help
9. Learn to cope with changes
10. Treat yourself well
11. Relax
12. Laugh

Cullen, N. (n.d.). Personal Growth & Motivation. Retrieved by Teresa Scibilia, January 23, 2015 from <http://www.pinterest.com/pin/27169378999368>

NAMI – THE NATION’S VOICE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

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Beaver, PA 15009
724-888-6877

Spotted on a church sign: “Whoever is praying for snow, please stop.”

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2015 *please renew early in year*

*In order to keep the membership process streamlined, we **prefer** renewals to be processed early in the year. It is also possible to renew your membership online at www.nami.org. Any questions or concerns please direct them to Carla Braund, 724-888-6877 or carlabraund@namibeavercounty.com All NAMI – Beaver County memberships include subscriptions to all four newsletters.*

_____ Enclosed is my check for \$35 for 2015 memberships in NAMI – Beaver County, NAMI, NAMI – PA, and NAMI – SW PA

_____ I am on a limited income. Dues are \$3 for full membership.

_____ I wish to make a tax deductible donation of \$ _____ to NAMI – Beaver County.

NAME(S) _____
Please check one: Family member Consumer Mental health professional

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

<p>Make checks payable to: NAMI – Beaver County <u>Send to: NAMI – Beaver County 1229 3rd Street -- Beaver, PA 15009</u></p>
