

With more than 1,200 affiliates, NAMI is America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of all individuals affected by mental illness.

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NAMI Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, GA 31908
(706) 320-3755 (leave a message)
Website: www.namicols.org
E-mail: info4@namicolsinc.org

Board of Directors:

Shelley Reed, Ph.D	President
Molly Jones	Vice President
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Stephen Akinduro	
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Teri Owens

Georgia Crisis & Access Line

Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services 24/7/365
Adults, Children & Adolescents
1-800-715-4225

Peer Support "Warm Line"

1-888-945-1414 (toll-free)

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network operates a state-funded, consumer-directed "warm line" for anyone struggling with mental health issues, 24 hours a day

Columbus ACT Team

AmericanWork, Inc.
706-641-9663

Monthly Education Meetings

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer,
4700 Armour Road, Cols., GA 31904

February

In Our Own Voice Presentation

February 18, 2019 -- 6:00 P.M.

Stephen Akinduro will be our February presenter. Stephen has been an IOOV presenter for over ten years. In addition to presenting, he has been a NAMI Columbus Board member, NAMI Connection Facilitator, Peer-to-Peer Mentor and very active volunteer. During Stephen's IOOV presentation he will take you on his journey with Bipolar II.

If you have not heard Stephen deliver his talk, mark your calendar for February 18 at 6:00 PM. It is something you don't want to miss.

March

Chaplain, Muscogee County Jail

March 18, 2019 -- 6:00 P.M.

Neil Richardson is the Chaplain for the Muscogee County Jail. He entered into a partnership with NAMI Columbus some years ago. He is excellent at joining forces with different agencies and churches to bring about change and hope for the incarcerated in our local Jail.

The NAMI Columbus Jail Program is in the jail under Neil's umbrella of educational and spiritual volunteer programs.

Please join us to hear about the many programs Neil has brought to Columbus (in and outside of the Jail). You might be interested in volunteering and being a member of Neil's teams.

We hope you will join us at both of these informative meetings to learn more about the valuable programs they represent.

If you are able, please bring an item for the refreshment table.

The NAMI Columbus Mission

We will use **Support**, **Education** and **Advocacy** to throw out lifelines of hope and help to families and consumers seeking recovery. Our vision is to create an effective and active affiliate which delivers what consumers of mental health services and families need. We work to build an area where leaders and citizens work well together to create a caring, compassionate and educated public that realizes mental illness is a biological illness and is not a character flaw or due to bad upbringing.

Upcoming Events

(Below are chances for you to get involved)

February 2019

Feb 8-10– NAMI Basics Teacher Training – Atlanta, GA*
Feb 16-17 – NAMI Connection Support Group Facilitator Training – Atlanta, GA*
Feb 18 – Monthly Education Program, 6:00-7:30PM – **IOOV Presentation by Stephen Akinduro**
Feb 19 – Community Reentry Listening Session
Feb 20 – DBHDD Regional Community Collaborative
Feb 21 – Suicide The Ripple Effect, 6:00-8:00 PM
Feb 23-24 – NAMI Family Support Group Facilitator Training – Atlanta, GA*

March 2019

March 18 – Monthly Education Program, 6:00-7:30pm–**Neil Richardson, Chaplain for Muscogee County Jail**
March 30 – Ending the Silence Presenter Training – Atlanta, GA

NOTE: Upcoming in April: Family to Family Teacher Training and Peer to Peer Mentor Training

**If you are interested in attending a NAMI Georgia training session, a letter of recommendation from a member of the NAMI Columbus Board of Directors is required. Please secure this recommendation prior to submitting the application for the training.*

“Open” Support Groups:

Every Monday night, 6-7:30 pm
Family/Friend and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups
Both groups meet at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 4700 Armour Rd.

Every Saturday, 1-2:30 pm
NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
***Meets at The Bradley Center’s Multipurpose Room
(Use 22nd St. Parking Lot for easier access)***

Every Thursday night, 6:30-8 pm
NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
Meets at Pierce Chapel United Methodist Church, 5122 Pierce Chapel Rd.



Family-to-Family & Peer-to-Peer Courses Delayed Until Fall 2019

Family-to-Family and **Peer to Peer** are free NAMI educational programs which enlighten people who have a loved one or who are living with mental illness. Mental Illness is a chronic illness and individuals and families can learn how to live their best lives possible. The courses are designed to help all family members, and those who are diagnosed, learn facts, coping strategies and dispel myths that surround mental illness.

The courses are scheduled to be held in the Fall of 2019. Comprehensive free course materials will be provided for each participant. **Pre-registration is required** to ensure enough materials. Call 706-320-3755 & leave a message or email info4@namicolsinc.org.

Both classes will run concurrently in separate rooms to ease transportation issues.

COMMUNITY REENTRY LISTENING SESSION

**Muscogee County Health and Human Services Building
2100 Comer Avenue, Conference Room A, Columbus, GA 31904
Tuesday, February 19, 2019 from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM**

Georgia has had tremendous success with its Forensic Peer Mentor program since it began in 2015. The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network applied for and received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to develop a Georgia-specific forensic peer mentor training program, and we are eager to hear from Georgians about how an expanded forensic peer mentor program can better benefit communities, families, and individuals across the state.

We hope you will join us as we continue this series of listening sessions to learn from Georgia's communities what they need to improve the lives of our justice-involved citizens, including those who are returning to their communities from correctional facilities. One listening session will be held in each of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities six regions.

We need to hear from:

- Justice-involved citizens (current and former)
- Peers
- Allies
- Family members
- Veterans
- Law enforcement
- Judiciary
- Community and civic leaders
- Politicians
- Faith groups
- Behavioral health providers
- All Certified Peer Specialists
- Anyone who has been directly or indirectly impacted by involvement with the criminal justice system

Please forward this invitation to anyone you know who might be interested in having their voice heard as we move forward with this important initiative.

(Time and location to be determined.) The last community listening session is tentatively planned for:

- Albany (Region 4): Tuesday, March 12, 2019

For additional information, please contact Lindsey Sizemore at lindsey@gmhcnc.org or [404-947-1232](tel:404-947-1232)



The DBHDD Region 6 Field Office, Behavioral Health Department, would like to invite you to the **Regional Community Collaborative focusing on partnerships in Muscogee, Harris, Talbot, Randolph, Clay, Stewart, Quitman and Chattahoochee Counties**

*February 20, 2019 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
The North Columbus Library
5689 Armour Road, Columbus, GA 31909*

This collaborative is to form a recovery oriented, community-based, system of care with the capacity to provide timely access to high-quality behavioral health treatment and support services to the individuals in their communities.

The goals of the quarterly meetings include:

- Provide an avenue for improved communication with DBHDD and within the community for updates and feedback
- Facilitate the building of relationships within the counties for improved communication of resources, knowledge and planning
- Provide an opportunity for our partners and community stakeholders to improve in collaboration and problem-solving within the community
- Provide a platform for networking and teaming to develop the necessary resources for the community

The meetings will be held quarterly or more frequent as needed depending on input from the community.

Who is involved?

Behavioral Health & Substance Abuse Treatment Providers, Social Services agencies, NAMI, Organizations helping the homeless, County or City Officials, Housing Authority and providers, community members interested in helping individuals and the community.

To maximize the efficiency of this collaborative, we kindly ask that representation from your team be empowered to make decisions on behalf of your agency.

Please RSVP by February 15, 2019 to Lawonna.Parks@dbhdd.ga.gov , and include the number of team members who will be in attendance.

SUICIDE: THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Troy University

Trojan Suicide Prevention Programs

Thursday, February 21, 2019

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM EST

Troy University, Phenix City Riverfront Campus

1510 Whitewater Avenue, Room #213

Phenix City, AL 36867



Please join us for a special screening of *Suicide: The Ripple Effect*, a feature-length documentary film and MOVEMENT focusing on the devastating effects of suicide and the tremendous positive ripple effects of advocacy, inspiration and hope that are helping millions heal and stay alive.

[View the Trailer](#)

Please contact Dr. Sherrionda Crawford with any questions surrounding this event: 334-448-5164 or scrawford@troy.edu.

Mandatory RSVP for this free event using the following link:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/suicide-the-ripple-effect-tickets-54996363604>



Coping With Mental Illness: What NOT To Do

By Katherine Ponte, BA, JD, MBA, NYCPS-P, CPRP | Jan. 25, 2019



I was recently discussing coping strategies for my bipolar disorder with my psychiatrist. I was pressing him for new ways to cope. He told me that most of his other patients also tend to look for *what to do*—a new medication or treatment method—but it is just as important to focus on *what not to do*.

I was interested in learning more about the experience of his other patients. After all, one of the most effective therapies has been learning I'm not alone, that other people have similar experiences. I wanted to know what he observed as the most common behaviors and habits that interfere with recovery and coping. Indeed, I learned that the obstacles I faced for years are actually fairly common: denial, ambivalence, ignorance and fear of stigma. (continued on page 5).

(continued from page 4)

I could not help feeling regret as he listed them off. I realized that I had held myself back during all the years I denied the seriousness of my condition. In hindsight errors are obvious, but as I was experiencing the illness, I lacked the insight to make the right decisions. My doctor explained that these behaviors largely result from the “blind spots” that mental illness can create in our awareness. On top of that, stigma compounds the issue by limiting our perception of ourselves and the possibilities of living with mental illness.

Achieving recovery and coping with mental illness has required improvements to both my medical treatment and my interaction with my bipolar disorder. It has required increasing my awareness and coping by not doing behaviors created in response to stigma. Here are some of those harmful behaviors to avoid.

Denial

I stubbornly refused to accept my diagnosis of bipolar even though I knew something was wrong. That blind refusal took on many forms, including refusing all types of help. My treatment was needlessly delayed, which worsened my condition. I also refused to ask for help when it was clear that I needed it. The primary reason was fear of the consequences of being labeled as “mentally ill.”

Dismissal

I often dismissed my family's input. I foolishly thought, “*who are they to think they know better than me.*” But during many critical times they did know better. For example, my spouse has always been better than me at spotting signs of my hypomania. My refusals and dismissiveness also lessened my family's motivation to find me help. I didn't fully appreciate their efforts to help me, but looking back I know they had my best interest at heart.

Ignorance

I remained uninformed about my condition as a form of denial. I was worried that my suspicions, my health care provider's assessment and my family's concern would be confirmed if I became more informed about my condition. Ignorance made me a poor patient. I lacked the knowledge and impartial perspective to effectively assess and influence my treatment. I was sometimes combative when my doctor suggested a medication adjustment. I didn't know how to effectively express my treatment objectives and ask for medication alternatives. I wasn't self-aware enough to recognize the signs that my condition was deteriorating, and I needed to adjust to stay on track.

Non-Adherence

I was non-adherent to my treatment plan a couple of times. I convinced myself that I was well and didn't need my medications. When my symptoms became less pronounced, I immediately thought I'd been cured. Without proper medical advice, I reduced and stopped taking my medication, which led to a serious manic episode and hospitalization. I now understand the consequences of stopping my medication without consulting my doctor.

Recklessness

I was impulsive and ignored my safety on a few occasions. In one instance, I was furious with the rapid weight gain, which is a side effect of the medication. I insisted my doctor either reduce my dose or complete cessation. I got what I asked for, and I also got manic along with it. On another occasion, I hid my symptoms from my spouse because I was worried I might be hospitalized. My condition worsened, and I ended up being hospitalized. I have learned to trust those closest to me and accept the help when it's offered.

Ambivalence

Even after accepting my diagnosis, I remained ambivalent about my treatment for many years. This led me to accept subpar treatment. I didn't ask if there were options, if things could be better. Due to my apathy, my spouse had to step in and make treatment decisions for me, which I ultimately resented. I would take my medication and attend therapy, but do little else. I'd take a fistful of anti-depressants and lie in bed all day waiting for some magical transformation. I didn't give the treatment the support that it needed to be effective.

For many, these behaviors are deeply ingrained. Addressing them may involve facing your own insecurities and hopelessness that stigma instills in us. But if we don't, we may limit our ability to fully adopt and benefit from new treatment strategies.

I learned the hard way that I was holding my recovery back. For over 15 years, I struggled. I had convinced myself that nothing would ever change, that nothing would ever work. I denied myself and my treatment the benefit of the doubt. Maybe things would have been different if the feeling of repeatedly losing hope wasn't so painful. The last time I reached out for help might have been my last, but I grasped hope once more and never let go. I won't ever let go again. It finally led me towards recovery and back to my family. I realized that not having hope was my greatest blind spot of all.

“Katherine's candid description of times when she more than once “got in her own way,” possibly undermining her own treatment goals, is far from unusual and, I suspect, will sound familiar to many readers who struggle either first- or second-hand with chronic mental health conditions. By definition, it is awfully hard, if not almost impossible, to recognize blind spots. I applaud her candor and self-reflection.” – Dr. Goldberg

Author's note: Thank you, Dr. Joseph Goldberg for being a wonderful doctor, for showing me that recovery is possible and helping me get and stay there. I wish everyone had a doctor just like you.

Katherine Ponte is a mental health advocate and entrepreneur. She is the founder of [ForLikeMinds](#), the first online peer-based support community dedicated to people living with or supporting someone with mental illness and also offers [Recovery Coaching](#). She is in [recovery](#) from Bipolar I Disorder. She is also on the NAMI New York City Board of Directors.





Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, GA 31908
(706) 320-3755
Our Area's Voice on Mental Illness



Many people find their way to our classes by first attending a support group. If you are a NAMI Columbus "long timer" (we don't want to call you old), please attend either of the two weekly NAMI Connection support groups or the weekly Family support group. Newcomers can use your wisdom and hard-earned experience. Sharing a message of recovery gives the hope they are searching for. Many people tell us that the NAMI motto "**You Are Not Alone**" is the initial feeling they realize at their first meeting. If you are willing to train to be a support group facilitator, let us know!

I want to support NAMI Columbus and NAMI's mission.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone Numbers (do not enter a number if you do not want to be listed in the Membership Directory (members only).

E-Mail (Please include so we can be green and email you our monthly newsletter.)

Please check type of membership desired:

- ☐ Individual Membership -\$40 Dues
- ☐ Household Membership- \$60 Dues
- ☒ **\$5 Open Door Membership (financial hardship)**
(All dues are for 1 year and are tax-deductible.)

All memberships include NAMI National, NAMI Georgia, and NAMI Columbus membership.

- ☐ I am not joining at this time, but I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____. (Thank you!!!)

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

NAMI National, NAMI Georgia and NAMI Columbus are dedicated to eradicating stigma and improving the lives of persons with mental illnesses thereby also benefiting their friends, family and community. Catch the wave and be a part of change.

NAMI Columbus is an affiliate of NAMI Georgia, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible. Membership includes a subscription to our monthly newsletter and access to immediate news on advocacy, treatment and support issues from our national, state and local organizations.

Please make checks payable to:
NAMI Georgia & enter "**NAMI Columbus membership**" in the memo field.

Mail your check and membership form to:
NAMI Columbus
P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, Georgia 31908

You can also join safely online at www.nami.org/join.