



Columbus

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

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Sue Marlowe
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Shelley Reed, Ph.D
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Advisor: Doris Keene

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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

Support Education



Farewell Fine Friend

By Sue Marlowe

Farewell fine friend, **Doris Keene**, but only from the NAMI Columbus Leadership Team. This month she is stepping down ... but fear not. Doris will continue as an advisor to the team so we will still benefit from all that valuable experience she has gained in 25 years of leadership within NAMI Columbus.

During her time so far with NAMI Columbus she has served as President, Treasurer and Secretary. She has also been in charge of the membership database, proofing and distribution of the newsletter, teaching many Family to Family classes and facilitating family support groups. That sounds like the work of more than one person, but that's not even all that she did. You can see what a valuable NAMI member she has been.

It's also important to say that many NAMI Columbus people have a deeply personal connection with Doris. She has been there for weddings, funerals, and other major events in people's lives. She has helped when people have struggled with their loved one's, or their own recovery. You would never know that she also has a full life of her own that included full time at TSYS (just recently retired), and a husband, Wayne and their two sons Alan and Brian.

So we don't have to say we will miss Doris except on the Leadership Team. She will continue to be a jewel in NAMI Columbus' crown that we will enjoy for years to come.

Upcoming Trainings

April 2021

Apr 17 – NAMI In Our Own Voice Presenter Training

(Candidates must complete an online training session before attending an in-person training)

[In Our Own Voice Presenter Application](#)

Apr 24-25 – NAMI Family to Family Teacher Training

[Family to Family Teacher Application](#)

Trainings are delivered online through the Zoom platform

Please note that all applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Applicants must be current NAMI members.
2. Applicants must be actively involved in their local NAMI Georgia affiliate.
3. Applicants must be endorsed and approved by a NAMI Georgia Affiliate Board leader. A letter of recommendation from a NAMI affiliate leader must accompany your application.



NAMI Columbus Virtual Support Group Meetings

NAMI Columbus **Family Support Group** meetings are now being held virtually. These meetings are on Monday evenings from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM via Zoom. We're happy to be able to once again offer facilitated support meetings for family members and friends of an individual with a mental health issue.

We hope you will join us for these Monday night FSG Zoom meetings. If you would like a meeting invitation to be sent to you, simply send your email address and cell phone number to:

Teresa O'Donnell, tblankenbeker@gmail.com or **Tawana Farley**, farleytawana@yahoo.com.

NAMI Columbus **Connection Recovery Support Group** meetings will continue to be held virtually at the following times:

- Saturdays 1:00pm – 2:30pm
- Thursdays 6:30pm – 8:00pm

Email **Vanessa Vivas**, Vanessa.M.Vivas@gmail.com or **Teresa O'Donnell**, tblankenbeker@gmail.com for an invite/link to either group.

Please email at least 24 hours prior to the session.



For valuable information and resources, check out the NAMI National Resource Directory. You can access the directory at the link below. We also have the directory on our NAMI Columbus web site.

<https://nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Images/FactSheets/NAMINationalResourceDirectory.pdf>

Welcome Aboard!



In February, our Leadership Team welcomed a new member. **Tawana Farley** stepped up and let NAMI Columbus know she would be interested in joining the Leadership Team. After joining the Team, she immediately helped revive the family support group meetings after she completed facilitator training. Soon she will be helping our affiliate raise funds for the Columbus walk team.

Tawana has a spouse (Tobias) and kids, and still finds time to volunteer her time to NAMI Columbus. When we start meeting again in person, please introduce yourself to Tawana and let her warm smile please your soul



NAMI Georgia Presents:

Movie Night & Trivia

April 10th @ 12pm - 2:30pm

**This engagement is for NAMI members to build
community and support during this time!**

The Ride

**Also, we will have a trivia contest with gift cards and NAMI Swag
giveaways!**



Please see virtual meeting registration information below:

Register in advance for this meeting:

**[https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYsdutrz0sEtwP2Ab6YEZCCholbSVD
dnWz](https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJYsdutrz0sEtwP2Ab6YEZCCholbSVDdnWz)**

**After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing
information about joining the meeting.**

The Many Impacts of Self-Stigma

By Katherine Ponte, BA, JD, MBA, CPRP

The mental illness label is one of the most stigmatizing. Most people with mental illness face stigma at some point from external sources, whether from friends, family members, employers or health care professionals. However, what's even more damaging is when we internalize that stigma and start believing in the negative stereotypes that have been prescribed to us. This is self-stigma.

The emotional impact of self-stigma can often be greater than the symptoms of our illness itself. It batters our self-esteem, self-efficacy and outlook on life. The shame and embarrassment self-stigma ingrains in us can make us reluctant to talk about our condition. This can limit understanding and awareness, allowing our self-stigma to grow even stronger.

Without intervention, this vicious cycle can lead to worse outcomes for people who are struggling. Therefore, understanding and addressing self-stigma is an essential part of healing and recovering from mental illness.

Types Of Self-Stigma

The **Internalized Stigma Mental Illness Inventory-29** (ISMI-29) measures self-stigma using four categories, including:

1. **Alienation:** Feeling embarrassed, ashamed, inferior or disappointed in yourself for being ill. Feeling that your illness is

Support

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Advocacy

Recovery

- your fault. Believing mental illness has ruined your life. Feeling like others are incapable of understanding you.
2. **Stereotype endorsement:** Applying stereotypes to yourself, such as people with mental illness are violent, can't live good or rewarding life, can't do certain typical things (e.g., get married, work a steady job, contribute to society) and can't make decisions for themselves.
 3. **Discrimination experience:** Feeling discriminated against, patronized, ignored or not taken seriously; believing others would not want a relationship with you; feeling incapable of achieving much.
 4. **Social withdrawal:** Avoiding getting close to people who don't have mental illness, socializing or talking about yourself because you feel like a burden, out of place or inadequate, like a potential embarrassment to loved ones.

Consequences Of Self-Stigma

There are [wide ranging](#) consequences of self-stigma. It can be a barrier to recovery, increase depression, reduce self-esteem, reduce recovery orientation, reduce empowerment and increase perceived devaluation and discrimination, among other consequences. A study also showed a strong [correlation](#) between loneliness and self-stigma.

Self-Sabotage

Many people with mental illness engage in self-sabotaging behavior because self-stigma causes them to expect failure. An example is to refuse or stop taking medication because we don't believe it will work or that we will get better. It can be emotionally easier to handle intentional failure than trying to succeed and fail.

We may also intentionally harm or cut off relationships because we expect them to fail. Self-stigma may cause us to question the viability of the relationship, because "who could possibly like us?" As illogical as it might seem, self-sabotage may be a way to protect ourselves. The expectation of failure leads to harmful action taken to protect against further self-stigma. We may sabotage an activity or relationship now to avoid its more hurtful eventual failure in the future.

Rumination

Many people living with mental illness struggle with rumination on negative thoughts. Also, we may generalize our experiences of stigma. If we've experienced stigma a few times, we may assume that others who do not stigmatize also have stigmatizing views about us.

Suicidal Ideation

Some forms of self-stigma can be life threatening. One of the most common examples is feeling like you're a burden, that your family would be better off without you. This can lead to suicidal ideation, which is what happened to me. It's a key reason people with mental illness withdraw and isolate. The pain or guilt can be excruciating. It can be easily triggered by remarks from loved ones like, "I have to do everything for you." It is not uncommon for us to hear these expressions of frustration from our caregivers.

Addressing Self-Stigma

There are many ways to address self-stigma. A [study](#) found the two leading approaches to self-stigma reduction were attempts to:

1. Alter stigmatizing beliefs and attitudes of the individual and
2. Enhance skills for coping with self-esteem through improvements in self-esteem, empowerment and help-seeking behavior.

These approaches can be addressed in a clinical setting, but self-stigma is often best addressed through supportive interactions with loved ones. Statements and actions from people who care about us usually have a larger impact on us, whether good or bad.

These are a few tips for loved ones to guide a conversation as they try to help us address self-stigma.

Try to Understand

Do not underestimate the power of self-stigma. Try to identify and understand its potential consequences. Assume that your loved one is experiencing self-stigma given its prevalence and detrimental impacts. Many of us are reluctant to talk about stigma, let alone self-stigma. We don't want to admit that stigma impacts us as much as it does.

Also, consider if you may have made stigmatizing comments even if unintentionally to your loved one. Be prepared to recognize and apologize for this behavior.

Use Facts

Assemble facts and resources to prove that common stigma examples are false. For example, contrary to popular stigmatizing views, people with mental illness are **more likely** to be victims of crime than perpetrators. Self-stigma based on stigma that can be objectively disproven is easier to address than subjective sources of stigma. Talk about common examples of stigma and self-stigma to show your familiarity and recognize that your loved one may be experiencing them. You may also note common emotional reactions triggered by stigma, namely sadness and anger.

Respond Thoughtfully

Be aware that talking about self-stigma is often more about how it makes your loved one feel rather than whether it is reasonable for them to believe the stereotype to be true. Be extremely cautious about delegitimizing, diminishing or dismissing emotions by saying statements like, “you shouldn’t feel that way” or “why do you feel that way?” This sort of statement may provoke an emotionally defensive response.

Listen

When your loved one is willing to discuss their self-stigma, you should simply listen. If there is silence or if a reply seems natural use **active listening**. Most importantly, empathize and validate their emotions. Engaging with peers, including conversations about stigma, can help normalize the feelings associated with self-stigma and allow for a “collaborative” resistance to stigma.

Keep in Mind

Self-stigma can persist despite recovery. Maybe it’s because we know that there is always the risk of a mental illness relapse. This possibility may leave open in our minds the fear that “stigma was right all along” if we relapse.

So how do I cope with this shadow of self-stigma? I know that just as relapse is possible, so is recovery. I take comfort knowing that I have recovered before, and I can do it again should I relapse. And having recovered before, I have the tools and the roadmap now to get me to recovery more easily. Recovery is the ultimate way to prove stigma wrong.

Additional Articles of Interest:

10 Foods That Boost Your Memory and Brain Power <https://www.newsmax.com/health/health-news/food-boost-memory-brain-power/2021/02/23/id/1011146/>

What is dialectical behavior therapy? <https://www.today.com/health/what-dbt-dialectical-behavior-therapy-selena-gomez-treatment-t139722>



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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.**

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

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!!!)

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 .