



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Syracuse



Newsletter

JULY/AUGUST 2019

Meeting Schedule

NAMI Syracuse - Support & Sharing Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm

AccessCNY, 420 East Genesee Street, Syracuse 13202

(parking and entrance in rear of building)

NAMI Syracuse Family Support Group

Second Wednesday of each month, 10:00am

NAMI Syracuse office, 917 Avery Avenue, Syracuse 13204

NAMI Syracuse is a not-for-profit, self-help organization of active and concerned families and friends of people who suffer from serious and persistent psychiatric illnesses, most commonly schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic depression), and severe depression.

CARING

SHARING

EDUCATION

ADVOCACY

Events Calendar

July 16, 2019	NAMI Syracuse Family Support 7:00pm - AccessCNY
July 17, 2019	Peer Support Group - This Mind of Mine 5:30pm - NAMI Syracuse Office
August 14, 2019	NAMI Syracuse Family Support 10:00am - NAMI Syracuse office
August 20, 2019	NAMI Syracuse Family Support 7:00pm - AccessCNY
August 21, 2019	Peer Support Group - This Mind of Mine 5:30pm - NAMI Syracuse Office
September 8, 2019	Harvest Hopela , Greenwood Winery <i>(see page 3)</i>
September 11, 2019	NAMI Syracuse Family Support 10am - NAMI Syracuse office
October 2, 2019	NAMI Syracuse Conference Responding to Crisis Rosamond Gifford Zoo <i>(see page 3)</i>

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear NAMI Syracuse family and friends,

April, May and June were challenging months for my family. My son stopped his medication because he didn't think he needed it anymore. He didn't tell me because he knows I'd nag him about taking medication. His mania and psychosis rolled back in. The scenario is familiar - trying to get him to go back on meds, go to the clinic or hospital, concern about his behaviors that threaten his safety and housing.

Many of you have been in my shoes -calling clinicians who can't speak to you because "no release signed". Trying to coordinate case management with the clinical team. Calling police but when they arrive, my son speaks calmly to them although he'd been screaming moments ago. Finally he arrives in the hospital but they only keep him a few days because he's very cooperative. He did take his monthly shot in the hospital. It's a start -.but he's still so symptomatic that many issues in his life become chaotic, losing friends, phones, keys, ID, medicaid card, and the apartment is a mess, risking eviction.

Dealing with my own feelings of frustration, anger and sadness takes a lot of my energy. The mental health system is so unhelpful when you are trying to get help for your loved one.

In our support groups we talk about self care especially during these difficult episodes.

I tried to practice what I preach. I'm taking longer walks with the dog, went for a massage, cut back on some obligations, pulled weeds, spent more time at the barn with my horse, prayed and went out and pulled more weeds.

Remember to prioritize yourself whether you are a family member or a consumer or a professional. We all need to "recharge the battery", "gas up the tank", and protect our own mental health.

Meanwhile NAMI Syracuse has been very busy with calls, presentations, and the office building getting a paint job.

Tanisha Wiggins partnered with me to present **Ending the Silence** at Cazenovia High School for 500 students. Our biggest group yet!

Madeline Canastra represented NAMI Syracuse at the "Off the Mask" fashion show in Albany May 10th. She was the third biggest fundraising model because of all your donations!

May 19th, **Ending the Silence** at Onondaga Public Library was a success. Thank you to Beckie and Danae Hidy, Tanisha Wiggins, and Joe Ridgway for doing this presentation. Our **Nothing to Hide** picture/text display was at the library the entire month of May courtesy of Spence Plavocos and Mary Bartowski taking the time to put it up and take it down.

We had a table this year at the CNY Pride Festival June 22nd with Carol Notar and Lacey Roy volunteering their time.

This year our annual Hopela fundraiser is scheduled for September 8th at Greenwood Winery, 6475 Collamer Road, East Syracuse.

Our 25th annual conference, **Responding to Crisis** will be October 2nd at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo

Please start to seek donations from businesses where you spend your money or if you know business owners, ask them for support. We need a large silent auction this year to offset our costs at the winery.

Thank you for your time, devotion and support of NAMI. Take good care of yourself.

Marla Byrnes, NAMI Syracuse President

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For the latest happenings at NAMI Syracuse visit us on **Facebook** and **LIKE** our page.



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Register your current Amazon account with NAMI Syracuse Inc. today by going to:

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and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to NAMI Syracuse!

RECEIVE THE NAMI SYRACUSE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL!

If you would like to receive this newsletter and other NAMI Syracuse correspondence through your email, please contact us at:

namisyracuse@namisyracuse.org

If we don't already have your e-mail address, please provide us with it.

Many of you have asked for this option for your convenience and to save NAMI Syracuse resources.

Please, take the time, and let us know.



Harvest Hopela

A fall fundraiser presented by NAMI Syracuse

Sunday, September 8, 2018

3:00pm to 6:00pm

Greenwood Winery

6475 Collamer Road, East Syracuse, NY

*Food, 1 Complimentary Drink, Cash Bar,
Large Silent Auction,
Music by Falling Forward
\$50 per person
Purchase tickets online at
namisyracuse.org
or call 315-487-2085 to purchase by phone*

**Ticket purchase automatically enters holder
for a chance to win \$500!
You do not need to be present to win!**

*National Alliance on Mental Illness is a not for profit
grassroots organization to support families and individuals,
educate the community about mental illness and fight
stigma.*

NAMI Syracuse Educational Conference

Responding to Mental Health Crisis

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

9:00am - 3:30pm

Rosamond Gifford Zoo, One Conservation Place, Syracuse

Earn 5 CEU's

Tarum Kumar, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at SUNY Upstate University, Syracuse and Clinical Director at Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center in Utica, NY

Assessing Dangerousness to Self and Others

~~~~~

**Sheila Le Gacy, Director of the Family Support and Education Center, AccessCNY**

*Radical Acceptance and the Art of Working with Families*

~~~~~

Jonathan Moe & Ron Wood, Helio Health

Incorporating Crisis Response into Outpatient Service

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**Peer Panel: Lacey Roy Ciciriello, Rex Mac Queen, Tanisha Wiggins**

*My Story - What Works and What Doesn't*

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Crisis Intervention Panel: Spencer Gervasoni, LMSW, Chief Thomas Winn, Staff Sergeant Kristen Afarian, Officer Patricia Arnold, Theresa Humennyj, LCSW and Nancy, parent

Crisis Intervention in Action

Save the Date! Brochures will be available soon!

MEMBERS, please remember to renew your membership. It's different with the NAMI new affiliation process. Now we each have different renewal dates which I think makes it much harder to remember. In the past, we sent out a letter to all members at the beginning of each year to jog our memories and that helped. The current system sends out an email from National NAMI about renewal and I'm afraid lots of folks are just deleting it. Please take time to renew your membership today. It's only through our "numbers" that we have clout with politicians and government agencies. They want to know you have "power" to utilize your voting "power" if they don't listen to our advocacy efforts. Each member is important to our cause. Please encourage family members, friends, and professionals to join.

**COMMENTARY: STOP
INCARCERATING THE
MENTALLY ILL IN SOLITARY
CONFINEMENT**

*by Alicia Barraza and Doug Van Zandt,
April 30, 2019*

Holidays are normally a time of festivities, sharing and families being together. For Easter Sunday, I recall shopping for that special Lego or K'nex toy that challenged our son, Ben, and that he wanted so badly. From a young age, he had a talent for quickly assembling these toys. He also had a very caring and loving personality.

Then came the tumultuous teenage years and the summer when Ben began suffering from severe depression. He did not tell us what was happening to him because he was afraid he would end up in a psychiatric hospital and be humiliated at school. While in a state of psychosis, he lit a fire in an empty house and was subsequently arrested. Even though he was an honor student and a Boy Scout and had never been in any type of trouble, he was sent to prison at the age of 17.

While at Woodbourne Correctional Facility, Ben obtained his GED and was named valedictorian. At the age of 18, he was accepted into the highly competitive Bard Prison Initiative, where he took college courses. Each year we spent the holidays with him, eating vending machine food and playing card games.

But for Ben, there were more bad times than good times.

Ben told us he was subjected to sexual abuse by another incarcerated person and was assaulted by prison staff. He began suffering from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. It all came to a head when he was wrongly accused of fighting, in retaliation for complaining about staff mistreatment. He was put in solitary confinement, locked in a tiny cell for 23 hours a day and only allowed out for an hour of so-called recreation, alone in a different cage. There, he had minimal access to mental health treatment and was not allowed to attend any programs. Before, we had talked on the phone just about every day, but people in solitary are not allowed to make phone calls. Ben was completely alone.

Ben could no longer endure the violence, brutality, inhumanity and loneliness of prison life. He had experienced and witnessed too many horrible events.

On Oct. 30, 2014, while in solitary confinement, Ben hanged himself. He was 21 years old.

Our grief is immeasurable, and we have dealt with it in many ways. Most important to us was preventing this tragedy from befalling anyone else. We built a replica solitary confinement cell and joined other advocates in raising awareness across the state while fighting to pass the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act (A2500/S1623).

If HALT had been law, Ben would still be alive today. HALT prohibits the placement of people like Ben, with mental illness, in solitary confinement. Also, it would restrict placement in solitary to more serious misconduct, so he would not have been sent to solitary for a minor rule violation and with no due process.

In some cases, a person may need to be isolated, and HALT would limit that to 15 days, in line with international human rights standards. If the person continues to pose a serious threat, they could be trans-

ferred to therapeutic units with the goal of addressing the underlying cause of any problematic behavior, including by ensuring access to meaningful, pro-social programming.

Now, after a long, hard campaign, the bill has enough support to pass in both houses of the Legislature. We demand that they bring it to the floor and pass it - without weakening it - this year, and that the governor sign it as is.

New York's leaders are responsible for our son's death, and they alone can end the abhorrent use of incarceration to respond to mental illness, and the torture of solitary confinement.

Editor's Note: Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the state legislative leaders shelved the HALT bill that would have restricted solitary confinement in prisons and jails before the legislation session ended on June 20th.

**Mark Your Calendars for
Grand Rounds
Upstate Medical University**

Date: July 25, 2019

Time: 12:30-2:00pm

Title: Physician Assisted Deaths of Patients Suffering from Psychiatric Disorders: an Overview of the Issues and Evidence

Speaker: Scott Kim, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Bioethics and Humanities, National Institute of Health

Discussant: Gregory Eastwood, M.D., Professor of Bioethics and Humanities, SUNY Upstate

Date: August 1, 2019

Time: 12:30-2:00pm

Title: Cannabis: Harmful or Helpful? Review of the State of the Evidence.

Speaker: Ziva Cooper, Ph.D., UCLA Cannabis Research Initiative, Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior.

Grand Rounds area, 2nd floor, 713 Harrison Street, Syracuse 13210

Questions: contact Claire Neale: 315-464-3120, NealeC@upstate.edu

These talks are open to everyone.

UNDERSTANDING THE WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE AND WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED

from rtor.org., July 1, 2019

It is difficult to reach adulthood without knowing someone who has attempted or died by suicide. It's natural to feel helpless and guilty when someone you know takes this step, even if you were not close to the person. When a suicide occurs, our thoughts turn to how to prevent it in the future. Read on to learn the warning signs and what you can do if you see or experience them.

The warning signs

Suicidal risk announces itself with a number of warning signs. Suicidal thoughts, talk, and threats should never be dismissed as just attention seeking or a cry for help. Those messages often lead to suicide attempts.

Talking about suicide or death is just one way people indicate they need help. Other signs of suicidal intention are:

- Unusual anger
- Reckless behavior
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic mood swings
- Loss of sleep or oversleeping

Confusingly, the above symptoms can easily point to a different problem, including an underlying physical malady. A physician can help determine if that is the case, and can then refer someone to appropriate treatment. In fact, a physician can be a first step toward assembling a team of professionals who can help those who are struggling.

An emotional wellness team

Physicians are qualified to help determine if someone is facing a physical health issue, or if there's a need to address a mental health concern, or both. A visit to your doctor is a great first step toward healing, and you will likely be asked a series of questions about recent wellness and activities. The doctor might prescribe an antidepressant or other medication, therapy, or refer you to another professional.

Social workers can also play a key role on an emotional wellness team. For example, a social worker who completes a Master's of Social work from any number of U.S. universities will have training in diagnosing and treating mental health issues. From there, a social worker can help someone learn healthy coping skills.

Young people can also benefit from having a school counselor on their emotional wellness team. As U.S. News & World Report explains, counselors can help address specific academic concerns, as well as provide direct counseling, and arrange help for students and their families.

What treatments are there?

Suicide is preventable, and to stop it normally means treating whatever is causing the underlying issue. For most people, this means treatment for depression.

Fortunately, there are a number of effective treatments for depression. Medications are often the first line of defense if an individual is showing signs of depression. For instance, serotonin reuptake inhibitors appear to be particularly successful in treating the depression of suicidal individuals.

Serotonin is a naturally-occurring chemical in our bodies that helps us stay happy and stable, even in the face of adversity. If someone is clinically depressed and therefore suicidal, his serotonin levels have probably fallen too low. Several antidepressants work by preventing the body from expelling serotonin. The result is that the patient has enough serotonin to overcome the sadness.

The link between addiction and suicide

There is a strong link between drug and alcohol addiction and suicide. Both drugs and alcohol have sedating effects that can lead to depression. On the flipside, people often use drugs to self-medicate, so an undiagnosed mental health issue can contribute to addiction. When the issues occur together, both should be addressed.

Who can I call?

If you are thinking about suicide or someone tells you he or she is considering suicide, please call 911 immediately, visit an emergency room, or call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. If you are concerned about what happens when you make that call for help, a 2018 article in USA Today explains that the

experience is completely confidential, and you do not need to disclose any information that makes you uncomfortable.

We must all be alert to the warning signs of suicide in ourselves and in our friends, family members, patients, students, and clients. It is better to err on the side of too much vigilance than too little. If you or someone you know is showing signs of suicidal ideation, reach out for help now.

MY STORY OF RECOVERY FROM DEPRESSION AND ADDICTION

from rtor.org., May 31, 2019

As early as grade school, I remember struggling to gather up the energy and motivation I needed to get out of bed in the morning and go to school. Some days it was so bad that my mom had to nearly drag me out of bed. I had no problems in school and no real reason to dread going, but I did anyway. I was a smart, approachable young girl. I could put a big smile on my face and I made friends easily. Regardless of the facts, I simply felt as though I didn't fit in with the other kids at school. I had no desire to socialize or participate in the activities that other kids looked forward to. I was happier alone in my bedroom.

This isolation brought me to a place where I began to hate myself. I was slightly overweight and was teased in school. Insecurity took hold of me and I let it run my life for several years. I was constantly worried about what other people would think of the way I looked or the things I said. I second-guessed everything I did. At the age of 13, I learned that a little whiskey from my parent's musty liquor cabinet could effectively remove my feelings of desolation and insecurity while enhancing my mood.

Over the next few years, I continued to drink in secret. I began to go to high school intoxicated and alcohol was playing an important part of my life as I sought confidence and happiness through a bottle of liquid courage. Alcohol was my favorite companion that later became my worst enemy.

Although alcohol seemed to be the solution to my depression in the beginning, it eventually made it worse. It dramatically changed my life in terrible ways. By the time I went to college, I couldn't get out of bed without having withdrawals. Around this time I was also introduced to opioids - which provided me with the functionality I needed to go to class high until I could get back to my dorm and take the next drink.

It wasn't until alcohol and drugs had taken away my desire to live that I realized I had been self-medicating my depression for nearly 10 years. I felt as though I only had two options: to kill myself or to get sober.

Fortunately, my suicide attempt failed and I decided to get help.

When I went to a dual diagnosis treatment center I was diagnosed with depression for the first time and put on the right medication while receiving therapy to help me get to the root of my problems.

During the 90 days I spent in treatment, I was taught about the relapse prevention tools I needed to stay sober and treat my depression simultaneously. I was surrounded by a group of other individuals who were also suffering from co-occurring mental illness and addiction. This group not only thoroughly understood what I was going through, but they were willing to listen to me, provide me with immense support, and hold me up when I was feeling down. I learned how healing it can be to talk about my problems and emotions with other people who shared common ground. This helped me learn how to identify and cope with emotional triggers in order to avoid letting depression control my life.

Treatment also encouraged me to incorporate healthy habits into my lifestyle that can be used as coping mechanisms, such as yoga, meditation, and spending time in nature. These activities are all helpful in reducing stress and anxiety while promoting a sense of well-being. I have found that if I start my day with a short walk outside and end it with a relaxing meditation, I feel better and have more energy.

While the cycle of depression and alcoholism may seem like a hopeless one, it is estimated that 20 million people are living lives in sobriety. My own recovery proves this as I embarked on a journey of sobriety hand in hand with other alcoholics and addicts. I was given a life where my dreams were restored, my motivation came back with an enthusiastic outlook on life, and I found gratitude for the little things in life. Through treatment, hard work, and an outstanding support group, I believe that anyone has the ability to recover from depression and alcoholism.

STUDY POINTS TO "SHARED BIOLOGY" BETWEEN 5 PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

An international group of scientists have identified genetic links between five major psychiatric disorders, including autism, ADHD, bipolar disorder, depression and schizophrenia.

Their study, published in the medical journal *Lancet*, could change how we understand and treat the illnesses.

For the first time, researchers were able to see if there are any genetic variants that are linked to not just one of those disorders, but to all five. "And there were," Dr. Jordan Smoller, one of the lead researchers in the study, said.

Smoller, a psychiatry professor at Massachusetts General Hospital, explained. "There were several regions of the genome, several variations that seemed to increase the risk for all five. It's important to realize, of course, that this is a small part of the genetic component of these disorders, but it points to a shared biology."

The researchers took this approach because disorders often cluster in families. Smoller added, "It's not only that, we sometimes see the same family being affected with multiple kinds of disorders, so there was some evidence that there would be shared links, but this is the first time we've been able to see specific DNA variations."

Will the study affect how we treat these disorders?

"Well, not immediately," Smoller said. "But one of the interesting findings from the study was that genes involved in how calcium channels operate in the brain. These are important for how brain cells communicate. It seemed to be associated with all of these disorders, so it raises the possibility that treatments that target those channels might have broad effects."

But just because you have family members that have one of these disorders doesn't mean you will develop a disorder, Smoller explained. "We do know that all psychiatric disorders do seem to run in families to a degree," he said. "We also know that genes are not destiny. It is not the entire picture. But the hope is that we're going to learn something fundamental about how these disorders occur."

Asked if eventually predicting these disorders is possible, Smoller said, "We're not there yet, but the more we learn about the genetic and non-genetic causes of these disorders, the better position we're going to be to know who might be at risk and what we might be able to do."

I'll Stay Strong!!!

by Ernest L. Jones

Sometimes life throws you an unpredictable curve ball;

You are caught unaware and get a strike one call.

With inner strength and support from those you know,

You stand tall, with bat in hand and two strikes to go.

With the bases loaded and the game on the line,

Its a must win situation; can't strike out this time!

The challenge is real, so you'll do whatever it takes,

To hit it out of the park once it crosses the plate.

I have so much more to give before the sun sets;

I'll win this battle, because I'm not done yet!!

I'll stand in that batter's box with strength of heart,

Overcome my fears and hit it out of the park!

I've done what is necessary my whole life long,

Now I have two strikes left and I can't go wrong.

"Here comes the pitch, I swing and - IT'S GONE!!

I knew I could do it-I just had to stay

STRONG!!!

**RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM
THE BIPOLAR NETWORK NEWS,
VOL 23, ISSUE 2, 2019**

*submitted by Sheila Le Gacy, Director
of the Family Support & Education
Center, AccessCNY*

**EATING BEEF JERKY AND
OTHER NITRATE-CURED MEATS
LINKED TO INCREASED MANIA
RISK**

A history of eating nitrated dry cured meat, such as beef jerky was associated with a more than threefold increase in the risk of current mania. Research reported that an independent link was found between eating nitrated dry cured meat (such as beef jerky, turkey jerky, or meat sticks) and being admitted to a hospital with acute mania. Having eaten other cured meats such as salami or prosciutto was not linked to mania, nor was having eaten other foods. (2018 Molecular Psychiatry, S.G.Khambadkone et.al.)

**ANTIOXIDANT SUPPLEMENT
COENZYME Q10 PROMISING
FOR BIPOLAR DEPRESSION**

Researchers have found that adding coenzyme Q10 supplements to a treatment regimen improved bipolar depression. Coenzyme Q10 is an antioxidant that occurs naturally in the human body, but its levels decline with age, medical illness and depression.

The pathophysiology of bipolar disorder involves mitochondrial dysfunction, oxidative stress, and inflammation. Coenzyme Q10 can affect all of these pathways. It is also neuroprotective, and may help prevent the degeneration of neurons in people with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or Huntington's diseases.

Taking coenzyme Q10 is low risk. It had no adverse effects in this study. One effect to note is that coenzyme Q10 can interact badly with the blood-thinner warfarin. (Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology 2018. Maryam Mehrpooya et.al.) see original article for important dosing information and other findings.

*Wishing everyone a safe
and fun summer!*

**VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY IN NEW-
BORNS LINKED TO HIGHER RISK
OF SCHIZOPHRENIA IN ADULT-
HOOD**

A 2018 large study from Denmark found that newborns with vitamin D deficiency were more likely to develop schizophrenia later in life.

Risk factors for vitamin D deficiency include being born in the winter or spring, living in high-latitude locations, spending early life in an urban setting, and being darker-skinned (especially in high-latitude locations.) These risk factors are all correlated with decreased skin absorption of UV rays from the sun, which is how the human body produces vitamin D. The vitamin D receptor is expressed in the brain in areas that are relevant to schizophrenia, such as areas with a lot of dopamine activity, and each of the above risk factors also applies to schizophrenia.

Newborns' vitamin D levels depend completely on their mothers' vitamin D levels, so researchers suggest that ensuring pregnant women have adequate vitamin D levels could prevent some cases of schizophrenia. (Scientific Reports 2018 Darryl W. Eyles)

**STUDT SUGGESTS THAT TUMERIC
MAY REDUCE ANXIETY AND PRO-
MOTE RESILIENCE TO STRESS**

Chronic stress is a risk factor for the development of mood and anxiety disorders. Researchers have begun to focus on how to promote resilience to stress. Curcumin as a micronutrient found in turmeric that has anti-inflammatory and antidepressant effects and may promote such resilience.

A recent article described the effects of curcumin on mice undergoing chronic social defeat stress. Mice who were given a diet with increased curcumin showed a 4.5-fold increase in resilience. (Neuropsychopharmacology, Antonia V. Aubry et.al. 2018)



**FDA APPROVES FIRST DRUG FOR
POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION**

The first drug for women suffering postpartum depression received federal approval on March 19th, a move likely to pave the way for a wave of treatments to address a debilitating condition that is the most common complication of pregnancy. The drug works very quickly, within 48 hours-a significant improvement over currently available antidepressants.

Experts say the new treatment will provide immediate relief for mothers whose depression keeps them from providing their babies with the care, bonding and nurturing that is critical for healthy development. As many as one in seven American women experience depression during or after pregnancy.

There are limitations to the new drug, brexanolone which will be marketed as Zulresso. It is delivered by infusion over 60 hours, during which a new mother must remain in a certified medical center, under supervision should she get dizzy or faint.

The infusion will be expensive, averaging \$34,000 per patient, according to Sage Therapeutics, the manufacturer. Officials say they expect that insurers will cover the treatment.

The treatment may be helpful for up to 30% of the 400,000 American women who develop post partum depression each year. Candidates for treatment would likely be those experiencing severe symptoms or who failed to improve on standard antidepressants.

Edited by Sheila Le Gacy from The New York Times, March 19, 2019 by Pam Bel-luck.

**DAILY MARIJUANA USE AND
HIGHLY POTENT WEED LINKED
TO PSYCHOSIS**

Weed use is taking off as more states move to legalize it. But there are some serious health risks associated with frequent use. One of the more troubling ones is the risk of having a psychotic episode. A new study in the Lancet Psychiatry shows that consuming pot on a daily basis and especially using high potency cannabis increases the odds of having a psychotic

episode later. High potency means products with more than 10 percent THC, the compound responsible for the drug's psychoactive effects.

Those who started using cannabis at 15 or younger had a slightly more elevated risk than those who started using in later years.

Edited by Sheila Le Gacy from Brain in the News, April 2019, Volume 27, Number 5, May 2019.

Opening of Affordable and Supportive Housing Development in Syracuse

Catherine Street Apartments is a four-story building with 50 apartments located at 501 Catherine Street in the North Side section of Syracuse.

Thirty apartments are reserved for individuals with mental health diagnoses. Central New York Services, Inc. will provide connections to supportive services for these households, including skill building and recovery-based case management.

BOOK REVIEW: THE RED BENCH BY JACQUELINE CIOFFA

The Red Bench follows international model and Auburn, NY native, Jacqueline Cioffa's struggles grappling to survive the dark descent into mental illness and bipolar disorder to pick up the pieces of her fractured life after a nervous breakdown.

Jacqueline never wanted to be the poster girl for manic depression but as a writer who was a privileged, successful international model for 17 years, living and working all over the world for top fashion clients she understands the intrigue of her unique story and the importance of using her voice to raise awareness, suicide prevention, and empathy.

The Red Bench was written a decade ago after a nervous breakdown. It is a raw and difficult glimpse inside Cioffa's

broken mind and the daily, relentless, struggle to stay alive. The memoir talks frankly about her battle with suicidal ideations, hallucination, psyche wards, anxiety, depression, paranoia and delusion. "If sharing my hard truths helps others suffering feel less alone, I've done my job as an author, and a good human."

206 pages

paperback /ISBN:9781794307193

available on Amazon

FOR GOOD SUMMER MENTAL HEALTH TWO THINGS ARE ESSENTIAL

from HealthyPlace.com

Summer is upon us in the northern hemisphere. It can mean longer days, warmer weather, happiness, and improved moods; however, it doesn't always-especially when it comes to mental health.

In some cases, mental illness symptoms can worsen in the hot, sunny months. Anxiety, for example, can intensify in the summer for some people. While mental illness is year-round, you can make your summer mentally healthy and enjoyable. These essentials will provide a mental health boost this summer season.

Two Things to Make Your Summer Mentally Healthy

Discover a Sense of Purpose. What needs to happen for your summer to be meaningful? Answer this personal question, and then determine what you can do to make meaning.

Have fun. Act purposefully, but also allow yourself to let go and have fun. Being playful and doing things you enjoy boosts wellbeing. By making time and taking opportunities for fun, you can reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and more. To return to the question above: What needs to happen for your summer to include fun?

Even if it seems daunting at first, taking small steps to create purpose and fun this summer will help your mental health and wellbeing bloom.

OMH Commissioner Ann Sullivan announces the appointment of **Amanda Saake** as Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Office of Consumer Affairs effective July 1, 2019.

Welcome Amanda to OMH!

Researchers ID, treat faulty brain circuitry underlying symptoms of schizophrenia

Non-invasive brain stimulation alleviates the chronic, treatment-resistant symptoms of schizophrenia

Date: January 30, 2019

Source: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Summary:

In a first-of-its-kind study, researchers have determined the underlying anatomical cause of certain symptoms of schizophrenia, then ameliorated them with non-invasive brain stimulation. The scientists reported that these symptoms arise from a breakdown in a network between the brain's prefrontal cortex and the cerebellum, and that non-invasive brain stimulation restored network function, which in turn improved schizophrenia's most debilitating symptoms.

Donation Opportunity

A sewing machine from the estate of Kathleen Cornell is available in exchange for a donation to NAMI Syracuse. This is a Singer model 301A in the original factory hard shell case. It includes the electric foot pedal and three accessory kits. This machine with all three kits is being offered for a \$500 donation to NAMI Syracuse - or make us your best offer.

~~August Cornell

HOW BRAIN DEHYDRATION AFFECTS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

from *HealthyPlace.com*

Summer is here, and with it, heat and the possibility of brain dehydration.

Hot temperatures cause us to sweat. When fluids seep out of our pores rather than circulating through our brain, we risk brain dehydration. Even mild brain dehydration has a negative impact on the brain and our mental health.

Water comprises a whopping 75% of the human brain (leaving only 25% for everything else, which is pretty mind-boggling). Clearly, the brain requires water to operate well. When our brain is dehydrated, we risk mental health difficulties like these:

- Mood changes, including intensification of mood disorders
- Anxiety
- Increased effects of stress
- Muddled and/or negative thoughts
- Difficulty focusing, concentrating, and paying attention
- Brain fog; short-term and working memory problems
- Delirium (in cases of severe dehydration)

Hydrate Your Brain for a Mental Health Boost

It's true: you can reduce these life-limiting issues and boost your overall mental health simply by drinking water. The recommended amount varies based on age, weight, climate, and activity level.

General guidelines apply to everyone. Drink at least 8 oz. of water when you wake up in the morning, and drink it regularly throughout the day. Also, stick to water. Soda, caffeinated, and sugary beverages contribute to mental health problems.

To stay well and enjoy the summer months and every season of the year, it's crucial to drink plenty of water to keep your brain healthy and happy.

In Memoriam

NAMI Syracuse offers our prayers and condolences to the families below who have recently lost loved ones.

Lynne Mattot on the loss of her son, Kip, May 12, 2019

Annette Becker on the loss of her husband, Peter, May 29, 2019

Raymond Kimber on the loss of his wife, Dorothy, May 30, 2019

Darlene Manning on the loss of her daughter, Roxanne, June 3, 2019

Marilyn Lyman on the loss of her husband, Frederic, June 20, 2019

Rest in Peace!

Thank you to the following for their donations to NAMI Syracuse

Barbara Masucci and the Knitty Gritty Knitters from Knitty Gritty Yarn held a brunch and a fundraiser for NAMI Syracuse in April

~~~~~  
*Anna Marrioty and the students of EJD Middle School, Phoenix, NY*

~~~~~  
Emily Dillon and the employees of Nascentia Health during May is Mental Health Month held various events to raise awareness about mental health and to raise funds for NAMI Syracuse.

~~~~~  
*Lacey Roy and #ClubFitWear for a donation of tee-shirts to NAMI Syracuse*

~~~~~  
August Cornell for a donation of NAMI Syracuse posters.

Thank you to those who have recently joined or renewed membership and/or made a donation to NAMI Syracuse!

*J. Thomas Bassett
Susan Bowen
Jeanne Brown
Linda Cady
Charles & Marie Caines
Joan Carlon
Dr. Malika Carter
Dr. Mark Cattalani
Tom & Sue Cunningham
John & Patricia Duffy
David Dunn
Barbara Ellis
Kathleen Flood
Suzanne Geremski
Beckie Hidy
Phuong Kripalani
Lynne Mattot
Mary Ellen Muir
Giovanni Muratore
Kathryn Murphy
Dr. Richard O'Neill
Mary Oyer
Kirsten Panachyda
David Semione
Carolyn Stafford
Mark & Sandra Touri-Bell
Karen Vogtle &
Depression Bi-Polar Support Alliance
Rose Warakowski
Dianne Wisniewski*

***Donations made in honor of
Marla Byrnes***

*Carol Sheldon Brady
Shondra Jones
John & Barbara Masucci*

***Donations made to
NAMI Syracuse in memory of
Roxanne Alton***

*Diane & Leland Chapin
Darlene Manning
Kathleen Turner*

BECOME A MEMBER OF NAMI SYRACUSE TODAY!

_____ Household Membership \$60.00

_____ Individual Membership \$40.00

_____ Open Door Membership \$ 5.00 (for those on a limited income)

Donation \$ _____ In Memory/Honor of \$ _____ Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. # _____ E-Mail: _____

Mail to: NAMI Syracuse Inc., 917 Avery Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13204

What are the benefits of NAMI membership?

- Membership at all three levels of the organization: NAMI National, NAMI-NYS & NAMI Syracuse
- Eligibility to vote in all NAMI elections
- A subscription to The Advocate, NAMI National's quarterly magazine, as well as access to optional subscriptions to speciality newsletters and information at the national, state and local levels
- Discounts on publications, promotional items, and registration at NAMI's annual convention, state and local conferences
- Access to exclusive members-only material on NAMI National's website

NAMI Syracuse
Family Support Group

2nd Wednesday of each month

NAMI Syracuse office
917 Avery Avenue, Syracuse

10-11:30am

Facilitated by:
Ann Canastra
Marla Byrnes

NAMI Syracuse
Family Support Group

3rd Tuesday of each month

AccessCNY
420 E. Genesee St., Syracuse
(parking & entrance in rear of building)

7:00pm

Facilitated by:
Sheila Le Gacy