



NAMI

PA, CUMBERLAND and PERRY COUNTIES NEWS

National Alliance on Mental Illness

January 2014

Volume XVII, Issue 1

NAMI is the largest nationwide, grassroots membership organization devoted to improving the lives of those affected, directly and indirectly, by serious mental illness. NAMI is comprised of family members, friends and consumers.

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- Feb 20th—Support Meetings in Carlisle&New Cumberland
- Feb 22nd—Youth MH First Aid
- Feb 27th Kay Redfield Jamison at Dickinson College

Contact Us:

P.O. Box 527
 Carlisle, PA 17013
<http://www.namipacp.org>
findhope@namipacp.org
 Message line number:
 240-8715

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

IT IS A TIME OF RENEWAL AND POSITIVE FORWARD PROGRESS

Even though the freezing cold weather and recent snow cover immerse us in a winter experience, the days are actually now getting longer. We are only 3 weeks from Groundhog Day when we formally begin our vision toward Spring. How's that for positive thinking.

This issue contains several articles about the power of positive thinking, which can be very important when coping with dark times. I think it is very appropriate for the season.

One important renewal to consider now is the renewal of your NAMI membership. Though the national tracks membership from your date of joinder, we, as an affiliate, track memberships as a batch for a calendar year, and press for renewals the beginning of each new year. Some years we actually send out a letter with a renewal form to remind folks to renew and to make it as easy as possible. We have not done that for at least 2 years and our actual membership census is lamentably down even as our mailing list is growing.

Please check your own records and if you have not renewed your membership with NAMI since October 1st, please do so now. If you have not previously been a member, please consider joining. The back page of this newsletter can be used. Just fill it in and mail it with a check to the address shown. Standard membership dues are \$35 for an individual or a family, and \$50 for a Professional membership. Dues are not to be a barrier to membership. Therefore, anyone can self-declare for an Open Door membership with submitted dues as low as \$3. Open Door members are not earmarked as such anywhere, and have all the privileges of membership at the national, state and local level.

Please strengthen our NAMI Family by becoming a member or renewing your membership now.

JANUARY MEETING

NAMI PA of CUMBERLAND and PERRY COUNTIES

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2014 at S.T.A.R.

253 Penrose Place, Carlisle, Pa.

[See page 4 for directions]

7:00 — 7:15 PM Announcements

7:15—9:00 PM Support Meeting

support

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**NAMI Pa. Cumberland/
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<http://www.namipacp.org>
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Message line number:
240-8715

Officers:

President: Taylor Andrews
243-1645/243-0123

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Signore**

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Zwierzyna**

**Secretary: Kathleen
Zwierzyna**

Board of Directors:

Thom Fager 697-2602
Hazel Brown
Jennifer Hacker
Teresa Kerns
Sarah Roley

What: Support Group Meeting

When: Meets 3rd Thursday of each month

Location: STAR (253 Penrose Place Carlisle, PA 17013)

Time: 7:00 pm up to 9:00 pm there will be an educational program once each quarter [every 3 months]. Where there is an education program it shall run from 7:00 PM until 7:50 PM, and the support meeting shall follow at 8:00 PM.

Jan 16, 2014

7:00 PM Announcements

7:15 up to 9:00 PM—Support Meeting

Feb 20, 2014

7:00 PM Announcements

7:15 up to 9:00 PM—Support Meeting

**March 20,
2014**

7:00 Program about PLAN— Speaker: David Hamlin [tentative]

7:15 up to 9:00 PM—Support Meeting

WEST SHORE SUPPORT GROUP

Meets at 6:30 PM on the 1st Thursday of each month at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, 4200 Carlisle Pike, Camp Hill, PA. There may be an education program 1x per quarter. Call Thom at 697-2602 for information.

Feb. 6, 2014

6:30 to 8:00 PM—Support Meeting

NEW CUMBERLAND SUPPORT GROUP [from York County F2F Class

Meets at 6:30 on the third Thursday of the month at the New Life Baptist Church, 530 Big Springs Road, New Cumberland, PA. Contact Beverly Riggins at 717-979-0519 for more information.

Jan. 16, 2014

6:30 to 8:00 PM—Support Meeting

DAUPHIN COUNTY SUPPORT GROUP [Assoc with NAMI PA Dauphin County]

Meets at 7:00 on the 3rd Monday of each month at the Epiphany Lutheran Church at 1100 Colonial Rd., Harrisburg, PA. Contact Marge Chapman at 574-0055 for more information.

Jan 20, 2014

6:30 to 8:00 PM—Support Meeting

Get a Grip on Negative Thoughts with Distraction Skills

Posted to HealthyPlace.com blog on February 6, 2013 by [Emily Roberts MA, LPC](#)

When you have negative thoughts and beliefs, have you tried distracting yourself in order to feel better rather than examining them? Research and experience suggests that disengaging from your negative thoughts gives the ego, or [negative self-talk](#), less power. It allows us to chill out and gain control over these intrusive thoughts and belief systems, not letting it lower your [self-esteem](#).

Negative Thoughts and Losing Perspective

A friend of mine often goes to this place of negative overwhelm when something unexpected happens, as do most of us. Recently, she received an email from her boss saying he'd like to schedule some time to chat this week. Moments later, her mind was flooded with negativity. "I must have messed up. What if he fires me? What if I can't find a new job? What if I have to move in with my parents? I am such an idiot." You get the picture. By the time she actually meets with him, she has already future-tripped herself into low-level thinking and it's taken a huge toll on her self-esteem. Rather than letting these thoughts control you, why not try controlling them with some distraction skills? Remember, we can't control the future, no matter how much we try.

Gaining Control Over Negative Thoughts

When we are mindful (the opposite of distracted) of our thoughts, we are happier and have more control over them. This can be so hard to do when you are freaking out about past experiences and what the future holds. Often, being in the moment sounds impossible. However, deliberately distracting from your thoughts, temporarily, can be a huge mindful act that pays off rather quickly. The more often you practice, the higher your confidence becomes in similar situations.

Deliberately Distracting

Now, don't get me wrong, this is a much different concept than avoiding. Avoiding is pushing something away and trying to forget it happened. Avoidance can be the cause for much future distress and suffocates your ability to work through problems. Distracting is temporary; it gets you to a place where you can think in a more skillful, logical manner. [Getting out of your head](#) is a great way to move forward.

For my friend, reading the email and noticing how she feels, identifying the emotion is the first step. Likely she would say she is extremely anxious, worried, and fearful of the future. Now doing something to stop the process of tripping out on these thoughts will give her more control in the long run. Perhaps, getting up from her desk and talking to a co-worker about his or her day, going to make a cup of coffee and focusing on the task, making a list of what she needs from the store, anything to push her mind to a more focused and controlled space. This settles your nervous system or, at least, keeps it from going to the pit of self-deprecation.



It's not easy and you may have to really turn your mind over and over again, but distractions can really help. I have a client who works herself up on her way to class every day. In the subway or car, she constantly thinks of everything that can or could go wrong. Her mind goes to the things in the past that have been stressful. By the time she gets to school, she is a mess and can't even focus on socializing with her friends. We started to give her distraction skills for her commute. She plays a game on her phone, reads the morning paper, knits, does crossword puzzles, or mindfully listens to songs. When she deliberately does one or two of these, her stress level is down and the thoughts are not as strong.

Negative Thoughts? Try These Distractions

- Look at a magazine and get lost in the pictures or an interesting article.
- Research something you are interested in, future vacation, places you'd like to visit in town, your favorite topic of interest, or even a new movie.
- Make a to-do list or items you need from the store
- Take a shower or bath. Research shows that just splashing cold water on your face can reduce your emotional vulnerability; it can actually take you down in anxiety quickly. Notice the changes in temperature, use your senses, and focus on the smells and textures of the soap.
- Get active and move, running, walking fast, even jumping jacks in your living room, when your body is in motion you become mindful of how it feels physiologically, taking you away from how you are thinking emotionally.
- Make something, whether you are crafty and want to try a new DIY project, make a new playlist for your commute, or try out a new recipe, get involved in an activity outside of your thoughts.
- Surf the web. Making sure you are not focused on self-deprecating sites that can cause more emotions to rise (Facebook or Tumblr) looking up things that actually make you more self-conscious or anxious. Read a news article, look up inspirational quotes, or find a new blog that you dig.
- Reorganize; get focused on a task that makes your life a little more manageable, pick an area of your room or desk that needs a clean-up.
- Games play a game on your phone; grab a Sudoku, video game or a deck of cards and get focused on the present moment.
- Talk to someone else, be careful not to discharge your anxiety on them, rather ask about how they are doing and get involved on helping them out with a problem or challenge. It shifts your mind.

My friend's meeting with her boss went better than expected. Although she walked in ready for a pink slip, she actually got major praise and was asked to be a part of a huge project. By

(Continued on page 4)

"I've been there, I understand."

Connections is meeting at new day and time!!

NAMI Connection is a recovery self help support group for people living with mental illness.

WHEN: 2nd Sunday each month at 2:00 PM

WHERE: Aurora Cyber Café 104 West Main Street, Downtown Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 (717) 591-9598 (across from Jo Jo's Pizza)

WHO: Jen and Chris, NAMI National trained Support Facilitators

CONTACT: Any group related questions can be directed to Jennifer at (717)385-8028.

JOIN US FOR 2014

\$35.00 For an individual

Membership includes membership in NAMI [national] and NAMI PA, and Subscriptions to *The Advocate*, *The Alliance*, and NAMI PA C/P News.

\$35.00 For a Family

Same price as an individual. A family consists of two people living at the same address. A family has one vote, and will receive one copy of subscriptions.

\$3 - \$35.00 For "Open Door" membership

Anybody can opt to join as an open door member. Dues are **any amount that can be afforded**. This option is available so that membership is not denied due to financial hardship. Open door members are regular members with all the privileges and powers of membership including all subscriptions.

\$50.00 For Professional Membership

A Professional member shows support for the mission and goals of the organization. Upon request, NAMI PA C/P will provide multiple copies of our newsletter for the waiting room of Professional Members.

**Make Payment to:
NAMI PA C/P**

**Send Payment to: NAMI PA C/P
Box 527, Carlisle, Pa 17013**

**JOIN NOW TO BECOME PART OF
THE NAMI FAMILY**

*Memberships submitted now will extend
to the end of 2014*

Ask the Doctor: Teleconference Series

NAMI's *Ask the Doctor* teleconference is a monthly series hosted by NAMI's Medical Director, Dr. Ken Duckworth. Typically, he is joined by another mental health professional or advocate who in turn presents on a topic in his or her area of expertise. Each month, two such calls are hosted; one focuses on adult issues, the other on child and adolescent issues.



Ken Duckworth, M.D.

To access these calls, dial **1 (888) 858-6021** and enter pass code **309918#**. These calls are always held at *11 a.m. E.T. on scheduled dates unless otherwise noted*. The *Ask the Doctor* schedule and previously recorded podcasts can be found below.

Upcoming Ask the Doctor Schedule

Calls on adult issues

January 24, 2014: Dr. Andrew Nierenberg; Bipolar disorder
February 28, 2014: Dr. Dilip Jeste; Successful aging and schizophrenia

Calls on child, adolescent and young adult issues

January 17, 2014: Darcy Gruttadaro and Emily Cepla; Raising Mental Health Awareness
February 21, 2014: Dr. Barry Sarvet; Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project

DIRECTIONS TO S.T.A.R.

From I-81:

- Take Hanover St. Exit and turn towards town, [Rt. 34 North];
- At the major intersection at Noble Blvd, turn left on Noble Blvd.
- Proceed straight ahead at the first Stop sign at West St.;
- Turn right after the gas station on Penrose Pl.;
- The Penrose Plaza is immediately on your left;
- STAR is the last store front on the right end of the Plaza.

From Downtown Carlisle:

- Take Hanover St. out of town [Rt. 34 South].
- At the major intersection at Noble Blvd, turn right on Noble Blvd.
- Proceed straight ahead at the first Stop sign at West St.
- Turn right after the gas station on your right;
- The Penrose Plaza is immediately on your left;
- STAR is the last store front on the right end of the Plaza.

(Continued from page 3)

distracting from her negative mind and focusing on her distractions, she was able to pull it together and feel at ease. What can you do to distract your way to a positive, more productive mind-set?

My Path to Positive Thinking

Posted to HealthyPlace.com blog on June 20, 2012 by [Emily Roberts MA, LPC](#)

It usually takes a journey for positive thinking to consistently become a part of your life.

My Positive Thinking Journey

For many years, I pretended to be happy. I read all the books, consulted with many professionals and had the blueprint for a positive, happy persona. On the outside, I appeared to be happy and confident, and on many occasions I was. Yet these feelings were fleeting. They were based on how I was feeling with others or in what I doing at the moment. However, the conversation I was having with myself was not constructive. It did not build my self-esteem.



Positive thinking was not my focus. I was always thinking about what I had *not* accomplished, things that were *not* going well, people who had *hurt* me, and things I could *not* control. I became exhausted. My body literally was telling me this path was no longer serving me. I was harboring negative feelings, getting sick often, and feeling sorry for myself. I let self-care go by the wayside.

It didn't just hurt me, but those around me. My relationships began to suffer; people could feel my funky energy brought forth by my negative thinking. Unfortunately, some of these relationships were severed beyond repair. I had a choice to make. I could delve into this positive thinking concept I had been preaching about to clients or continue this toxic cycle, threaten my mental and physical health, and miss out on the beauty of the world around me. So, I embarked on my positive thinking path.

This was not an *Aha*, Oprah, moment, rather a culmination of events and experiences that pushed me to actually start practicing positive thinking. I had the tools and the teachers. I just needed the will to really start living in a positive mindset. I believe all of us want to be happy. Sometimes, we just don't have the energy. We are too tired. I had to actively choose a new route, shifting negative thoughts into more positive ones. This was not an overnight success (I still have to practice every day) but when I started working the positivity path, it became totally worth it. My energy was attracting more positive experiences and overall happiness.

Working the Positive Path

I want to share my path to positive thinking. Maybe the steps I took can help you reach your goal of bringing more positivity into your life.

- **I surrounded myself with like-minded positive people** and had to actively shift some of my relationships. I brought those with positive energy closer and devoted less time to those who were bringing me down.
- **Instead of looking at tasks as a burden, I started to make things fun.** The have-to's can be exciting. Instead of dreading the gym, I rented a bike and explored New York City. Rather

than avoiding chores, I make them a game and wound up smiling the whole time.

- **I became grateful.** Instead of looking at the past with regret, I have tried to reprogram my thoughts. I am now grateful for many of the experiences because they have taught me so much. I remind myself about what I learned from the friendship/relationship that ended. I look for the things that I am thankful for and appreciative of and remind myself of these things when I am feeling a wave of negativity. It shifts my mindset.

- **I found purpose.** I began finding and attracting others who shared my mindset, not in a therapeutic sense, but who desired to make the world a more positive place. I have friends who are not in the helping profession, yet make it their intention every day to do something that can change the world in some way, and maintain positive thinking. A friend of mine is an illustrator. She helps authors make their stories come to life. Another is a consultant. He helps small businesses become profitable. Their intentions are to find positivity in their work. This energy is extended to those around them.

Some tools may work for you, others may not, but be gentle with yourself. Try shifting your negative mindset subtly. Remember, the goal is to find your path to positive thinking that lasts a lifetime.

My Favorite Inspirational Quotes

Of all the judgments we pass in life, none is more important than the judgment we pass on ourselves. ~ Nathaniel Branden

You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love & affection. ~Buddha

You alone are enough...You have nothing to prove to anybody. ~ Maya Angelou

You have been criticizing yourself for years, and it hasn't worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens. ~ Louise L. Hay

"You're always with yourself, so you might as well enjoy the company." ~ Diane Von Furstenberg

You can't build joy on a feeling of self-loathing. ~ Ram Dass

The way you treat yourself sets the standard for others. ~ Sonya Friedman

Look at these inspirational quotes as just a small step in moving forward on your own individual journey. Please feel free to add your own inspirational quotes that inspire and motivate you to build self-esteem.

NAMI Celebrates 35 Years in 2014

By Courtney Reyers, NAMI Director of Publishing

Next year marks NAMI's 35th anniversary. Recent years have seen landmark changes in health care reform, something NAMI has steadfastly worked toward throughout its history.

In 2013, the rollout of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid expansion—which are still underway— were important steps forward for individuals and families affected by mental illness. But there are many more areas of growth and success that can be noted as we step into 2014.

NAMI's signature education program, NAMI Family-to-Family, was officially declared an evidence-based practice this year, putting a seal of approval on what tens of thousands of families already knew: F2F really helps in learning to understand and cope with mental illness. NAMI also offers other education and support programs; the newest ones are NAMI Ending the Silence and NAMI Homefront, both launched since Nov. 20. Another area of tremendous growth has been NAMI On Campus. Onset of mental illness often occurs in a person's teens or twenties. Early intervention requires education and awareness as well as communities with resources to provide support to young people in need.

Throughout 2013, NAMI also has been engaged in the National Dialogue on Mental Health that flowed from the Sandy Hook tragedy approximately a year ago. It has included fighting for a broad agenda of initiatives. It also has included efforts to elimi-

nate stigma and building new partnerships.

One outlet that fosters a great sense of community and inspires hope is NAMI's story-sharing hub, You Are Not Alone. NAMI members and friends tell us regularly that the personal stories they read submitted by others who have experienced mental illness have helped them immensely. (Please feel free to share your own story if you would like!).

NAMI also offers a national, toll-free Helpline, 1 (800) 950-NAMI (6264) which fields more than 2,000 calls and sends out more than 100 packets of information and brochures each month. It is a critical service, staffed by trained volunteers, for individuals and families seeking information about mental illness and the mental health care system.

NAMI works every day to save lives. From battling stigma to addressing cultural disparities to reaching out to youth and advocating with policymakers, NAMI is there, fighting for and alongside the millions of Americans who face mental illness in their daily lives.

For all the progress made in 2013, we know the fight will continue. We also know we depend on the support of NAMI members, friends and readers to sustain our work. Thank you for your continued help. We look forward to working with you throughout the New Year, as part of a community dedicated to hope and recovery.

Save the Date

Youth Mental Health First Aid Course

Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Mechanicsburg, PA

Exact Location & Registration Details To be

online Jan. 27, 2014

at www.namipacp.org

Cost \$25.00 per person

Youth Mental Health First Aid is a public education program focused on equipping adults who work with youth (ages 12-18) who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or in a crisis. The course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, AD/HD, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder. Participants do not learn to diagnose, nor how to provide any therapy or counseling.

Participants learn a core five-step action plan to support an adolescent developing signs and symptoms of mental illness or in an emotional crisis: 1) Assess for risk of suicide or harm, 2) Listen nonjudgmentally, 3) Give reassurance and information 4) Encourage appropriate professional help, 5) Encourage self--help and other support strategies

Teaching Methodology: Mental Health First Aid uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect young people to professional, peer, social, and self-help care.

This training is for: The course is designed for adults whom regularly interact with adolescents, but may also be appropriate for older adolescents (16 and older) so as to encourage youth peer to peer interaction.

Anyone who regularly works or interacts with youth to include: teachers, athletic coaches, mentors, juvenile justice professionals may find the course content useful. The core Mental Health First Aid course has been successfully offered to a variety of audiences including hospital staff, employers and business leaders, faith communities, law enforcement, and the general public.

If you are interested in increasing your skills to better serve, similar to traditional First Aid and CPR, Mental Health First Aid is providing help to a person with a mental health problem or someone experiencing a crisis until professional treatment is obtained or until the crisis is resolved. ###



Think Positively: Your New Year's Resolution

from HealthyPlace.com

Let's face it, most people are not realistic with their New Year's resolutions. However, I have a resolution you may be able to keep without breaking the bank or your back which could yield huge results in improving your mental health. **Think positively!** That's right. Think positively.

Here are some ways to accomplish that. All you have to do is everytime you begin down that path of negative thinking, stop for a moment, reflect on your negative thoughts and reframe them to a positive frame of reference. Our Adult ADHD blogger, Liz Prager, shares a technique called "[Thought Stopping](#)" to help you accomplish this. Using a [thought log](#) can also help you stem the tide of negative thinking.

Another self-help tool, [affirmations, can help build self-esteem](#), which leads to more positive thinking. Our "[Best Mental Health Quotes](#)" on Pinterest may be another helpful tool to assist in accomplishing that.

Humor, Smiling and Thinking Positively

Lighten up a bit. Enjoy humor. Be open to recognizing the

potential humor in a situation. It can lessen your stress and brighten your outlook. And **smile a lot**. If you're not used to smiling, in the beginning, you may have to force yourself to smile to get in the habit of smiling.

Finally, I want to stress the **importance of optimism** in relation to thinking positively. To put it lightly, it is challenging to live with a mental health condition. There are symptoms and medications to deal with. It affects the ability to get and keep a job as well as important relationships. But if you are working on managing your mental health, there's plenty of reason to feel optimistic. Congratulate yourself for that. Give yourself credit for moving in a positive direction. In fact, when things go right in your life, don't forget to give yourself credit for that. And they don't have to be huge accomplishments. Give yourself a pat on the back daily if you can for even the small things you are achieving.

Practice these things every day to get in the habit of thinking positively. If you can reach the goal of thinking positively in 2014, I have a feeling it's going to be a great year. All of us at HealthyPlace.com wish that for you.

SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2014

Kay Jamison, internationally known expert on bi-polar illness, professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Medical School, Director of the Mood Disorders Clinic, and author of *An Unquiet Mind* (her memoir), will be giving the Morgan Lecture at Dickinson on Feb. 27th - the event will be free and open to the public. Bio is below.



Kay Redfield Jamison, Ph.D.

Patients at Hopkins Hospital who find themselves on the recovery side of a flight into mania or a free-fall into depression—especially young adults hearing they have bipolar disorder—are often given what should be called bibliotherapy. Kay Jamison's book *An Unquiet Mind*, is potent for doing what pills can't: It lets patients read for themselves how destructive not taking their medicine can be, it tells of the healing power of structure, psychotherapy and a social network. It tells them they're not alone. And, as critical, it shows, through Jamison's example, that the diagnosis needn't drain all the life from life.

Jamison is perhaps this country's most famous writer about manic-depressive illness. Her books and articles not only help patients, they have raised society's consciousness. Her public appearances inform Americans about their millions of fellow

citizens who suffer mood disorders. Her work and life chip away at the stigma of mental illness.

Jamison is a full professor of psychiatry who has researched widely on medication adherence and suicide. She's co-authored *Manic Depressive Illness: Bipolar Disorders and Recurrent Depression*, the definitive book on the topic.

But within the Mood Disorders Center, Jamison is seen as a tether. She grounds its scientific studies in humanity, giving what she calls, "a broader notion of moods in the human perspective.

"I'm interested in the boundaries between normal moods and abnormal, between normal and abnormal behavior. It's the overlap that fascinates," she says.

And it's in those tenuous states between a normal passion and pathology, she believes, that exuberance and creativity surface. "The tie between high accomplishment in business, science and the arts and mood disorders is far from coincidental."

Understanding the psychology and biology behind that, she says, "could lead to therapy even better than what exists, that doesn't ever tamper with a rich, imaginative life."

PA REP TIM MURPHY INTRODUCED FEDERAL BILL WITH MENTAL HEALTH REFORMS

ARLINGTON, VA - Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA) introduced major mental health reforms earlier today that would substantially improve care for individuals with the most severe mental illness so that treatment is accessed through the healthcare system, rather than the criminal justice system, according to the Treatment Advocacy Center.

Released this morning following a year of hearings led by Murphy as chair of the House Energy & Commerce Oversight Committee, the **"Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013"** includes provisions that:

- Requires states to have commitment criteria broader than "dangerousness" and to authorize assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) in order to receive Community Mental Health Service Block Grant funds.
- Allocates \$15 million for a federal AOT block grant program to fund to 50 grants per year for new local AOT programs.
- Carves out an exemption in HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) allowing a "caregiver" to receive protected health information when a mental health care provider reasonably believes disclosure to the caregiver is necessary to protect the health, safety or welfare of the patient or the safety of another. (The definition of "caregiver" includes immediate family members.)
- Establishes a new National Mental Health Policy Laboratory

in the Department of Health and Human Services.

- Prohibits federally funded "Protection and Advocacy" organizations from engaging in lobbying activities and from counseling individuals on "refusing medical treatment or acting against wishes of a caregiver."
- Requires the U.S. Comptroller General to submit a report to Congress detailing the costs to the federal and state government of imprisoning people with severe mental illness.

"Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA) is to be strongly commended for taking leadership on federal problems regarding the treatment of individuals with serious mental illnesses," said Dr. E. Fuller Torrey, the Treatment Advocacy Center's founder, who went door to door on Capitol Hill following last December's Newtown shootings to raise congressional awareness of the need for mental illness treatment reform.

"This is an issue on which federal and state leadership has been in short supply. Rep. Murphy, a psychologist by training, has approached the issue in a systematic and thoughtful manner, focusing specifically on the parts of the problem which have federal origins."

Torrey urged bipartisan support for the legislation. "The problems it addresses are not Democratic or Republican problems, but rather everybody's problems."

A CNN STORY: IT'S ABOUT NAMI

There's usually a back story to any main event.

In this case, the main event is a special feature by CNN, [My Son is Mentally Ill, So Listen Up](#), a 10-minute video documentary and story by Wayne Drash.



The story is about Stephanie Escamilla of San Antonio and her 14-year-old son "Daniel" (a pseudonym because of his age) and his experience living with mental illness.

The feature was unveiled on the CNN website on Dec. 11. In addition, CNN's chief medical correspondent, Dr. Sanjay Gupta in news broadcasts on Dec. 12-13 [discussed Daniel's recovery](#), calling it "a daily struggle."

Drash posted [another video](#) talking about his experience meeting Daniel. By the end of the weekend, Dec. 15, CNN had received thousands of comments by email, Facebook and Twitter—making the story a truly interactive one with its audience.

On Dec. 16, Drash wrote another story about the responses

received, titled ["Hope Amidst the Pain"](#)

So what's the back story?

Drash first approached NAMI in January 2013 for assistance in developing the story, such as finding a family with a teenager living with mental illness who would be willing to let him visit in their home and follow them with a camera for a few days.

We found Stephanie, who had [submitted her family's story](#) to the "You Are Not Alone" feature on the NAMI website, where people share their personal stories of the affect mental illness has had in their lives.

It turned out that Stephanie is a member of the [NAMI San Antonio board](#) and teaches a [NAMI Basics](#) class for parents of children who are diagnosed before age 13.

She first learned about NAMI three years ago through the recommendation of a friend. She calls her work as a NAMI teacher and advocate one of the best experiences of her life.

Drash met her for the first time in June 2013 at [NAMI's national convention](#), which this past year happened to be in San Antonio. It was a good omen.

(Continued on page 9)

DAVID'S STORY

From **It's Time To Take Action** section at www.NAMI.org

IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION

When I first met Erin, we were in our late teens and signing up for college. I'll do us all a favor by skipping all the mushy details, but needless to say, we fell in love. As we continued to grow together as young adults, learning the ways of life on our own, we also got to find out something else: how to grow together as a couple with bipolar disorder in the relationship.

"So when people ask me what it's like having a "wife with bipolar" I tell them it's not that much different than having a wife.

When I first learned Erin had bipolar, I didn't really think it was that bad. She had done a good job of not exposing me to the worst parts and she was still young. By my estimation, it took more than a year to fully manifest. So in the beginning there wasn't anything that would be considered scary by most people. Sometimes she'd need a bit of time to collect herself when something was wrong or she'd need an extra-long hug session when she was feeling low.

Once bipolar had taken hold though, it started to really tear at Erin emotionally. It took a little bit of trial and error during an episode to really know what to do. Super-logical-me would say things like "It's okay" "Don't worry, it'll get better," "Calm down," etc. What you learn is that telling someone in a bipolar episode that everything is "ok" is like telling a thief that stealing is wrong. It's not that you're wrong, you just really aren't

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From start to finish, the story was nearly a year in the making. Following the CNN broadcast and reading some of the messages received about the feature, Daniel told her: "I finally can say that I accept myself for who I am. I am not my mental illness; I am me."

The energy that comes from mutual support and the liberation that comes from speaking out can be steps toward recovery for any person or family. Sometimes, we have more power than we know.

Wayne Drash also has a powerful gift. In 2012, Drash was named one of the top best online writers in the nation. He is also the author of *On These Courts: A Miracle Season that Changed a City, a Once-Future Star, and a Team Forever*. Not many journalists understand the challenges of mental illness and can write or produce a story with insight, honesty and sensitivity. Too many tell these stories wrong, resulting in stereotypes, patronization or even romantic visions.

Thanks to Wayne, Stephanie and Daniel, who had the courage to share their story, many people have heard about the real experience of families affected by mental illness.

helping to alleviate the problem.

There were two things that really affected Erin: the auditory hallucinations and extreme mood swings she would experience and the triggers that existed in her life that would set her off. What I ended up learning was that the medical piece needed to be dealt



with by a doctor. Luckily, we found a really good one. She really worked with Erin to dial in the dosages to help Erin stabilize her mind. I cannot emphasize how much of a difference the medication made. We may have gotten lucky with how well Erin responded, but this step was absolutely crucial to Erin taking control. Medication alone, however, does not solve bipolar.

Erin's triggers taught me something about bipolar I hadn't ever put into words before: People with bipolar aren't crazy. What I mean is that Erin's triggers were legitimate feelings wrapped up in a ball of frustration over how to express herself. Even if I didn't agree with her on a certain issue, I was still able to help during an episode because I could validate her feelings. Asking someone with a healthy understanding of bipolar disorder in an episode something like "what's triggering you," or "what were you thinking about before you started feeling bad" allows you to hear what was really on their mind. Often times you can identify the real problem and offer yourself up to help take care of that problem. Then once the episode is over, you can revisit the topic and offer to talk through it.

So when people ask me what it's like having a "wife with bipolar" I tell them it's not that much different than having a wife. For me, once we got the medical side of her bipolar under control, handling the triggers and emotional side was an exercise in humanity. You have to be respectful, honest, open to new points of view, patient, caring, etc. And that's what I'll be, 'till death do us part.

On a final note, Erin makes it easy on me. Bipolar isn't easy, but when you see someone giving 100 percent of themselves to overcome a challenge, you can't help but root for them. All I really have to do is be there and step in when she needs a little nudge in the right direction. Erin is a trooper and has never come close to giving up, and that's all anyone could ever ask of a person living with bipolar.

Ultimately, responsibility for kicking this thing's butt falls to Erin. But I'll be here, not thinking for one second that she's crazy, and each day learning more about this beautiful girl I was lucky enough to marry.

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