BELIEVE IT OR NOT, SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER and that means it’s time to get ready for the NAMI WALK. The primary fundraiser for NAMI nationwide and for NAMI-Cambridge/Middlesex, this year’s WALK is scheduled for Saturday, May 16 at Artesani Park in Brighton, along the Charles River. Our indefatigable Walk Captain John Sharp ensures us:

“It WILL BE A SUNNY DAY NO MATTER THE WEATHER!”

It’s not too early to sign up to walk or to donate for our team at our Walk website http://namiwalks.nami.org/CAM. Below the large picture there, click on the box “JOIN THE TEAM” or “DONATE.” For questions or help in registering, call or email John, 781-646-6381 or john@nami-cambridge-middlesex.org.

The top affiliate Walk team for the past five years, NAMI-CM’S three teams and 55 walkers brought in donations just shy of $40,000 last year, as follows:

• NAMI-CM, under Captain John Sharp and including a huge amount donated by Family-to-Family students and alums through Carolyn White’s efforts
• Cambridge Health Alliance under Dr. Miriam Tepper
• Katelyn’s Klan under Maureen Riley

Forty-five percent of funds raised by Cambridge are returned to the affiliate to cover its expenses throughout the year. An equal amount goes to NAMI Mass and ten percent goes to National.

Recovery Is Real: 
Hear from those who have lived it

6:30 – 8:30 PM
MACHT AUDITORUM, CAMBRIDGE HOSPITAL
1493 CAMBRIDGE ST., CAMBRIDGE

SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 6
Support Groups for Family Members

NAMI Cambridge-Middlesex offers bi-monthly support group meetings for family members and friends of people with mental illness. Trained NAMI volunteers who are also family member caregivers facilitate the support groups. Conducted in a confidential atmosphere, the purpose of the support groups is to help provide mutual support and coping strategies. Many families find NAMI support groups helpful.

Please contact Elizabeth if you would like more information or to attend. She can be reached at Elizabeth@nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org or 781-646-0397.

The support groups are FREE and conveniently located in the 3rd floor Conference Center of the Cambridge Health Alliance, 1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge. On-site and on-street parking are available and the location is T accessible.

Mondays, 7:30-9:30 pm:
• 1st Monday of each month, Lisa and Larry
• 3rd Monday of each month, Karen and Doris
• 4th Monday of each month, Rae and Jane

For more information and updates on Cambridge-Middlesex programs: www.nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org

Area Family Support Groups

SUPPORT/WEST—NAMI CENTRAL MIDDLESSEX

ACTON Contact Susan McDougall at mcdougalletal@aol.com or 978-263-8830; Clare Cooper at ccooper@westfordconsulting.com or cell 978-692-8994.

BEDFORD Call the NAMI of Central Middlesex affiliate helpline 781-982-3318.

DORCHESTER Contact Monica, 857-342-2796 or Mpomare28@gmail.com; Mark, 617-522-7439 or mzanger@comcast.net.

SWOT Call Trish Woods at 978-897-2962.

WAKEFIELD Contact Kay at 781-438-1851, or Diane at 978-658-3567 or email: Dianeh23@yahoo.com

CARRYING FOR THE SOUL-CAMBRIDGE Info: bsejo222@yahoo.com.

For Consumers

NAMI CONNECTIONS Support Group for peers/consumers: Vinfen/Cambridge-Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 35 Medford St, Ste. 111, Somerville. Press 1R and go through elevator; walk up ramp, enter first suite on the left. Contact Janel Tan (tanj@vinfen.org) or 617-863-5388, or Judi Maguire jmaguire@namimass.org.

DBSA-MCLEAN HOSPITAL Visit www.dbsaboston.org or call the DBSA office 617-855-2795 (email info@dbsaboston.org).

THE COLE RESOURCE CENTER, Belmont 617-855-3298, coleresourcetercenter@yahoo.com.

This Newsletter is published quarterly by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts, Inc./Cambridge-Middlesex Affiliate for its members and others interested in our education, support, and advocacy work on behalf of the mentally ill. You can find back issues at www.nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org.
Famed Psychiatrist Dr. Mark Komrad Answered Our Questions at January’s “Ask the Doctor” Meeting

Dr. Mark Komrad, author of You Need Help: A Step-by-Step Plan to Convince A Loved-One to Get Counseling, spent a Saturday morning recently answering questions for us. Just elected to the prestigious American College of Psychiatrists and honored as an “Exemplary Psychiatrist” by NAMI, Dr. Komrad is a frequent guest on NPR, answering callers’ questions.

Q: Is it a good idea to ask directly for help for your family member?
A: Yes, but often it works best to ask the ill person to seek help for your sake, since it is hurting you to see them suffer without help.

Q: It can be hard to decide between respecting the person’s autonomy and using techniques to get them to get help. How can those two be balanced?
A: The only legitimate goal is to try to restore or maximize the person’s autonomy, not to punish or exploit the person. The use of logical reasoning is good but not always relevant, if the patient has lost cognitive ability. Most important are parent-child relationships, where there is asymmetry, with years of roles of parental dominance for the well-being of the child.

Q: How can you deal with a mentally ill family member who can’t be relied on to take their meds?
A: If it is well known that they don’t take their meds, initiate a new regimen. For example, tell them they must take the meds with you watching until you are sure they are taking them regularly. Another approach is to use long-acting injectible formulations, which decrease their therapeutic effect more gradually when not taken for a day or two. It can be helpful to link certain family privileges (eg., cell phone, internet access, car, etc.) to the responsibility of taking meds. Maybe one day at a time.

Q: Are there always changes in neuroanatomy with mental illness?
A: No, the changes described in published research are averages, so any given person will not necessarily show those changes. For mental illness the patient’s history is the only source of information the doctor has to make his/her diagnosis. Diagnoses on the basis of brain scans is not valid practice.

Q: A mentally ill relative has a long history of addictions. Now the addictions have all been replaced by an addiction to Christ. He attends a church and talks only to people from the church.
A: Try to talk to others from that church to form an alliance to get help for him.

Q: What is the effect of smoking on someone with mental illness?
A: Nicotine is known to have anti-psychotic action. One way to control or limit a person’s smoking is simply to limit that person’s available money.

Q: Can people get help to convince someone they care about to get treatment?
A: I am often approached by people who want to consult me about a family member. Over many sessions, we can brainstorm a number of approaches. Persistence and courage to implement ideas are needed. I often have to do “hand holding” to support that courage and help families develop fortitude and not get discouraged.

Q: When there is conflict with someone’s family, is that anosognosia?
A: Not necessarily. Problems have varying causes, for example, early life experiences. If a parent abandoned a child, the child may have trouble establishing friendships or relationships later on.

Q: After trying many things for my family member, he is still noncompliant. Am I enabling him?
A: It’s easy to inadvertently enable chronic problems in a family environment. There is an inherent danger of the verticality of family relationships. The patient needs a “launch” out of the family. A group home may provide that. Some chronic illnesses plateau at an impaired level. That is, after some improvement, that may be all you are going to get.


www.nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org
Find Your Legislator
http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/
MyElectionInfo.aspx

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MENTAL HEALTH IN THE NEWS

Resilience: Two Sisters and a story of Mental Illness
Jessie Close and Pete Earley: “Resilience: Two Sisters and a story of Mental Illness.” The Diane Rehm Show, NPR February 5, 2015 (the diannerehmshow.org)

Interview with Jessie and her sister, actress and mental health advocate Glenn Close, and Pete Early. Pete and Jessie have written a new book Resilience, describing Jessie’s bipolar “journey.” Also see bringchange2mind.org.

Peter Earley One of Ten Named Warriors for Mental Wellness
http://www.peteearley.com/2015/01/21/thanks-mention-cnn-names-warriors-mental-wellness/

June Binney Writes on Police Training in Boston Globe
Boston Globe
February 1, 2015

Ruth Graham’s Sunday Ideas article, “First aid for the mind,” touched briefly on how training benefits police. Massachusetts has made a commitment to provide three hours of mental health training to local police officers, giving them the tools to safely de-escalate a situation involving a person in crisis and avoid involuntary hospitalizations and unnecessary arrests.

By the end of this year, every municipal police officer in the state should receive training, similar to Mental Health First Aid, thanks to a collaborative effort among the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Department of Mental Health, and the Massachusetts chapter of the National Alliance of Mental Illness.

At least one in five Bay State residents have experienced a mental illness, according to a recent NAMI Mass survey. How we all handle such encounters can determine whether a person with a mental illness is transported to a hospital emergency room, a jail, or a community-based program.

June S. Binney, Director, Criminal Justice Project, NAMI Mass

Stronger Than Stigma

Celebrities and mental health advocates (l-r) Brandon Marshall, wide receiver for the Chicago Bears; Michael Angelakos, lead singer of indietronica band Passion Pit; comedian and actor Wayne Brady; and Ben Scrivens, NHL goalie for the Edmonton Oilers, are helping Bringchange2mind launch its new campaign, StrongerThanStigma. See it at bringchange2mind.org. The campaign aims to erase stereotypes, create a new narrative by raising awareness of the mental health problems that men face, encourage dialogue, and promote help-seeking behavior.
Advocacy
State Representative Marjorie Decker (25th Middlesex District, including parts of Cambridge) met in December with several NAMI-CM board members, including Carolyn White and Sharon deVos, both members of the hospital advisory committee overseeing issues with the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) ER, newly merged with the psychiatric ER. A lifelong Cambridge resident and former Cambridge City Councillor, the state rep plans to work with NAMI-CM in gaining necessary support at the State House.

NAMI-CM Donations
For the third year in a row NAMI-CM was able to make a $1000 donation each to the following non-profit organizations:
- **Tunefoolery**, a Cambridge and Boston-based organization of more than 50 unique and courageous musicians with psychiatric conditions and disabilities who play and perform music as a way towards healing and recovery. In addition to their regular ensemble and solo acts (folk, classical, blues, rock, show tunes) Tunefoolery has added monthly drum circles, is building a new recording studio in its space, and will be training its members as recording engineers,
- **The Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition** which manages 34 Clubhouse employment and recovery centers for 8,300 residents of Massachusetts who have serious and persistent mental illness. More donations to service organizations dedicated to helping consumers will be considered at the March 9 board meeting.
- **CHA Drop-in Center**

Proceeds from the November Winetasting and Silent Auction also allowed the affiliate to continue to support the Drop-in Center at the Cambridge Health Alliance with a $12,000 donation. NAMI-CM also helped the Center secure $5,000 from the Cambridge Community Foundation. A small staff in the Outpatient Psychiatry Department are offering weekly groups, as well as seasonal lunches, to 60 patients to help them overcome the social isolation and frequent medical complications that accompany serious mental illness. A monthly Coffee House gathering has been added.

In addition to the Recovery Drop-in Center, CHA has added RISE, a dedicated program for young adults 16-30 with psychosis which offers the timely, accessible, appealing interventions critical to improving long-term outcomes.

CHA is also one of 10 area health organizations to receive a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation to support the integration of behavioral health and primary care services.

MEMBERS—Watch for renewal date on the mailing label of your newsletter—envelope enclosed.

Join NAMI Cambridge-Middlesex:
Please print clearly and mail to the address below with your check or visit www.nami.org to join online

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☐ I would like to become a NAMI-CM member. Please send $35 (or $3 for Open Door membership)
This includes CM, state and national membership and newsletters. Thank you for your support.

☐ I want the Cambridge-Middlesex NAMI newsletter only, since I am already a member of another affiliate. Please send $10.

Make checks payable to: NAMI-CM  Mail to: NAMI-CM, 174 APPLETON ST., CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138
This is not an office, but a mailing address only. NAMI-CM is a volunteer organization; we do not maintain an office.
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Recovery Is Real
Hear from those who have lived it

APRIL MEETING
Recovery Is Real
Hear from those who have lived it

6:30-7:00 pm Coffee hour
7:00-8:00 pm Presentations
8:00-8:30 pm Time for questions
Macht Auditorum, Cambridge Hospital
1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge

Speakers will include:
• Anne Whitman, vice president of the NAMI Mass Board of Directors, chair of the Metro Boston/South-east Recovery Learning Center, and president emeritus of the Cole Center.
• Gary Bromley, a jail diversion specialist and a long-term support coordinator for One Care Support.
• Megan Wiechnik, resource/helpline coordinator at NAMI Mass
• Michael Siena, peer specialist, Metro Boston Recovery Center, and NAMI Connections facilitator

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
(Free hospital parking with vouchers obtained at the meeting)

WWW.NAMI-CAMBRIDGEMIDDLESEX.ORG