The Board and Staff of NAMI Northern Kentucky wish all of our members and readers best wishes for a healthy, happy new year where stigma is reduced, treatment is enhanced, and families are supported. As you will see as you continue to read, it is starting out as a very good year, indeed!

Annual Board Meeting February 16, 2017

Join Us for NAMI Northern Kentucky's Annual Board Meeting on Thursday, February 16, 2017. The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Newport Branch of the Campbell County Public Library located at 901 East Sixth Street, Newport, Kentucky 41071, 859-572-5035.

The NAMI Northern Kentucky members and the public are encouraged to attend. The meeting's agenda will include:

- A review of the minutes from the 2016 Annual Meeting.
- Approval of the 2017 Budget.
- Election of Officers for the Board of Directors.
- Presentation of Slate of Directors.
- Nomination and voting of new members for Board of Directors.
- Open discussion about the proposed changes to the Bylaws.

The 2017 Proposed Slate of Directors is as follows:

- Chuck Washburn - President
- Martha (Martie) Rhoden-Bessler
George Best will be stepping down from the board.

For a copy of the 2016 Annual Meeting Minutes, a Slate of Directors Ballot and/or more information, please contact NAMI NKY at (859)392-1730 or info@naminky.org

Executive Director Dorothy Best and I recently had the opportunity to view “She's Crazy: Mental Health and Other Myths” via our good friend (and SAS walk sponsor), the Cincinnati Academy of Professional Psychology (CAPP). This is an award-winning cabaret-style musical that presents mental health facts and stories in a funny yet respectful manner. The three presenters are all mental health consumers who are professionally involved in theatre. The audience we were with—a tough one made up mostly of psychologists—rated the performance very, very highly. Why are we telling you this? Because we are bringing the program to Northern Kentucky for YOU to see! We don't have the time or location finalized yet, but we are so excited we had to share this with you right away. Stay tuned for further announcements via this newsletter, via, and/or our Facebook page. We thank CAPP for inviting us.

We are very excited to announce that in 2017, our affiliate will begin offering the NAMI Homefront program. This much needed program provides support specific to caregivers and loved ones of our military veterans who are suffering from mental illness. As you may be aware, both depression and PTSD are very, very common among our veterans, with roughly twenty-two taking their own life each day.

NAMI Kentucky has requested we initiate the program within the state because of our local VA's renowned PTSD clinic in Ft. Thomas. Training to participate in providing this program will be conducted locally. Stay tuned for further information as details develop!
Perhaps this year we can learn something from Bhutan. If you are not familiar with Bhutan, it is with good reason. A tiny landlocked Himalayan country surrounded by India, Nepal, and Tibet, it has only been open to outsiders since 1999. Entry is severely limited, as they do not want to be overwhelmed by visitors. Your editor is very fortunate to be one of the few outsiders who has been able to venture into Bhutan, having gone there two years ago to hike up to the Buddhist monastery in the picture.

Despite its seeming isolation, Bhutan is very progressive in many ways. While a kingdom, it is really a democracy. Efforts are made to preserve the old culture while embracing the new. People dress in traditional garb but have cell phones and Internet access. It is the first country in the world to be carbon negative. There is a government supported program to assist battered women--and the men who are doing the battering. For every tree cut down, two are planted. One very unusual feature is the government's concern for Gross National Happiness (GNH). This replaces the Gross National Product of Western nations. In place since the early 1970's, it is based on good government, environmental conservation, sustained development, and cultural continuity. The people we met were warm, friendly, and welcoming.

How does all this tie into NAMI? We have witnessed our family members, our patients, and ourselves overcome great odds and obstacles to recover and succeed. Daily people with mental illness, and their loved ones, demonstrate their resilience to face reality and rise above their challenges—much as Bhutan is successfully doing. Could our country do likewise? Maybe a good place to start would be an overhaul of the mental health system! Which is coming—see below!

for Mental Health

Congress—yep, those folks in Washington—has passed the "21st Century Cures Act."

This act promises nothing less than a fix of our broken national mental health system. It incorporates both Rep. Tim Murphy’s (R-PA) "Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act" and Sen. John Cornyn's (R-TX) "Mental Health and Safe Communities Act." Passage was bipartisan and overwhelming. The margin of victory was 94 to 5, with the "no" votes cast by Sens. Mike Lee (R-Utah), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR). It had previously passed the House with 392 favorable to 26 negative votes.

The act will require SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) to prioritize people with severe mental illness, help shift the burden of care from the criminal justice system back to the health system where it belongs, produce data around mental illness issues ignored and unexamined for decades, and bolster proven programs including assisted outpatient treatment targeting the most vulnerable and sickest. The bill also speeds up drug approvals, funds research in cancer and brain science, and combats opioid abuse. A portion of the bill targeting cancer research was renamed by the Republicans after Beau Biden, the son of Democratic Vice President Joe Biden, reflecting the overwhelming bipartisan support of the bill. The bill had previously passed the House with similar enthusiasm, and has been signed into law by President Obama.


...And MORE Good News from Crisis Intervention Team

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Committee, of which NAMI NKY is a part, has been approached by the Chief of Police of Carrollton for assistance in improving law enforcement interaction with mentally ill members of their community, and learning more about resources. He is enthusiastic about having increased NAMI services in his community.

Carrollton presently has two officers who are CIT trained. Natalie Selby, Committee Chair and a sergeant with Alexandria will be working with the chief on helping those officers function more effectively. This is the first time Carrollton has participated in the CIT Committee, and we are very appreciative of Chief Mike Willhoite’s coming forward to join us.

Infection and Mania Linked?
Common respiratory, urinary tract and other infections may play a role in triggering acute mania in bipolar disorder.

Patients with acute mania were substantially more likely to be taking antibiotics for infection than patients with schizophrenia or depression and than non-psychiatric patients. Doctors think better control of bacterial infections in individuals with susceptibility to mania may prevent acute episodes.

Interestingly, a growing body of research has examined the possible role of infection and inflammation in causing schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression. We know the immune system is activated during acute mania, but the cause is unknown. Possible explanations for the link are an underlying bacterial infection that activates the immune system, which then triggers the onset of mania; or decreased immunity to infection in bipolar disorder.


Psychotropic Drugs: Do They Increase the Risk of Death in Schizophrenia?

Because people with schizophrenia on average die younger, it is easy to point the finger of responsibility at the medications being taken. Poorly controlled research studies, combined with scaremongering by organizationis opposed to psychiatry because they have their own system of "treatment" (such as Scientology) have fostered the idea that psychotropic medications are dangerous to take.

Now, a well-controlled study comprising 21,492 patients with schizophrenia followed for four years give us the answer. Here are the surprising results:

- All levels of exposure to antipsychotic drugs were associated with a significantly LOWER risk of death, including death by suicide. Clearly, these drugs are lifesaving!
- High levels of us of benzodiazepines (anti-anxiety drugs such as Valium, Xanax, etc.) were associated with a higher risk of suicide and a higher risk of death.
- Antidepressant drugs were associated with a significant reduction in mortality.
- Overall, the risk of death was 15-40% lower with antipsychotics and antidepressant drugs, and up to 70% greater with benzodiazepine use.

Cost of Schizophrenia

New research estimates the direct and indirect cost of schizophrenia to U.S. society in 2013 was $155 billion - $44,773 per individual with the disease. By comparison, major depression affects six times as many people but was estimated in 2015 to cost $210.5 billion, only 35% more.

One of the most significant cost impacts resulted from the lost productivity of those who took care of individuals with schizophrenia. Time devoted to caregiving by family members increased from 484 hours per year in 2002 to 1,040 in 2013. Total caregiver cost: $52.5 billion or 34% of the total economic impact of schizophrenia.

While the article does not address the reason for the increase in cost of caregiving by family, it isn't too hard to figure out: there aren't enough professional resources to provide it.


Guns vs. Drugs

For the first time, in 2015, deaths from opiod overdose exceeded the number of deaths from guns. As recently as 2007, gun homicides outnumbered heroin deaths by more than 5 to 1. Deaths from natural opiods surged 25%, while those from synthetics like fentanyl rose 75%. These deaths helped fuel the first decline in life expectancy for Americans since 1993.


Abilify Lawsuit

Bristol-Meyers Squibb will pay a $19.5 million fine for off-label marketing of Abilify. The antipsychotic was marketed for use in children and Alzheimer's patients, neither of which has been approved by the FDA. Indeed, the FDA has its highest level of warning, a black box warning, indicating it can cause death in a dementia patient! That Bristol-Meyers Squibb when then encourage its use in Alzheimer's patients is unconscionable. It is marketing mainly as an adjunctive aid in the treatment of depression.


Marijuana Warning

According to an article in a mainstream news magazine, new research suggests that long-term use of marijuana may reduce blood flow to the brain and increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Using PET scans, researchers studies the brains of about 1,000 current or former pot smokers, and found they had less blood flow to nearly every part of their brains compared with non-users. The effect was strongest in the hippocampus—the area responsible for learning and memory and the area first affected by Alzheimer's. The author was Daniel Amen and this was originally reported by MedicalNewsToday.com. While we have not seen the original research article yet, there is certainly no harm in abstaining! Apparently when you get stoned, you really DO get stoned!

What time is your appointment with your therapist? Believe it or not, it may make a difference in how much benefit you derive from the session—at least, if your diagnosis is panic disorder with agoraphobia. The best time is early in the day. Why? Well, it's not because that is when your therapist is more awake. Rather, it is because that is when your cortisol levels are highest, and for reasons still unknown, higher cortisol levels correlate with greater clinical improvement. The authors suggest this may also apply to other "extinction-based therapy sessions" though this has not yet been demonstrated. What are those? Anything where the goal is to eliminate some problematic symptom (in this case, panic attacks) such as phobias, smoking, etc. If nothing else, it illustrates the strong relationship between psychotherapy and brain chemistry.


A New Series:

Psychiatric Treatments Throughout History - Odd, Outlandish or On the Right Track...

Attempts to treat mental illness date back to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians and contain—perhaps more so than in any other field of medicine—an array of unusual treatments that today may make us cringe. A few make a degree of scientific sense, some were genuine breakthroughs, and most were disasters.

Over the next year, we will present some of the more odd, outlandish and intriguing psychiatric therapies proposed throughout human civilization.

Moral Therapy

One very progressive treatment for the time was the approach of French physician Philippe Pinel. Since their emergence, asylums for the mentally ill had been nearly inseparable from prisons, and witness to untold acts of punishment and exploitation. In 1792, Pinel instituted "moral therapy" at a French asylum, which included unshackling patients, barring their public display for entertainment, and generally treating the mentally ill with dignity. It included building trust.
treating them with then-unheard-of dignity. Moral therapy also included building trust into the doctor/patient relationship, decreasing stimuli, and encouraging routine activity. With their encouraging results garnering glowing coverage in the French press, Pinel's theories gained traction in small pockets of England and the United States. This would prove fleeting, as war, social changes, and entrenched prejudices restored more punitive measures. It took nearly two centuries more before the ethical treatment of asylum patients became a popular cause once again. Meanwhile we continue to fight the stigma.

NAMI NKY welcomes the members of the community to share his or her time and talents in spreading our mission and local mental health awareness.

We currently have volunteer opportunities open for accounting and clerical support, support group facilitators, Family to Family and Basic Course teachers, and Steps-Against-Stigma annual walk preparation.

To become a volunteer, go to [www.naminky.org](http://www.naminky.org) and fill out a volunteer form. (Note: Some volunteer opportunities may require specific NAMI training)

**Volunteer for NAMI NKY**

Have information or an article you would like to share? Email NAMI NKY at info@naminky.org

**Stay Connected**

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