



Brain Storm

Newsletter of NAMI Tri -Valley

www.namitrivalley.org

Volume 2 Number 6, November/December, 2006

NAMI Tri-Valley Mission Statement

"NAMI Tri-Valley in collaboration with other community agencies and organizations provides information and referrals to resources, education programs and advocacy support to consumers and families."

Board of Directors

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Art Tenbrink, MS LMFT
Tony Limperopulous, LCSW

Coping with the Holiday Blues

By George M. Burnell, M.D.

'Tis the season to be jolly", at least that's what we'll be hearing in the next few weeks. But the holiday season is stressful for many people. So-called "holiday blues" may include tension, anxiety, depression, sleeping problems, over-eating, and excessive drinking. Much of the stress and depression results from fear of loneliness, to a feeling that you're different from others, or excessive responsibilities. However, a number of steps may be taken to prevent the holiday blues. First, a review of the five common situations that can be emotionally draining during the holiday season:

The Family Get-Together — People who have not been together or in close intimate contact during the year are expected to behave lovingly during the holidays. Past conflicts and tensions are supposed to be forgotten or ignored. Many people who smile on the outside are crying or seething on the inside.

The Tense or Silent Marriage — Spouses are expected to behave in a loving fashion in front of others. Even when alone, they expect more romance and care from each other. Yet, their demonstration of affection is often forced and motivated by tradition rather than genuine feelings.

The Grief Experience — Grieving over someone you love is very painful. During the holidays, it is even more painful because of the realization that your loved one will not be with you.

Loneliness — If you have no one or are removed from family, you might feel more alone around this time. The feeling is intensified by seeing cheerfulness in others, or people shopping and hurrying home with armfuls of presents.

The Money Squeeze — Many people are low on funds at this time of year. Spending on impulse without a plan can later increase your tensions and anxiety. Buying gifts to make up for love lost, for the aftermath of divorce or separation, or for forgiveness of past wrongdoings will not repair the situation. It might not even relieve your guilt. If you spend excessively and beyond your budget, you will incur your own disapproval and self-reproach, which is probably far worse than that of others.

Here are some suggestions on how to combat the holiday blues and reduce your stress level during the holidays:

1. Postpone all major life decisions such as moving, changing jobs, breaking up with a friend, or divorce.
2. Stick to your routine as much as possible and maintain your rest and exercise schedule.
3. Avoid overeating and drinking at parties and get-togethers.
4. If you have conflicts with family members, avoid confrontations and emotional topics.
5. Try to recall good holiday times of the past.
6. Remember the holiday season does end.
7. If you're cooking, ask others to help prepare food or clean up.
8. If you're alone, start your own new tradition this year such as taking a trip, going to church, doing volunteer work or starting a new hobby or project.
9. Whether alone or not, make time to visit friends.

Buy yourself a treat. Plan and schedule your expenses well ahead.

President's Outlook

Soon the year will close as 2007 is fast approaching. NAMI Tri-Valley has done well in 2006 but there are many goals yet to reach. We've been shaping and reshaping while moving forward as many of our commitments have remained constant. Each Monday evening (holidays excepted), a mental health meeting is held. We've added a new support group, incorporated our affiliate and hosted many interesting educational meetings. It's important to take the time to reflect on the year's successes and challenges. Some of NAMI Tri-Valley's accomplishments in 2006 include:

- Our resounding ability to raise money for the San Francisco Bay Area NAMI Walk: \$15,000. Thanks goes to Krista Radojevich and the Tri-Valley Bipolar Bears for their phenomenal ability to raise money and stigma awareness. Thanks also goes to Suzi Glorioso for her last minute fund-raising and thank you to Mike and Carole Koslosky for their contributions to the walk.
- In September, NAMI Tri-Valley started a new parent support group. This group is for parents of children who are diagnosed with or suspected of having bipolar disorder or other mood disorders. The group is facilitated by a parent, Suzi Glorioso, who is deeply knowledgeable about resources and how to navigate school and medical systems. This is an ongoing monthly meeting at no cost to anyone who attends. Many thanks to Pathways To Wellness for generously providing a room for this community service,
- We've added another professional to our advisory board, Tony Limperopulos, LCSW, from Behavioral Health Care Services (Alameda County's mental health services).

NAMI Tri-Valley is fast becoming a recognized and respected organization in our communities and many local agencies are interested in developing lasting relationships. Thank you to all who have helped NAMI Tri-Valley along, I wish you all a peaceful holiday and happy new year.

Marsha McInnis,
President, NAMI Tri-Valley

Helpful Web Links:

- <http://www.nami.org> — National Alliance on Mental Illness (National)
- <http://www.namicalifornia.org> — National Alliance on Mental Illness (California)
- <http://www.mhaac.org/> — Mental Health Association Alameda County
- <http://bhcs.co.alameda.ca.us/> Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services
- <http://www.dballiance.org> — Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
- <http://www.narsad.org/> — NARSAD (funds research on psychiatric disorders)
- <http://www.chadd.org> — Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- <http://www.survivorsofselfharm.com> — Survivors of Suicide (helping those who have lost a loved one to suicide resolve their grief and pain in their own personal way)
- <http://www.tara4bpd.org> — Treatment And Research Advancements/National Association for Personality Disorder

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

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November 6, 2006
NO MEETING
THIS MONTH

November 7, 2006
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Parent Resource
and Support Group
Pathways To Wellness
5674 Stoneridge Dr., Ste 116
Pleasanton
Contact: Suzi Glorioso
Phone: (925) 443-1797
glorios4@comcast.net

November 13, 2006
7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
NAMI Tri-Valley
Family Support Group
Livermore Public Library
1188 So. Livermore Ave.,
Livermore
Contact: Marsha McInnis
Phone: (925) 980-5331
e-mail: marsha_mci@comcast.net

November 20, 2006
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
"In Our Own Voice"
St. Clare's Episcopal Church
3350 Hopyard Rd. Pleasanton
Contact: Krista Radojevich,
e-mail: trivalleybipolar@hotmail.com

November 27, 2006
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
NAMI Tri-Valley
Family Support Group
St. Clare's Episcopal Church,
3350 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton
Contact: Donna & Russ White,
Phone: (925) 455-6901
e-mail: russdonnawhite@comcast.net

DECEMBER CALENDAR

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December 4, 2006
NO MEETING
THIS MONTH

December 5, 2006
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Parent Resource
and Support Group
Pathways To Wellness
5674 Stoneridge Dr., Ste 116
Pleasanton
Contact: Suzi Glorioso
Phone: (925) 443-1797
glorios4@comcast.net

December 11, 2006
7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
NAMI Tri-Valley
Family Support Group
Livermore Public Library
1188 So. Livermore Ave.,
Livermore
Contact: Marsha McInnis
Phone: (925) 980-5331
e-mail: marsha_mci@comcast.net

December 18, 2006
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
"In Our Own Voice"
St. Clare's Episcopal Church
3350 Hopyard Rd. Pleasanton
Contact: Krista Radojevich,
e-mail: trivalleybipolar@hotmail.com

December 25, 2006
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY
NO MEETING
THIS MONTH

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Case Management 101: A Case Manager's Job

by Marsha McInnis

At NAMI Tri-Valley's monthly meeting for October, guest speaker, Roger Pirtle, LCSW, a psychiatric social worker with Alameda County's Behavioral Health Care Services, talked about what a case manager does and how they help clients.

Advocacy, assisting in treatment plans, searching for housing and other needs of the client are some of the supports that a case manager provides. Roger detailed specific responsibilities such as case planning. Case planning includes working with the client on personal goals and helping to develop a case plan.

He/she assists clients in applying for Social Security Disability Insurance as well as with transportation by obtaining discount vouchers on buses or BART.

Roger discussed the case manager's role in crisis intervention such as regular

phone calls to clients and wellness checks by the local police departments. Livermore and Pleasanton Police Departments are very responsive and only licensed therapists are able to make this kind of request.

Another important responsibility is fund management. A case manager authorizes monies to pay for a client's rent and other essential expenses.

Roger talked about how an Alameda County resident might be qualified to receive case management services within Alameda County. The first step is to call the toll-free ACCESS phone line: 1-800-491-9099. The phone call will be evaluated and referred to the appropriate source by an experienced professional.

To conclude, case managers can be a vital part of stability and support for a client.

Kid's Corner

by Suzi Glorioso

We had our first Parent Resource and Support Group meeting on the 5th of September and were very pleased with the outcome. Though our numbers were small, the room (generously donated by Pathways to Wellness in Pleasanton) reverberated with invaluable information and support while we shared our stories of the challenges and successes our children, and we as parents and caregivers, face daily dealing with mental illness. Thank you all who attended and we look forward to seeing you again. And we hope to see many new faces at our next meeting on November 7th.

During our open discussion, it became very clear how important telling our stories truly is. It was not only validating and insightful, but educational as well. We learned from each other what worked and what didn't and shared new resources. We learned that we are not 'bad parents', but rather parents collectively

striving to find answers and solutions for our children so they can live their best life. But most importantly, we learned that the illness does not define who our children are, but is instead a part of their health (just as Diabetes or Epilepsy) that can be treated. And that wellness and recovery is within their reach.

I would like to open up Kid's Corner column to you, our readers. I would like it to be an open forum for questions and answers, and for sharing our stories. If you have questions, comments or personal experiences dealing with mental illness in your children (ages 4 to 17) that you would like to share with our readers, please contact me at glorios4@comcast.net. I will do my best to incorporate as much information as possible into each newsletter issue. Thank you for your interest and support and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Please Note:

The next NAMI General Meeting will be in February 2007. The speaker for February will be announced in the January/February 2007 *BrainStorm* Newsletter.

FU:

for Consumers:

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance—DBSA Tri-Valley

Meets each Wednesday 7:15-8:45

St. Clare's Episcopal Church

3350 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton

Contact: Krista Radojevich

trivalleybipolar@hotmail.com

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance—DBSA Castro Valley

Meets each Friday 7:15-8:45

Eden Hospital Conference Center

Conference Room A, Ground Floor

20103 Lake Chabot Road, Castro Valley

Contact: Jennifer Garrison 925.413.3784

jenn@dbsacastrovalley.org

for Families:

NAMI Tri-Valley Support Group

Meets 2nd Monday of the month 7:15-9:00

Livermore Library

1188 S. Livermore Ave.

Contact: Marsha McInnis 925.980.5331

marsha_mci@comcast.net

NAMI Family Support Group

Meets 4th Monday of the month

St. Clare's Episcopal Church

3350 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton

Contact: Russ or Donna White 925.455.6901

russdonnawhite@comcast.net

Parent Resource and Support Group

Starting in September 2006:

Meets 1st Tuesday of the month

Pathways To Wellness

5674 Stoneridge Drive Suite 116, Pleasanton

Contact: Suzi Glorioso 925.443.1797

glorios4@comcast.net

**Membership Application
NAMI Tri-Valley**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

General \$35

Consumer \$15

Professional \$45

Century \$100

\$_____ In Memory Of: _____

\$_____ In Honor Of: _____

\$20.00 of your membership dues is tax deductible. Membership entitles you to receive NAMI Tri-Valley Newsletter "Brainstorm", NAMI California publication "The Connection" and NAMI National "The Advocate".

Send this application form with your check payable to:

NAMI Tri-Valley

1989-A Santa Rita Road PMB 129

Pleasanton, CA 94566



NAMI is a non-profit, grassroots, self-help, support and advocacy organization of consumers, families, and friends of people with severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic and other severe anxiety disorders, autism and pervasive developmental disorders, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and other severe and persistent mental illnesses that affect the brain.

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Brainstorm is published by NAMI Tri-Valley, an affiliate of NAMI National and NAMI California