

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Denver Affiliate

January-February 2009

 E-mail: namidenver@nami.org

Phone: 303-504-6545

Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place

 Website: www.namidenver.org

Message from the President

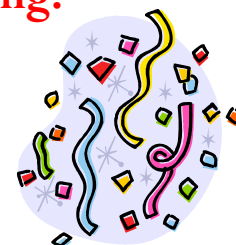
NAMI Denver Members: Join Us In Kicking Off 2009

January 21: Pizza, Annual Meeting, and Education Meeting!

Please join us at **6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21**, for NAMI Denver's Annual Meeting and Celebration. (Please note that that the time has changed.) We will elect 2009 board officers, honor our volunteers, and get together to visit. We have a number of great volunteer opportunities coming up in 2009, and we want you to be involved. For ideas of ways you can participate, see page 4. One of our board members should be calling you soon with a personal invitation.

Immediately following the annual meeting will be our first Education Meeting of the year, featuring Dr. Jane Mountain. Dr. Mountain brings her expertise as a physician and as a wellness expert. She has written two books,

Bipolar Disorder: Insights for Recovery and Beyond Bipolar: 7 Steps to Wellness. She is a regular contributor to our newsletter. Her talk is titled *Wellness and the Wasp*. "Part of healing is sharing our illness stories with others," Dr. Mountain says. "With psychiatric diagnoses, telling our stories can be difficult due to the way others understand these illnesses. Telling our illness story requires skills that bring wellness into our stories while validating our struggles."



NAMI Denver is a supportive organization where you can meet others with similar experiences. Please join us and meet some new friends!

-- Kathryn

When: Wednesday, January 21, 2009

6 - 7 p.m. Annual Meeting (NAMI members and prospective members)

7- 8:30 p.m. Education Meeting (open to the public)

Where: 2nd floor, Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place

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Family to Family Class Begins February 3

Family to Family is a free, 12-week course for family members of a person living with mental illness. The course is taught by trained family members who have experienced first hand the rewards and challenges of caring for a loved one with mental illness.

During the class you will learn about symptoms and clinical treatment of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic depression), clinical depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), borderline personality disorder, and co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders.

This will help you to gain empathy by understanding the subjective, lived experience of a person with mental illness.

Learn problem solving, listening, and communication techniques and acquire strategies

for handling crises and relapse.

You will learn techniques for coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload and improve communication with your relative.




The National Institute of Mental Health research indicates that people with mental illnesses do 20 – 50% better after their families participate in educational classes and support groups.

The class will run on Tuesdays from February 3 through April 21, 2009.

The class will be held in Southwest Denver and each class is 2.5 hours.

You must register in advance to attend class so please call Kathryn @ 303-744-0288 or email cecil296@aol.com

Upcoming Meetings and Events

	What	Topic	Where	Date & Time
	Peer and Family Support Meeting (Second Wednesday of every month)	Two separate support groups meeting at the same time, one for family members and one for peers	4141 E. Dickenson Place	Wednesday, Jan. 14 Wednesday, Feb. 11 7 - 8:30 p.m.
	Monthly Education Meeting (Third Wednesday of every month)	Dr. Jane Mountain Wellness and the Wasp: A talk presentation about Healing and Sharing our Stories NAMI Colorado: Mental Health Legislation Update-	4141 E. Dickenson Place	Wednesday, Jan. 21 7—8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18 7-8:30 p.m.
	NAMI Denver Board Meeting	All members welcome	4141 E. Dickenson Place	Thursday, Jan. 29 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26 6:30 p.m.

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Class and Support Group Begin in February

WRAP Class Begins Feb. 17

A **FREE**, 8-week Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) class will begin Tuesday, February 17, for individuals who experience psychiatric symptoms and family members. The class will be held at the Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place, Denver, 7:00 – 8:30 pm.

The WRAP class will help participants to:

- ◆ Identify their strengths, resources and coping methods (wellness tools);
- ◆ Determine what they need to do each day to feel as well as possible;
- ◆ Identify things that might cause (or trigger) problems and wellness tools that can help them get through any difficulties that might arise;
- ◆ Recognize the first signs that things are not going well and know what to do to feel better;
- ◆ Understand when things are getting worse and use wellness tools to get through difficult times;
- ◆ Develop a crisis plan to ensure, as much as possible, that they will get the support and treatment they need and prefer when they are unable to make decisions or care for themselves; and
- ◆ Create a post-crisis plan that will help them return to wellness after a very difficult time.

NAMI Denver Launches WRAP Support Group

The first meeting of the **WRAP Support Group** will be held **Thursday, February 26, 2009** at the Mental Health Center of Denver, 4141 E. Dickenson Place, Denver, 80222, 7– 8:30 pm.

This support group will meet quarterly and is appropriate for those who:

- *Have a written WRAP* which is working for them, and they wish to share their success(es) with others;
- *Have a written WRAP* but are finding it a challenge to keep it current and use it effectively;
- *Have taken a WRAP class, have a draft/beginning WRAP* and need some guidance and support in completing their WRAP; and/or *Have a written WRAP* which includes some creative wellness tools which others may find useful.

The February 26 meeting will include development of meeting guidelines and format.

For more information about the WRAP class or the WRAP support group, contact Deborah Amesbury, 303-744-1817 or DebBAmesbury@msn.com.

WRAP is a gift you give yourself!



Volunteer Opportunities

It's 2009: Make a Resolution to Volunteer at NAMI Denver

Mission statement: To improve the lives of people affected by mental illnesses.

Ways you can help:

NAMI Walk

- ◆ Find business sponsors
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Walking with friends

Contact/Support Line

- ◆ Provide phone and e-mail support

Office Support

- ◆ Inventory educational materials
- ◆ Check mail
- ◆ Process memberships and donations

Fundraising

Support Group Facilitators

- ◆ Peer Group
- ◆ Family Group

Education Program

- ◆ Select topics of interest to members
- ◆ Find and schedule speakers

Community Outreach

- ◆ Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Recognition Luncheon
- ◆ 9 Health Fairs
- ◆ Presentations to hospitals and local organizations
- ◆ Advocacy Committee

Newsletter Publication

- ◆ Research or contribute articles
- ◆ Desktop publishing
- ◆ E-mail and mail distribution

Volunteering makes a difference!



Walkers from NAMI Iowa — Photo courtesy of nami.org



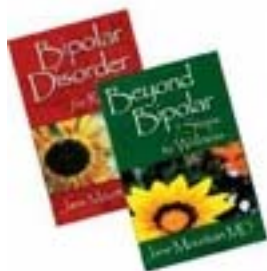
Exciting news! Metro area NAMI affiliates are joining together in 2009 to hold a NAMI Walk in Denver, currently scheduled for May 16. We are looking for sponsors, volunteers, and participants to help with this very exciting event.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ◆ Are you, or anyone you know, involved in a corporation or small business that would like to sponsor the NAMI Denver team?
- ◆ Start thinking about building a team of walkers. Friends, co-workers, family, who can raise money and awareness by walking together.
- ◆ Volunteer to work on other parts of the walk, such as publicity, logistics, etc.

If you think you can help in any of these areas, or for more information, please e-mail namidenver@nami.org.

Wellness : Beyond Bipolar, by Jane Mountain M.D.



This is the fifth step in a series of articles contributed by local author Dr. Jane Mountain. Dr. Mountain is a speaker, author and publisher who shares her personal experience of bipolar disorder with others. She has written two books, *Bipolar Disorder: Insights for Recovery* and *Beyond Bipolar: 7 Steps to Wellness*, which can be purchased on her website, www.BeyondBipolar.com, or at any bookstore, including Amazon. Sign up for her free e-Newsletter, BeyondBipolar on her website.

Step Five: Connect! © Jane Mountain, MD

Depression and Mania Are Connected by Mood Regulation

In living with bipolar disorder, we often do not see the connection of moods. When we experience a particular mood, it is the only thing that is real to us. In depression, we may be able to remember we have experienced other moods. Yet it is still hard to believe that they actually existed or that we could experience them again. Normal or healthy mood seems totally unreal, and we also forget the higher moods of bipolar.

Likewise, when we experience mania, hypomania or mixed mood, it seems as though we are in a completely different place from where we were when depression had us in its grip. It is remarkable that we can remember having been depressed, but the feelings of depression no longer seem possible. It's as though they live in a different universe.

To get a better understanding of bipolar disorder, we need to catch sight of the fact that the various moods of this illness are connected to each other. The connection lies in mood regulation. It is the brain's difficulty in regulating mood that is the source of all our mood problems.

Getting to the core of bipolar disorder, we need to understand that not only are moods connected through mood regulation, but the extreme moods we experience have an impact on our later experiences of mood.

For instance, in dealing with mania or hypomania, we must understand that our mania affects depressions following the mania. The higher the mania becomes before we deal appropriately with it—through medications, psychotherapy and wellness skills—the deeper the depression that

follows the mania.

To put it in a different way, depression, mania, hypomania and mixed mood are not the essence of bipolar disorder. The core disorder is the brain's inability to consistently regulate mood within a normal or healthy range. Just as the brain can regulate far from normal or healthy mood, so it can regulate in smaller ways.

So where does our focus need to be to find wellness? Is it trying to prevent or deal with depression or mania? No. Our focus needs to be on mood regulation, because that is where the core problem lies.

Getting the fact that depression and mania are linked by mood regulation helps us go *beyond bipolar* in several ways:

We will no longer want to fuel mania or hypomania because we know that will lead to greater depression.

We no longer need to fear the extremes, but instead we can put our focus on regulating mood—first in small ways and then in larger ways.

Our wellness plan becomes one of learning wellness skills that help us regulate mood, instead of focusing on avoiding extremes of mood.

There are far fewer surprises because we realize that our focus has to be on mood regulation and not on individual episodes that seem to come out of the blue.

Continued on page 6

Attend a NAMI Connection Support Group

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Saturdays
<p>11:30 am – 1 pm Aurora Mental Health Center 11059 E. Bethany Drive Broadway Room Aurora, CO 80014 Facilitators: Stacey 720-327-7894 missgalka@gmail.com</p>	<p>7 – 8:30 pm CHARG Drop-in Center Our Savior's Lutheran Church 920 Emerson Street Denver 80218 Facilitator: Kathy 303-321-3104 kredman@nami.org</p>	<p>7 – 8:30 pm S.T.A.R. Reach Clubhouse 2531 W. Church Avenue Littleton 80120 Facilitators: June 303-788-0776 jdmcw@interfold.com Carol 303-760-1055 kyvilla@aol.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesdays</p> <p>5:30-7 pm Sante Fe House 6509 S. Sante Fe Dr. Littleton, CO 80120 Facilitators: Carolyn 720-366-0883 cvtv2003@yahoo.com Faith 303-321-3104 faithmof3@hotmail.com</p>	<p>7 – 8:30 pm Colorado Mental Health Institute at Ft. Logan 3520 W. Oxford Avenue Denver 80236 Administration building, room #108 Facilitators: Joe 303-949-3862 Norma 303-980-5821 njschneider@comcast.net</p>	<p>2:30 - 4 pm CHARG Drop-in Center Our Savior's Lutheran Church 920 Emerson Street Denver 80218 Facilitators: Paula 303-322-6296 Cathy</p>



NAMI Connection is a recovery support group program for adults living with mental illness that is expanding in communities throughout the country. Each group meets weekly for 90 minutes, is offered free of charge, follows a flexible structure without an educational format, does not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies, and is confidential.

Dr. Jane Mountain continued from Page 5

Seeing the connection gives insight into the long term management of bipolar disorder. It also allows us to take small steps toward stable mood and know that we are making progress as we do so. Connect! Depression and mania are connected through mood regulation. Knowing this helps us move *beyond bipolar* toward stable mood.

see Dr. Mountain's books, *Bipolar Disorder: Insights for Recovery* and *Beyond Bipolar: 7 Steps to Wellness*. These can be purchased at www.BeyondBipolar.com, your local bookstore or on Amazon. To find new ways to manage in the face of mental illness, call your local NAMI and ask for resources in your community that will provide support and help you on the journey to wellness.

To learn more about how moods are connected,

NAMI— National Alliance on Mental Illness - is a grass-roots, family and consumer, self-help, support, education, and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with severe mental illness.

NAMI Denver Board Members: President: Kathryn Chaney; Secretary/Treasurer: Michael Callahan; Members-at-Large: Maureen Martin, Anjali Budhiraja

NAMI Denver Dispatch Editor: Anjali Budhiraja; Distribution: Deborah Amesbury

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