



THE VOICE

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS
PALM BEACH COUNTY

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
ISSUE 2 ~ VOL. 11

THE ARIZONA TRAGEDY AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

BY MICHAEL J. FITZPATRICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NAMI NATIONAL

NAMI is an organization of individuals and families whose lives have been deeply affected by mental illness.

We share the sadness of other Americans over the Tucson, Arizona tragedy and extend our sympathy to the families of the six individuals who died. We pray for the recovery of U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and the 13 other persons who were wounded. Representative Giffords is a NAMI friend who has served as co-chair of the NAMIWalk in Southeast Arizona and has supported our missions of education, support and advocacy.

When tragedies involving mental illness occur, it is essential to understand the nature of mental illness—and to find out what went wrong.

The U.S. Surgeon General has reported that the likelihood of violence from people with mental illness is low. In fact, “the overall contribution of mental disorders to the total level of violence in society is exceptionally small.” Acts of violence are exceptional. They are a sign that something has gone terribly wrong, usually in the mental healthcare system.

Nationwide, the mental health care system is broken. Arizona, like other states, has deeply cut mental health services. Arizona has a broad civil commitment law to require treatment if it is needed;

(Continued on page 2)



PROUDLY PRESENTS...

DIABETES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Presented by
Alyse November, LCSW

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 8, 2011

6:30-8:00PM

**United Methodist Church of the
Palm Beaches**

900 Brandywine Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33409

(Chapel)

*NAMI/PBC General Mtgs. Are Free & Open to
the Public*

National Alliance on Mental Illness/PBC

however, the law cannot work if an evaluation is never conducted or mental health services are not available.

In specific cases such as this, authorities and the news media should seek to objectively determine every factor that may have contributed to the tragedy—so that we can act on lessons learned.

- Was there a diagnosis?
- What is the full medical history?
- When were symptoms first noticed?
- Did family members receive education about mental illness and support?
- Did the person or family ever seek treatment—only to have it delayed or denied?
- Was the person seen by mental health professionals? By whom? How often?
- Was treatment coordinated among different professionals?
- Was the person prescribed medication? Was it being taken? If not, why not?
- Was substance abuse involved?
- What may have triggered the psychiatric crisis?

www.nami.org

<http://twitter.com/namicommunicate>

NAMI/PBC'S MESSAGE OF HOPE

BY CRISTINA ANDREOLI AND CURTIS RUSS, NAMI/PBC
CO-PRESIDENTS

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Palm Beach County (NAMI/PBC), which provides sup-

port, education and advocacy, gives families and peers affected by mental illness the message of hope in recovery. What can we learn from the Tucson events? There is a salient need to overhaul the country's mental health system so that early evaluation and treatment of mental illness can be implemented and to ensure the elimination of the associated stigma. Stigma is defined by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) as "prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping "impeding people from obtaining assistance...". There is a need for education directed to both families and social institutions, as incidences of recovery from mental illness dramatically outnumber the in-successes and few people with mental illness are violent. Additionally, there is a need for the regular screening of young adults especially in the critical 18-22 year old risk period, as mental illness often surfaces in colleges. Families would be well served to gain support from and develop a relationship with NAMIs in their areas, thereby learning about existing tools on groundbreaking practices and how to set up game plans counteracting mental illness. Finally, families should ask for Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) first responders to ensure appropriate involuntary commitment responses.

Currently, Florida's mental health system is insufficient and overburdened due to funding cuts – it received a "D" rating when NAMI graded the states. NAMI/PBC believes that it would be more economically advantageous to treat mental illness rather than have people with brain disorders hospitalized or in prison, costing society far more. It believes that there is a need for holistic treatment access, continuity (after involuntary commitments) and integration within a community health care system; and access to sufficient health professionals and high cost medications.

36TH CIT COURSE

BY DOROTHY KELLEHER, CIT PLANNING GROUP

The 36th CIT Course providing law enforcement and first responders with 40 hours of training has been successfully completed. Our Guest Speaker at the Graduation was Delsa Bush, the Police Chief for the City of West Palm Beach, and her enthusiasm for the training was evident throughout her presentation. Chief Bush oversees approximately five hundred people including 310 officers. She has received numerous awards, and she is dedicated to the belief that those suffering from serious brain diseases should receive appropriate medical services outside of a jail setting, and that they be treated with understanding, dignity and compassion. The CIT Planning Group and class were fortunate in having Chief Bush as a Guest Speaker.

If a peer, family member or friend is facing a crisis situation, dial 911 and ask the dispatcher to send a CIT officer in response to the call.

NONPROFITS FIRST GRANT

BY CRISTINA ANDREOLI

It is my privilege to talk about the benefit that NAMI/PBC received through a \$10,000 Capacity Building grant which was sponsored by the Nonprofits First Agency. Driven by the need to set up a database system in the affiliate, particularly related to fundraising, program and marketing outcomes, the Grant financed the creation of an updated Information Technology (IT) System. The grant, also, implemented a capacity study of NAMI/PBC which yielded as a result the fact that it is a high growth affiliate. The IT system and its electronic data thus collected and analyzed fast became the tool to measure the effectiveness of NAMI/PBC Programs. An impact study was implemented of the Peer-to-Peer

NAMI/PBC FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

WEST BOCA RATON

West Boca County Library
18685 State Road 7 Boca Raton, FL
Meets the 1st Tuesday of the Month; 6:30–8 pm

BOYNTON BEACH/DELRAY BEACH

Hagen Ranch County Library
14350 Hagen Ranch Road, Delray Beach, FL
Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the Month; 6:30pm

LAKE WORTH

NAMI/PBC Office
1520 10th Ave., No., Ste D, Lake Worth, FL
Meets the 4th Monday of the Month; 3pm

JUPITER

County Library on Military Trail
705 Military Trail, Jupiter, FL
Meets the 3rd Thursday; 6:30–8pm
*NOTE: December Mtg moved to 12/06, same time.

WELLINGTON

Wellington County Library
1951 Royal Fern Dr., Wellington, FL
Meets the 2nd Monday of the Month; 6:30–
8:30pm

CALL 561-588-3477 FOR INFO

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

NAMI CONNECTION

RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP

Jo's Place @ South County MHC
16158 S. Military Trail, Delray Beach, FL
Mondays, 1:30-3pm

YOUNG ADULTS SUPPORT GROUP

(18-28)

For more information call the
NAMI/PBC office at (561) 588-3477

PEER COUNCIL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 3

NAMI/PBC in a Panel Discussion

NAMI/PBC will participate in a Panel Discussion at Palm Beach State College on the value of mental illness education with reference to the Tucson events.

February 16

Guardian Advocate training

Mrs. Marcia Greene, RN-BC and Curtis Russ will hold a Guardian Advocate training course at the Palm Beach County Courthouse between 1:00 -5:00 pm. A trained Guardian Advocate is appointed by the Baker Act Court to act in the best interest of the individual until they are able to consent or are released from the facility.

April 15

Palm Beach County Health Department

NAMI/PBC will participate in a presentation on Psychiatric Emergencies at the Palm Beach County Health Department between 2:30 – 3:15 pm.

Course in terms of its lasting effect on its participants which revealed a high success rate. We were happy to report to Nonprofits First on this and other data reflecting NAMI/PBC's high-capacity grant activities.

We shared with Nonprofits First some very rewarding professional growth experiences. The ancillary training sessions on diverse capacity-building topics, which were provided largely for

free by that agency, were powerful and instructional. These sessions challenged its participants to examine and expand their knowledge on such topics as benchmarking, cost allocation, budgeting as well as marketing etc. We embarked on this training program and were changed. On December 15, the Nonprofits First Grantor conducted a final visit of the affiliate's new office IT system; and we sent them NAMI/PBC's Final Report reflecting the program outcomes which had been supported by the Grant.

THE NAMI/PBC PEER COUNCIL

BY CURTIS RUSS

Caroline Chen and Mike Coburn were voted in unanimously as Co-Presidents of the NAMI/PBC Peer Council and will start their Presidency at the next Peer Council meeting to be held on February 27. They will come up with an agenda and direct the various Peer Council Committees, including the Activities Committee. We would like to congratulate them on their success and are sure that they will benefit from their leadership experience.

The Peer Council is an association of Peers that meet for educational, advocacy and social integration purposes.

MEDICATIONS AND SIDE-EFFECTS

BY LORI JO BAACH

We, who take meds, are always presented with a forever list of side-effects that may occur from these meds. What happens when we need to take

side-effect meds? It can often be complicated and cause for problems.

I have a “movement disorder” as a result of the psych meds having bombarded my internal chemistry over the last 30 years. It has made me extremely self-conscious. I often feel that I am scrutinized by everybody. I feel as if I have to apologize for my presentation when with “normal” people. My family, friends and co-workers are well acquainted with it by now, but the general population stares at me as some kind of distorted being.

I have become so sensitive that I went to the acclaimed Cleveland Clinic and have been under the care of a neurologist for my Tardive Diskenesia. My hope in this MD to be able to make magic and cancel my visible, bodily obstacle is unfair to him. With each visit I beg for his wizardry as my ultimate last chance, invested resource.

When I first saw the doctor I saw his forever list of medications; he jokingly offered to pay me \$50.00 to go to the Mayo Clinic to seek treatment as he projected that he was up against a challenge. He did take on my case, however, with eagerness.

The Doc prescribed me a brand new drug called “Xenazine”. He informed me that I am one of the first individuals in this country to be trialed on this medication... (I had experience with this “guinea pig” syndrome from Clozaril days and had a self-fulfilling prophecy that it was going to work). He started me on a low dose. I returned to his office as scheduled with some evidence of improvement. So, he raised the dose by one pill. More significant progress. He decided to add another pill. (Now I pill 3x/day). Definite notice of the ability of diminished symptoms observed by candid, critical outsiders. (i.e., my family who “tell it like it is”).

I was discouraged by the textbook Xenazine

side-effects that I was experiencing. I feared that this trial medication may be escorting me to places where I had not been in for an eternity. “Call the doctor right away if you become depressed or have any of the following symptoms, especially if they are new, worse, or...” I seem to relate to almost every symptom listed. These feelings were foreign to me as I had not felt like this in ions.

This was definitely not Lori Jo Baach. I immediately lowered my Xenazine and talked to the doctor to share my dismay. I continued on a lower dosage and he told me that if the depression did not lift by Friday to call my psychiatrist and that it was not Xenazine-related.

The point of this all... Side-effects medications may be worse than the side-effects themselves. We need to take an inventory of the pros and cons,

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NAMI/PBC's Peer-to-Peer Course

A free 10-week course on recovery through lectures/discussion/interaction/stress management. A life changer. To be scheduled in the Spring.

Please call Cristina Andreoli at the NAMI/PBC office for application/registration.

The Spanish Family Support Group

The Spanish Family Support Group will start soon in the evenings at the NAMI/PBC office.

For more information call the office at (561) 588-3477.

National Alliance on Mental Illness of Palm Beach County
1520 10th Avenue North, Suite D
Lake Worth, FL 33460

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33460
PERMIT NO. 1327

Or Current Resident



Palm Beach County

Membership

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voting | \$45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$55 | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional | \$65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Door | \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$15 |

NAMI Membership exists at 3 levels: Affiliate, State & National; with just 1 payment, you'll be joining all 3 at once! As a member, you will receive: cutting-edge newsletters & publications, like *The Voice* & *The Advocate*, action alerts & leadership opportunities, plus advanced notice of upcoming meetings, classes & events.

NAMI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization—contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. *Together*, we can continue to fight for all those affected by mental illness. *Thank you!*

1520 10th Ave N Ste D
Lake Worth, FL 33460-2069
T: 561.588.3477
F: 561.588.3499
WWW.NAMIPBC.ORG
INFO@NAMIPBC.ORG

Check here for renewal:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

I'd like to support NAMI/
PBC with a donation of:

\$5 **\$10** \$25

other: \$ _____

I'm interested in volun-
teering with NAMI/PBC.

I wish to receive NAMI
National's solicitations.

*Members are NAMI/
PBC's lifeblood; your joining
helps us continue to provide
free outreach, support & educa-
tion. In bringing mental
health issues to wider atten-
tion, we advocate for better
treatment. As our membership
base grows, our voice becomes
stronger.*

**Respect, Compassion
& Hope ... NAMI Works!**