

NAMI Schenectady E-News

Fall 2020 Edition

Acting Editor*: Cynthia Seacord Send address changes, requests to discontinue and comments to: namischenectady@gmail.com
or contact temporary acting editor at 518-374-8071 (home #)

*** Please NOTE: We need one or two members to take on the editorship of this newsletter!**

Support Group Meetings

We are pleased to announce that the Ellis Hospital Mental Health Department has resumed its weekly Family Support Group as of Wednesday September 23rd. Meetings take place as before in the Hospital's Mental Health Department Classroom B-3 (B-wing 3rd floor) on Wednesday evening 6 - 7:30.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AS COVID-19 Safety Steps apply.

Up to 10 participants are allowed in the meeting room because social distancing must be practiced. Also without exception, participants must wear a face mask to cover both nose and mouth.

Two things to do prior to attending the meeting each week:

1) **Call Joel Haynes**, meeting facilitator, in advance, to tell her you are going to attend. This is so she knows how many are coming, and when to cut off the attendance at 10 people. Her number is 518-605-6537.

2) **Park in the Rosa Road ER parking garage, then go to the Emergency Room first** to get your temperature taken and to answer a set of questions. Once you are cleared by this quick screening you will be given a pass to proceed to the meeting room. Once you are ok-d to go upstairs, follow signs to B wing and take the elevator to the 3rd floor classroom B-3.



Virtual Support Through NAMI Capital Region

Our friends at NAMI Capital Region have been able to successfully run on-line family and peer support groups since early this summer. Pass on the word to your friends and loved ones who have missed going to support groups, whether it be peer recovery or family support. Here is how you can take part in these groups using ZOOM.

Attend a ZOOM* meeting via NAMI Capital Region at: <https://namicapitalregionny.org>.

On their home page go to the support group link in the upper right hand corner. It looks like this:

Online Support Groups

[Click here for online Support Group](#)

Put your cursor on the "Click here..." message and click. You will be taken to the Support Page where you will find information and further links that will enable you to go into either of the two groups that are in operation, provided you link up to the meeting on the right day of the week, at about 10-20 minutes prior to the start times given on that page. The two groups are:

- NAMI Family Support group for friends and family of persons living with mental illness. This group meets **Thursday evenings with a start time of 5:30 pm.**
- NAMI Connection is a recovery support group for adults living with mental illness. It meets **Tuesday evenings starting 5 pm.**

You can connect to the meetings either by PC or cell phone per on-line instructions.

*You need ZOOM in order to connect.

NOTE: You or your family member does not have to be receiving care through Ellis Hospital or be a member of NAMI to attend these support groups.

Up-Coming Meetings and Programs

We will announce resumption of topic meetings once we determine a safe and convenient location at which we can safely meet while following COVID-19 precautions. We anticipate running an on-line board meeting early this fall. If interested in attending the board meeting via ZOOM, please send us an e-mail at our g-mail address (see newsletter heading) so that we can invite you to the meeting. Be sure you have the ZOOM application/program on your device!

Feeling overwhelmed about COVID-19?
Help is waiting for you.

NEW YORK STATE
COVID-19 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT HELPLINE:
1-844-863-9314
8 AM - 10 PM, 7 days a week

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced a new helpline for people who are experiencing overwhelming anxiety, stress and depression brought on by the coronavirus emergency.
Call now for free and confidential support.



Other Helpful COVID-19 Resources from OMH

- **Tips for Mental Wellness** – check out <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/guidance/covid-19-managing-stress-anxiety.pdf>
- **Mental Health Resources During an Emergency** – knowing the signs of anxiety and getting help: <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster-resources/pandemic-influenza/>

NAMI info on COVID-19 – see page 3.

NAMI Schenectady E-News Page 2

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



NAMI Celebrates Major Step Forward in “9-8-8” Mental Health Crisis Response

Sep 22, 2020 Arlington, VA

Yesterday, Congress passed S. 2661, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020, which heads to the President’s desk to be signed into law.

“The need for 9-8-8 is urgent. Without appropriate care, people with mental illness end up on our streets, in jails and in emergency departments—and dying in tragic encounters with law enforcement,” said Daniel H. Gillison, Jr., NAMI CEO. “Thanks to yesterday’s vote, we are making progress toward ensuring people in crisis get help, not handcuffs.”

More than half of people in the U.S. report that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their mental health. Too many lives are being lost because of interactions between people in crisis and law enforcement. By the House passing the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, the country is on track to make 9-8-8 fully operational and provide resources to meet the increasing demand for mental health services.

We are especially grateful to celebrate the success of this bill during Suicide Prevention Awareness Month because it establishes, in law, a universal three-digit number, 9-8-8, for mental health and suicidal crises and has the potential to save lives when every second counts. The Federal Communications Commission has said this number will become effective in July 2022. To help communities prepare, S. 2661 also permits states to impose fees that will allow for timely and well-trained crisis response.

NOTE: The new three-digit number will not be operational until July 2022.

Another article for Suicide Awareness is on page 5



Experiencing a crisis? Please call the National Suicide Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text “NAMI” to 741741.

NAMI-NYS COVID-19 Info and Helpline Is There to Help You!

NAMI-NYS has a great deal of current information related to COVID-19 on its website. Go to naminys.org and click on its COVID-19 Information link. For support call NAMI-NYS's temporary Helpline number (518)-248-7635, available on weekdays from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. (NAMI National also has information and a helpline at www.nami.org.)



Why it is important to vote?

The 2020 election goes beyond who will become the next President of the United States. When we vote, we express our opinion on issues that affect all of us – including housing, education, employment and healthcare. Here are some simple reasons for registering and voting:

- Elections have consequences. When you vote you are exercising the power to decide on the quality of life you want for yourself and your loved ones and for generations to come. Here is your chance to stand up for those issues most important to you, and choose what you want to see happen.
- You give up your voice when you don't vote. If you don't vote, someone else will make the decisions for you.
- Voting gives you a say in how and on what your money (i.e. your tax dollars) is spent – such as on health care, social services, protecting the environment, etc.
- Voting is an opportunity for change. When you vote, you show support for the candidates and the laws they sponsor and vote for to can help your locality, state and the country, working for the common good.
- Your community depends upon you, especially those friends, loved ones, neighbors and children who don't have the privilege to vote. Some of our neighbors don't realize how important their votes are. So, vote for yourself and those around you who won't or can't vote.
- You can make the difference especially in a super close election. All we need to do is recall the closely contested presidential race that took place in 2004 between Al Gore and George W. Bush, a race that President Bush won by just 35 electoral votes. That race could have turned out differently had more people voted.

TOGETHER WE CAN AND DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



2020 NAMI-NYS Education Conference

Building Momentum:



Coming Together to Create Our Future.

**Yes, there is an education conference this fall
*Here's the scoop – directly from NAMI-NYS!***

The 2020 NAMI-NYS Education Conference-*Building Momentum: Coming Together to Create Our Future* will focus upon the importance of resiliency and address many of the critical issues we are currently facing including:

- How to recover from the trauma and grief generated by COVID-19, the economy and racial injustice
- Understanding and addressing social-determinants of mental health
- How to take our education and turn it into action, including how we can make our voices heard in supporting mental health services in the upcoming elections.
- How to partner in advancing research
- Addressing suicide
- How to take the next steps in supporting multicultural communities
- The importance of early-intervention
- Issues impacting young adults

While we can only attend this year's conference remotely, we will not let physical distance keep us apart. The education conference will still allow us to come together to learn from one another, help each other heal and begin creating the future we want to see. NAMI-NYS's goal is to bring together as many people as possible for this important gathering. **We are not charging a registration fee this year**, though we are asking if possible, for people to make a \$20 donation to support NAMI-NYS.

NAMI Schenectady E-News Page 4

When

Friday, October 23, 2020 at 9:45 AM EDT
-to-
Saturday, October 24, 2020 at 4:00 PM EDT

Where

This is an online event.

Contact

Matthew Shapiro
NAMI-NYS
518-462-2000
matthew@naminys.org

To register:

Contact NAMI-NYS at phone number above or go directly to their website: www.naminys.org and click on the Building Momentum Education Conference page.

Featured Speakers Engaged (so far)

- **Jeffrey Borenstein, M.D.**, President and CEO, Brain & Behavior Research Foundation
- **Barbara A. Cornblatt, PhD, MBA**, Director, Recognition and Prevention (RAP) Program Department of Psychiatry, Zucker Hillside Hospital
- **Christine Crawford, MD, MPH**, Assistant Professor, Associate Director of Psychiatry Medical Student Education Boston University School of Medicine
- **Wilfred Farquharson, Ph.D**, Director, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic & Psychologist, Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University
- **Donald Goff, MD**, Director Nathan Kline Institute
- **Michelle Hammer**, Founder, Schizophrenic NYC
- **Luke Kramer**, Executive Director, the STARR Coalition
- **Jeffrey A. Lieberman, MD**, Lawrence C. Kolb Professor and Chairman, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; Director, New York State Psychiatric Institute; and Psychiatrist-in-Chief, Columbia University Medical Center of the New York-Presbyterian Hospital
- **Merrill Rotter, M.D.**, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, New York State Office of Mental Health

(see conference agenda information on page 5)

More on the October “Ed” Conference

NAMI-NYS's goal is to bring together as many people as possible for this important gathering. A 5-page detailed agenda and conference registration form can be found on NAMI-NYS's website, www.naminys.org.

Agenda Highlights

- *First Steps Towards Healing: Addressing and Overcoming the Grief and Trauma of COVID-19, the Economy and Racial Injustice*
- *Our Path Forward: Understanding and Prevailing Over Our Current Social Determinants of Mental Health*
- *Education to Action: Creating Our Future Breakout Sessions*
- *Coming Together to Celebrate the Resiliency of our 2020 Leaders of Mental Health Awareness: Honorees and NAMI-NYS Members*
- *2020 NAMI-NYS Excellence in Research Award Presentation*
- *Partnering on Research and Update from Leading Research Facilities*
- *Disease Focus Workshops*
- *Using Communication to Cut Through Cultural Divides and Mental Health Disparities*
- *Zero Suicide Session-Recognizing and Addressing Warning signs of Suicide During COVID and Social Isolation*
- *Expanding Mental Wellness in the LGBTQ+ Community*
- *Four Young Adult Sessions on Managing Our New Back to School Stress, How to Curate a Healthy Social Media Feed, Addressing Anxiety (Turning Negative “What Ifs” to Positives, and Act and Vote for Mental Health*

CDC: One Quarter of Young Adults Contemplated Suicide During Pandemic

By Brianna Ehley, *Politico*, 8/13/2020

One in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 say they've considered suicide in the past month because of the pandemic, according to new CDC data that paints a bleak picture of the nation's mental health during the crisis.

The data also flags a surge of anxiety and substance abuse, with more than 40 percent of those surveyed saying they experienced a mental or behavioral health condition connected to the Covid-19 emergency. The CDC study analyzed 5,412 survey respondents between June 24 and 30.

The toll is falling heaviest on young adults, caregivers, essential workers and minorities. While 10.7 percent of respondents overall reported considering suicide in the previous 30 days, 25.5 percent of those between 18 to 24 reported doing so. Almost 31 percent of self-reported unpaid caregivers and 22 percent of essential workers also said they harbored such thoughts. Hispanic and Black respondents similarly were well above the average.

Roughly 30.9 percent of respondents said they had symptoms of anxiety or depression. Roughly 26.3 respondents reported trauma and stress-related disorder because of the pandemic.

Another 13.3 percent of respondents said they have turned to substance use, including alcohol and prescription or illicit drugs, to cope with stress from the pandemic.

More than half of respondents who identified as essential workers reported some kind of adverse mental health or behavioral health condition related to the Covid-19 emergency.

The anonymous internet survey was based on self-reporting and didn't cover clinical diagnoses.

The background: Federal officials and public health experts have been warning about a potential mental health crisis stemming from the pandemic, though there's been little national data so far.

States and the federal government have some data showing an increase in drug overdose deaths in the first several months of the year, amid lockdowns, economic uncertainty and added stress caused by the pandemic.

(CDC continued) **What's next:** Researchers, in the study, recommended that any community-level intervention and prevention efforts include strengthening economic supports to reduce financial stress, and to address racial disparities in health care. They also suggest expanding access to social supports, comprehensive treatments and harm reduction services.

If you are having suicidal thoughts, or you know someone who is, we cannot stress often enough that help is available. In the U.S., call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The number is toll-free: 1-800-273-8255.



NAMI New York State's Fall 2020 Fundraiser Needs Our Help to Reach its Goal: \$125,000

**OFF THE MASK - FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 06, 2020**

Where: Facebook Live at 7:30 PM

What: Fashion Show - Silent Auction

Virtual Art Exhibit - Raffle

Join us in ending the silence and stigma.

All proceeds raised will go to the National Alliance of Mental Illness - New York State and their mission to provide FREE education, support, and advocacy for people impacted by mental illness and raising awareness of mental health.

Visit the following for full details on this event:
www.naminys.org/nys/events-featured/off-the-mask/

NAMI Schenectady E-News Page 6

E. Fuller Torrey on the passing of DJ Jaffe

I am very saddened to let you know that DJ Jaffe died yesterday, August 23. After battling leukemia for more than 15 years – and, knowing DJ, you can bet that it has been a battle - he died quietly at home. Since 1998, when we first started making plans for what became the Treatment Advocacy Center (TAC), DJ has been the single most effective advocate I have worked with and a close personal friend. His dedication to improving the treatment of people with serious mental illness, based on his experience with his sister-in-law, has been extraordinary. The amount of time and energy he has invested in this mission, first at TAC and then at Mental Illness Policy Org, is legendary. Even as he knew he was dying, DJ said nothing and continued his advocacy.

The remarkable success of his book, Insane Consequences, was a further reflection of his ability to mobilize families to bring about change.

DJ suggested that any memorial tributes be directed to TAC; this can be done by visiting www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/dj-memorial-fund. In addition to the memorial fund, in an effort to honor DJ, my wife and I are creating a new advocacy position at TAC specifically named after DJ. Just as colleges have named professorships, so TAC will have a named advocate position. We are guaranteeing the funding for this position for five years.

DJ's death is a huge loss for all of us.

E. Fuller Torrey, M.D.

Coretta Scott King once said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

#ACT4MENTALHEALTH



WE NEED YOU TO HELP US DO THE VITAL WORK THAT MAKES NAMI WORK! For NAMI Schenectady to continue to function we need:

- Two members to take over production of our *E-News*. We have one volunteer. Contact us if you want to become our 2nd co-editor. Will train.
- Reporters for our newsletter. Review a book or movie, advocate, or share recovery and wellness-related tips.
- A co-webmaster for namischenectady.org, our website Put your technology know-how to work today.
- Someone to set up a Facebook account for us.
- Members to serve on committees (example: nominating, program planning, finance) **and fill our current board vacancy!**
- More NAMI Family to Family class graduates to become certified Family to Family teachers so we can offer these classes.

Please respond at: namischenectady@gmail.com

NAMI Joins Public-Private Partnership to Advance Early Interventions For Schizophrenia

On 9/15/2020, NAMI announced it has joined the Accelerating Medicines Partnership (AMP) Schizophrenia (SCZ), bringing together the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Drug Administration and multiple non-profit and private organizations to work toward the shared mission of finding biological markers that can help identify those at risk of developing schizophrenia early, track the progression of symptoms and other outcomes and define targets for treatment development.

“NAMI was founded by parents of adult children with schizophrenia over 40 years ago and we’re proud to be a part of the Accelerating Medicines Partnership for Schizophrenia,” said Daniel H. Gillison, Jr., NAMI CEO. “This partnership is a new opportunity for coordinated research on the root causes and progression of schizophrenia.

NAMI is dedicated to this partnership which represents the best of the public, private and academic communities. We can all agree that we need better treatments for psychosis and this partnership has the potential to fast-track progress in this area.”

“We know that with most brain diseases, early interventions before the onset of symptoms improve long-term outcomes,” said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D. “Through research we’ve identified clinical and biological markers for schizophrenia, but we need to translate this knowledge into early interventions to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people at risk for this debilitating disease. AMP Schizophrenia aims to be that bridge.”

Schizophrenia, a serious mental illness, is **one of the top-15 causes of disability worldwide**. The disorder, which typically emerges in adolescence or early adulthood, is characterized by alterations to a person’s thoughts, feelings and behaviors, that can include becoming out of touch with reality, known as psychosis. Detecting and intervening before it develops could attenuate, postpone or even prevent the transition to psychosis and improve treatment outcomes.

AMP SCZ will work to develop measures that further define early stages of risk and predict the likelihood of progression to psychosis and other outcomes. Such tools will enable clinical trials to test new pharmacologic interventions that may prevent the onset of psychosis.

NIH’s National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) expects to contribute \$82.5 million over five years, pending availability of funds. Additionally, the FDA will be a critical partner in providing regulatory guidance on biological markers of disease progression, outcome measures and endpoints for clinical trials.

About the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): The mission of the NIMH is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery and cure. For more information, visit www.nimh.nih.gov.

JOIN NAMI SCHENECTADY

Membership in NAMI Schenectady also makes you a member in
NAMI New York State and national NAMI

To join choose your annual membership dues type(x) below and
complete form to accompany your check: ___ individual \$40
___ Household \$60 ___ Open Door \$5 (limited
income)

___ Donation Total enclosed: _____

Name(s)

Street Address or PO Box

City, State & Zip

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

NAMI Schenectady is a 501(c)3 organization.

**Make your check payable to: NAMI Schenectady,
PO Box 974, Schenectady, New York 12301**

**NAMI Schenectady
PO Box 974
Schenectady, New York 12301**