

# NAMI Boulder County

## *Circle of Support*

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Boulder County, Colorado

Issue No. 190

- For all those touched by mental illness -

March 2007

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### How to help someone with mental illness accept treatment

*The following article was crafted by Joanne Kelly from a presentation given by Dr. Xavier Amador at the NAMI Colorado Annual Meeting in September 2006.*

If you did not believe you had diabetes, would you give yourself daily insulin injections? Of course not! And you probably wouldn't have much patience with your family members who were trying to convince you to do so.

The same problem is faced by about half of the more than 6 million people in the United States with serious mental illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. These 3 million people are not in denial. Most problems with insight into illness are rooted in brain dysfunction. The condition, called anosognosia (ann-knows-egg-nose-ya), is characterized by a severe lack of awareness about their illness that persists despite the evidence. In other words, it's a manifestation of the illness itself rather than a coping strategy. Some stroke victims suffer from it, too.

*The bad news:* People who suffer from anosognosia are less likely to adhere to prescribed treatments or take advantage of services that are available. Poor adherence to treatment presents staggering obstacles to recovery. Poor adherence is associated with increased involuntary hospitalizations, suicide, poor response to subsequent treatment, discord with caregivers and mental

healthcare providers, criminal behavior, and failure to reach optimal levels of recovery.

*The good news:* There is a way to help people with anosognosia find their own reasons, or personal motivation, to participate in treatment. Dr. Xavier Amador, who is a professor of clinical psychology at Columbia University and a NAMI board member, outlines a motivational technique in the newly revised edition of his book, "I Am Not Sick, I Don't Need Help!"

#### **Families can learn to LEAP**

Dr. Amador advises us to Listen-Empathize-Agree-Partner or LEAP. The ultimate goal is to arrive at a "treatment agreement" that is grounded in the patient's assessment of his/her problems and focused on helping to achieve his/her goals.

You don't have to be a professional to use the LEAP technique. With practice, family members can learn it and use it regularly. In fact, one of the advantages of LEAP training for family caregivers is that there are many more opportunities for interaction than is possible during monthly appointments with a psychiatrist. LEAP can improve your family communication pat-

terns and help you reduce tension and conflict. Using the LEAP technique, you create a foundation from which you can build a partnership for recovery with the person you are trying to help.

Because the first two LEAP skills involve listening and empathizing without giving an opinion, the LEAP method can quickly transform an adversarial relationship into an alliance. These techniques, in particular, reduce tension and conflict because the patient does not feel the need to defend his/her point of view. Patients who lack insight into their illness often are frustrated and angry because nearly everyone they know is telling them they should take psychiatric medication for an illness they do not believe they have. When such a person finds that someone is willing to listen without trying to convince him/her that he/she is ill, new avenues for collaboration open. Tension is reduced between the LEAP practitioner and the patient, and he/she feels more satisfied with the treatments.

#### **Focus on adherence**

In patients with severe and persistent problems with insight, awareness of being ill will never be a

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**NAMI BOULDER COUNTY**

1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder  
303-443-4591

www.namibouldercounty.org

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**Friends of NAMI**

We are most thankful for your past and continuing friendship, but our list has grown too large for this small space. Please know how much you mean to NAMI Boulder County.

~

Office Manager, Sharon Bowyer  
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Barbara Connors, Christine Vigorita,  
Reg Saner, Sharon Bowyer,  
Samantha Stiers

**President's Corner**

On a cold, snowy Saturday in January (was there any other kind of Saturday in January?), I ventured out to a NAMI meeting in Denver. The affiliate presidents were invited to join the NAMI Colorado board members for a day of resolving differences and making plans for working together more smoothly.

I must admit to being nervous as I drove to the meeting, and my jitters were not caused solely by the icy roads. Truth is, I don't like conflict. I was worried that we would spend the whole day dealing with the friction that had developed between the affiliates and the NAMI Colorado board over the last couple years.

My fears were quickly put to rest. NAMI Colorado Executive Director Lacey Berumen opened the meeting with a report of her activities and plans. In a nutshell, she's busy writing grant applications. Her goal is to win grant money she can send out to the affiliates to use for implementing community-based programs. How exciting! Lacey has already invited NAMI Boulder County to participate in some of those grants.

As the meeting progressed, it became clear that all parties are on the same page. Dennis Hofts, the new NAMI Colorado president, and Lynette Loken, new vice president, have both been actively involved with their county affiliate organizations for many years, and they are committed to NAMI's grassroots philosophy. I left the meeting with a renewed sense we could all work together to make the world a better place for people with mental illnesses. Together, we can make a difference.

**Upcoming events**

**March 9: Soft Voices** trip to Leaning Tree Art Museum, 1:00 p.m. Call Gil at 303-776-0410.

**March 16: Talk on PTSD** by Dr. Jeffrey Anker, MD Psychiatrist, Longmont United Hospital. Call Laurie at 303-772-3559.

**March 19: "Let's Talk about Bipolar Disorder"** 7- 8:30 p.m. Centaurus High School, Lafayette. See page 5.

**March 20: NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting** 6:30 p.m.

Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Louisville. Meet NAMI Colorado Executive Director Lacey Berumen.

**April 6: Talk on Anxiety Disorders** by Dr. Jeffrey Anker, MD Psychiatrist, Longmont United Hospital. Call Laurie at 303-772-3559.

**April 17: NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting** 6:30 p.m.

Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Louisville. Presentation on eating disorders by Anne Weiher.

**April 25: "Let's Talk about Bipolar Disorder"** 7- 8:30 p.m. First

Congregational United Church of Christ, Longmont, See page 5.

**May 11: Talk on Suicide** by Dr. Jeffrey Anker, MD Psychiatrist, Longmont United Hospital. Call Laurie at 303-772-3559.

Save the date:

**2007 NAMI Walk/Run**  
**Saturday, September 22**

## Volunteer Corner



*Barbara Connor,  
NAMI Boulder  
County Volunteer  
Coordinator*

During the Christmas holidays, NAMI Boulder County Volunteers staffed 36 shifts of gift-wrapping at Borders Bookstore in Boulder to raise funds for the organization and to make more people aware of NAMI's mission and services. Many thanks to Pattie Austin, Wendy Bloechle, Karen Campbell, Laura Hadaway, Karen Henderson, Sandy and Seth Hughes, Lesley Julian, Bill and Elizabeth Kauffman, Jo Ann and Joe Maxner, Leslie Maya-Charles, Susan Siegel, Ellen Sukovich, Brett Walters, and Stacy Zeisloft for their help. A special thanks goes to Cathy and Samantha Stiers, Bev Melius, and Sharon

Bowyer for taking more than one shift and to Cathy Stiers for making the arrangements with Borders. We were pleased to make shoppers more aware of NAMI Boulder County through this activity.

Currently I am working on updating lists of local clergy to use as contact information in connection with a possible Interfaith Conference on Mental Illness in Boulder. Once the list is current, I will be asking NAMI members to help conduct surveys within their own faith communities to assess interest in attending the conference.

On March 4 we will hold a Volunteer Appreciation Tea to honor all of you who have recently given your time to help NAMI Boulder County. Look for your invitations in the mail or on email. The tea will be held in Boulder at the community center for the San Lazaro community at 55th St. and Valmont from 4 to 6:00 p.m.

Hope to see many of you there.

The 9News Health Fair is coming up in April and we need many volunteers to help with that project. I will be in touch about that as soon as we know the dates and the locations.

As always, we need volunteers to fight stigma by responding to stigma alerts, to advertise upcoming Family-to-Family classes in church bulletins and community bulletin boards, and to find places and groups where speakers could share information about mental health issues.

If you are interested in supporting NAMI through any of these activities, please let me know. If you would like to help but haven't figured out exactly how, give me a call to discuss the possibilities. I can be reached at 303-710-0701 and/or [blconnors@comcast.net](mailto:blconnors@comcast.net). I look forward to hearing from you.

## How to help

*continued from page 1*

motivator because the person doesn't believe he/she is ill! This is why Dr. Amador urges us to forget about trying to improve insight, and focus on adherence. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which is that research shows that insight into illness is very difficult to change, whereas adherence to treatment is not.

In patients helped by LEAP, more times than not, the reasons to accept treatment have little, if anything, to do with new insight into having an "illness," but instead,

hinge on certain "insights" about how treatment has furthered their goals.

The top two predictors of adherence to treatment are: 1) good insight into how treatment can help one to achieve his/her goals; and 2) a relationship with a person (either mental healthcare provider, friend, or relative) in whom the mentally ill person feels respected and trusts and who is of the opinion that treatment would be beneficial.

## Learn more

To learn more about the LEAP technique, read Xavier Amador's revised and updated (2007) edition of "I Am Not Sick, I Don't Need Help." If you purchase the book from Amazon.com by using the link in the NAMI Store ([http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=NAMI\\_Store](http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=NAMI_Store)), a portion of the proceeds from your purchase helps NAMI improve the lives of people living with serious mental illnesses.

## A Golden Gate and War Costs

by Reg Saner

Aboard ship with 3,000 other U.S. soldiers, I heard one man say, only half kiddingly, “Damned if those lights don’t look like Yokohama.” The time was about 3:30 in the morning, 1952.

Peering into darkness from the rail of our troopship, I was spellbound by city lights miles east, and ached for them to be San Francisco, yet couldn’t be sure. There had been murmurs about a breakthrough back in Korea. Days ago the ship had put about during the night – or so went the rumor – to return us to combat duty. Absurd, yet . . .

As dawn gathered strength we began making out – through early haze – the Golden Gate bridge. Soon laughter and wisecracking had become the order of the day. A pilot was whistled aboard, our troopship weighed anchor, and we began closing the distance.

By then the entire deck was thronged with soldiers watching that incomparable bridge grow in span, height, and color. Spellbound, largely silent, we heard the rush of water pouring past our hull.

Then, just as the very tip of our bow passed under the near side of the bridge, each man of us hundreds and hundreds thronging the deck felt the same spontaneous impulse, exhaling a long, audible “Oh-h-h-h” of relief and awe – whose unprompted unison amazed

me, as if the whole ship were one soul saying, “Home!”

Docked, we trickled single file down the gangplank toting duffel bags and gear, along with a different kind of baggage all too many of us were bringing, unaware, back to the States. Although the Korean War was – in deaths per diem – far bloodier than Vietnam, the term “post-traumatic stress disorder” didn’t exist, nor did proper therapy for it.

Vietnam changed that. An important study found that 35.8% of Vietnam combat vets “met the full American Psychiatric Association diagnostic criteria for PTSD.” What, then, will be the case among returnees from Iraq? Already a government fact sheet reports the PTSD rate as “alarmingly high.” Dr. Michael Kussman, top doctor at the Veterans Administration, earmarked \$300 million for PTSD to cover 2005/2006, and has asked another \$300 million for 2007.

Yes, war costs have become a hot topic lately, but when it comes to invisible wounds, we in NAMI can certainly guess at its social cost: family dysfunction, substance abuse, grief turned outward as rage, or inward to suicidal despair.

The painful paradox, says Jonathan Shay, a psychiatrist specializing in PTSD therapy, is that serving your country can leave you unable to function within it.

## Adventures in Parenting

by Christine Vigorita

Recently I received a phone call from a mom who was preparing to have a meeting with her child’s school. Like my daughter, her child was diagnosed at a young age with a serious mental illness. She asked me to attend the meeting with her, and she seemed relieved when I said I would. After all, we all know what it’s like to walk into a special meeting alone. Heaven knows, I’d been called for special meetings six times when my child was in second grade alone!

Before I attended this meeting I thought I’d just be someone to stand behind the mom; surely everyone needs that! I was pleasantly surprised by what I learned. I didn’t just stand behind or next to the mom, I was an active participant at the meeting. Surprised? Well, so was I. I realized that although I am a passionate advocate for the mentally ill, it is dramatically different from being a passionate advocate for the mentally ill *and* the parent of the child whom the meeting is about. I was able to provide some insight into what the child might be feeling, but I was a third party. My participation and insights were well received by both the school staff and the parent. Bringing along a friend can benefit everyone! I wish I’d realized that before 10 IEP meetings and countless other “special” meetings. Don’t go it alone!

## Sensory Park

by *Samantha Stiers*

The hospital  
expected me back  
promptly at three  
  
but I was lost  
in a silent playground  
where everything was empty  
  
and bright.  
It was a paradise  
created by some artificial god  
  
and I was its new Eve,  
with my cropped hair  
and scabby knees.

I sat at the helm  
of a plastic ship,  
drank water

from a solitary fountain,  
crossed over that little bridge  
to infinity.

*Samantha Stiers is a part-time college student. Her poems have been published in several magazines. She suffers from schizoaffective disorder.*

## New Series: "Let's Talk about Mental Health"

Learn how to live with hope when you are dealing with a mental illness. "Let's Talk About Mental Health" is a new series dealing with various topics related to mental illness. A clinician, a family member, and a person with a mental illness will each give an informal presentation and then you will have the opportunity to participate in discussions of your choice.

This program is co-sponsored by NAMI Boulder County and the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties (MHCBBC).

The first topic, bipolar disorder, will be discussed at both locations listed below. We will also be asking for input that will help us determine future locations and program content. Do you want to talk about housing, employment, personality disorders, communication skills, OCD, etc?

All sessions are free. For questions or comments, please call the NAMI Boulder County Office at 303 443-4591.

**March 19, 2007, Monday, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

Centaurus High School, Student Center  
10300 E. South Boulder Road, Lafayette

**April 25, 2007, Wednesday, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Fellowship Hall  
1500 9th Avenue, Longmont (corner of 9th and Francis)

*If you would like to help us with any of our presentations, please call 303-443-4591 and leave a message for Sharon Bowyer.*



stories ON STAGE

Sunday, March 25, 2007 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Seawell Ballroom, Denver Center for the Performing Arts

Tickets \$20 - Scholarships available!

303-494-0523 or [www.storiesonstage.org](http://www.storiesonstage.org)

### Stories & Music from the Bridge Between Mental Despair and Hope

#### Act 1: Seduction

Stories by Claude Aiken, Amy Bloom and Sylvia Plath  
Read by John Hutton, Kathleen Brady and Jeanne Paulsen

#### Act 2: Redemption

Stories by Kay Gibbons, John Falk and William Styron  
Read by Julia Pace Mitchell, David Ivers and John Hutton

#### Featuring music by Rene Marie\* and Melissa James

\*Voted Best Jazz Vocalist by the Association for Independent Music Critics

## The Recovery Movement: What's It All About?

by Sharon Bowyer, Board Member

Recently I had the wonderful opportunity to attend a conference given by the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties (MHCBBC) entitled “Demystifying Hope: Strategies for Inspiring Positive Clinical Outcomes.” This conference was another step in their efforts to integrate recovery into every aspect of their organization. The guest presenter was Rick Forbess from Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation ([www.bu.edu/cpr/](http://www.bu.edu/cpr/)).

The first day of the conference was full of presentations and discussions on all aspects of recovery and hope. Then there was a second day of skill building for many of the therapists that focused on how to actually incorporate recovery and hope into their relationships with their clients.

For this first article on recovery, I should define the word “recovery” for those of you who have not heard this word used in the world of mental illness. Recovery is not used here to mean a cure. Instead, per Forbess, recovery is “the process of building meaning and purpose into a life and having a full life focusing on a community ... not a life defined by one’s mental illness.”

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***“Recovery is ‘the process of building meaning and purpose into a life and having a full life focusing on a community ... not a life defined by one’s mental illness.’”***

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One of the foundation concepts of recovery is hope. Forbess said hope is so important to impart to the client because it:

- Gives a sense of psychological well being
- Decreases depression and suicidal intent
- Increases sense of empowerment and self-control
- Increases self-esteem
- Motivates a person to change

As we discussed all the qualities we would like therapists to have in order to give a client hope, I could not help but think how we family members should strive for the same qualities.

Therapists and family members can offer hope by:

- Validating feelings
- Helping the person obtain the basics in life: food, clothing, housing, employment
- Helping the person network in the community
- Talking about and celebrating successes and not focusing on the negative
- Consistently encouraging
- Acknowledging strengths
- Helping person stretch beyond what he/she has been doing
- Offering a more balanced perspective

Recovery is a long, difficult process, but all of us have to work at making it a part of the treatment for mental illness.

*“We don’t need dire predictions about the course of our symptoms ... We need assistance, encouragement and support as we work to relieve our symptoms and get on with our lives. Too many people have internalized the message that there is no hope, that they are simply victims of their illness.”*

Mary Ellen Copeland

## Education and Support Groups

### NAMI CLASSES IN BOULDER COUNTY

On-going free education and support classes offering information on brain disorders, how to cope, and how to advocate. We keep an ongoing list for these classes. For information or to reserve a place, call us at 303-443-4591.

- ▶ **Family-to-Family Class** – A free 12-week program for family members, friends or caregivers who have a loved one with a brain disorder.
- ▶ **Colorado Visions** (formerly Visions for Tomorrow) – A free multi-week program consisting of workshops for caregivers of children and adolescents with brain disorders. Leave a message for Christine at 303-443-4591.

### FAMILY SUPPORT

- ▶ **NAMI Family Education and Support Group**  
The previous Boulder Support Group has been replaced by the Let's Talk Series. See article on page 5. Call 303-443-4591 for details.
- ▶ **NAMI Caregivers Support Group**  
4th Saturdays, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Spirit of Peace Catholic, 15th & Hover, Longmont, non-religious. Leave message for Kathleen or Steve Roon, 303-443-4591.

### CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- ▶ **Parents Experiencing Challenging Kids Support Group (PECK)** - Meeting times vary. Contact Harriet Austin at 303-499-4132 or austinhb@hotmail.com for dates and locations.

### DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER

The first two groups meet at Longmont Hospital, Gaugin Room, 1950 Mountain View.

- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Group**  
Mondays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Laurie at 303-772-3559.
- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Group**  
Wednesdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Barbara at 303-443-0985 or Vanessa at 970-532-4973.
- ▶ **The Robert D. Sutherland Center for the Evaluation and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder**  
Contact Dr. Alisha Brosse, Associate Director, at 303-492-5680 for information about a 6-week psycho-education group and an on-going skills training group ([www.rdsfoundation.org](http://www.rdsfoundation.org))

### OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Support group for people with OCD, their family and friends. First and third Wednesdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Mental Health Center, Norton Room, 1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder. Contact Brent, 303-422-9704, Arlene, 303-670-9691, or Ilene, 303-938-1360.

### OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE ANONYMOUS

([www.ocdcolorado.com](http://www.ocdcolorado.com)) and **SOCIAL PHOBICS ANONYMOUS** ([www.healsocialanxiety.com](http://www.healsocialanxiety.com)). For further information on both groups, call John at 303-325-3143

### CHINOOK CLUBHOUSE, BOULDER

Chinook Clubhouse is a program dedicated to enhancing the recovery of men and women with mental illnesses. It provides opportunities for members to live, work, learn, and socialize while contributing their talents in a community of mutual support. The Chinook Clubhouse works with the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to offer transitional employment opportunities. Call 303-440-4842 for information ([www.chinookclubhouse.org](http://www.chinookclubhouse.org)).

### "SOFT VOICES" DROP-IN CENTER, LONGMONT

Resource and friendship center for adults with mental illness. Tuesdays, 10:00-Noon; Thursdays & Fridays, 1:00-3:00. 5th & Kimbark, downstairs. Art sessions led by Mimi Farrelly meets on Fridays, 1:00-3:00 p.m. For more information, contact Gil at 303-776-0410.

*Everyone is welcome to participate!*

### INTERNET RESOURCES

Visit the NAMI (national) Web site at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)  
Visit the NAMI Boulder County Web site at [www.namibouldercounty.org](http://www.namibouldercounty.org)

If you need computer assistance, contact the following sources. Service is confidential and available at no cost.

#### Consumer Health Resource Library

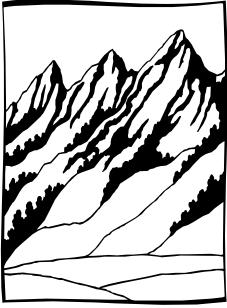
Located at Longmont Hospital, 1950 West Mountain View Avenue, Main Entrance. Call 303-651-5112 for hours.

#### Grillo Health Care Information Center

Located at Boulder Public Library, 11th and Arapahoe, Main Branch, 2nd floor. Call 303-441-4174 for hours.

### NAMI BOULDER COUNTY BOARD

Board members meet the third Tuesday of the month, September through May at 6:30 p.m. at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, 506 Via Appia, Louisville. Meetings are open to all who would like to attend.



**NAMI Boulder County**  
1333 Iris Avenue  
Boulder CO 80304

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### **Membership Form**

Your membership includes quarterly newsletters from NAMI National, NAMI Colorado, and NAMI Boulder County.

- \$35 per year regular membership     \$3 per year for persons on a limited income
- I want to support NAMI Boulder County with a tax deductible gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Your gift will help provide support, education, and advocacy  
for Boulder County individuals and families who are coping with serious mental illness with.**

#### *Does your employer has a Matching Funds Program?*

I am interested in:

- Learning about volunteer opportunities, either on-going or one time only.
- Arranging for speakers or presentations on mental illness for my club, church, work, or other group

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail your check to:**  
**NAMI Boulder County, 1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80304**

