

## *Circle of Support*

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Boulder County, Colorado

Issue No. 200

- For all those touched by mental illness -

September 2009

### **NAMI *In Our Own Voice* program comes to Colorado**



*By Anne Weiher, PhD, a NAMI board member and senior researcher at Aurora Research Institute, which is part of Aurora Mental Health*

*In Our Own Voice* (IOOV) is an innovative program from NAMI national. Its main mission is to break the stigma surrounding mental illness. The program started in 1996 in San Diego as a way for individuals living with a diagnosis of schizophrenia to talk about their experiences with schizophrenia to other consumers. In 2000, the program was expanded to include other mental illnesses as well.

Colorado held its first training for IOOV presenters August 8 and 9, and for many participants, this was their first opportunity to tell their story and have their voices heard.

The structured program consists of six sections, with two presenters for each section along with a DVD of vignettes that provide different perspectives for each of the sections. The presentation begins with the introduction of the presenters. Presenters are encouraged to introduce themselves as persons first

without reference to their mental illness. This encourages the audience, be they consumers, family members, mental health professionals, or other target groups, to see the presenters as individuals and not focus on their illnesses. I must admit that I had difficulty introducing myself, telling about NAMI, and then mentioning why I was affiliated with NAMI without self-disclosing my mental illness.

After introductions, presenters were asked to think about their darkest days and how they felt those days when their illnesses were most challenging. This can also be a time when consumers talk about how stigma impacted their dark days. For me, there have been many dark days. It was difficult to condense at least 45 years of living with mental illness into 3 minutes, but amazingly/ I found I could do it, as did all of our group.

Following the dark days segment, each presenter was given 3 minutes to talk about acceptance and what it meant to us. Throughout the presentations we were constantly reminded that this was our story and to use "I" statements to make our point. After each segment, the presenters changed hats, opened the floor to

questions and became facilitators. It is vital to give the audience a chance to ask questions as they come up but also to be mindful of the time and the need to make certain that all voices are heard.

The final parts of the presentation include treatment, coping skills and hopes and dreams. We packed a lot into a two-day training, and it is exciting to have a strong new consumer program added to the list of NAMI Colorado programs. We hope to be up and running with the program in October. The present plan is to send pairs of consumers to affiliates for practice runs. The purpose of this is threefold: one, presenters will have a space to present in a safe environment; two, the affiliate members can give constructive feedback to the presenters and finally, it may be a way to integrate more consumers into the affiliates which is one of our stated goals.

I trust NAMI Boulder County will take advantage of this opportunity to see a very strong consumer program in action. For me, this is where some of the money we earned from our walk can be well spent as we continue our mission to educate, advocate, and reduce stigma surrounding mental illness.

**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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Contributing writers for September:  
Nancy Coleman, Barbara Connors,  
Joy Eckstein, Mary Kay Irving,  
Alan Johnson, Reg Saner,  
Anne Weiher, Carol Devenir

**Upcoming events**

**Sept. 9 - NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m. at the San Lazaro clubhouse, Valmont and 55th, Boulder

**Sept. 17- "Hope Lights the Night" Vigil honoring those who have died by suicide.** See page 5.

**September 26 - NAMI Colorado Annual Meeting and Conference**  
See page 9

**October 4-10 - Mental Illness Awareness Week.**

**October 10-12 - Interfaith workshop.** See page 3.

**Oct. 14 - NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m. at the San Lazaro clubhouse

**President's Corner**

Let me introduce myself. My name is Nancy Coleman and I'm the new president of NAMI Boulder County. NAMI has been an important part of my family's life for many years, and was a gift that came to me at a confusing and fearful time. It's been quite a journey for my family over the past 10 years, and NAMI held our hands as we maneuvered some of the roughest, most difficult road.

I found out about NAMI through a friend of a friend. My friend received a Christmas letter from a friend in Texas that described in grateful, glowing terms the helpful information and support her family received from their involvement in NAMI. The Texas family had a son diagnosed with schizophrenia and instead of feeling frightened, fearful and lost, they were actively involved in helping themselves and others find solutions to the challenges of his condition.

I wanted what the Texas family had. I found the NAMI Web site and opened the door to a better understanding of our loved one's condition and our situation. The call to the NAMI BC office gave me the date and time of the Boulder support group, so my husband and I went to check it out. As I tearfully shared our story, we sat among friends who truly understood our struggle. It was the lifeline my family was searching for.

How did *you* discover NAMI? How did it change *your* life?

Undoubtedly every single member of NAMI has a different story to tell regarding how they discovered NAMI and became members. However, the common thread is the connection, understanding and hope that NAMI brings to their lives. The warmth and caring that NAMI members share and their united commitment to improving the lives of those affected by mental illness.

Make sharing the gift of NAMI with others a priority in your life. Share the NAMI message of hope, education, support and advocacy with your friends, neighbors, fellow employees, your child's teacher, your pastor or priest, the person waiting in line at the grocery store, sitting next to you on an airplane or at a football game. NAMI has something for everyone. It enlightens our world.

*Nancy Coleman*

Interfaith workshops planned for Mental Illness Awareness Week:

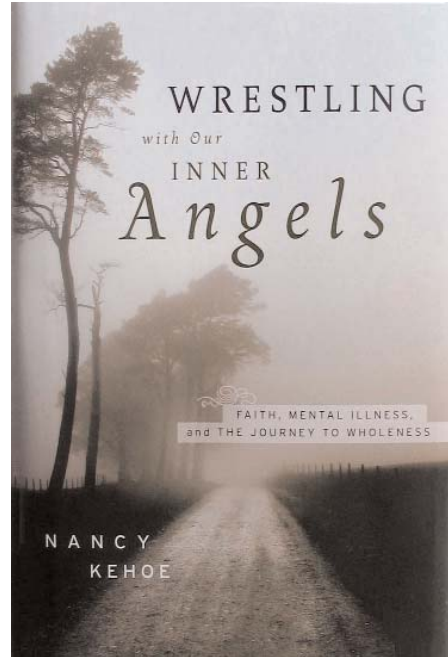
## “Faith, Mental Illness, and the Journey to Wholeness”

Saturday, October 10-Monday, October 12

*What can faith communities do to confront the stigma of mental illness? How do mental health professionals deal with spirituality in treatment? How does one's spirituality affect healing? What can a personal faith bring to the healing environment?* These questions will be addressed by the keynote speaker and workshop leader, Dr. Nancy Kehoe.

Nancy C. Kehoe is an expert in religion and spirituality in the clinical context. As both a nun and a clinician, Dr. Kehoe draws on her psychological and religious backgrounds to share insight about the role of belief and motivation in the lives of people who have mental illnesses. For 27 years, using a model she created, Dr. Kehoe has led groups on spiritual beliefs and values for adults with psychiatric disorders. She currently consults with healthcare providers in mental health and geriatric settings, teaching them how to address the religious and spiritual needs of individuals.

Dr. Kehoe is a clinical instructor in psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at the Cambridge Health Alliance, affiliated with Harvard Medical School, a position she has held since 1980. She also is a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, an international community of women in the Catholic Church, founded in



1800. She has published extensively on the subject of religion and psychotherapy. Her recent book, *Wrestling with Our Inner Angels*, is filled with fascinating stories of her spiritual journey and sprinkled with insight into the inner lives of people with mental illnesses.

Please join us at any or all of the following events. All sessions will be held at the First Congregational Church, 1128 Pine Street, Boulder.

### Saturday, October 10 -- Spiritual Support Group, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

This session is open to anyone who is living with a mental illness and families and friends who have been affected by a mental health issue (freewill donation).

*Dr. Kehoe will also speak at Sunday services at First Congregational Church on Sunday, Oct. 11. Contact [revalan2004@comcast.net](mailto:revalan2004@comcast.net) for details.*

### Sunday, October 11 -- Discussion Forum: “Spirituality and Mental Illness: Reflections and Conversations,” 3:00-5:30 p.m.

This program is open to people of all faith communities and others who are interested (freewill donation).

### Monday, October 12 -- Breakfast Meeting: “Spirituality, Mental Illness and the Journey to Wholeness: Interactions,” 8:00-

10:30 a.m. At this breakfast meeting, Dr. Kehoe will engage therapists, clergy and other professionals in the therapeutic and faith communities. Register by emailing [revalan2004@comcast.net](mailto:revalan2004@comcast.net). for this session. There is a suggested donation of \$20 for this session, payable at the door.

These programs are hosted by The Interfaith Network on Mental Illness (INMI). It is funded by NAMI Boulder County (National Alliance on Mental Illness), the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties, and the Mental Health Ministry of the First Congregational Church, Boulder. To learn more about INMI and its programs, or for information, please contact Alan Johnson, [revalan2004@comcast.net](mailto:revalan2004@comcast.net).

# Local efforts aimed at suicide prevention



By Mary Kay Irving, LCSW, NAMI Boulder board member

September is Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Month. It seems like a good time to share some information on the status of our local and state prevention efforts. As I looked into the resources in our community, I was quite surprised and excited to see just how much is being done and how far we've come since 2000 -- the year legislation brought to life the State Office of Suicide Prevention as part of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Education.

In this article, I will touch on a few of the local efforts. The good news is that there are so many of us working towards this cause that I don't have room to acknowledge them all.

The tough news is that we have so much more work to do. According to the American Association of Suicidology, in 2006, Colorado ranked 9th in the nation with just over 17 suicides per 100,000 people. It is the second leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults. White elderly men are at the highest risk. Men complete suicide more often, while women attempt at much higher rates.

**In a given year more Coloradans die by suicide than from motor vehicle accidents or from illnesses such as breast cancer.**

There are certain segments of the population that are more at risk than others. Our Latina youth, for example, are more at risk as are the GLBTQ minority. In the 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted in St. Vrain Valley and Boulder Valley school districts, close to one half of our GLBTQ youth reported attempting suicide compared to 13.5% of heterosexuals. Some of those at the highest risk are people with mental illness, particularly depression and mood disorders, schizophrenia, anxiety and certain personality disorders. Alcohol abuse and illicit drugs are involved in over half of suicides.

Back to the good news. Our community is responding in a powerful way. Lives are being saved and efforts are expanding to prevent suicide, educate as many as possible and advocate for those in need. One impressive effort belongs to that of the Second Wind Fund. This non-profit organization has served over 1700 at-risk youth. The group provides free, professional counseling to uninsured or underinsured youth at risk for suicide. Their main event is their annual walk/run/ride that has become the largest suicide-prevention event in the nation.

This September 20, more than 3000 people will participate in this year's event. To register and be a part of this amazing effort visit [www.thesecondwindfun.org](http://www.thesecondwindfun.org) or call (720) 962-0706.

Project Safety Net directed by the State Office of Suicide Prevention targets the education of adults working with teens in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems throughout Colorado. The training this project brings to the public is called ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). This is a 2-day intensive training (designed for anyone, professionals and laypersons) that teaches the participants to recognize when someone might be at risk and how and what to say to get them to help. Both the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts have offered this training to their staff, as has CU Boulder. Since 2001, St. Vrain has been sponsoring and organizing ASIST trainings.

Through this effort several hundreds of Boulder County teachers, administrators, counselors, parents and even students themselves have participated in an effort to save lives. As an ASIST trainer, I have heard amazing stories of just how participants have used this training to help people in need. Living Works Education Inc. is the devel-

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## Suicide prevention

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oper of this and other suicide prevention programs.

More information as well as training locations can be found at their web site at [www.livingworks.net](http://www.livingworks.net).

These efforts are to be applauded and there is still much to be done. There are many organizations right here in our backyard that we can join or donate to....perhaps just an item of clothing donated to Colie's Closet might help save a life. Find out more about this grassroots non-profit at [www.coliescloset.org](http://www.coliescloset.org) or join the local Hope Coalition at [www.hopecoalitionboulder.org](http://www.hopecoalitionboulder.org). To be informed or become involved with statewide efforts see the link for the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado at [www.suicidepreventioncolorado.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncolorado.org). There are ways to help. *Become involved, get educated. Save a life.*

If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide get help. With immediate risk call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. For support call 800 273-TALK (800 273-8255).

# Hope Lights the Night: Remembering Those Lost to Us by Suicide

*A vigil for people of all faiths*

**Thursday, September 17 at 7:30 p.m.**

**At the bandshell in downtown Boulder**  
(Corner of Broadway and Canyon)

Candles will be provided

- Honor those who have lost their lives to suicide
- Support family members, friends and others who are survivors
- Bring public attention to this public health problem
- Counteract the stigma associated with suicide by bringing it into the open

### *Vigil sponsors:*

HOPE Coalition and Collie's Closet  
Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and  
Broomfield Counties  
NAMI Boulder County  
Boulder County Aging Services  
Second Wind of Boulder (a program being launched  
this fall to provide services to high school  
students at risk of suicide)

Consider bringing a flashlight to help you get back to your car in the dark.

For more information, contact:  
Susan Marine  
[swdkm321@comcast.net](mailto:swdkm321@comcast.net)  
(303)444-6970

# Wanted: Families who have experience raising children with mental disabilities

Boulder County Housing and Human Services is looking for a few special families who have the experience and skills that many NAMI families have.

As NAMI families know, raising children with mental disabilities brings unexpected challenges of many kinds. The blessings often seem remote, but once we get past the crises and learn to accept and love our children as they are, our lives, too, are enriched. We learn not to judge ourselves as people, or as parents, based on our children's behavior. We understand that they are not trying to be "bad." They have extreme challenges themselves, and the way they show us this is through their behavior. They are inherently lovable, even though they don't act like little angels much of the time.

We are forced to set aside the normal expectations and standards that parents often have for their children, and instead learn what our children need, to live as well as they can. We learn to be advocates for them in a world that seems too busy to care. These are the gifts our "special needs" children bring us – learning to love without judging.

These gifts would benefit everyone, but they are crucial to children whose lives are challenging beyond challenging. Many children in the Foster Care system fall into this category. For whether or not the child started out with mental disabilities, by the time he is in Foster Care, he has a huge number of additional griefs and crosses to bear.

Most children in Foster Care are there because they have been abused or were neglected.

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*“These are the gifts our ‘special needs’ children bring us – learning to love without judging.”*

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Somehow they survived. They did the best they could, given the situation. Then, they lost everything familiar to them: their families, friends, homes, ways of living, etc. Imagine being suddenly taken to a whole new country, with new rules, new language, new people, and new expectations. These children need families with the patience of saints, the ability to love without judging, the strength to advocate in a sometimes harsh world. Calling NAMI families!

If you have room in your heart and your home, and are willing to share your hard-earned skills with a child who seriously needs them, Boulder County wants you!

The goal of Boulder County's foster care program is eventual reunification of the children with their biological families. Foster care placements are intended to be temporary.

But, the fewer moves the better, for the children. Families who have no experience with children with mental disabilities sometimes become overwhelmed, "bail out" and leave the child abandoned once again. They may not have the patience and perspective that NAMI families can offer.

In addition to full-time foster families, Boulder County's Family Enrichment Team is looking for people willing to mentor and support foster families who are caring for children with mental health issues.

For both programs, they especially need individuals or couples who have:

- Experience working with high-risk youth and families
- Knowledge of childhood onset mental health illnesses
- Experience in crisis management
- Experience developing relationships with collaborating agencies (mental health, school system, judicial, public health, etc.)
- Knowledge of child/adolescent development
- Strong parenting skills
- Good understanding of the impact of abuse/neglect
- Ability to provide a structured, yet flexible environment

Orientation sessions are available, to provide further information on how you can help Boulder County children with mental disabilities. If you would like to share your hard-earned skills, and your blessings, please call Cindy Mollica 303-441-1089.

## Volunteer Corner



*Barbara Connors,  
NAMI Boulder  
County Outreach  
Coordinator*

This summer we have maintained a NAMI

Boulder County presence at the Boulder Farmer's Market. Many thanks to board members Laura and Bob Hadaway for managing

and staffing the information table. Mark Ackermann, Alan Johnson, and Anna Marie Pois also took shifts. Jim Maguire was helpful as ever and took two shifts. We still need volunteers for two-hour shifts from 4 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, September 30 and from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 3. If you can take a two-hour shift on any of these dates, please let me

know. Call me at 303-665-2190 or email me at [blconnors@comcast.net](mailto:blconnors@comcast.net). These information tables help people become aware of the resources NAMI can provide and make vital connections to people and groups in the community who can be of assistance. Hope that you can find a time soon to share in this outreach experience.

## Homelessness and mental illness: Inextricably linked

*by Joy Ekstine, Executive Director, The Carriage House Community Table*

The issues of homelessness and mental illness are inextricably linked in most people's minds, and, indeed, there is a very complex relationship. Mental illness can cause homelessness, and the stress and trauma of homelessness is quite detrimental to a person's mental wellbeing. And when we say mental illness can cause homelessness, it is perhaps a short cut to acknowledging that the dearth of supportive services in the community, the increasing incarceration of the mentally ill and the lack of supportive housing cause homelessness as well as the individual's illness.

Research indicates that anywhere between 15-25% of homeless individuals have a severe and chronic mental illness, and 39% have a diagnosable mental illness. If we broaden the scope to look at a history of trauma, which may cause PTSD, researchers have found that 92% of homeless people have

experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse, and 40% were molested by age 12.

Homeless people with mental illness remain homeless longer, have less contact with family and friends, more barriers to employment and have worse physical health than other homeless people.

At The Carriage House Community Table, we believe that mental health support is invaluable to our clients. We hire outreach workers from the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties to assist in engagement, relationship building, referral to community resources and crisis management.

The outreach workers also provide invaluable education to our staff, so that we may ensure that we interact with our mentally ill clients in an appropriate and supportive way. We look forward to

working closely with NAMI to help us learn to serve this vulnerable population more effectively and compassionately.

### **About The Carriage House Community Table**

The Carriage House Community Table provides a safe, supportive community for the homeless and working poor. We are committed to addressing their immediate survival needs and to providing services that lead to stability, healing and employment. We provide a wide variety of services both at the Carriage House and at the free dinners we host at local churches in our community. Clients have the opportunity to get free meals, medical and mental health services, and to meet with a case manager that will assist them with everything from employment services to addiction concerns. In 2008, we served more than 2500 people and helped more than 100 find jobs.

## Officer Melanie and CIT

*By Reg Saner, Former NAMI Boulder County Board Member*

Certainly we in NAMI have had – with good reason – plenty to say about law enforcement and the mentally ill.

Whereas we regard more humane handling of the mentally ill as an unmixed blessing, police chiefs and sheriffs must ask, “Is it worth what it costs?” Indeed, what with its person-hours, and scenarios requiring specialized actors, Crisis Intervention Training isn’t cheap, not in the short term. And budget cutting is now a national pastime.

That’s why, in mid-August, Sharon Bowyer and one officer Molander, a course director in Boulder County’s program for Crisis Intervention Training, had agreed to meet with me at a local coffee shop. Since they knew incomparably more about CIT than I do, my presence was that of an interested NAMI member whose son’s mental disorder had acquainted me with police intervention, and the county jail.

My blink rate went into overdrive when the bejeweled and blue-eyed dish sitting with Sharon as I arrived turned out to be a fetchingly feminine if street-savvy cop named Melanie.

Naturally we just had to ask what impelled her to get into law enforcement. The answer seemed a non sequitur. “Oh,” she said, “I had the weirdest childhood you can imagine.”

### ***What is CIT?***

*The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model is a collaboration of law enforcement and community organizations committed to ensuring that individuals who need mental health treatment are referred for appropriate services rather than thrust into the criminal justice system. CIT programs have several essential components, including training to help first responders (including law enforcement officers) better understand individuals experiencing psychiatric crisis and how to respond compassionately to a crisis.*

How weird? When she was a mere tot, her father, in one of his rages, put a gun to her head, threatening to pull the trigger, then kill her mother. The good news is that he spent the rest of her childhood in prison. And the bad news? Her brother. A drug-addicted no-goodnik, he filled his father’s absence with shady behavior she’d rather not describe. Then when her mother remarried, it was to an alcoholic. Who else?

But he, having kicked booze, belied expectation by becoming a positive influence in Melanie’s young life. Nowadays she sums up the weirdness almost dismissively, saying, “Everyone’s got a story.” And how.

Though fascinated, Sharon and I still wondered about her career

decision, then learned its motive was almost comically obvious.

The dramatically dysfunctional Molander family had needed so many crisis interventions by the police that – from the youthful Melanie’s perspective – their work in sorting out one tense situation after another made them the good guys. Thus when Officer Melanie says, “As a cop you need to realize that what you do you can influence an entire life,” she is living proof.

Consequently, she brings a uniquely personal zeal to CIT, which bodes well for its local future. Her role as a “lead coach” soon showed her the program could stand some improvements. She therefore asked to be promoted to course director, and was. Then, with Sergeant Lance Enholm, she began devising better methods for evaluating the officers taking its pass/fail classes. The two also suggested a better method for re-testing officers who fail.

That word “fail” prompted Sharon to ask, “Just how tough is the grading?” We were both a bit disconcerted by the answer.

“Frankly, it’s pretty hard to fail. If you try at all, you’ll pass. It’s a five-day course with five different scenarios. You can fail one scenario and still pass. If you fail two, you have to try again – but if you still can’t cut it on the make-up scenarios, there may be consequences.”

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## Attend the NAMI Colorado annual meeting and conference, September 26, 2009 at Fort Logan

Please join us for the NAMI Colorado annual meeting and conference on September 26 in the auditorium at the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan.

At the annual meeting, which will run from 9:30 to 10:50 a.m., you will have a chance to vote for new and returning board members. Joanne Kelly from Boulder is one of the candidates for re-election. If you cannot attend the board meeting, please fill out the proxy form that was mailed to you and send it to Alan Kelly at 6423 Clearview Rd., Boulder 80303 so it arrives no later than September 24.

The conference, which follows the annual meeting at 11:00 a.m., will offer several workshops on timely

topics, as well as the opportunity to try the Virtual Hallucination Machine, courtesy of Jansen Pharmaceuticals. A complimentary lunch will be served.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Robert Freedman, chairman, Department of Psychiatry, at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and editor-in-chief of the American Journal of Psychiatry. He will talk about the latest developments in medications and the latest research findings on mental health.

Two breakout sessions will be offered. You can either attend a workshop on How to Start a Mental Health Ministry in Your Congregation, offered by Joanne Kelly and Alan Johnson of

Boulder's Interfaith Network on Mental Illness, or a talk by author Ann Kochenberger, who will talk about coping strategies that helped her avoid suicide when she was in her darkest days of depression.

Capping the days sessions will be a workshop called "Laughter is the Best Medicine." The laughter therapists who will lead the workshop, Trisha and David Ferlic, believe it is possible to enhance your mental health through mirth, joy and laughter and increase your potential for physical, emotional and spiritual enrichment. Come laugh and learn!

Please RSVP to the NAMI Colorado office, 303-321-3104, if you plan to attend the conference.

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### CIT

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"For that matter," said Sharon, "How about are the officers' attitudes toward CIT? Do they think it's worthwhile, or what?"

"It's a coin flip," said Melanie. "Half agree it's worthwhile, half don't. The negative ones do a lot of talking, whereas the officers in favor of CIT aren't nearly so vocal." Sharon asked if these officers with a negative attitude ever changed. "Yes," said Melanie, "mostly they do." I'm still pondering "mostly," but was somewhat reassured on learning that no fewer than four courses are planned for 2010, with class sizes ranging from

24 to as many as 30 officers. Apropos of outcomes and accountability, Sharon asked, "To what extent is CIT reflected in an officer's on-the-job behavior?"

At that, Officer Molander sighed and alluded to the already considerable amount of police paperwork. Currently, there's no mandatory tracking of crisis intervention in a way that would answer our questions. Yet she and Sergeant Enholm have set up a method that should allow some correlation between an officer's effectiveness in the class scenarios and his or her handling of real-life incidents.

Unfortunately, in this recessionary era the cost of CIT would seem to make for an uncertain future. Yet two further classes are scheduled for this year: from September 28 to October 2; and from November 9 through 13.

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## Beating the Blues

by Reg Saner, Former Board Member

“When you got a back-ache, a little rubbin’ will see you through,/

But when you got a heartache,”sings Bobby ‘Blue’ Bland, “there ain’t nothing you can do.”

All too often that’s indeed how it is.

Nonetheless, the recurrent crises of a mentally ill son or daughter – or spouse or parent, for that matter – have forced us NAMI members to deal with moods of the deepest indigo. Consequently, we’ve all developed strategies for coping, some of which actually help.

Over the years, my surest upper has been sunrise. Watching the solar sphere clear our eastern horizon gives me perspective on myself and plights. But sunup isn’t my only way of lightening a deeply indigo mood. In foul weather or fair, the

quirky motions of the commonest sparrow can lift up my heart in pure admiration for the lively courage of small creatures. And I think, “If it can, I can.” Pines that somehow manage to rise and survive while rooted in only the crevice of a boulder excite a similar admiration. Like moralists they enact a lesson I need: “See? Even here it can be done.”

If, however, my blue mood is tinged with self-pity, it’s instantly banished by the sight of someone in a wheelchair, or a blind girl tapping her way with a cane. Simultaneously I hurt for such victims of chance and awoken to just how lucky I am.

On a happier note, music can do it too. As I’ve aged, the solace music can give has come to seem almost miraculous. Jazz, of course, sometimes. Yet for no reason I can think of, classical music works best. Literature, too, can help with the

blues, and for me the Nobel laureate Samuel Beckett does the trick most consistently. His characters, ineffective to the verge of helplessness, find themselves in situations so appallingly joyless and bleak it becomes funny. I chuckle just thinking of his ironically titled play *Happy Days*. Winnie, the main character, is buried up to her waist, and ends buried up to her neck, all the while chattering about “Great mercies, great mercies!”

Withal, one of the best anti-blues dodges I know of may seem simplistic, yet as a dedicated, full-time worried I haven’t found it so: “Take short views. No further ahead than lunch.”

Because every NAMI member surely has her or his own methods for dealing with the blues, I hereby invite your email suggestions to [sanerreg@msn.com](mailto:sanerreg@msn.com). If enough people respond I’ll publish them in the next newsletter.

### Parents/caregivers: Register for free Colorado Visions class

**For:** Parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with brain disorders

**When:** October 20-November 17, 2009. Tuesday evenings, 6:00-8:30. Five classes.

**Where:** Boulder

**Contact:** Ann Taylor, 303 776-3199

**Topics include:** A better understanding of various brain disorders. Effective communication tools. De-escalation exercises. Recognizing behavior patterns. Dealing with problematic behaviors. Problem solving. IEP and the school. Parent/caregiver burnout and coping skills. Resources available. *Preregistration required.*

## Education and Support Groups

### NAMI CLASSES IN BOULDER COUNTY

Ongoing 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.

### NAMI SUPPORT GROUPS

- ▶ **Support group for family members of people with mental illness** - First and third Monday nights, 7-8:30 at the Boulder Mental Health Center (1333 Iris) in the Norton Room. Call Anne Weiher at 303-442-9209.

### DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER

- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Longmont**  
Mondays, 7:00-9:00 p.m., at Longmont United Hospital, Chagall/Rueben's Room  
Contact Marc Rope at 970-482-2605  
Email: twinpeaksdbsa@hotmail.com
- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Boulder**  
Two peer-only meetings a month and one friends and family meeting per month. Contact Lauren at (303) 641-6333 or email (preferred) boulderdbsa@gmail.com.
- ▶ **CareTogether Support Group** for spouses/partners of people with bipolar disorder and depression, 2nd and 4th Mondays, 7:45-9:00, Lafayette library, upstairs. 303-507-8533, caretogether@gmail.com
- ▶ **The Robert D. Sutherland Center for the Evaluation and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder**  
Visit rdsfoundation.org or call 303-492-5680 for information about the Sutherland Seminar Series. The 12-week educational series on bipolar disorder is offered twice yearly. Attend 1 session or all 12, Mondays, 6-7:30 p.m. Current 12-week series runs through October 26.

*Many of these support groups/classes/resources are sponsored by groups other than NAMI Boulder County. Please use your own best judgement as to whether they are suitable for you.*

### CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

**Parents Experiencing Challenging Kids Support Group (PECK)** - Meets monthly at a local restaurant in Louisville. For time and place, contact Harriet Austin at 303-284-9863 or austinhb@hotmail.com.

### OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Support group for people with OCD, their families 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 or Ilene, 303-938-1360.

**OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE ANONYMOUS** (www.ocdcolorado.com) and **SOCIAL PHOBICS ANONYMOUS** (www.healsocialanxiety.com)

### SCHIZOPHRENIA & Related Disorders Support

**Groups** (people with other mental illness diagnoses also welcome) Call Patrick, 303 413-6233, for details.

1. Tuesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m. sharp, Mental Health Center, 1333 Iris Ave, Norton Room, entrance on southeast.
2. Wednesdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m., Maslin House. 1036 University Ave.

### DUAL RECOVERY ANONYMOUS

A 12-step, self-help organization for people with a dual diagnosis of addiction/alcoholism with an emotional/psychiatric illness. Mondays, 2:30 p.m., First Lutheran Church, 3rd and Terry, east door, Longmont. Call Shochet, 303-245-4449.

### SUICIDE SURVIVORS

Free support group for family and friends of someone who has died from suicide. Longmont United Hospital, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 5:30-7 p.m. Call 303-532-7904 to confirm.

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

Resource and friendship center for adults with mental illness. Tuesdays, 10:00-noon; Thursdays and Fridays, 1:00-3:00. 5th & Kimbark, downstairs. For more information, contact Gil at 303-776-0410.

### 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 help finding information online, contact the sources below. Service is confidential and free.

#### Consumer Health Resource Library

Located at Longmont Hospital, 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.

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## Join the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Your dues include membership in NAMI National, NAMI Colorado and NAMI Boulder County. You will get the newsletters published by NAMI National and NAMI Boulder County. If it is more convenient for you, you can join online at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) using a credit card.

- \$35 per year individual/family membership
- \$3 per year for people with a limited income
- I want to support NAMI Boulder County with a tax-deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

### *Does your employer have a matching gifts program?*

*I am interested in:*

- Learning about volunteer opportunities, either ongoing or one-time only
- Arranging for speaker or presentations on mental illness for my club, church, work or other group
- Helping with advocacy efforts by writing letters/making phone calls to my elected representatives

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form with your check to: NAMI Boulder County  
1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder, CO 80304**

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