



NAMI Collin County, by encouraging research and by providing proven Support, Education and Advocacy Programs, will empower those living with severe Mental Illness and their Families to live life to their fullest potential.

MARCH MEETING

Thursday – March 12, 2015

Custer Road United Methodist Church – Lower Level

6601 Custer Road, Plano, TX 75023

*NAMI Connection Support 6:30 – 7:20 P.M.

* Family Support: 6:30 – 7:20 P.M.

* Meet, Greet, and Resource Sharing 6:30 – 7:20

* Meeting & Program: 7:30 – 9:00 P.M

des Anges Crusier (from Collin County PLAN)

PCI ProComp Solutions, LLC

Save the Date

March 12: des Anges Crusier (from Collin County PLAN) PCI ProComp Solutions, LLC

May 9: NAMI Walks Dallas more information on pages 3 and 4

FYI: If Plano ISD is cancelling events because of weather then Custer Road United Methodist Church is closed as well.

Referral for a Lawyer or Doctor

We get lots of calls asking us for a referral for a Doctor or Lawyer. As an organization we are not allowed to make referrals.

For a doctor referral we suggest you call the UT Southwestern Medical Center at 214-648-3111 and they can refer you to a doctor that specializes in your type of problem. You can also go to The North Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians web page at www.NTSPP.org.

For a lawyer referral we suggest you call the Plano Bar Association at 972-424-6113 or call Legal Aid of North Texas at 972-980-0472.

Also you can come to our support groups, NAMI Connection Recovery and Family Members Support that meet every Thursday (except holidays) from 6:30 to 8:00 (except on the 2nd Thursday when it ends at 7:20 for our monthly meeting) at the Custer Road United Methodist Church (south east end, lower level) to get some feedback from other people.

Are you on Medicaid, or have limited income, and need treatment for a mental health problem or substance abuse? The NorthSTAR program may be able to help. Call 1-888-800-6799 toll free.

The deadline for submitting news for the April Newsletter is March 17. Anything received after the deadline may not be included. Send your articles to news@namicco.org.



The NAMICCO CLARION



NAMI Connection

NAMI Collin County has a recovery support group for adults living with mental illness regardless of their diagnosis. Every group is offered free of charge and meets weekly for 90 minutes. All are led by trained individuals who are also in recovery - people who understand the challenges we face.

NAMI CONNECTION RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP WILL MEET WEEKLY ON THURSDAYS

(EXCEPT HOLIDAYS) FROM 6:30 PM UNTIL 8:00 PM AT CUSTER ROAD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 6601 CUSTER ROAD, PLANO TX 75023 CHURCH OFFICE ENTRANCE, SOUTH EAST SIDE ROOM B6, LOWER LEVEL

"I am a big believer in peer support--learning from someone who has been there is often a key to unlocking a person's engagement in treatment. Also reducing isolation and the loneliness that can accompany mental illnesses is greatly facilitated by a peer relationship." From Dr Kenneth Duckworth, MD, NAMI Medical Director.

In addition we have a Friends and Family Support Group meeting every Thursday from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the same location, lower level in Room B1.

Tuesday Evening Support Group

Rhonda Amstutz facilitates a NAMI support group for anyone with any diagnosis of MI the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 7-8:30 PM at LifePoint church, room 209, 4501 Hedgcoxe Road, Plano, TX. If you have any questions, e-mail Rhonda at amstutz@airmail.net. Contact Rhonda at 214-534-8678 for specific directions to the room.

New Support Group

The Living Room Peer support groups for teens are expanding! This new group is meeting Wednesday, at Clearwater Community Church in Richardson from 6:30 to 8 p.m. the first Wednesday of every month.

For more details about The Living Room, including locations, dates and times for all of our groups, please visit our website at <http://www.iamherecoalition.org/livingroom.html> or call 972-744-9790.

February NAMICCO Meeting

At our membership meeting, February 12, members voted 21 yes and 0 no to merge with NamiDallas.

This was the second meeting by Janie Metsinger to teach participants how to interact with legislators on rally day when NamiDallas sponsors a bus trip to Austin for the mental health rally on the capitol steps. This night several people acted as legislators. The rest of the people broke up into groups and practiced presenting our stories and concerns to our "legislator".



From our board meeting on February 17

We voted unanimously to ratify the affirmative membership vote to merge with NamiDallas. Advocacy committee is working hard -- bus drivers need to be educated on mental illness, benefits when people get out of jail need to be reinstated more quickly, physical healthcare needs to be integrated with mental health care, housing dollars need to stay at least at 2014 level.

Linda Creftsmith will be traveling to Virginia for Peer to Peer state trainer training. Rhonda Amstutz will be traveling to Virginia for Connection state trainer training. They go in April and are funded by NAMI. Collin County.

Leah Thedford will be a speaker at the NAMI National convention this year!

NamiDallas Walks will be Saturday, May 9, starting at 8:00.

NAMIWalks Dallas

May 9, 2015 @ 8:00AM
Fair Park, Dallas

The largest mental health education and fundraising event in America, NAMIWalks brings together thousands of individuals and supporters to celebrate mental illness recovery, to honor those who have lost their lives to mental illness and to help raise funds, combat stigma and promote awareness.

WANT TO KNOW HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION HELPS OTHERS?

The funds/contributions from NAMIWalks helps sustain the programs we offer to families and consumers free of charge. It has become more apparent that mental illness not only involves the individual, but the family, direct community, professionals and society are now feeling the effects as well. We understand that there are many important awareness walks throughout the world and we want to stress that mental illnesses are serious neurological brain disorders that deserve our attention. Mental illness can affect anyone regardless of race, income/social status, age or beliefs. We are proud to announce that partnering with local agencies, law enforcement, first responders and businesses has helped increase public awareness.

Will you consider joining us? Even if you are not able to contribute financially, your presence helps increase our visibility in the community! Come and walk with us and enjoy the entertainment and networking. Create a fun team, walk with your pet (leashed and trained) or simply spread the word if you're unable to attend or financially contribute! We also welcome in-kind donations. To learn more about in-kind donations, how to become involved or to volunteer for the walk, please contact John Dornheim the NAMI Dallas Walks Manager at 214-341-7133 or via email at johnd@namidallas.org.

Join Joy's Team to Walk or Create Your Own



I have registered and set up a team for NAMI Walks in Dallas at Fair Park on May 9th. The start time is 8am this year, so walkers will have to be there by 7:30, so we will have to leave the Plano train station very early. The team name is Collin County Families Fighting Stigma. You can join the team by going to the following website: <http://namiwalks.nami.org/collincounty>

Please let others know that there is a team to join or they can make their own team. If you join, please choose Collin County for the Affiliate to support. Collin County will be merging with NAMI Dallas, but unsure how long that will take. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Joy Bergmann

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Personal Stories

My Battle with Mental Illness

02.24.15

All around the blogosphere, people have been coming out with their personal stories of going through mental illnesses. I always felt like it was my duty to do the same. If I have an opportunity to help others by sharing my experiences, wouldn't it be selfish not to? Since I made a full recovery, I feel my story is especially important.

But I was afraid. It's terrifying to be so vulnerable and personal, especially since there's such a stigma attached to mental illness. I don't even talk to my friends about it, so a lot of people don't know.

After years of going back and forth on this decision, I think it's finally time to be open about it. My illness is nothing to be ashamed of. Not only do I want to reach out to others who are also suffering, but maybe I won't feel like I'm guarding a dangerous secret anymore. I think telling my story will be liberating.

Here it goes. (Deep breath)

I had the perfect childhood. I came from a happy, healthy, middle-class family. Nothing bad had ever happened to me. I was smart, pretty, talented, I had lots of friends, and I didn't care what anyone thought of me.

When I was around 12 or 13, something changed. My life was still perfect — middle school was one of the happiest times of my life — but I started to feel heavy for no reason. It became difficult to concentrate, to smile, to enjoy things I used to enjoy. I felt awful so often that my friends got tired of hearing me complain about it. Clearly, I wasn't normal.

There was never any doubt in my mind that something was *medically* wrong with me. Sure, I had personality flaws, but they didn't align with my symptoms. After a little research I discovered I had a depression disorder. It wasn't surprising since everyone in my family and extended family had it too.



I announced my discovery to my parents and told them I needed to see a psychiatrist and get put on medication. They refused.

Their reasoning makes sense to me now, though I felt betrayed at the time. My mother had gone through a dozen medications and had severe side effects from all of them. She had to go to the emergency room at least twice because of negative reactions to antidepressants, and she even lost her vision while driving on the freeway. Therapy had never helped her, so she didn't believe it would help me.

They also didn't realize how bad it was. I wasn't very open with them, and after they decided not to put me on the meds I felt I needed, I was so hurt that I withdrew from them completely. If I had shown them what I was going through, they would have helped me much sooner.

One day when I was 16, I couldn't stand being in school anymore. I went home in the middle of the day even though my parents were there, went straight to my bed, and refused to talk to anyone. My mom immediately scheduled an appointment with a psychiatrist.

I wish I had thought to do that in the first place! Hindsight is 20/20, I guess.

In that first appointment, the psychiatrist discovered I had had an eating disorder for the past few years. My parents were flabbergasted. I'm one of the last people you would expect to be anorexic. It explained a few things, though: why my period didn't start until I was fourteen, why my hair was falling out, why my skin looked dead and would peel off in large chunks.

My reasons for not eating are complicated. I still don't fully understand them. A big part of it was that I hated my body for not working properly. I couldn't handle my workload in school, I couldn't function socially, I couldn't be happy no matter what I did or how hard I tried. I hated everything about myself and the mediocre life I was given. Somehow, that turned into an aversion to food.

My parents signed me up for an outpatient treatment program. I went there for six hours a day for about a month and a half. A group of about a dozen of us went through therapy, did yoga, went to workshops with dietitians, had our meals supervised. We each planned our own menus while therapists tried to encourage us to make healthy choices. It was an incredible program and because of it, I've been anorexia-free for eleven years as of this April.

My eating disorder went away, but my depression didn't. I kept telling my doctors that the medication I was on wasn't working, but they just increased the dosage instead of putting me on something else. The therapy had helped immensely, so I accepted that I had improved as much as I was going to. I made peace with my improved but still mediocre life.

In my freshman year of college, my boyfriend helped me to see that I was still very sick and needed more help. He told me it wasn't normal to skip classes or work because I was too depressed to go, to sometimes only sleep four hours a night for a month and other months sleep 14, to cry for no reason, to have panic attacks.



(Of all the symptoms I went through, the anxiety was the worst. I would get attacks where it felt like my whole body was crushing itself, and I couldn't control them. Once in high school it happened while I was on my way home. I hid under a fenced-in overpass and prayed someone would find me and help me. Eventually, someone did find me. A worker saw me sobbing, gasping for air, and clutching my chest, and he threatened to call the police if I didn't get off the private property. I hope God holds him accountable for doing that to me.)

After much prodding from my boyfriend, I went back to a psychiatrist and asked to be put on new meds. Let me say this: treatment is available, but it is not easy. You have to take the meds for about a month before they start working, and if they don't work, it takes about a month to wean off of them. By that time your symptoms might get better on their own, especially if you're also going to therapy, so you might think the meds are working when they're not. Then you get hit with the symptoms later and have to go through the process all over again.

By this time, I had married my boyfriend. My husband had a harder time handling my depression than I did. He tried to be nurturing but nothing he did helped; I was still sad, irritable, angry, and lethargic. It quickly broke his spirit. I had accepted my life, but he never could.

Throughout my ordeal, many people suggested I might be bipolar. I always hated that. Everyone assumes a bipolar person has two personalities, but they actually have three: the manic, the depressed, and *who they really are*. I felt like I was being diagnosed as manic on the rare times that I was myself. Yet since I wasn't getting any better, I suggested it to my doctor. He said I wasn't bipolar, but that he'd try putting me on mood stabilizers instead of antidepressants to see if treating me as bipolar would help.

It worked.

Once I got on the right medication. I slowly started to heal. My marriage started to heal. I didn't have to call in sick at work all the time anymore. I didn't fail anymore classes. I stopped bailing on social functions. After a lot of work breaking bad habits, I was finally the same happy person I was in middle school. For a long time I was afraid the symptoms would come back, but it's been three years since I've had a problem.

There's a lot of negative stigma attached to medication. People think they're weak if they have to be on them, so they make it their life goal to function without them. They claim medication is dangerous because you don't know what it's doing to your body.

That's all absurd. I am never going off my medication. Never. I'd rather die from side effects when I'm 60 than live a long life with depression.

I want everyone to know that *treatment works*. It's not easy. I was sick for eight years before I finally got better. Finding the right meds can be a pain, and sometimes therapy downright sucks. No matter how hard it gets, don't give up. The wonderful life I have now was worth the struggle.



When Mental Illness Enters the Family

By [Bob Carolla](#) | Feb. 23, 2015

Ask anyone who has a family member who lives with mental illness, and they'll tell you it isn't always what someone would consider smooth sailing. When a family is presented with this category of illness, they may feel like they've entered an alien world. With a physical illness, it's often easy to at least obtain information through a doctor, if not through support groups or other organizations, and there's less shame in discussing it. Mental health conditions, on the other hand, still have an air of secrecy about them.

Both individuals and family members are given the onerous burden of confronting something that even the medical community doesn't fully understand. Families are often left with little knowledge of where to go or who to turn to. Fortunately, [Dr. Lloyd Sederer](#) is aware of this, and he will tell you: you're not alone.

In January, Dr. Seder gave a TEDx Talk in Albany, NY titled "[When Mental Illness Enters a Family](#)", which included a shout-out to the [NAMI Family-to-Family](#) program. He provides listeners with four main steps to cope with the effects of mental illness:

- Don't go it alone
- Don't get into fights
- Learn how the system works, learn the rules—and bend them
- Remember, it's a marathon, not a sprint

Dr. Sederer is no mere psychiatrist moonlighting as a tourist guide. He is the medical director of the New York State Office of Mental Health—i.e., chief psychiatrist for the nation's largest state mental health organization and former medical director and executive vice president of Harvard-affiliated McLean Hospital in Massachusetts. He is also the [mental health editor and columnist for *The Huffington Post*](#).

Your Teenager: Just Moody... or Something More?

By [Ken Duckworth](#) | Feb. 25, 2015

“Is my teen normal?”

As a child and adolescent psychiatrist and father of 3 teenagers myself, I get asked this question by people in my community all the time—at the grocery store, at the community pool and at cookouts. It's pretty clear to me this is an important public health concern for the people I know.

First, anxiety is normal and often healthy. It relates back to our human wiring—the evolutionary protection for being prepared for threats, like an incoming mastodon. In the modern day, we still have the same kind of alarm system even though the stresses are different.

For instance, it is natural to get anxious before the SAT exam because of the weight our society places on it. It's perfectly acceptable to get anxious before your first week at sleep-away camp or trying out for a school play. Anxiety can be motivating to a point, but anxiety can also be overwhelming and disabling.

One way to answer the question is to look at your teen's level of functioning. Does the anxiety reduce his ability to perform at school or engage with friends? Are the symptoms of anxiety stopping her from pursuing what she wants?



NAMI Collin County

An affiliate of NAMI Texas and NAMI (The National Alliance on Mental Illness)

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Open Your Mind



**Mental Illnesses are
Brain Disorders
Treatment Works!!!**

NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY MARCH 12, 2015

NAMI Collin County Board of Directors: bod@namicco.org

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ALTERNATES

Past President: Sherry Cusumano

UPCOMING Events

**March 12 - Monthly Meeting
des Anges Crusier (from Collin County
PLAN) PCI ProComp Solutions, LLC**

**Custer Road United Methodist Church
Lower Level**

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**Next Board of Directors Mtg
TBA**

**Custer Road United Methodist Church Lower
Level Room B3**

6601 Custer Road, Plano, TX 75023

The NAMICCO Clarion is a monthly publication of NAMI Collin County

Take your medicine on time, in the prescribed manner—eat a healthy diet—mostly grains, fruits and vegetables—high fiber/low fat.

Since 1987 - Empowering People with Mental Illness and their Families to Live Better Lives!