



Education = Knowledge Knowledge = Empowerment

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

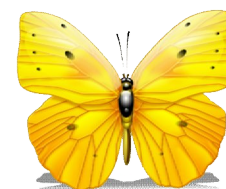
As I look around my office at the butterflies on the wall, I think of spring. Spring brings thoughts of hope and change. Change is all about metamorphosis and evolving from one stage to another.

NAMI of Erie County has certainly made changes. While the agency may have seemed to be wrapped in a cocoon, seemingly to be quiet and asleep, we were busy metamorphosing and evolving. Our mission statement has changed (see page 4). NAMI of Erie County has revitalized its Board of Directors with some new,

but familiar names and faces (see page 4), and the lending library is being updated (see page 2).

NAMI of Erie County has also been collaborating with other community agencies to provide mental health education to their staff. According to NAMI National's statistics, 1 in 5 people are diagnosed with a mental illness. Thus, there are at least 10 (usually more) family members, friends, neighbors, and coworkers affected by the mental illness. NAMI of Erie County wants to reach all those peo-

ple and provide them with education and hope for their loved one's recovery. Just as a butterfly completes the stages of metamorphosis, so does the person diagnosed with the mental illness. With support and treatment, they can evolve to live a full and productive life.



Butterflies represent change.

SPECIAL THANK YOU

NAMI of Erie County wishes to express their gratitude to 2 organizations who have provided financial assistance to the agency so that services can be expanded.

The Erie Community Foundation provided

NAMI of Erie County with a \$12, 500 grant for the *Open Your Mind Educational Series*. This grant has helped defray the costs of offering quality educational programs to the community.

The Good Neighbor Fund

of LORD Corp. has donated \$884.00 since July 1, 2008. They have been consistent donors to NAMI, and through their goodwill, the lending library has been expanded to include more books on suicide and grief.

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Special points of interest:

- A brief look into NAMI of Erie County's new Lending Library.
- Community organizations deserve special thanks.
- A glimpse inside the 2008-2009 Speaker Series.
- Are you a member of NAMI of Erie County, and is it time to renew your membership?

Re-Opening of NAMI of Erie County's Lending Library

NAMI's Lending Library will officially reopen on April 1, 2009 with many new offerings. The process for using the library has changed to insure the return of borrowed items. The new lending process is as follows:

- ◆ A NAMI of Erie County library card is necessary to check out any materials.
- ◆ NAMI members receive a free library card. Non-members must pay an annual \$1.00 fee to obtain a card. Non-members must present photo ID and proof of residency when applying for a card.
- ◆ Books can be checked out for 14 days. DVD's, videos, and cassettes will be checked out for 3 days.
- ◆ Any materials not returned by the due date will be assessed a fine of \$.10 per day per item and use of the card will be suspended until the items are returned and the fine is paid.
- ◆ An individual will be charged full replacement price for any item not returned after 30 days, and use of the library will be suspended for 3 months after the item is paid in full.
- ◆ The Library hours are Mondays-Thursdays 10:00am-3:00pm., and Fridays and Saturdays by appointment.
- ◆ If staff is not in the office, returned items can be slipped through the NAMI Office door slot.
- ◆ Please come and peruse the updated library. Some new offerings:
 - ◆ Hollywood DVDs that do not increase stigma surrounding mental health diagnoses.
 - ◆ Fictional novels with accurate portrayals of mental illness.
 - ◆ More books on eating disorders and various personality disorders.
 - ◆ More materials related to veterans, geriatrics, and children and adolescents.



Family-to-Family Education Course

Are you a family member, friend, or colleague of someone diagnosed with a severe and persistent mental illness? Are you a professional who works with people / clients diagnosed with a mental illness? If you answered "Yes" to either question, then NAMI of Erie County invites you to attend the 12 week *Family-to-Family Education Course*.

The course is intensive and participants

"graduate" from the course with increased problem-solving skills, limit-setting abilities, and self-care skills. Participants gain knowledge about many psychiatric diagnoses and medications. Those who attend learn how to handle crises and relapse and receive many valuable handouts useful on a personal and professional basis.

Past "graduates" have expressed

gratitude at the ability to meet and bond with others who are experiencing similar circumstances.

For detailed course information, please refer to page 6 for the next scheduled course.



Family Support Group

Ongoing support for those people whose life is impacted by someone with a mental health diagnosis is crucial. Support is a necessary tool in coping with the daily challenges of living and caring for someone with a mental illness. NAMI of Erie County's Family Support Group is designed to join people together in a supportive environment that creates mutual understanding and support for coping with serious and persistent mental illness.

Although the group's name is entitled *Family Support Group*, the group is open to anyone who is acquainted with someone diagnosed with a mental illness.

While staff has received inquiries about facilitating support groups for specific diagnoses, this is not feasible or necessary as it is the support



received from others that provides the bond and learning for group members. The coping skills necessary for dealing with someone diagnosed with depression are the same skills necessary for dealing with Borderline Personality Disorder.

For more specific information on disorders, speak to the group leader.

SPEAKER SERIES

When Love Is Not Enough—Reactive Attachment Disorder **Presenter: Nancy Thomas**

On February 26, 2009, NAMI of Erie County hosted internationally renowned speaker, Nancy Thomas, for a day long free training on Reactive Attachment Disorder. 160 people, ranging from professionals to foster and adoptive parents, attended the seminar held at the Blasco Library. Nancy hails from Glenwood Springs, Colorado. For over 30 years, she has shared her life and home with severely emotionally disturbed children. Nancy claims she has an 85% success rate with these children. Nancy admittedly has no college degree, but is a Therapeutic Parenting Specialist and is a mother, grandmother, adoptive mother, and foster mother.

Nancy's presentation included:

- ◆ The latest information on attachment and bonding.
- ◆ Building brilliant brains.
- ◆ Rebuilding the foundation.
- ◆ Connecting Heart to Heart.

The program was a huge success. In reviewing completed evaluations, all participants rated the overall program as "Excellent." The following are direct quotes from some of the evaluations:

- ◆ "I found it great that this training was offered to parents and was free to them. This is a major problem and there are few MH professionals who know how to work with these children and families."



Nancy Thomas, Therapeutic Parenting Spec.

- ◆ "Nancy rocks! The best conference in 9 + years in the field. The life experience is priceless."
- ◆ "This was the best training for the best price. Need more like this. Nancy gave us tools, not just talk."

Nancy reported that she enjoyed her time in Erie. In surveying the audience before her presentation, Nancy noted that Erie was a warm, close community as many participants were chatting and milling around the auditorium. Nancy's enthusiasm was contagious and the audience could be heard laughing frequently during her presentation. She was able to provide hope and encouragement to those who posed questions to her during the breaks. It is obvious, when talking to Nancy, that she truly cares about the children and families that she has worked with. Her humor and creativity shines through her kind eyes and compassionate heart.

After her Erie presentation, Nancy was off to Canada to facilitate a weekend training camp for parents.

For further information on Nancy and her program, *Families by Design*, or to purchase her materials, please visit Nancy's website at www.attachment.org.

Understanding and Treating the Self-Injurer **Presenter: Wendy Lader, Ph.D., M.Ed.**

On May 7, 2009, NAMI of Erie County will host a day long training on self-injury. Dr. Wendy Lader will be the presenter of this program being held at the Blasco Library from 9:00am-4:00pm. Wendy is co-founder and clinical director of the S.A.F.E. (Self Abuse Finally Ends) Alternatives Program located in Linden Oaks Hospital at Edward in Naperville, Illinois. The S.A.F.E. Alternatives Program is the only inpatient unit, in the United States, devoted exclusively to the treatment of self-injury.

Dr. Lader is an internationally recognized expert on self-injury treatment and lectures extensively on the subject. She has co-authored the book: ***Bodily Harm: The Breakthrough Healing Program for Self-Injurers***. Dr. Lader has also been featured on a variety of TV shows such as

20/20, *Dateline*, and *CNN*. In addition, she is cited frequently as an expert by the media, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *Time*.

In the past decade, self-injury has grown from an obscure psychiatric symptom to a mainstream problem. Clinicians, educators, and medical and criminal justice professionals frequently feel unprepared to work with clients or students who engage in self-directed violence. Dr. Lader's workshop will challenge some of the participants' concepts about self-injurers, traditional treatment methods, and counter-transference reactions. Therapeutic strategies and treatment modalities, including the Impulse Control Log, will be presented.

The PA. State Board of Social Workers,

Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors has approved the training for CEU's. NAMI is awaiting approval from the Intermediate Unit to provide ACT 48 credits.



Dr. Wendy Lader, Ph.D., M.Ed.
Co-Founder & Clinical Director of S.A.F.E. Alternatives

Registration for this program is required. Certificates will be provided to all participants who attend the training. To register, complete the form on page 7. (For more information on self-injury, refer to page 5).

LOCAL AFFILIATE NEWS & EVENTS

WHO WE ARE

MISSION STATEMENT

NAMI of Erie County is committed to empowering individuals diagnosed with a serious mental illness towards recovery to a productive life. The organization is also committed to fostering personal growth and development in family members and friends of an individual diagnosed with a serious mental illness.

In the execution of this mission, NAMI of Erie County will provide education, advocacy, support, and referrals to these individuals. These services will maintain a climate of confidentiality and a respect for the dignity of all who are served by this organization.



Open Your Mind

AGENCY EMPLOYEES

Anne Burnett: Administrative Officer
Yannette Barnes: Administrative Asst.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sheila Silman: Board President
Rosanna DeNiro: Board V.P.
Barbara French: Board Secretary
William Roche: Board Member
Christine Jordan: Board Member
Ida Page: Board Member
Denise Kolivoski: Board Member
Glenn Fickenworth: Board Member

UPCOMING EVENTS & INFORMATION

Family-to-Family Education Program:

- ◆ Spring Class will be held on Tuesdays from March 24, 2009 - June 9, 2009 6:00pm - 8:30pm at the NAMI Office. **** Advance registration is required.**
- ◆ NAMI of Erie County is interested in conducting a Family-to-Family Program in the Corry / Union City area; Edinboro / Albion / McKean area; and in the Girard / Springfield area. If you live in any of those Erie County areas and are interested in attending a Family-to-Family Program, please call the NAMI Office at 456-1773.

Support Groups:

Family Support Group is held every Monday evening at the NAMI Office 6:30pm - 8:00pm. **** No registration required.**

Resource Library:

NAMI of Erie County's Resource Library will reopen on April 1, 2009. Hours of operation are Mondays - Thursdays 10:00am - 3:00pm and on Fridays and Saturdays by appointment only. **** A NAMI Library Card is needed to use the library.**

Speaker Series:

Understanding and Treating the Self-Injurer on May 7, 2009 9:00am-4:00pm at the Blasco Library. Presenter: Dr. Wendy Lader, Ph.D., M.Ed. Registration begins at 8:00am. **** Advance registration is required.**

Newsletter:

Next issue will be out in June 2009. If you have any comments, questions, or subjects you would like to see addressed in the *Community Educator*, please call our office at (814) 456-1773 or e-mail aburnett@namierie.org.

Membership:

New memberships or membership renewals can still be mailed directly to the NAMI of Erie County Office at 1611 Peach St. Suite 105 Erie, PA. 16501. A membership form is located on page 6.

Website:

NAMI of Erie County's reconstructed website will become effective at the end of April 2009. Website address: www.namipaerierecounty.org. Feel free to peruse the site and check out the new look and features of the site.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SELF - INJURY

Over the years, there has been an alarming rise in the number of people who feel compelled to handle life's frustrations by wounding their bodies. Countless items are used: razor blades, knives, fire, and household tools turned into weapons. The creativity shown in finding ways for an individual to hurt or deform their bodies is astounding, but they are all alike: they are struggling with inner conflicts that seem too vast to cope with.

Who Self-Injures?

- ◆ Celebrities, Roseanne Barr and Johnny Depp; Princess Diana of Wales; and Alfred Kinsey, the sex researcher.
- ◆ Children and adolescents. Wendy

Lader, Ph.D. has surmised, through her work, that youth use self-injury as a means of "uglification" to protect themselves against premature sexuality or as a rite of passage. As the number of structured rites of passage, observed as a society dwindle, some teens fill the void with self-injury.

- ◆ Adult women. Today's women are turning to self-injury to cope with the multitude of pressures facing them. Wendy Lader reports that a woman has to do everything from working and earning money to tending house and kids. Women are belittled if they cannot hold a job and be responsible for the brunt of domestic duties.

- ◆ Males. Wendy Lader reports that the vast majority of self-injurers are female, but S.A.F.E. is getting more male patients and is contacted more frequently by male self-injurers. The issues that male self-injurers struggle with are similar to females: childhood trauma, difficulty managing emotions and tensions, confusion about identity and sexuality, and problems forming and sustaining relationships.

While many self-injurers are diagnosed with mental illnesses, such as major depression, psychosis, Dissociative Identity Disorder, and Borderline Personality Disorder, many are able to live and work normally, and have largely remained hidden within society.

MORE FACTS ON SELF-INJURY

Types of Self-Injury

- ◆ Cutting skin
- ◆ Hitting oneself
- ◆ Scratching to excess
- ◆ Extracting hair to excess
- ◆ Biting oneself
- ◆ Breaking bones
- ◆ Chewing the lips, tongue, or fingers
- ◆ Facial skinning
- ◆ Burning oneself
- ◆ Head banging
- ◆ Interfering with healing of wounds
- ◆ Ingesting sharp or toxic objects
- ◆ Amputation of limbs or digits

Cultural Factors That Might Foster Self-Injury

- ◆ Society is becoming increasingly disenfranchised.
- ◆ The collapse of the extended family and increasing isolation of individuals has given people / children fewer confidants in times of difficulty.
- ◆ The American culture increasingly emphasizes immediate gratification.
- ◆ Americans have become a nation of addicts and "a-holics."
- ◆ We live in a relentlessly body-focused culture where appearance and presentation are all-important.
- ◆ Persistent gender biases are driving young women to more severe emotional extremes than ever before.

A Picture of the Typical Self-Injurer

If there is a picture of the "typical" self-injurer, it would be a white, middle-class woman of above-average intelligence who began cutting in adolescence. She has low self-esteem and may suffer bouts of depression. She has difficulty forming intimate relationships and has a hard time articulating her thoughts and feelings. She did not internalize positive nurturing skills from her parents; thus she does not take very good care of herself. Her goal is to put an end to the pain and suffering she feels in her head, even if it means her body bears the brunt of an attack. The sight of the injury and the numb sensation that surrounds it bring comfort and relief; she feels "whole" again.

**** For more information on self-injury, join NAMI of Erie County on May 7, 2009 at the Blasco Library.**

What families should know about mental illnesses:

They are biological, medical disorders in the brain.

Mental illnesses are no one's 'fault.' They are **not** the result of inadequate parenting or lame excuses for bad behavior or poor life choices; they are very real alterations in thinking, mood, and behavior that often bring chaos to the lives associated with them.

Though statistics show that those living with brain disorders are no more prone to violence than others, this is a commonly held misconception. Still, concern for the rapidly increasing numbers of individuals dealing with addictions, homelessness, crime, physical and emotional abuse, suicide or self-harm, and the judicial system is valid. If we are to effect social change, any discussion of these and other maladies must include the topic of mental illness. Serious brain disorders such as major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder are so widely misunderstood and so exceptionally feared, they are glossed over or go entirely ignored when these important issues are being addressed.

The steps for lasting change begin with correct and clear information. For anyone who is a caregiver, family member, significant other, or friend to someone with a severe and persistent mental illness, there is a class you should consider taking: Family-To-Family. **The Family-To-Family Education Course is FREE**. Classes run for twelve consecutive weeks, one 2-1/2 hour class per week.

Important components of the course include:

Information about schizophrenia, bipolar and depressive illnesses, OCD, panic disorder, and borderline personality disorder.

Coping skills: Handling crises and relapse.

Listening and communication techniques.

Problem solving and limit setting.

Self-care for caregivers: Learning how to recognize the normal emotional reactions to chronic worry and stress.

Basic information about medications.

Information about connecting with appropriate community supports.

Advocacy: Getting better services, fighting stigma, and recovery.

Spring class will be held on Tuesdays March 24, 2009 through June 9, 2009 at the NAMI Office 6:00pm – 8:30pm. *Advance registration is required.*

NAMI of Erie County Educational Training Seminar Registration Form

Please Mail or Fax: NAMI of Erie County: Peach Street, Suite 105 Erie PA 16501, 814/456-1773- (p) 814-451-0340 (f)

Dr. Wendy Lader, May 7, 2009, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Training Location: Blasco Memorial Library, Hirt Auditorium
160 East Front Street, Erie PA 16507

*First Name: _____ Middle _____ * Last Name _____

Company _____

*Address _____

* City _____ * State _____ * Zip _____

* Daytime Phone _____ * Evening Phone _____

* Email _____

* How did you hear about the Training Seminar? Flyer Newspaper Posting Other

Which of the following describes you (Circle all that apply)

Mental Health Professional Student Current School Attending: _____

Juvenile Justice Teacher School Counselor School Administrator

Other _____

Continuing Education Registration Fee: Dr. Wendy Lader Program ONLY \$35 per person

**** This program is eligible for 5.5 hours of continuing education credits****

Please circle which CEU you will be applying for:

Social Worker

Marriage & Family Therapist

Special Educators

Nurses

Professional Counselor



NAMI of Erie County Affiliate

1611 Peach Street

Suite 105

Erie PA 16501

Non-Profit Org.

US Postage

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Erie, PA

Permit 858

Membership Renewal

____ Individual/Family/Friend \$35.00

____ Professional /Sponsor \$50.00

____ Consumer/Open Door \$3.00

____ Patron \$500.00

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please return membership information to NAMI of Erie County, 1611 Peach Street, Suite 105, Erie PA 16501