



National Alliance on Mental Illness

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(Serving Coshocton, Guernsey, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble & Perry Counties)

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The Family Voice Newsletter

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Loss of Beloved Advocate for Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families

On November 28, the region's mental health community lost Tom Quinn, one of our area's most dedicated advocates.

Several years ago, Tom and his wife Margaret received The Thomas Community Service Award from the Muskingum County Community Foundation. The nomination for the award listed just a few of their many achievements:

- Officially founding NAMI Six County (the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness).
- Hosting and facilitating in their home the 12-week Family-to-Family Education Series.
- Trouble-shooting problems that clients and family members experienced in receiving services.
- Forming The Quinn Family Singers (made up of Tom and Margaret Quinn, their seven children and several grandchildren) and presenting each year the Quinn Family Bash for over 200 clients and family members.
- Facilitating monthly education/support groups for family members of persons with mental illness.
- Providing leadership in developing the local Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Academy for law enforcement officers.



Vickie Hare, Executive Director of the local Mental Health & Recovery Services Board, considers herself fortunate to have known Tom. "He was a fierce advocate, caring father and grandfather, and a person with great vision," said Hare. "He believed that society has an obligation to treat and support its most vulnerable citizens — persons with mental illness — and worked hard to make that happen." Hare also pointed out that local clients and their families greatly anticipated attending the Annual Quinn Family Bash, which offered them a free/fun afternoon of music and fellowship.

Several years ago, Tom presented the eulogy for a young man who had died by suicide. In a thank-you note published in *The Times Recorder*, the young man's parents noted: *"We ask that you remember the mind is a part of the body that malfunctions the same as your heart or kidneys. Please remember to extend your hand to someone with a mental illness."* Tom did just that for many, many years and countless clients and their families benefited from his efforts.



NAMI Six County's monthly family education/support groups provide a warm and accepting setting in which everyone can openly share experiences without fear of criticism. We have all 'been there' before and want to share and help! Please join us.

► **Zanesville Afternoon Support Group — January 3, 2017, at 1:00 p.m.**

This group meets from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month in the Central Presbyterian Church Social Hall in downtown Zanesville, 40 N. Sixth Street (enter via the alley and follow signs to the second floor).

► **Zanesville Evening Support Group**

WHEN: January 17, 2017, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. (every third Tuesday evening of the month).

WHERE: Please note a change in location to the TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 830 Military Road, Zanesville in the youth room. The entrance is located across from the picnic shelter. As you approach the church – if coming up the hill on Military from Maple – take first right turn. Ample parking is available just down the hill as you turn into the church property. There will be a sign, so watch for it as there are many doors. NOTE: If Zanesville is under a Level 2 Snow Emergency, the meeting will be cancelled.

WHAT: Support and education for those with a loved one diagnosed with a mental illness.



Dr. Darell Smith, retired Six County, Inc. psychiatrist, will be our special guest again. Dr. Smith is recognized for his years of service in compassionately providing exemplary psychiatric care to persons with mental illness and their families. He didn't retire until he was in his early 80s, a boon to so many in this area who benefited from his wisdom and continued care.

Come with your questions about mental illness and related issues and take advantage of Dr. Smith's expertise and down-to-earth approach.

Bring a friend who might benefit from this support group. Questions? Call Becky Allison at 419.709.5838.

► **Coshocton Support Group — Monday, January 16, 2017, at 7:00 p.m.**

This group meets from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. (every third Monday evening of the month) in the Grand Central Station Room at Coshocton Hospital, 1460 Orange Street, Coshocton.

First-Episode Psychosis Intervention at Allwell Behavioral Health Services

Allwell Behavioral Health Services has launched the FIRST Program, which is aimed at changing the long-term prognosis for people with psychotic illnesses. Initially, the program is being offered in Guernsey, Morgan and Muskingum Counties.

Through the FIRST Program, people who have experienced a first episode of psychosis will receive comprehensive support from a team of experts, who will help them navigate doctor and counseling appointments and issues with medication, jobs and schooling. The goal of the program is to preserve functioning and to help people stay well.

In an episode of psychosis, a person loses contact with reality and may experience delusions or hallucinations. A first episode often occurs in the late teens or 20s and is a very traumatic time for patients and families.

The program works with patients between the ages of 15-40, who have experienced a first psychotic break in the past 18 months.

The goals of the program are:

- To provide support and education for the patient and family.
- To improve recovery.
- To reduce the chances of relapse.
- To set goals for the future.

Determining exactly when the first episode of psychosis begins can be hard, but these signs and symptoms may indicate an episode of psychosis:

- Having serious problems at work or school.
- Seeing or hearing things that others do not see or hear.
- Having firmly held beliefs not shared by others.
- Withdrawing from social interactions.
- Speaking or thinking in a disorganized way.
- Feeling paranoid.



FIRST treatment includes access to the best treatments for psychotic illness and involving loved ones in recovery. Early outcomes for individuals participating in FIRST treatment are promising: the majority of individuals in FIRST programs are either working and/or pursuing educational goals (source: www.neomed.edu).

Encourage recovery by calling your local Allwell's FIRST team leader at **740-562-3270**. The team leader will make an assessment and discuss the most appropriate treatment options.

7 Mental Health Resolutions for 2017

(Source: <http://time.com>)

When it comes to New Year's resolutions, our self-improvement efforts often focus on getting a better body. And we ignore that other, equally important part of our wellbeing: our mental health.

Certain health hazards come with warnings, like cigarettes or alcohol, but less obvious ones, like loneliness and rejection, can take just as great a toll, says psychologist Guy Winch, author of *Emotional First Aid: Healing Rejection, Guilt, Failure and Other Everyday Hurts*. Research shows social isolation is linked to shorter lifespans, yet we often ignore our emotional hygiene.

This year, prioritize your mind as well as your body, and make some resolutions for better mental health. Here are some of Winch's tips for prioritizing your emotional hygiene in the new year (and all year long).

- 1 Pay attention to emotional pain.** Psychological pain is much like physical pain—if something hurts for more than a few days, you need to do something about it. If you experience rejection, failure, or have a bad mood that lingers too long, don't ignore it.
- 2 Take action when you feel lonely.** Chronic loneliness is devastating to your emotional and physical health because it increases your chances of an early death by 14%. Therefore, when you feel lonely, actions like reaching out to family members or connecting with friends can help. Make a list of people who you've been close to in the past and reach out to one of them each day to chat or to make plans. It will feel scary and risky to take those kinds of steps, but that's what you need to do to break the cycle of disconnection and end your emotional isolation.
- 3 Stop your emotional bleeding.** Psychological wounds tend to create vicious cycles that get worse with time. Failure can lead to feelings of helplessness that in turn can make you more likely to fail again in the future. To break the negative cycle of failure, find ways to gain control of the situation. Our minds are not as reliable as we tend to think, so ignore misleading feelings from your gut that tell you to give up, and focus on the aspects within your control, such as your preparation, planning, effort and execution.
- 4 Protect your self-esteem.** Your self-esteem is like an emotional immune system—it can increase your resilience and protect you from stress and anxiety. Good emotional hygiene involves monitoring your self-esteem and boosting it when it's low. How? Avoid negative self-talk that damages it further—despite how tempting it might be to indulge these kinds of thoughts at times.
- 5 Revive your self-worth after a rejection.** It's very common to be self-critical after you get rejected. It's an unfortunate reaction, since that's when your self-esteem is already hurting. You're most likely to call yourself names, list all your faults and shortcomings, and generally kick yourself when you're already down. The most important thing you can do after getting rejected is to treat yourself with the same compassion you would treat a good friend. Make sure your inner voice is kind, understanding and supportive.
- 6 Battle negative thinking.** When something upsetting happens, it's natural to brood over it. But replaying the scene over and over in your mind will not give you much insight or closure. The best way to break a brooding cycle is to distract yourself with a task that requires concentration, like a game on your cell phone, a quick run or a crossword puzzle.
- 7 Be informed on the impact of common psychological wounds and how to treat them.** You know how to treat a cut or a cold, so you should also know how to treat rejection, failure, loneliness, guilt and other common emotional wounds. By becoming mindful about your psychological health and adopting habits of good emotional hygiene, you will not only heal your psychological injuries when you sustain them, but you will elevate your entire quality of life.

From One Parent to Another

(Source: www.nami.org – By Karen Meadows)

When my family was struggling with the onset of our teenage daughter’s mental illness, stigma made us reluctant to “come out.” It was too late before we realized we weren’t as alone as we thought. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, just over 20 percent (or 1 in 5) children have a seriously debilitating mental health condition. By staying silent, we perpetuated stigma and prevented ourselves from finding the best available help.

Sadie lost her battle with mental illness, and I lost my daughter.

Through this heartbreaking experience, I’ve learned a lot from my mistakes. I’m sharing my newfound knowledge with you — parent-to-parent — with the hope that even one of these suggestions might prevent another lost battle.

Accept Your Child’s Diagnosis

For many parents, their child’s diagnosis is difficult to process. You want so badly for your child to have a normal, happy life that it’s easy to believe, on good days, that they have overcome their challenges. Accept that the way their brain works is a unique part of who they are. Help your child find a new normal — one that leverages their strengths, interests and capabilities. Build a normal, happy life that fits them.

Get Educated and Network

Read as much as you can. Get on the distribution list of as many mental health organizations as you can that provide information, support and research updates. Talk with trusted friends, colleagues and family. I know this is hard, but you will be surprised at how many people open up to you about their challenges. Help may come from the most unexpected places.

Listen and Don’t be Judgmental

Instead of focusing on your child’s behaviors, try to understand their feelings. Rather than asking “why” questions, which can sound judgmental, ask “how” or “what” questions. Consider taking effective communication training. After Sadie died, I volunteered to work on a crisis line. I learned how to defuse anger, connect with people, and partake in collaborative problem-solving. I’ve always felt as though these skills would have helped me communicate with Sadie more effectively.

Call a Crisis Line

If you or your child needs information, resources or someone to talk to during difficult times, make a call or send a text:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (<http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>): 1.800.273.8225
- NAMI HelpLine (<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-HelpLine>): 1-800-6264 or email info@nami.org
- Crisis Text Line (<http://www.crisistextline.org/>): Text **NAMI** to 741 741.

Don’t Let Shame Interfere with Getting Help

If your child had a physical condition, you would seek medical help. Do the same for your child if they have a mental health condition. Find a mental health specialist who provides the right kind of therapy, is highly recommended, and is someone your child connects with. As your child grows, their mental health condition may change or evolve. Consider requesting a periodic assessment of their diagnosis. To identify the appropriate treatment, an accurate diagnosis is critical.

Empower Your Child

Teach them positive lifestyle habits, such as diet, exercise, regular sleep, and mindfulness. Talk about the dangers of self-medicating with drugs or alcohol. Link your child with legitimate resources that provide help and community for youth.

Have a Discussion about Suicide

Find out whether your child is having suicidal ideation and if they have plans to act on those thoughts. Talking openly and showing genuine concern are key elements in preventing suicide. Make sure they have crisis phone numbers saved to their phone. Also, have a crisis plan prepared for them (<http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers/Being-Prepared-for-a-Crisis>).

Have Hope

Remember that new developments are happening every year. Don’t give up, because your child’s life may depend on your perseverance. Also, consider attending the next local Family-to-Family class. Those sessions really help!

We hope you appreciate receiving this newsletter. If you do not receive a personal copy and would like to be added to our mailing list, please let us know. If you are on our mailing list and would like to be removed, we want to honor your wishes. Just call Linda Hand at 740-454-8557.

Also, if you would like to join NAMI Six County, please call Linda to request a membership form. Thanks!

Help to End the Stigma!

- Learn about mental illness.
- Tactfully object to negative stereotyping of persons with mental illness.
- Treat people with the dignity and respect we all deserve.

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