Loving Someone with Bipolar Disorder

By Joanne M. Doan

While no marriage is easy—as evidenced by the 50% failure rate in United States—challenges stack up when a mental health condition is added to the mix. The prospect of dealing with a lifelong, life-threatening condition can be overwhelming.

The diagnosis of bipolar disorder, for example, can test even the strongest of foundations. The unpredictable symptoms and behaviors of a person experiencing bipolar disorder can shake up a relationship and may scare even the most supportive partner. These symptoms can include:

**Mania**
- Increased physical and mental activity
- Exaggerated optimism and self-confidence
- Excessive irritability, aggressive behavior
- Decreased need for sleep
- Rapid speech, thought
- Increased sexual behavior and spending

**Depression**
- Prolonged sadness
- Changes in appetite and sleep
- Irritability, anger, worry
- Pessimism, loss of energy
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness
- Recurring thoughts of suicide and death

**Couple’s therapy can be an effective way to develop strategies for coping with the disorder together,** says David Miklowitz, PhD, a professor of psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles. “The counseling should help the couple solve problems that arise around the symptoms of bipolar disorder, and learn to communicate effectively about them,” he says.

Further, couples that view bipolar as a brain-based disorder and their partnership as “equal” seem to have the most success. Focusing on shared goals and your commitment to each other helps make your partnership work, and the more both partners know about symptoms, treatments and coping strategies, the more hope there is for recovery and the relationship.

As the loving partner of someone experiencing bipolar disorder, your life will take on a new “normal”—which could possibly consist of taking on increased daily responsibilities. Laurie of San Antonio, Texas remembers the exhaustion of caring for her husband and longing for the day when “someone would take care of me instead of the other way around.” The loss of a life imagined takes time and acceptance.

It can be a day-to-day challenge knowing what to do to support your loved one without being consumed by their depression and mania, says David A. Karp, professor of sociology at Boston College. “Indeed, caring for someone who has a mental illness can be more draining than caring for someone with cancer,” he explains. “They may even feel their own identities are being buried—they are losing themselves or jeopardizing their own health.”

**Caring for your own wellness is key.** While it can be difficult to master, self-care is essential if you love someone with a brain disorder. Research shows that as a caregiver, you are at increased risk of becoming depressed and having other health problems if you neglect yourself. This means you must make time to restore your energy, reduce stress and deal with feelings like guilt and anger.
Off to a Fast Start

By Dar Walker

NAMI St. Louis is off to a fast start in 2017. New Director of Development is coming onboard in February, check out the introduction in this newsletter. Preparations are underway for the NAMIWalk 2017 on May 6, 2017 at the Central Park – Chesterfield Amphitheater, see the save the date. The Team Captain Kickoff was on March 10, 2017 at the Hilton Frontenac St. Louis.

Major advocacy efforts underway to increase access to child behavioral health services (there are 135 child psychiatrists in the whole State of Missouri or one per every 10,316 children), prevent the elimination of the psychotropic medication exemption by imposing step therapy treatment in the state Medicaid system and finding a way to provide mental health insurance coverage parity in the Missouri. All of these efforts are difficult as state funding resources are continuing to shrink.

We continue to review options for NAMI St. Louis office space as our current lease is over at the end of June. The Executive Committee of the Board and I started the process six months ago and are narrowing the choices. If relocation is the final decision it will be in June 2017.

NAMI St. Louis is managing the funds we receive from a diversified funding portfolio well and using the funds efficiently to maximize the number of programs and classes we can provide to the community. With that being said the ability to develop sustaining funds is becoming more difficult. There are greater than 2,500 nonprofit organizations in the St. Louis region. The total philanthropic dollars available in the region is declining. NAMI St. Louis needs the financial and volunteer support of the community to be successful. In 2017 NAMI St. Louis is working on our first negative budget in 6 years. We have the operational reserves to manage the short fall. Last newsletter we talked about all lives we improved through our family focused education and advocacy. In 2018 we will have to have a breakeven budget and it is preferred that programing capacity reduction will not be the way we achieve breakeven.

For individuals and families that can afford to start repeating monthly gifts it will help balance the budget and make budgeting more predictable. No amount is too small. If everyone who receives this newsletter donated $10 per month our budget would be met in full and we could offer more programs and classes in the community.

I hope you have enjoyed the mild winter and are looking forward to spring season of recovery.

NOTE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are family (and friends) who The Board of Directors wants to communicate with the members that Dar Walker our Executive Director has informed us that he is retiring by the end of 2017. The Board has begun the process of searching for and retaining a new Executive Director. Dar will continue to lead NAMI St. Louis until the new Executive Director is retained. This timing is driven by the search, selection and retention process. NAMI St. Louis has had two part time and five full time Executive Directors since 1989. Volunteer leadership governed the organization form 1978 to 1989. This is unique for NAMI affiliates of which 30 months is the average Executive Director tenure.
NAMI St. Louis Names Christine Paterson New Director of Development

It is a pleasure to introduce Christine Paterson, NAMI St. Louis’ new Director of Development. Christine comes to NAMI St. Louis from Columbia, MO by way of the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare. Christine has worked for non-profit agencies for over eight years, in diverse project management, event coordination, and mental health related roles. Christine graduated from University of Missouri with a MA and PhD in Sociology. She has 17 years of experience in course development and teaching at the collegiate level. Her list of professional accomplishments is extensive, including:

- Managing Governor Nixon’s Community Mental Health Liaisons (CMHLs), which was first in the nation with over 30,000 contacts between law enforcement and courts with over 23,000 referrals in three years.
- Creating first statewide Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) conference with 100% participant increase by 2nd year.
- Working with Missouri CIT Council to expand CIT to over 50% of Missouri counties in two years.
- Creating P.O.S.T. certified law enforcement training modules, which have been used to train 6,000 law enforcement officers on mental health and substance use disorders.
- Aiding in developing Missouri’s first Zero Suicide initiative with over 50% of Community Mental Health Centers participating.
- Authoring statewide assessment study of the over-representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system.
- Authoring Missouri Preschool Exit Assessment Report, which was used to evaluate the effectiveness of Missouri Preschools.

Please take time to welcome Christine to NAMI St. Louis, her email is cpatterson@namistl.org.

NAMIWalks St. Louis - Saturday, May 6th

Why We Walk

• To have fun!
• To raise much needed awareness about mental illness
• To support our communities throughout the State
• To show recovery IS possible
• To change perceptions & to STOMP OUT STIGMA
• To raise vital funds for our FREE public programs
• To ensure that hope and help are available

Central Park – Chesterfield Amphitheatre
16365 Lydia Hill Drive
Chesterfield, MO 63017

Central Park in Chesterfield is easily accessible from Highway 64/40 (west of Highway 270 and 141):
Going west exit Highway 64/40 at Chesterfield Parkway West (Exit 19A), turn left onto Chesterfield Parkway West, then turn right onto Lydia Hill Drive.

Going east exit Highway 64/40 at Chesterfield Parkway West (Exit 19A), turn left onto Wild Horse Creek Rd, then turn right onto Chesterfield Parkway West, then turn right onto Lydia Hill Drive.

VOLUNTEER TODAY FOR 2017 NAMIWALKS ST. LOUIS - SHARON@NAMISTL.ORG
Memorials and Tributes - A Lasting Gift

A NAMI St. Louis Memorial or Tribute is a perfect remembrance for a loved one. Memorials honor a recently deceased person or on the anniversary of death. Tributes honor an individual or family on birthdays, anniversaries or special occasion.

Request a Memorial or Tribute by sending a donation, in any amount, to NAMI St. Louis. We send the person or family you name a card acknowledging your gift without mention of the donation amount. You receive a thank you from us. Names of those memorialized or honored are listed in the next newsletter.

In Memory of Chris Albrecht
Chris & Margaret Albrecht

In Memory of Irene J. Bishop
Judy Bock & Glenn Brinley

In Memory of Megan Dooley
Mary Allen
The Carraway Family
Janice Grefenkamp
Mary Johnson
Gay Smith
Ron & Erika Steuterman

In Memory of George Ferguson
D. June Kreyling

In Memory of Jan Good
Lee T. Lawless

In Memory of Melba Gutierrez
Veronica & Kelly Conley
Debbie Lippold
Stacy Luker
Betty Jean Scalis
Kristin Shantz
Darrell & Karen Schultz

In Memory of Albert Morris Kleiman
Evelyn Kleiman

In Memory of Jay Allan Knerr
Steven & Cathy Anderson
Robert & Suzanne Kupfer
William & Sharon Macy
Robert Quinn
Patricia Weiss

In Memory of Douglas Kreyling
D. June Kreyling

In Honor of Ann Mandelstamm
Cynthia H. Allen
Gail Bunce
Katherine Drescher

Bettie Schroth Johnson
Jean B. Quenon
Mary V. Rassieur
Perry Street
Carol B. Walker

In Memory of Mary Anne McKeman
Beverly Bledsoe
Lorien Carter
Aminda Chomanczuk
Margaret Clancy
Janet Gillow
Elizabeth Hahn
Debra Haire-Joshu
James Jaccard
Dean-Assael Kara
Barbara Levin & Barry Rosenberg
Gisselle Pardo
Michael Sherraden
Social System Design Lab
Vetta Thompson
Jean-Francois Trani
Li Zou

In Memory of Irwin and Joyce Mohr
Frederic J. Mohr

In Honor of Tim Murphy
Christina Thenen

In Memory of Shirley Nobbe
Ronald & Joan Bertolino
Charles & JoAnn Buckner
David & Cheryl Craus
Fred & Jennifer Derner
Jim & Ginger Gornall
Donna Harkey
Lyle & Carol Heimbigner
Mary & Gary
Johannigmeier
Joe & Debbie Lamere

Sid & Mary Masterson
Gary & Pat Matevey
Dennis & Catherine
Nobbe
Michael & Christine
Norriss
Roger, Ann Marie & Kattyn Parr
Greg & Brenda Roosevelt
Dale & Barbara
Schillinger
Fredna Carlson Scroggins
Diane Waldo
Jean Weishaupt

In Memory of Ellen N. Sarver
Laural Duellman

In Memory of Shirley Schultz
Betty Jean Scalise

In Memory of Micah Abraham Lemerman Shilcrat
Lawrence Friedman
Stewart J. Shilcrat & Paula J. Lemerman

In Memory of Gladys Timothee-Johnston
Oakbrook Solutions, Inc.

In Memory of Elaine Veit
Michael Carter
Christine & Greg
Czerneckiewski
Dennis & Kathy Eagan
Melissa Eagan
Catherine Gruebbelie
Barry & Mary O’Brien

In Honor of the Ward Family
Frontenac Racquet Club
Staff
Thank you to all who volunteer for NAMI St. Louis!
Welcome new volunteers: Anne Pennell, Joy Roberts and Michael Bolton.

five reasons to volunteer

• To be challenged
• To do a civic duty
• To share a skill or passion
• To learn from others
• To gain leadership skills

Source: PointsOfLight.org

As we go to press, we learned of the passing of Cindy Gates. Cindy became a volunteer and In Our Own Voice speaker in 2012. Through the In Our Own Voice program, she educated hundreds of nursing students at Goldfarb School of Nursing and Lutheran School of Nursing. She will be deeply missed.

We want to hear from you!
Share ideas for future issues of your Newsletter at info@namistl.org.

NAMI St. Louis is a proud member of:
United Way of Greater St. Louis  United Way

Sponsored by:

Gateway to Mental Health Recovery
second thursday brown bag lunch series

Every Second Thursday
April 13, 2016, May 11, June 8, July 13
Noon - 1:00 pm

At the Heights
8001 Dale Avenue, Richmond Heights, MO 63117
The Heights is located at Dale Avenue and Hanley Road. From Hwy. 40/64 take Hanley Road South, go east at first light on to Dale. Bus line located nearby.

RSVP, Please!
Bring your own lunch and we will provide beverages and cookies with RSVP (314) 962-4670.

April 13, 2017
Worry Less with St. Andrew’s Senior Solutions
Speakers: Melissa Robinson, MA Executive Director and Jill Walsh, MSW Director of Client Services for St. Andrews Senior Solutions
Ms. Robinson and Ms. Walsh will be speaking about accessing resources to assist in enhancing your living situation. We will cover the Continuum of In-Home support services and community resources available to make this possible. We assist in coordinating these services so you can “Worry Less”.

May 11, 2017
Equal Access to Justice – An Overview of MO HealthNet, legal assistance regarding MO HealthNet and other issues that may impact people with mental illness
Speakers: Tiajuana Henderson, MBA, Healthcare Advocate, Advocates for Family Health (AFH) from Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Inc. and W. Patrick (Pat) Mobley, J.D., Lead Attorney, Legal Advocacy for Adults with Mental Illness (LAAMI) also from Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Inc.
Ms. Henderson will provide an overview of how to apply for MO HealthNet (Medicaid) for Kids, Pregnant Women and Families and how they can assist families when they have problems getting MO HealthNet and services through MO HealthNet. Mr. Mobley will cover the types of cases that Legal Advocacy for Adults with Mental Illness see and how they can assist clients.

NAMI ST. LOUIS FACT:
NAMI St. Louis was founded in 1978 & will celebrate 40 years in existence next year. Share NAMI memories for future newsletter issues. Send them to info@namistl.org. Subject: Memories.

June 8, 2017
End of Session Review for 2017 Missouri Legislature
Speaker: Amy Blouin, Executive Director, Missouri Budget Project
The 2017 Missouri Legislature began with a flurry of activity around cutting state services because of revenue shortfalls and bills filed to reform Medicaid because of growing healthcare expenditures. The mission of the Missouri Budget Project is to improve the quality of life for all Missourians by informing public policy decisions through objective research and analysis of state budget, tax and economic issues. Ms. Blouin will share what happened in the 2017 legislative session related to the state budget and healthcare and how it impacts the future for Missouri’s most vulnerable. She will also talk about the streamlined sales tax, circuit breaker tax credit, and what we must do to make sure that critical state services are maintained.

July 13, 2017
Anxiety and Depression: Taking Charge of Your Health & Well-being
Speaker: Sheila Hunt, MA, LPC, Regional Director of Business Development/Assessment & Referral at CenterPointe Behavioral Health System
Anxiety and depression are two of the most common mental health concerns in our society. Anxiety and depression are not the same, but they often occur together. In this presentation you will learn how to identify the hidden triggers of anxiety and depression by taking care of your health, managing your stress, your relationships and environment.

VOLUNTEER TODAY FOR 2017 NAMIWALKS ST. LOUIS - SHARON@NAMISTL.ORG
It means that our loved ones will have a greater chance of living a peaceful and joyful life in the community. It means that they will be able to access mental health medications that will keep them stable and safe from jail, homelessness, or suicide. However, this “safety net” may be in jeopardy for some if the current structure of Medicaid is changed.

**Senate Bill 28, which was filed by Senator David Sater from Southwest Missouri, would change the way Medicaid is structured.** It would go from its current structure of shared funding from both the state and federal governments with no upper cap to a fixed grant from the federal government. This would put the state at financial risk if actual costs are higher. It could also mean that there could be cuts to eligibility for Medicaid or services provided in the future. It could also mean substantial cuts to federal Medicaid funding and loss of coverage for vulnerable seniors, people with disabilities, children, pregnant women, and low income parents who now depend on Medicaid.

Currently Medicaid is one of the largest payers of mental health services in Missouri, if not the largest. One in four people with disabilities in Missouri have Medicaid. Even though people with disabilities make up 16% of the Medicaid population, they account for 47% of the total expenses for Medicaid. Therefore, people with a primary mental health disability on Medicaid will likely be affected negatively by this bill if approved by the Missouri Legislature.

The argument given for passage of SB 28 is that Medicaid is growing too fast and is almost 50% of the total budget. The Human Services budget which is $12.9 billion makes up 47% of the state’s operating budget of $27.6 billion. Out of the $12.9 billion of the Human Services budget, $9.2 billion is Medicaid. However, most Medicaid funding comes from federal funds and provider taxes – Missouri pays just 17% of Medicaid costs from state general revenue.

Medicaid is actually a great deal for Missouri. Healthcare spending grew less for Medicaid than for private insurers between 2007-2013.

Medicaid is needed in Missouri to help its most vulnerable citizens get the mental and primary healthcare that will help them live peaceful, joyful, stable and safe lives in our communities.

**Your help is needed.** Please stand with NAMI and demand that Medicaid – Missouri’s “safety net” remains stably and adequately funded now and in the future. Please consider participating in this effort by doing one or more of the following: write, call or tweet your Senators and Representatives and ask them to vote “no” on SB 28. Share your personal stories about how Medicaid helps you or a loved one in Missouri.
calendar

APRIL

**Autism Awareness Month:** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects a person’s ability to socialize and communicate with others. ASD can also result in restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities. The term “spectrum” refers to the wide range of symptoms, skills and levels of impairment or disability that people with ASD can display. See more at: https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Autism

MAY

**Mental Health Awareness Month:** What better way to recognize this month than to participate in the 15th annual NAMIWalks in St. Louis? Come out to show that you care about mental health.

JUNE

**PTSD Awareness Month:** Traumatic events, such as military combat, assault, an accident or a natural disaster, can have long-lasting negative effects. Sometimes our biological responses and instincts, which can be life-saving during a crisis, leave people with ongoing psychological symptoms because they are not integrated into consciousness. See more at: https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder