National Alliance on Mental Illness Southwest Washington

Behavioral Health Services

(NAMI SW WA—BHS) is an adult outpatient clinic located in Vancouver, WA offering individual and group therapy to Medicaid insured individuals.

We are a group of psychotherapists, interns, and certified peer counselors dedicated to providing quality, confidential, and individualized mental health services in a warm, comfortable atmosphere.

**You will always be treated like a person,** not a number or a diagnosis or a label or someone who is less-than.

Here are some of the issues we help individuals with on a regular basis:

- Depression • Anxiety • Bipolar Disorder • Coping Skills • Grief • LGBTQ issues
- Loss of Direction • Low Self-esteem • OCD • PTSD • Schizophrenia • Stress

If your particular issue isn’t listed, that is not a problem. Individuals we serve are unique, each with their own set of strengths and weaknesses. We tailor what we do to fit you—your needs.

We strive to provide personalized services from start to finish.

If it will benefit you, we will immediately link your therapy with NAMI SW WA’s no charge support and educational services such as: Family-to-Family Class, Family Support Group, Peer Led Support Group, Women’s Support Group, Personal Advocacy Support and more.

See page 3 to read about what to expect at your first therapy appointment.

Wondering if we are a good fit for you? Contact us

Mailing address and location:
5411 E Mill Plain Blvd. Suite 4
Vancouver, WA 98661

Phone: 360-695-2823
Web: www.namiswwa.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/namiswwa
From the Director’s Desk

Dear Members and Friends,

It is hard to believe that we have arrived at the last month of 2016. This year has passed quickly, with lots of accomplishments and challenges.

We will host one last educational seminar this year on Genetic Testing for the Ability to Metabolize Medications on Tuesday, December 5th. Roxanne Holtz, a volunteer who has been the presenter that the previous seminars will be with us again. We are greatly appreciative of her willingness to put this program together for us, negotiating with various testing labs to ensure that the testing can be done at no or reduced charge for our NAMI SW WA friends, and to share her incredible knowledge about the benefits of this testing for anyone taking mental health or other medications. This program will continue in 2017, as well. However, if you want to have your testing done this year, Wednesday the 6th will be the final day this year that Roxanne will be with us to monitor you sample taking via a very easy cheek swab.

Our Chronic Lyme Disease educational program is moving along. Those of us working on this program have chosen a launch date of March, 2017. If you want to learn more about chronic Lyme watch our newsletter announcing the date when we will present the program to NAMI SW WA members and friends before we present it to mental health and primary care providers in our three counties.

We are busy collecting items for our gift bags that will be delivered to many different residential programs such as Elahan Place, Telecare, Station Two, and others in our three county region before the end of year holidays. We plan to fill about 300 bags this year with individually wrapped candy, socks, gloves, hats, toiletries, and other useful and fun items. Our pile of donations is growing but we can always use more. Right now we are short on candy, hats and gloves. If you are able, please bring items to our office or plan to attend our fun evening on Wednesday, December 14th from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. Very light refreshments will be available. Please join us. You will work hard and have a great time.

With all the hustle and bustle this month, I hope you take time to think of those who struggle with mental illness each day by donating to NAMI SW WA. It is easy to do and would be very much appreciated. Simply visit www.namiswwa.org and click on Donate at the top. If you wish to donate monthly/quarterly choose “recurring donation” on the Donate page. The other choice is to mail in your donation at either of the addresses on the left side of this page. We are sending out an Annual Appeal letter by mail and email. To ensure that your donations support Southwest Washington, please make your checks out to NAMI SW WA because donations made to NAMI or NAMI WA do not support us. Thank you!

Thanks and we hope to see you at one of our events this month.

Best regards,

Peggy
First Therapy Appointment at NAMI SW WA—BHS

It is a rare person who wakes up one morning and says, “Oh, goodie, I’m going to my first therapy appointment today.” Most people have given a lot of thought to taking this first step. They may have finally decided to go because they are “stuck” and the fear of staying where they are outweighing the fear of taking that first step to get help. Some have been encouraged by others or even told, “you need to go or else...”. Whatever the reason, many experience anxiety and some even fear. Your therapist is trained to recognize this and make every effort to help you through this first appointment. Knowing what to expect will help you as you embark on this journey.

Your first session will be a time for the therapist to find out how you are hoping therapy can help make your hope a reality. An initial assessment of your situation will be made in order to better understand your problem and make a diagnosis. You will be asked about why are you seeking therapy at this time, your personal history and current situation. Therapy is a team effort. Here are three helpful hints on how you can do your part to make this first session as successful as possible:

- answer the questions openly and honestly
- come prepared to describe “what’s wrong” and describe your feelings about your problem—make a list ahead of time if it will help
- ask questions

Plan for two hours, although most initial evaluations (also known as “intake appointments” or “intake assessments”) will take about 90 minutes. It also includes review and completion of initial paperwork required for services.

At the end of your first appointment, the therapist will often arrive at a tentative diagnosis for your problem in order for Medicaid to pay for your treatment. It also helps guide your therapist in helping you formulate a realistic treatment plan. If you wish to continue, you will be scheduled for your follow-up appointment, most are usually scheduled within a week from your first.

This first step may be the most difficult one you take, however, the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu stated, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” The staff at NAMI SW WA Behavioral Health Services not only wants to help make the first step easier, but also the rest of your journey with us.
My name is Billy Meier, and I am currently in the Clark County Jail awaiting trial on two separate felony cases. I have been incarcerated several times. I've spent time in two juvenile institutions and have been sent to prison now 7 times. I am 47 years old and, to date, I've spent a total of 25 years of my life behind bars. It's not something that I'm proud of, and I want to break that vicious cycle but the only way I can do that is for society to drop the agenda of ostracism & punishment & commit to helping me heal.

I suffer from severe drug addiction for cocaine, methamphetamines and heroin. I am also dealing with mental illness for major depression, anxiety, PTSD, adjustment disorder and personality disorder. I have a lot of emotional pain that I have suppressed since I was 14 years old because I have major trust issues. So, I've always suppressed my feelings and wounds just masking them with drugs and alcohol.

I'm finally humbling myself and reaching out for help but the courts are denying me that opportunity and just want to send me back to prison even though that hasn't worked the last 7 times. I need to be put into long term treatment for chemical dependency and mental health.

The courts are always talking about rehabilitation and reducing the rate of recidivism. If that's the case, then why aren't they helping the ones that really need the most help? The ones like myself that are reaching out. The ones that have never experienced a normal life, never experienced love, been mentally beat down by the courts, others and society. The ones that are battling with mental illnesses.

I'll tell you why they won't help people like me. It's because they are walking in the flesh, not the spirit. They are looking through humanly eyes, not godly eyes. They are not looking through the eyes of their heart. They are not seeing us as children of God, the way God sees us. Like Marvin Sapp Sings: He saw the best in me, when everyone else around me could only see the worst in me.

Criminals are just one group of people treated like outcasts by society and the courts. They do not want to look at our lives. They don't want to hear about our pain. They just want to put us away, where they don't have to deal with us. They do the same with the elderly, the mentally ill, the homeless, and so forth.

The courts like to look at the crime as the problem. That isn't the real problem at all though. The real problem is the addiction along with the mental illness. When we can't deal with our mental illness properly, then we get high or drunk to mask the pain. Before we know it, without wanting to intentionally do something wrong or stupid, we already have. At times we don't even realize we've done something stupid or wrong. It's a vicious cycle. We get high to excess to mask the pain. We get delusional, we become desperate, we feel frivolous like a failure. We become capricious and in a stupor, leaving us with loss of control over our thoughts, behaviors and actions.

Crime is another form of self-punishment, unconsciously chosen to address unconscious guilt. The criminal commits a crime, because he is still trying to punish himself. And society obliges him by punishing him and reinforcing his guilt.
Never Too Late To Learn by Susan Correa

Retirement can be a challenging transition for any couple, but when one of them has a major mental illness, it can be especially stressful. I have experienced this situation first hand.

Five years ago when my husband's workplace had a major shakeup, he decided it was time to take the plunge and gave his notice. Within two months, we both left our jobs and sold our home and moved to the beautiful Northwest.

For the first time in our married lives we were together almost all the time. When the excitement wore off we found it was rather difficult. He was shocked at how I struggled, on a daily basis, with my bipolar disorder. The stress of living in a new state, knowing no one and missing the people I left behind exacerbated my illness. He found my moodiness and unpredictability unnerving. He had always been under the impression that if I took my medicine, everything should be fine. I felt hurt because I had tried to explain many times this is not the case.

Because I have been on medication for years, I had to find a psychiatrist soon after we arrived. I picked one off my insurance list and hoped for the best. Luckily, I found one who listened well and was willing to work until I got on a better regimen than I had been on before the move. I explained to him that I was having trouble and he worked with me for months trying to find medications that would help me function at an optimum level. Happily, this effort was successful and I felt better than I had in a long, long time.

Still we continued to struggle at home. A new friend of mine asked me if I would like to write some book reviews for the local chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. I was pleased to do so. I knew of NAMI through my experience as a therapist and had great admiration for the work they do. I wrote an occasional book review for them and began to receive the newsletter.

That is where I was reminded about the Family to Family groups. I had had a client whose mother had Schizoaffective Disorder and it was so helpful to the young woman. It dawned on me that going to that group might help my husband understand me better. I was surprised when he agreed to try it. A month later he went to his first meeting. I was afraid he would come home saying it was a waste of time. Happily, he didn't seem to mind it at all.

He was given a big notebook full of information and he must have been reading it because he opened up about the experience he was having. Although the group was mainly filled with parents dealing with mentally ill children, he was able to learn and understand that having a major mental illness is a difficult thing, even with good medical care. From what he was sharing with me, it is clear that he was finally getting a clear picture of what we were dealing with because of my disease.

Over the weeks he became more compassionate towards me. Because he had been busy with a demanding career, he hadn't realized that it must have been challenging for me to deal with the disease and be a wife and mom and daughter. It helped me so much to be able to open up and say that it had been difficult having two small children before I had any idea medication existed to help me with the depression and anxiety and mood swings I was trying so hard to deal with. It helped my self-esteem tremendously when he finally understood I had done a good job under many such circumstances.

(continued on page 6)
Customer Re-enrollment
If you have your card already assigned to us, you will need to re-assign card. Fred Meyers anticipates this will be a yearly process. Please visit www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards.
Fred Meyer donates $2.5 million per year to non-profits in Washington, based on what charity their customers tell them to support.

You can help NAMI Southwest Washington (NAMI SW WA) earn dollars just by shopping with your Fred Meyer Rewards Card!

Here’s how the program works:
• Sign-up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card number to NAMI at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards.
• You can search for us by our name NAMI Southwest or by our non-profit number 83250.
• Then every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, NAMI SW WA earns some change!
• You still earn Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, just as you do today.
• If you do not have a Rewards Card, stop by the Customer Service Desk of any Fred Meyer store.

For more information, please visit www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards.

(Never Too Late to Learn - Continued from page 5)

Because he went all the way through the program, our retirement has become so much easier. I have been more open about what I need to do to take good care of myself and he has been very considerate. We have talked a lot about the past and he has been able to share how he found my mood swings difficult to understand. He has never experienced the emotional ups and downs I still deal with and he now understands they are part of the package of mental illness.

When I suggested he go to the Family to Family classes, I never dreamt it would have such a powerful affect on our relationship. Even with all this, I still sometimes have a difficult time accepting my disease.

I have read your newsletter about ending the stigma of mental illness. Although I accept the premise in my head, it is still a scary proposition to own that I have bipolar disorder. When I saw the notice in the newsletter that you needed an editor I thought I would love to try it. Silly as it is, I worried that my disease might be a problem. It finally clicked, one afternoon, that, for the first time in my life, I didn't have to hide the real me. NAMI is a safe place to start opening up.

STRivE First Steps
(enter at any week)

Using an educational approach, group member will learn effective coping strategies in order to take first steps on their journey toward mental health recovery. Good to re-fresh skills and add to tool box.

This continuously revolving class will provide a certificate of completion for those who attend at least 8 of the classes.

The 10 class program includes:
• Improving Self-Esteem
• Managing Impulsive Behavior
• Effective Communication
• Stress Management
• Managing Dependent and Enabler Traits
• Controlling Anger
• Problem Solving
• Improving Social Support
• Sleeping Well
• Developing Healthy Boundaries

NAMI SWWA
Vancouver Office: 5411 E. Mill Plain, Suite 4
Vancouver, WA 98661
(360) 695-2823

Kelso Office: 109 Allen Street
Kelso, WA 98626
(360)703-6722

Vancouver: Tuesdays @ 3:30-5:00 p.m.
Kelso: Mondays & Thursdays@ 1:00-2:30 p.m.

To offer hope, help, healing
Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness.

Drop in.

Support for friends and family of people with mental health issues (call to sign up)

Support for families of military personnel who are struggling with mental health or military issues.

Drop in.

Support for friends and family of people who have a mental health diagnosis.

Drop in.

Peer support group for those affected by mental illness (drop in)

Peer support group for those affected by mental illness (drop in)

Drop in.

Support for friends and family of people with mental health issues and sustained recovery from mental illness.

Psychosocial education and tools for a successful reintegration into the community.

All listed events are held at our Vancouver office unless otherwise noted (*)

Unforeseen circumstances that cause a group or class to be cancelled. Please call.

MONDAY

Buck (Movie) - Dec 12th
3:00 – 5:00 pm

TUESDAY

STRive First Steps
Educational Seminar on General Mental Health/Struggling with Mental Health Issues (drop in)
3:00 – 5:00 pm
9:00 – 4:00 pm

BOARD MEETING
2nd Tuesday of every month
7:15 – 8:45 pm

TUESDAY

STRive First Steps
6:00 – 7:30 pm
3:00 – 5:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

AND Thursday of every month
7:15 – 8:45 pm

THURSDAY

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP
Weekly
3:30 – 5:00 pm

FRIDAY

MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT
BY APPOINTMENT
Call 360-695-2823

DISABILITY/WORK INCENTIVES COUNSELING
w/Cindy Falter
BY APPOINTMENT
Call 360-695-2823

INFORMATION LINE
-9:5 Monday-Friday
Call 360-695-2823

By Appointment w/ Cindy Falter

Mental Health Medication Consult

2823
(360) 695-2823
Suite 4
On Mill Plain Blvd between
4111 E. Mill Plain Blvd

Our entrance is on the West side.

CLARK/SKAMANIA

Southwest
Dec 2016

NAMI
Washington
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PROVIDES SUPPORT AND RESOURCES
Call 360-695-2823
INFORMATION LINE 9-5 Monday-Friday

DISABILITY WORK INCENTIVES COUNSELING
Call 360-695-2823
BY APPOINTMENT w/Cindy Falter

MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT
BY APPOINTMENT

Support for friends and family of people with a mental health diagnosis. (Drop in)
Peer support group for those affected by mental illness.
Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness. (Drop in)

(360) 703-6722
109 Allen Street
Kelso, WA 98626

MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT
BY APPOINTMENT
Call 360-695-2823

DISABILITY WORK INCENTIVES COUNSELING
BY APPOINTMENT w/Cindy Falter

MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION CONSULT
BY APPOINTMENT

Support for friends and family of people with a mental health diagnosis. (Drop in)
Peer support group for those affected by mental illness.
Psychoeducation and tools for a successful and sustained recovery from mental illness. (Drop in)
Board Committees
Development Board
Suzanne Arnits
Ann Donnelly
Peggy McCarthy

Governance Board
Michael Altig (chair)
Peggy McCarthy
Janet Ragan

Nominating Committee
Kim Schneiderman (chair)
Peggy McCarthy

My Story
by Angie Corll

I began my journey here at NAMI SW WA back in August of 2013. I became a volunteer then, helping get trained in Basics, Peer to Peer, Family to Family as well as to help train others peers and staff. I have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, but if you really knew me, you would know there if more to my story.

In 2006, I began having neurological symptoms that couldn’t be explained. Symptoms like headaches, intense pain, balance and coordination issues, memory and felt just “off” inside my brain. I slept one time for a week straight and because of this, I was told I had bipolar disorder and began seeing therapy and psych. I began taking medications then also, which only made me gain weight. My symptoms grew worse and my emotional state grew weary. Years later, I because so ill that they hospitalized me a couple of times thinking I had cancer. Eventually, chronic illness became a part of my life and my marriage deteriorated and my brain grew weary. On Halloween 2013, I was told I had a frontal lobe brain tumor that was not able to be operated on. I was left with major medications and felt miserable. Pain and illness were my life-long friends up until now, so I was used to one more issue. As my moods grew worse and more erratic and intense, my boss Peggy gave me a suggestion that ultimately saved my life - to get a surgical second opinion. This wouldn't come for a while though, because my spouse also got cancer. I helped save him and then in July I got a second opinion. I was told I needed brain surgery. My tumor was small but needed to come out to save my life. So, I prepared to have a full-frontal lobe craniotomy and tumor resection. I became paralyzed and having seizure the following weeks and needed emergency brain surgery. That took place on 8/14/2015 at Harborview Medical Center. It took six doctors to open my skull and when they did they found what they called “goop”. My tumor was golf ball sized and had spread to the right and middle sides. No wonder I was in pain and having so many issues! This spreading caused side effects. The main one being frontal lobe epilepsy. I take medications for life now to control my episodes and mostly they are not controlled.

During recovery, I experienced some major trauma at my home and needed to feel for my safety. I ended up in a divorce and on my own in my own place. While life has not been easy, and I’ve had multiple complication, I am free and experiencing a new life tumor free and husband free as well. My mental health had changed and my emotions are now better controlled. I continue therapy, medication and lots of self-care during this recovery process and attribute my successes to my peers and staff at NAMI SW WA who have been my main support system. I have a degree, am working toward another degree and am also an artist and enjoy my dogs, friends and social life as well as career helping many at NAMI SW WA.

With all the hustle and bustle this month, I hope you take time to think of those who struggle with mental illness each day by donating to NAMI SW WA. It is easy to do and would be very much appreciated. Simply visit www.namiswwa.org and click on Donate at the top. If you wish to donate monthly/quarterly choose “recurring donation” on the Donate page. The other choice is to mail in your donation at either of the addresses on the front page. We are sending out an Annual Appeal letter by mail and email. To ensure that your donations support Southwest Washington, please make your checks out to NAMI SW WA because donations made to NAMI or NAMI WA do not support us. Thank you!
Welcome to the Cowlitz Corner. We look forward to helping you along your journey with mental illness recovery.

The outreach team is looking forward to the upcoming presentations with Cowlitz Indian Tribal Health and Cowlitz Veterans Service Center in Longview.

We’re excited and proud to announce that Sharon, Dani and Blaine completed the Family-to-Family facilitator training in Kirkland this past month. Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people living with mental illness. It is a designated evidenced-based program. Research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to an individual living with a mental health condition. NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI SW WA trained family members who have been there and includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises. In January, we hope to offer this class at the office in Cowlitz county. Please call 360.703.6722 for more information and to sign up for the class.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to a survey by Live Science, people from 3 different countries gained the most weight during the 7-day period from December 25 through January 1st. Here are the stats.

- Germany 1.8 pounds
- United States 1.3 pounds
- Japan 1.1 pounds

Here are some suggestions for avoiding weight gain through the holiday season.

Start your day with a bang. Exercising in the morning can help ensure better behavior all day long, according to a study published in the journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise.*

Be picky, picky, picky. Peruse the buffet before you load your plate to avoid foods you don't really want, suggests obesity expert Tim Church, MD, a professor at Pennington Biomedical Research Center at Louisiana State University. If, for instance, you could take or leave sushi but adore sliders, don't start with the tuna rolls hoping to be able to resist the two-bite burger.

"If you pick the stuff you really want and have it in moderation," Dr. Church notes, "you'll stave off those cravings that can get you in trouble later on."
There will be an **Educational Seminar on Genetic Testing**, Tuesday, December 6th from 6 – 7:30 pm. The presentation will describe how a person metabolizes medication and how our individual DNA plays a role in this process. The presenter will also explain pharmacogenomic screening, how it works, give examples of potential test results and then walk through the steps required to get tested.

**Genetic Testing Day at NAMI SW WA - Wednesday, December 8th 9-4pm** Please come to the seminar on Tuesday, December 6th and then come to the office to get genetic testing.

**MOVIES**

**Paper Tigers:** This film that chronicles the lives of some teenagers in Walla Walla, WA who were facing the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in high school and how they were able to gain resiliency skills and overcome the effects of their ACEs.

*Wednesday, Dec 7th, 3-5pm: 5411 E Mill Plain Blvd. Suite 4, Vancouver*

*Tuesday, Dec 15th, 10-12pm: 109 Allen Street, Kelso*

**Buck:** This is a multi-award winning film that follows Buck Brannaman from his abusive childhood to his phenomenally successful approach to horses.

*Monday, Dec 12th, 3-5pm: 5411 E Mill Plain Blvd. Suite 4, Vancouver*

*Thursday, Dec 6th, 1-3pm: 109 Allen Street, Kelso*

**Blood Pressure Readings:** NAMI SW WA is partnering with the SW WA Healthy Living Collaborative to help people better manage their blood pressure. We have easy-to-use cuffs in both our offices and trained volunteers are available to take your blood pressure any time you come to either of our offices. Personal information will not be provided to the Healthy Living Collaborative; the only data we are collecting for them is the range of blood pressures from normal to very high. If your blood pressure is high you will be encouraged to seek medical help. Please join us in this very worthwhile program.

**Therapeutic Art Group for Vets:** This group will be held on Fridays 1:00 - 3:30pm at our Vancouver office. This group is for vets dealing with TBI, PTSD, and other mental health disorders who would like to explore this route to recovery.

Congratulations to Blaine, Dani, Greg and Sharon for completing the Family-to-Family Facilitator training in Kirkland, WA.

Thank you to Angie and Rebecca Lynn for facilitating the Family-to-Family class at our Vancouver office. You made a difference in many people’s lives.

**Annual giving letter**
□ ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - $35.00
□ OPEN DOOR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - $3.00
□ MEMBERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP - FREE
□ DONATION $ ____________

We are a registered non-profit organization 501(C) (3) and donations are tax deductible.

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NAMI Membership Includes:
□ NAMI National Advocate Magazine, quarterly
☆ Washington Friday Facts, weekly e-mail by request
☆ NAMI SW WA Newsletter, monthly

Member Discounts on NAMI Events & Materials,
Please return your payment and completed form to:

NAMI Southwest Washington
5411 E Mill Plain Blvd, Suite 4
Vancouver, WA 98661
To use a credit card and join online, go to www.namiswwa.org and click on Join NAMI