



NAMI Southwest Washington

National Alliance on Mental Illness

We are dedicated to helping people affected by mental illness.

www.namiswwa.org

Vol. 15.1

December 2015

Clark Office

Hours: Monday–Friday
9 am–5 pm

Clark Address

Street address:
8019 NE 13th Avenue
Vancouver, WA 98665

Mailing Address:
PO Box 5353
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Tel: (360) 695-2823
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Cowlitz Office

Hours: Monday–Friday
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Skamania Office

Hours: Monday–Friday
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Skamania Address

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Annual MEETING

January 13, 2015

7:00 - 8:30 pm

NAMI SWWA Office

- Elect board members
- Elect board officers
- Approve 2015 budget
- Recognize community heroes
- Meet trainers and support group facilitators



Open meeting to all NAMI members, guests and the public. Please join us.

Refreshments will be provided.

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS, CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

Have you ever met someone who, despite having awful stuff happen to them, remain cheerful and look forward to each new day? They could be angry and bitter, but they were full of optimism and positive possibilities.

The up and coming field of positive psychology studies the positive impact that optimism has on mental health. Researchers are finding that a positive outlook on life strengthens the immune system (and the body's defenses against illness), cardiovascular system (optimists have fewer heart attacks), and the body's ability to handle stress.

Being an optimist or a pessimist depends on how you talk to yourself. Optimists, because of their thought processes, believe that their own actions result in positive things happening, that they are responsible for their own happiness, and that they can expect more good things to happen in the



Continued on Page 3

From the Directors Desk

President

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Board Members

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Family Specialist

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Development Director

Suzanne Arnits

Counselor/Advocate/Educator

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Mental Health Counselor

Janet Ragan, MA, LMHC

Peer Benefits Specialist

Cindy Falter

SEE ME Coordinator

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MSW Intern

Eric Chastain

Office Assistant

Chelsea Lawhead



County Coordinators

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Cowlitz
Janie Gislason

Skamania
Becky Anderson
Scott Brickley

Volunteer Coordinator
Jason Harris

Class Preparation
Jeannie Bays

NAMI Walks Coordinator
Angela Rheingans

Support Services
Eric Johnson

Outreach
Sandy Frischman

Burgerville Events
Wayne Pattison

Library Coordinator
Nancy Marsh

Family Support Group
Don Greenwood
Kay Roberson
Teri Robinson
Chris Tibbits

**Connection
Support Group**
Eric Johnson

Teen Support Group
Eric Chastain

STRiVe Support Group
Eric Johnson
Daryn Nelsen
Lyn Pattison
Ilse Schuurmans
Janine DeBacker

**Corrections
H-Pod/Workcenter**
Eric Johnson
Daryn Nelsen
Ilse Schuurmans
Janine DeBacker

FOCUSING ON POSITIVE THINKING

You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The process is simple, but it does take time and practice. You are creating a new habit. Here are some ways to think and behave in a more positive and optimistic way:

Identify areas to change. If you want to become more optimistic and engage in more positive thinking, first identify areas of your life that you typically think negatively about, whether it's work, your daily commute or a relationship. You can start small by focusing on one area to approach in a more positive way.

Check yourself. Periodically during the day, stop and evaluate what you're thinking. If you find that your thoughts are mainly negative, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them.

Be open to humor. Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times. Seek humor in everyday happenings. When you laugh at life you feel less stressed.

Follow a healthy lifestyle. Exercise at least three times a week to positively affect mood and reduce stress. Follow a healthy diet to fuel your mind and body. And learn techniques to manage stress.

Surround yourself with positive people. Make sure those in your life are positive, supportive people you can depend on to give helpful advice and feedback. Negative people may increase your stress level and make you doubt your ability to manage stress in healthy ways.

Practice positive self-talk. Start by following one simple rule: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to anyone else. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself. If a negative thought enters your mind, evaluate it rationally and respond with affirmations of what is good about you.

Change Your Thoughts, continued from Page 1

future. Optimists don't blame themselves when bad things happen. They view bad events as results of something outside of themselves.

Pessimists think the opposite way, however. They blame themselves for the bad things that happen in their lives and think that one mistake means more will inevitable come. Pessimists see positive events as flukes that are outside of their control – a lucky break that won't happen again.

You can change your thinking patterns over time and gain the benefits of positive thinking. Start by reframing how you define events, and analyze bad experiences to figure out what good can come of them. Even if something is a failure, think about what you learned from that experience. Instead of blaming yourself for the failure, think about what outside influences affected the outcome, and what you can learn from the experience.

Life is far too short to be miserable, so start cultivating a positive outlook which will in turn help improve your relationships and life experiences.

TOAST TO THE NEW YEAR

- Author Unknown

- Let this coming year be better than all the others.
 - Vow to do some of the things you've always wanted to do but couldn't find the time.
 - Call up a forgotten friend.
 - Share a funny story with someone whose spirits are dragging. A good laugh can be very good medicine.
 - Make a genuine effort to stay in closer touch with family and good friends. The surest way to have a friend is to be one.
 - Find the time to be kind and thoughtful. Give a compliment. It's sure to give someone a badly needed lift.
 - Think things through.
 - Forgive an injustice.
 - Listen more. Be kind.
 - Apologize when you realize you are wrong. An apology never diminishes a person. It elevates him.
 - Don't blow your own horn. If you've done something praiseworthy, someone will notice eventually.
 - Lighten up. When you feel like blowing your top, ask yourself, "Will it matter in a week from today?"
 - Laugh the loudest when the joke is on you.
 - Be optimistic. The can-do spirit is the fuel that makes things go.
 - Don't abandon your old-fashioned principles. They never go out of style.
 - When courage is needed, ask yourself, "If not me, who? If not now, when?"
 - Walk tall, and smile more. You'll look 10 years younger.
 - Don't be afraid to say, "I love you". Say it again. They are the sweetest words in the world.
- And Have a Happy New Year!**

MEET THE BOARD—REBECCA (BECKY) ANDERSON

Becky is NAMI SW WA's Board Treasurer. She lives in Skamania County and works hard to represent all the residents in that county. She has played a key role in NAMI for the past ten years after her two oldest grandchildren were taken from their biological parents. Their father was Becky's son. The children were placed in foster care for a week before we could be placed them with Becky's daughter who offered to adopt these children. During this transition time Becky took a family parenting class and other classes she felt would help her help her daughter to raise the children. When the two girls were just starting school we realized that they both had some issues we were not sure how to handle. We started the process with the school and medical community to reach diagnoses. At this same time their parents had another child, her grandson, who was born addicted to meth, has ADHD and anger management problems. Currently, all three children receive services for their mental health issues. Becky has spent the past seven years helping her daughter with appointments, treatment, therapy and whatever else it has taken to keep our children safe and to make sure they grow up healthy, both physically and mentally.

Becky first became involved with Children's Home Society of Washington, and they told her about NAMI. Her first NAMI class was Family to Family. She was then trained to lead this class to help other families cope better with issues of mental illness. She attended the NAMI BASICS class to learn about childhood diagnoses; Becky became a BASICS class educator and now she is a state trainer, teaching others to become BASICS educators. At least once or twice a year, Becky is the main educator for both Family to Family and BASICS. Most recently, Becky became a state trainer for NAMI SMARTS, the NAMI legislative advocacy program that will be offered January ____ to train all SW WA people who will be joining us in Olympia on Martin Luther King Day, January 18th, as we meet with our legislators and other key decision makers to state our case for better services for those affected by mental health issues.

Becky also serves on three other boards that focus on mental health. She is the Chair for SWBH (Southwest Behavioral Health) Mental Health Advisory Board that reports to the SWBH Governing Board. She is also a member of the Skamania Human Services Advisory Board and the SWRHA (Southwest Regional Health Alliance Community Advisory Council).

As Becky acknowledges: "I really have an advantage over a lot of volunteers, by being retired I can devote more time to all these wonderful Board's and can take an active role in the educational part of making people aware of what resources are out there to help them. It is a great honor and privilege to participate with so many wonderful people involved in advocacy and programs for our mental health community. Thank you for letting me be part of an amazing community."

BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Millions of Americans suffer from borderline personality disorder (BPD). These people exhibit a rigid and unhealthy pattern of thinking, functioning, and behaving. This results in trouble perceiving and relating to situations and people. These characteristics begin to show themselves in adolescence or early adulthood. The most common symptoms of BPD are intense emotions and mood swings, harmful, impulsive behaviors, relationship problems, low self-worth, a panic-stricken fear of being left alone (abandoned), and aggressive behavior. Typically these people have one or more addictions (e.g., alcohol, spending money, gambling, drugs, or sex). They may respond to their unstable emotions through self mutilations (e.g., cutting on one's self), suicidal thoughts, or suicidal behavior.

The exact cause of BPD has not definitely been determined. Research suggests that both nature (biology or genetics) and nurture (environment) in some combinations contribute to the disorder. Research has also shown that childhood abuse, neglect, or separation from caregivers at an early age may contribute. However, there are many people who have experienced these circumstances and do not have BPD.

Historically BPD has had a reputation for being difficult to treat. Although still in the early stages, research now shows that many individuals with BPD have been treated effectively and improve over time. Psychotherapy is usually the first treatment option. Among these are psychodynamic, psychoanalytic, interpersonal, cognitive, dialectical behavior, cognitive analytic, and relapse prevention. At this time, most researched and effective treatment for BPD is dialectical behavior treatment (DBT). Although no drug has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat BPD, many people are treated with medications that may address some symptoms in addition to psychotherapy.

The good news is there is hope. Research has shown that with good treatment, BPD symptoms can be managed and reduced significantly.

More in-depth information is available at:

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness: <http://www.nami.org/>

National Institute of Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

WHAT WE THINK, WE ARE..



You can't live a positive life with negative mind.

Upcoming Classes



Family-to-Family:
Vancouver Office
January 22nd 2015
March 3rd 2015

Family-to-Family
Cowlitz Location
January/February 2015
Exact dates TBD

Family-to-Family
Skamania Location
February/March 2015
Exact Dates TBD



BASICS
Vancouver Location
February , 23rd 2015

BASICS
Cowlitz Location
March/April 2015
Exact Dates TBD

BASICS
Skamania Location
December 6th & 13th 2014



HOMEFRONT
VA Location
January 2015

CALL (360) 695-2823
to sign up or visit our
website to register,
classes fill up quickly
so sign up soon.

TIPS TO STOP CRITICAL SELF-TALK

A little self-criticism is a good thing: It can be a reality check that spurs you to be a better person. But there is a vast difference between "I need to work out more," which sparks your motivation, and "I'm no good.

Negative self-talk doesn't work, because it leads us to focus on our so-called failures instead of the small ways that we could have improved. Over the long term, studies show, negative self-talk is associated with higher stress levels and even depression.

Here are some ways to help change negative self-talk to positive optimism.

1. Put Negative Stuff In A Box When we're beating ourselves up, a tiny mistake can be viewed as a big catastrophe. So the next time a negative thought intrudes, take a few deep breaths and then quickly narrow it down and put your problems into the smallest box possible. If you think you screwed up in a meeting, instead of saying, 'I'm an idiot; I ruined my career,' say, 'Man, I used a poor choice of words.' Visualizing that box can really help." Seeing a tiny box in your mind shows the actual size of the problem and helps you feel more confident that you can take it on.

2. Try The Power Of Possible Thinking Possible thinking, involves reaching for neutral thoughts about the situation and naming the facts. "I'm a fat cow" becomes "I'd like to lose 10 pounds. I know how to do it." The facts give you a lot more choices and directions you can go in.

3. Ask Yourself If You're Really So Guilty Make the choice to be kind to yourself by questioning your initial thoughts, which is key to slowing down the negative voice in your head.

4. Put A Better Spin On Things Use words that describe how you feel, not who you are.
5. Ask: What Would My Best Friend Say? A quick way to stop negative self-talk is to think of someone you trust and imagine what they would say to you. Another rule: If you wouldn't say it to your friend, don't say it to yourself.

6. Give Your Inner Critic A Name Naming it something goofy adds a bit of levity, which helps break through the emotional hold that anxiety has on you.

7. Give Your Rants A Name, Too We have pretty much the same thoughts today that we had yesterday, which should clue us in to the fact that they're habits, not necessarily truths.

8. Pick Up The Phone Shame only works if we keep it secret. Tell someone what happened – invariably those conversations end with laughter."



WELCOME—SUZANNE

Suzanne Arnits has more than 20 years of non-profit management experience, first as Executive Director and subsequently in Foundation and Development Director positions. She has a Bachelor's of Science degree from the University of Washington's School of Public Health.

Suzanne has demonstrated success in fundraising that include: campaigns, events, grants, individual and corporate asks and targeted mailings. Her skill sets include: planning and execution of goals; thinking "outside the box"; community relations; training, inspiring and retaining both volunteers and staff as well as a strong aptitude for technology. Suzanne's successful career is directly related to her passion and drive for each non-profit's mission.

She resides in Cowlitz County with her husband Gunars. They have two grown sons Mathew and Erik plus one grandchild.

Suzanne has volunteered in her community for many years and is currently a board member of the Rotary Club of Longview and a member of Toastmasters. She is delighted to be playing a key role at NAMI Southwest Washington.



**Your attitude is
like a box of
crayons that color
your world.**

**Constantly color
your picture gray,
and your picture
will always be
bleak. Try adding
some bright colors
to the picture by
including humor,
and your picture
begins to light up.**

-Allen Klein



**You can't
stop the
waves, but
you can
learn to
surf.**

-Unknown

Bulletin Board

SURVIVING TO THRIVING is the name of a new support group facilitated by Janet. This confidential six-week session will be open to a maximum of six women. Members will be introduced to new ideas which will help them move forward from the trauma of sexual abuse. Please call Janet at 695-2823 to schedule an appointment to discuss the group and to make sure it is exactly the right fit for you. This is a closed group and registration is required.



NAMI Southwest Washington
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Help support the one in four Americans who will be affected by mental illness this year.

Thank you for being part of the team!

National Alliance on Mental Illness

- ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - \$35.00
- OPEN DOOR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - \$3.00
(No one is refused membership due to economic hardship)
- DONATION \$ _____
★ We are a registered non-profit organization 501(C)(3) and donations are tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State & Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

E-Mail: _____

- 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,
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