Bullying: In David’s Own Voice

I’m sure we all have a situation or two that may come to mind as the subject of bullying comes up in discussion. It may be a first-hand experience we endured during our childhood or teens or perhaps something we witnessed another suffer. Most of us survived the days when we first had our boundaries tested in those easier days spent avoiding scraped knees and counting down to recess: sadly, however, many youth resort to suicide. For those who survive into adulthood, a new set of trials and troubles, responsibility and reward face us.

Unfortunately bullying does not stop when we reach adulthood. It is carried out in the workplace regularly by those who never outgrew such child-like methods of obtaining goals. The motives behind bullying vary; the reasons behind them can only be speculated upon. A person who bullies may dislike or fear their peer for nothing more than differing from their own culture, religion or other character trait. They may mistreat others and treating them poorly due to their seeing others as potential threats to their employment, ego, or perhaps they are just attempting to deflect their own insecurities or shortcomings onto another due to a lack of proper coping skills being obtained as they grew into adulthood. Who truly knows?

To quote a beloved teacher of mine, “Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.” Or to further simplify: We can’t control what they say or do to us. We can’t even control how this makes us feel. All we can control is how we react to what’s done. Only we can control our own actions. But with this being stated, what’s done and over with may still leave emotional scars for us to deal with, some only beginning to show themselves years down the road, their full impact only to be seen as it unravels. If left unchecked, these emotional scars have the ability to consume a person’s mind and disrupt their everyday quality of life. This is often where mental health goes askew and where seeking the assistance of a mental health professional becomes vital. Self-care is key in life if we’re to be able to care for those we love. Being that compassion begins with ourselves, self-care is in fact loving those we love. Take the time to love yourself by keeping your mental health in order. Do it for yourself, or if for no other reason, do it for those you love and THOSE who count on you.

David Hill
Dear NAMI SW WA Staff, Volunteers, Members, and Friends,

February was a busy month for all of us. We completed the first, very successful series of *Out of the Darkness*, our suicide prevention workshop and support group, in Cowlitz County. Intern Eric Chastain worked with our Cowlitz County coordinator, Janie Gislasen to conduct this program that has been helpful to many in that community. NAMI SW WA began what turned out to be an extraordinarily large weekend *Family to Family* group in Washougal, on the border of Skamania County led by mother:daughter team Anna and Astella Schepp. *Homefront*, our support program for family members of Vets was also completed and a second round of that six-week long program began on Monday, February 16th. Our team will take a bit of a break after this group ends on March 23rd before starting another session.

We are very pleased to finally begin our partnership with Vancouver Public Schools and Vancouver Housing Authority by welcoming our VISTA member who began working with us during the week of February 16th. This program will focus on three Vancouver Elementary Schools: Hazel Dell, Martin Luther King, and Washington. NAMI will be launching a new program to help parents and children build resiliency skills; this program has been developed by our newest MSW intern from USC, Mary Seifert-Fleming. The program is a compilation of other evidenced-based work and will be used in this program as well as several others that we will start during this year.

Daryn Nelsen, who graduated from USC in December, 2014, and will be staying on with us is creating two new programs that we have desperately needed. One is a structured Volunteer program; the other is a coordinated Internship program. In the meantime, Daryn is taking various courses that I and other heads of agencies take in order to be able to retain USC interns in our programs so that during this year she can take a leadership role in working with our interns, not only from USC but from other universities and colleges, as well. We will be interviewing two new interns from USC in the next couple of weeks who will begin working with us in May. Each will be with us for a full year. Another student from Portland State University will begin her internship with us also in May,

NAMI SW WA also worked with Clark County Corrections staff to hold the *first Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)* for fifteen new deputies and a number of experienced deputies. We are all very excited about this program. Our former board president, Don Greenwood, worked hard for many years to help make this possible. It is a great honor that we are now able to sponsor this training through funding from Southwest Behavioral Health (SWBH).

In March NAMI SW WA will host a state training for *Parents and Teachers As Allies* on Saturday, March 29th. This class has also been made possible by funding from both SWBH and Providence Health & Services. We are fortunate to have this dedicated support in our region. If you are interested in being trained to lead this wonderful program, please call the office (360-695-2823).

Please think about ways to take care of yourselves as we move into spring. Each of us has that immense responsibility to do all we can to protect our own health and wellness. A long walk in during our currently sunny days will build endorphins that help to make us happy and content, so, if you can, get outside and enjoy the daffodils and red bud trees.

Best to all,
Peggy
ADULT BULLYING

You don’t hear a lot about adult bullying, but it is a serious problem in our society. We hope that as people mature and grow older that they would stop the behaviors they exhibited when they were teens. However, adults can be bullies just like children.

Adults tend to use verbal bullying as opposed to physical bullying. Adults bully to gain power over another person and to make themselves the dominant adult. They want to humiliate their victims and to “show them who is boss.”

There are several types of adult bullies, and here is how they operate:

**Narcissistic Adult Bully:** Self-centered, this type of bully does not have any empathy for other people. They also have little anxiety about consequences. Even though these bullies seem to feel good about themselves, they have a brittle narcissism that makes them need to put others down.

**Impulsive Adult Bully:** Impulsive adult bullies have a hard time restraining themselves. The bullying may be unintentional or may occur when the bully is upset or concerned about something completely unrelated to the victim.

**Physical Bully:** While adult bullying is rarely physical, adult bullies may use threats and physical domination through looming. Also, a physical bully may damage or steal another person’s property.

**Verbal Adult Bully:** Verbal bullying involves starting rumors about the victim, using sarcastic or demeaning language. This type of bullying is very difficult to document. The emotional and psychological impacts are very harmful and can result in depression or even poor job performance for those being bullied.

**Secondary Adult Bully:** This is someone who joins in with the bully so that s/he does not become the bully at a later date. These bullies are mostly concerned about protecting themselves.

Bullies at the workplace can slow down productivity, create a hostile work environment, and reduce morale. Supervisors should be made aware of this practice and deal with it in a proactive way.

ARE YOU A BULLY?

Most bullies have been victims of bullying themselves. Just because you have had bad experiences in the past is not an excuse for bad behavior, although it might be the cause.

First of all, you have to be able to understand the cause of your own behavior if you are going to change. Do you need to change the way you treat others?
• Read everything you can about the causes and consequences of bullying.
• Talk to someone about it. Research where you might be able to find a therapist who specializes in treating bullies.
MEET THE BOARD: MICHAEL ALTIG

Michael Altig has been helping children and families in conflict for the 30 years. Before that he claims he was your average “beer drinkin’, pot smokin’ logger” that God called out of the woods for a completely different purpose in life. Along the way he completed a bachelor’s degree in psychology at Northwest College of the Assemblies of God. Bible college is where he met his wife, Merrilee. They have been married and traveling this life pilgrimage for the past 27 years. Michael completed his Master of Arts degree in marriage, family, and child counseling through Chapman University in 1996. He has been serving Clark County as a child and family therapist since then in his private practice, Christian Counseling Ministries.

Michael and Merrilee have been blessed with two children. They have a 23-year-old son and a 25 year old daughter who is closing in on her mechanical engineering degree at Portland State University. They came to Vancouver as strangers but have long since called this community their home. The home school, academic competition, and church communities have provided a wonderful place for their family to grow and thrive. There is a great network of mental health and human services providers with whom he can coordinate services to clients.

The network of services to people with mental illness has been extremely important to their son since he’s been living away from home. His mental illness needs require daily support. There were two areas in which his parents did not fully grasp: the anger of an older teen pursuing independence without the benefit of logical thought or reality testing is baffling and full of conflict. The support their son needed as a young adult is different but every bit as important. Michael would encourage families to weather that storm because your child will need your help on the other side.

ELEVEN FACTS ABOUT CYBER BULLYING

1. Nearly 43% of kids have been bullied online. 1 in 4 has had it happen more than once.
2. 70% of students report seeing frequent bullying online.
3. Over 80% of teens use a cell phone regularly, making it the most common medium for cyber bullying.
4. 68% of teens agree that cyber bullying is a serious problem.
5. 81% of young people think bullying online is easier to get away with than bullying in person.
6. 90% of teens who have seen social-media bullying say they have ignored it. 84% have seen others tell cyber bullies to stop.
7. Only 1 in 10 victims will inform a parent or trusted adult of their abuse.
8. Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying.
9. About 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out 10 say it has happened more than once.
10. Bullying victims are 2 to 9 times more likely to consider committing suicide.
11. About 75% of students admit they have visited a website bashing another student.


“Children should be able to live a life free from bullying and harassment and it is time that we all took a stand against this.”
Katherine Jenkins

Courage is fire, and bullying is smoke.
Benjamin Disraeli

“Bullying is killing our kids. Being different is killing our kids and the kids who are bullying are dying inside. We have to save our kids whether they are bullied or they are bullying. They are all in pain.”
Cat Cora

“People need to realize bullying has just as much of an impact online because words are so cutting and difficult to deal with.”
Bridgit Mendler

“Often I think bullying - especially in its adult, verbal forms - is the sort of thing you don't realize till the end of the day, and it's a horrible feeling to realize something wasn't just a bland statement, but was actually cruel. But then we're all capable of things that are breathtakingly cruel.”
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WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STOP BULLYING?

When you are being bullied, it isn’t likely that you will be able to say or do anything that will make them treat you better. The best strategy is to change how you respond. If a bully does not get expected response, you have successfully stood up to them. Choose not to be a victim, and the bullying will stop.

How can you do this? Bullies tend to pick on people who cannot defend themselves, and their enjoyment depends on the victims’ unwillingness or inability to fight back. Also, most bullying is conducted when there are no witnesses around. It probably won’t work if you make a complaint against a bully who is generally liked, or respected for some position of authority. This can even result in a dangerous situation. If you are a victim and you can’t defend yourself, try the following strategies:

Tell someone you trust. Name names and details. Make your situation very clear. Be brave.

Arrange for a witness to the bullying. If the person bullying you only picks certain times or situations to victimize you, ask someone you trust to watch or listen when the bullying takes place. If you must use technology to record the bullying, make sure it is legally admissible. Do your homework and be prepared.

Confront the bully. You can do this, your trusted person or witness can do it, you can hire a lawyer, or you can go to the police or some other authority. It’s important to expose the bully and hold him accountable. Once exposure happens, and you have evidence, the bullying most likely will stop.

Don’t try these:

Getting into a fight. If you resort to physical confrontation, someone might get hurt or you might go to jail. Nothing will be resolved.

Returning the abuse. When you are hurt or angry, it is easy to become a bully yourself. Be the stronger person.

Acting out in frustration. Don’t go home and kick the dog or anything else. In Washington State any destruction of property in a home when another person is present can be declared domestic violence. Cruelty can spread like wildfire. Don’t start an epidemic. Protect yourself.

Suicide. This won’t stop the bully from finding a new victim, and it may stop you from enjoying anything else. If you are having thoughts about ending your life, GET HELP IMMEDIATELY. Call Clark County Mental Health Crisis Line at (360) 696-9560 and attend NAMI SWWA’s next Out of the Darkness session that will start in April.

NAMI SOUTHWEST WALK

NAMI Southwest WA. is teaming up with both NAMI Washington and NAMI Oregon for the annual NAMIWalks. The NAMIWalks is not only our largest fundraising event, but it’s also an outstanding platform that allows us to raise awareness about mental health and come together as a community. We currently have several walk teams that you can join: Some of these are Donnelly BoardWalk, RaisingJordan, and Clark County Juvenile Court. Other teams are being established by our many Southwest WA. agencies, businesses, and our dedicated community members

All money raised is used to fund the many educational and community support services NAMI provides free of charge for those in need. Please help us by becoming a sponsor or joining a Walk team which will walk in Portland on Saturday, MAY 17th at the Esplanade. If you prefer not to walk you can always be on a team as a virtual walker. For more information you can contact Angela at angela@namiswwa.org, or go to NAMIWalks.org/northwest. Be sure to click on the NAMI affiliate you will be supporting.
MARCH BOOK REVIEW:
The Angry Heart, Overcoming Borderline and Addictive Disorders
by Joseph Santoro, PhD, with exercises by Ronald Cohen, PhD.

In the NAMI, January newsletter, an article described symptoms and causes of BPD, (Borderline Personality Disorder), and gave a list of various helpful therapies. Similar help is available for individuals who use this interactive, do-it-yourself book. The exercises could well be life-changing if a person is motivated to follow them for 30 minutes a day 5 days a week for 2 months. According to the authors, it will “help you change the behavioral cycle that keeps you in the zone of mental agony.”

The key to making life-changes is consistently doing the exercises and writing in a journal every day. Each journal exercise lists an objective, a background for understanding the exercise, and any insights or positive behavior gained from the leading questions that have been asked. Behavior contracts keep those doing the exercises on track while reinforcing new behaviors. Positive affirmations provide help for breaking various destructive behaviors associated with BPD: addiction, self-inflicted violence, manipulation of others, etc.

The book suggests finding cheerleaders to support your efforts at recovery. Some of NAMI SWWA’s support groups may be the right fit, or you can call, the American Self-Help Clearinghouse at (201) 625-7101 for help in finding a cheerleader. In addition, you might use the book along with the help of a trained professional who can speed you along the path to recovery.

This book is a keeper for those who use it. Our lending library has a copy with a previous reader’s underlining in the first third of the book. Let us hope the person who underlined those portions continued doing the exercises and has fully recovered from symptoms of BPD.

Book review by Nancy Marsh

January 2015 brought our first Cowlitz volunteer orientation class. The energy and enthusiasm of our volunteers is the backbone of NAMI. Without them we couldn’t possibly offer our classes, groups and services FREE of charge to the consumer. We are ever so grateful to all of our supporters.

NAMI Cowlitz office now offers 1:1 counseling regardless of insurance coverage. To inquire please call the office at 360-984-6096.

I have been busy meeting many of our fellow mental health service providers, learning what each program provides and providing them with our NAMI literature describing all of our NAMI programs. We look forward to working in alliance with them all.

We've also been invited to give presentations to local groups introducing them to NAMI’s many FREE offerings for both individual and family support for those affected by mental illness. On Feb 18th the Rotary Club invited us to speak at their luncheon. On Feb 28th we will be speaking at East Hill Alliance Mental Health support group and on March 11th we will be speaking to all staff at the Goodwill Industries Worksource Center.

We hope you'll all join us on March 21st, 11am-2pm for an outdoor hotdog & chili feed at the Church of the Nazarene in memory of Ashlee England, who recently passed away at the very beginning of her adult life after battling mental illness and chemical dependency.

We hope to see many new people come join our STRivE group on Thursdays from 4:00pm-5:30pm at 900 Ocean Beach Highway, Longview.

Until next month.... Be well.

Janie Gislason
Cowlitz County Coordinator
Basics in Vancouver: This class for parents and caretakers of children and adolescents to age 18 will start Monday, March 10 from 6:00-8:00 pm at the Vancouver office. The instructors will be Lyn Pattison and Charla Struys. Please call (360) 695-2823 to make sure you are signed up.

NAMI Volunteer Training will be held every last Friday of each month from 1:00-3:00 pm. This training is required to be able to volunteer with NAMI SWWA.

Parents & Teachers as Allies - Training in Vancouver—NAMI SW Washington and NAMI Washington are pleased to announce an addition to the state training schedule: Parents & Teachers as Allies, Saturday, March 28, 2015, 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM. Funding for this class has been made possible by grants to NAMI SW Washington. NAMI SW Washington and NAMI Washington are collaborating to make the training possible. However, there will be no travel or lodging funds available for NAMI members travelling to Vancouver for the training - those costs will be the responsibility of the affiliate or individual attending the training. NAMI SW Washington will pay for a light continental breakfast, lunch and snacks, and all training materials. If you have any questions contact the NAMI Washington office at 206.783.4288. To obtain a registration form and to see the requirements for this class, please see www.namiwa.org.

Farewell to Connie Mom-Chhing: Connie Mom-Chhing, the CEO of Southwest Behavioral Health (SWBH) the organization that is responsible for providing NAMI SW WA with about 60% of our funding, resigned this past week to take a new position with CUP (Columbia United Providers). Connie will head up their Behavioral Health Organization. We look forward to continued interaction with her and with CUP as we move into the new era of integrated healthcare. Thanks, Connie, for your constant advocacy for NAMI and our community services.

HomeFront classes will begin again in April. Please call our office number to reserve your spot in this class for families of veterans.

A Board Retreat in Longview at Walstead Mertsching Attorneys At Law, 1700 Hudson Street, Longview, WA 98632 on Saturday Feb. 21st from 1-5.

A Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday the 10th from 7:15 - 8:45... This meeting is open to members and the public.

Family-to-Family will be held in Vancouver starting in early April. Please call the office to sign up for this class.

NAMIWalks Washington
June 6, 2015
Marina Park, Kirkland, WA
Sign up at http://www.namiwa.org
☐ ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - $35.00
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Thank you for being part of the team!
Help support one in four Americans who will be affected by mental illness this year.

Thank you for being part of the team!