



# NAMI NEWSLINE

National Alliance on Mental Illness - Cook County North Suburban

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS

2017 Volume 3



**From the NAMI CCNS Board**

*"We still live in a near silent world when dealing with the topic of mental illness."*  
Gregg Sackrider, Board Treasurer and Family-to-Family Teacher



**From the Executive Director**

*This year's Walk was especially meaningful as a dedication to the memory of Grant Nelson. Grant's mother, Tina, is a long time member of the NAMI CCNS Board of Directors. Thank you to everyone who joined us on September 24<sup>th</sup> to share in celebrating Grant's life.*



**My Story: Sandie Elliott, Family to Family Teacher**

*I don't want anyone to feel bad that my sister is gone. What I try to do is to realize that although she is no longer with us, she is no longer suffering from any of her mental and physical illnesses and is at peace.*



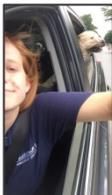
**Research Report:** Margaret Winker Cook, MD, Editor

❖ Tai Chi improved depression in Chinese Americans ❖ African American youths treated for ADHD via Medicaid less likely to have adequate follow-up than Hispanics and whites ❖ Blacks are much more likely than whites to experience early deaths in their nuclear families



**Volunteer Profile:** Carrie Thilmany-Drews

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**New Staff Profile:** Kathleen Hughes, Summer 2017 Intern

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**From the Program Director:** NAMI National has joined forces with 7 Cups of Tea  
*7 Cups is an online support and therapy network*



**State and National NAMI News**



**New grant** to fund training for bilingual facilitators

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**NAMI CCNS Calendar**



### From the NAMI CCNS Board

***“We still live in a near silent world when dealing with the topic of mental illness.”***

by Gregg Sackrider, Board Treasurer and Family-to-Family Teacher

Education is the key to dealing with the ever-changing world around us, especially when it comes to disease. Formal schooling teaches us about the most commonplace illnesses. We also learn by sharing information when a friend or loved one is stricken.

*Except for mental illness.* We still live in a near silent world when dealing with this topic. We are oblivious about mental illness until it hits *our* family, and we find that we are woefully unprepared to address the unbelievable stress that’s just been dumped on us.

So when this happens where do you turn? NAMI! With the knowledge that NAMI classes bring and the support of others in similar situations, we move out of the dark ages. NAMI is a lifesaver for the families and support givers.

So here’s an idea: Let’s educate everybody about NAMI *before* they actually need it. Invite everyone to this fall’s Run/Walk on Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, forward NAMI emails to your friends, spread the word on Facebook and the many other media marvels we have at our disposal.

Educate people for their future. They can thank you later.



### **From the Executive Director**

I want to express my personal gratitude to everyone who joined us on September 24th to walk and run along the Lake Michigan shore in Evanston. This year's Walk was especially meaningful as it was dedicated to the memory of Grant Nelson. Grant was stabbed to death earlier this year while transporting a passenger as an Uber driver. Grant's mother, Tina, is a long time member of the NAMI CCNS Board of Directors. As a gesture of support to Tina, her husband, Leonard, and children Todd and Alex, our Board wanted to honor Grant's memory in this special way. If you weren't able to join us on September 24<sup>th</sup>, there is still time to give to the NAMI CCNS Walk. Just go to [www.namiccns.org](http://www.namiccns.org). Please join us in celebrating Grant's life.

*– Nancy Carstedt*



Sandie's sister Sonia with her daughter Kate

### **My Story: Sandie Elliott, Family to Family teacher**

*I don't want anyone to feel bad that my sister is gone. What I try to do is to realize that although she is no longer with us, she is no longer suffering from any of her mental and physical illnesses and is at peace.*

My sister Sonia was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia back in 1997 at the age of 40, which was unheard of at that time. Schizophrenia usually shows up between ages 18 and 23. At the time Sandie was diagnosed, it did not make sense to me and definitely not to the doctors.

Her first and most memorable episode was on a very cold February day. It was a Saturday morning. I went home for a visit. Sonia and her 6-year old daughter lived with my mom. I turned the corner to approach the house and saw several police cars parked outside the house. I slowly walked up the stairs to the front door, opened it

very cautiously, and asked, "Is everything alright?" My mom was sitting in the living room with my sister and several police officers and detectives. One of the detectives took me outside to talk. He said Sonia called the police stating that someone was trying to kill her and she was being followed.

As I listened, I was in shock. Who would want to hurt my sister? I stayed to talk with my sister after the police left. She told me about cars following her, flyers with her face on them, "the shooters." I believed her. I had no reason not to. Later, I could not stop thinking about what she had shared with me. After a while, I remember saying to myself, "None of this makes any sense." I finally concluded that none of this happened, and I had to find out what was going on.

As time went by, subtle paranoid episodes continued to occur, involving strangers following her or co-workers going through her trash can at work looking at papers she had thrown away. She then had a catatonic episode at work and had to be transported to Evanston Hospital. That's when her diagnosis was introduced to us. The doctor said, "I think Sonia is paranoid schizophrenic." I looked at him and said, "You think?!" Everyone was baffled because of her age. No one had heard of late on-set schizophrenia at that time. She stayed on the psychiatric ward for 11 days. She spoke slowly and slurred her words because of the drugs. It was like she was moving in slow motion. It was a sad state of being.

Over the years, this disease took its toll and Sonia lost a good and secure job she had held for 13 years. She lost her salary, insurance, and struggled as she was losing herself. Her physical health deteriorated drastically and eventually, she was unable to care for herself. On July 31, 2015, she was admitted to Evanston Hospital because she had developed a massive brain bleed. Her surgeon explained that even if she had brain surgery, he could not guarantee that she would be able to open her eyes and look at me again. That was when I told the surgeon to "leave my sister alone and not to do anything." She had been through enough. The very next day, August 1, we took my sister off of life support. She went peacefully."

*Sonia's daughter Kate lives with Sandie and is in college studying to be a social worker.*

## Research Report

Margaret Winker Cook, MD

*In honor of National Minority Mental Health Month we are highlighting research pertaining to people of color.*



### **Tai Chi improved depression in Chinese Americans**

Chinese American patients (average age 54 years, 72% women) with untreated depression who took 12 weeks of Tai Chi were more than twice as likely to have improvement in their depression symptoms as patients in education or waitlist groups. (Those in the study all had major depressive disorder. A total of 56% of those receiving Tai Chi had at least a 50% reduction on the Hamilton depression rating scale, vs 25% of those in the waitlist group and 21% in the education group.)

Those in the Tai Chi group were also more likely to achieve remission (in other words, they no longer met diagnostic criteria for major depressive disorder) than those in the waitlist group. (50% of those in the Tai Chi group achieved remission, vs 21% in the education group and 10% in the waitlist group. The difference between the Tai Chi and the education groups was not significant).

The authors wanted to learn whether Tai Chi might be a more culturally acceptable alternative to medication treatment for depression. The study was a randomized trial and therefore a strong study design, but was only a pilot study because it was small (67 patients total). They plan to conduct a larger, more definitive study to confirm these preliminary results.

*From:* Yeung AS et al. A Pilot, Randomized Controlled Study of Tai Chi With Passive and Active Controls in the Treatment of Depressed Chinese Americans. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2017 May;78(5):e522-e528. doi: 10.4088/JCP.16m10772.



### **African American youths treated for ADHD via Medicaid less likely to have adequate follow-up than Hispanics and whites**

Among youths receiving Medicaid, African Americans starting treatment for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were less likely to have adequate follow-up than whites and Hispanics, a study has shown. Over three-fifths of youths discontinued medication, while over two-fifths ended treatment altogether. African American and Hispanic youths were more likely than white youth to discontinue medication and to disengage from treatment. African American and Hispanic youths were more likely than white youths to receive combined medication and psychotherapy, vs.

medication alone.

The study involved data from 172,322 youths aged 6 to 12 from 9 states in the years 2008 to 2011. In 2011 the American Academy of Pediatrics issued guidelines on diagnosis, evaluation, and treatment of ADHD in children and adolescents (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/5/1007>) so care may have improved since the data in this study were collected.

*From:* Cummings JR et al. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in ADHD Treatment of Youth Enrolled in Medicaid. *Pediatrics*. 2017 June;139(6) e20162444. doi: 10.1542/peds.2016-2444



### **Blacks are much more likely than whites to experience early deaths in their nuclear families**

Blacks in their childhood through midlife are much more likely than whites to have their mothers, fathers, or siblings die, according to a new study. Blacks in young adulthood through later life are more likely than whites to experience their child's or spouse's death.

Blacks were at least three times more likely to lose their mother, more than twice as likely to lose their father, and 20% more likely to have lost a sibling by age 10 than whites. Blacks were also more than two times more likely to lose a child by age 20. The researchers say their results "reveal an underappreciated layer of racial inequality in the United States, one that could contribute to the intergenerational transmission of health disadvantage."

The researchers used two US studies, the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (7,617 people born 1980–1984) and the Health and Retirement Study (34,757 people born 1900-1965) to learn how often individuals experienced death of family members. The authors also evaluated two more datasets and found very similar results.

*From:* Umberson D et al. Black Americans experienced more early deaths of parents, siblings, and spouses within age cohorts through midlife. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2017 Jan; 114(5), 915-920. doi:10.1073/pnas.1605599114



*Margaret Winker Cook, MD is a member of the NAMI-CCNS Board of Directors. She is a Trustee of the World Association of Medical Editors ([WAME](#)) and has served as a contributor and editor for JAMA and [PLOS Medicine](#). She earned her MD from the University of Illinois School of Medicine and completed her residency and fellowship training at the University of Chicago.*



### **Volunteer Profile: Carrie Thilmany-Drews**

*“The only difference between mental illness and a physical illness is you can’t see it.”*

Carrie began volunteering for NAMI CCNS in September 2016. She provides administrative support, enters donor data, generates thank-you letters for donors, and, as she puts it, “does whatever is needed in the office.”

Carrie retired in August 2016 and vowed to find someplace to volunteer her time. “That’s when I got an email looking for help making phone calls regarding the last fall’s Walk,” she said. “When I realized help was needed in the office, I was thrilled as this is my niche.”

Carrie is a Family-to-Family alum. Soon after her son was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, a friend recommended the Family to Family class. Carrie found that it helped her so much that she has referred other people to the class. “I love the fact that NAMI is campaigning to end the stigma associated with mental illness,” she said. “Stigma is often built around fear. Fear is often built around not understanding. As more and more people understand mental illness, hopefully the stigma can end. NAMI has motivated me to help fight against the stigma.”

When she is not volunteering for NAMI CCNS, Carrie and her husband are at their second home in southwestern Wisconsin, where they have four chickens and two alpaca. They love to travel and to spend time with their grandchildren when they can. Her hobbies include taking guitar lessons and photography.

Carrie wishes everyone understood that “mental illness is just that, an illness. The only difference between mental illness and a physical illness is you can’t see it. You can feel a lump, see a broken bone, but you can’t see inside someone’s mind. I believe once our society treats mental illness as just that, an illness, people who are affected won’t be so hesitant to seek help.”

Carrie and her husband Jeff in Alaska, with Mendenhall Glacier in the background.



Katie and Molly on the road!

### **New Staff Profile: Kathleen Hughes, Summer 2017 Intern**

*“I compare mental illness to cancer; for some people it’s a stretch but for me it makes perfect sense. Just like cancer, mental illness needs treatment or else it will never get better.”*

Katie is the NAMI CCNS 2017 Summer Intern. She starts her third year at Tulane University in the fall, where she is a Psychology major on the Pre-Nursing track. Katie assists Susan Ockerlund, Development Director, working mainly on the NAMI CCNS’s 5k Walk/Run on September 24<sup>th</sup>. She reaches out to potential new sponsors and local companies and posts the Walk/Run information onto different walking and running sites. “There is a lot of stuff to do for the Walk, so I am happy to give Sue an extra hand,” she said.

Katie is very passionate about mental illness. “I personally struggle with anxiety and after receiving my diagnose I got involved into the mental health community,” she shared. “I think it’s crucial that everyone struggling gets the care that they need. I think it’s also important to get rid of the stigma surrounding mental health. There should never be a stigma surrounding a physical disease.”

When she isn’t hitting the books at Tulane or volunteering at NAMI CCNS, you can find Katie playing with the love of her life, her dog Molly, a soft-coated Wheaten Terrier. This summer she is hanging out with friends and family and working jigsaw puzzles. “I have already completed three puzzles this summer!” she said. “Also, on Monday nights, you can find me watching *The Bachelorette*.”

Katie wants everyone to understand that mental illness is a physical disease – it is a fault in brain chemicals and genes, not a fault in the person or their environment. “I want everyone to treat mental illness as if it were like any other physical ailment,” she says.

“I compare mental illness to cancer; for some people it’s a stretch but for me it makes perfect sense. Just like cancer, mental illness needs treatment or else it will never get better. Just like cancer, mental illness takes a toll on the individual and their family. Just like cancer, mental illness takes away lives. Yet, patients suffering from cancer are treated better than patients suffering from a mental illness.

“There is no stigma around cancer just pity, but if you’re mentally ill you can be considered lazy, strange, insane. You’re considered to be less than everyone else. I want people to understand that this should not be the case. People with mental illness should be treated the same as any cancer patient by everyone and anyone.

### Staff Profile: Brian Rootberg, Peer Program Coordinator



Brian and Jen Rootberg with their daughter, Lila

*I wish that slowly, over time, people of all types will be able to understand that ‘mental illness’ is exactly the same as what is considered ‘physical illness’ so that the unnecessary out casting disappears. – Brian*

Brian has been with NAMI CCNS for almost 9 years, first as a volunteer for a couple years and then as a member of the staff. He came to NAMI CCNS as an individual in a Connections support group. After participating for a year, he was asked to start facilitating that group.

“The program helped me improve my life so tremendously that I started volunteering in the office,” Brian shares. “Shortly after that I was asked to take on the role of helping to run the programs I do and continuing to build that up as time has gone on. I now get to do things for others with NAMI CCNS that the people here, at the time, did for me.”

As the Peer Program Coordinator for NAMI CCNS, Brian runs and oversees all of the programs involving individuals living with mental illness, such as Connections, Balance for Success, and In Our Own Voice. He is also trained to facilitate Connections support groups, present In Our Own Voice (IOOV) programs, and, most recently, to train individuals to become presenters for the IOOV program for the State of Illinois. He and volunteer Linda Logan, also an IOOV presenter, are both now State of Illinois trainers for the program, which contributes greatly to increasing the IOOV line-up of speakers.

When he’s not working, Brian keeps himself healthy by spending as much time with friends, family, and most importantly his wife and daughter. “They are the core of what keeps me going on a daily basis,” Brian says.



## **NAMI National has joined forces with 7 Cups of Tea**

*7 Cups is an online support and therapy network*

by Christine Somervill, PhD, Program Director

Sometimes we just need to be heard. NAMI national has joined forces with [7 Cups of Tea](#), an on-demand emotional health and well-being service.

Anyone who wants to talk about whatever is on their mind can quickly reach out to a trained, compassionate Listener through the 7 Cups network, which has hundreds of listeners from all walks of life and with diverse experiences.

People connect with 7 Cups Listeners for all kinds of reasons, from big existential thoughts to small, day-to-day things that we all experience. Unlike talking to family or friends, a 7 Cups Listener doesn't judge or try to solve problems and say what to do. Listeners just listen. They understand. They give you the space you need to help you clear your head.

7 Cups of Tea is draws its name from a famous Chinese poem. The suggestion is that each cup provides a different level of healing. It's important that our community feels that 7 Cups of Tea is a place where you can sit down and have several cups of tea with a friend. It isn't just a one-time meeting. You can touch base as much as you like.

### **7 Cups of Tea, by Lu Tong (795 - 835 CE)**

The first cup kisses away my thirst,  
and my loneliness is quelled by the second.  
The third gives insight worthy of ancient scrolls,  
and the fourth exiles my troubles.  
My body becomes lighter with the fifth,  
and the sixth sends word from immortals.  
But the seventh—oh the seventh cup—  
if I drink you, a wind will hurry my wings  
toward the sacred island.

*Translated by Christopher Nelson*



The banner features a green and blue background. On the left, the text reads "NAMI Illinois Conference" in white, with "Northbrook, IL" below it. On the right, the text reads "October 13 - 14, 2017", "Changing Minds in Challenging Times", and "Techny Towers Conference and Retreat Center" in white. A small photograph of a building by a pond is in the top right corner.

The NAMI Illinois 2017 Annual Conference, Changing Minds in Challenging Times, will be held October 13-14, 2017 at [Techny Towers](#) Conference & Retreat Center in Northbrook, Illinois. Presentations will address four major areas: Understanding Policy & Advocacy, Consumer & Family Engagement, Strengthening NAMI, and New Research, Practices & Innovation. [Click here](#) for updates to the conference schedule and for registration information.



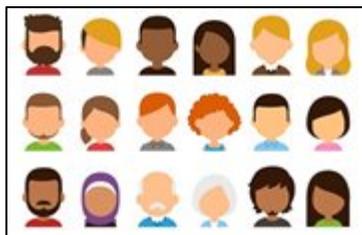
[How to Help Someone in Crisis](#)  
By Laura Greenstein | Sep. 20, 2017

It can be intimidating talking to someone who is going through a mental health crisis or seriously considering suicide. However, sometimes all a person needs in that situation is one person being there, helping them access the help they need. You can be that person.



[Mental Health In The Workplace: The Value of Rest](#)  
By Jennifer W. Adkins, Ph.D. | Aug. 28, 2017

A period of stillness and rest may be a necessary precursor to a more active mental health recovery. Though, resting is not as easy as it sounds. Here's some advice on how to rest the right way.



[Disparities Within Minority Mental Health Care](#)  
By Larry Shushansky, LICSW | Jul. 31, 2017

The mental health system is flawed. We all know that and many of us have experienced it personally. But *all* mental health advocates should band together in improving the status quo for those who are the least likely to both seek and receive treatment. Those who are most vulnerable to the systemic disparities of getting help. Those who only get the spotlight for one month out of the year.



## Spreading Princess Diana's Message of Kindness

By Mary Giliberti, J.D. | Aug. 31, 2017

Princess Diana once said, "Two things stand like a stone. Kindness in another's trouble, and courage in your own." Let's all reflect on this message today, the 20th anniversary of Princess Diana's passing, as we thank her for all she's done and all she continues to inspire others to do.

Public Policy  
Platform of  
The National Alliance on  
Mental Illness



### [Public Policy](#)

Public policy makes a difference in the lives of both the people living with mental health conditions and the people in their lives. Changes in policy can mean better outcomes.

But we still have work to do, and we need your help. Learn about mental health advocacy. Talk to your neighbors, friends and family about why these issues are important. Find out how you can get involved with your local NAMI's advocacy efforts.



### **New grant to fund training for bilingual facilitators**

Thanks to an Acting Up Award from the Chicago Community Trust, NAMI CCNS will be able to train up to four qualified bilingual group facilitators or teachers.

The Acting Up Award of \$1,000 was the result of our application following a May 2016 [On The Table](#) community conversation we hosted in Skokie, in partnership with the Trust and [The Kennedy Forum](#).

*On the Table* is an annual forum hosted by the Trust and designed to elevate civic conversation, foster new relationships and inspire collaborative action across the region to address the most pressing issues facing communities in greater Chicago. The Kennedy Forum advances the current ideas, policies, and programming in behavioral health shown to be most effective. The Forum recruited 20+ partners, including NAMI CCNS, to host On the Table conversations about mental health needs.

Fourteen public health officials and police-, school- and town- based social workers from our catchment communities participated in the conversation, which was facilitated by our Program Director Dr. Christine Somervill. The greatest and most pressing mental health need identified by the participants is the lack of services for community residents who do not speak English.

Organizations that held an On the Table conversation were eligible to apply for funding to address a need that was identified. NAMI CCNS submitted a [video](#), per the application requirements, and was selected for a \$1,000 Acting Up Award.

Dr. Somervill is recruiting potential teachers and facilitators from the Pakistani, Korean, Filipino, and Assyrian communities.

## NAMI CCNS Calendar

Program	Meets on:	Date:	Time:	Where:
<b>BASICS FOR PARENTS:</b> 6 week course No fee. Registration required. Call 847-716-2252.	Wednesdays	10/4/2017	6:30 - 9:00 pm	New Trier Northfield High School, 7 N. Happ Road, Northfield
<b>FAMILY REFRESHER WORKSHOP:</b> 4 week course No fee. Registration required. Call 847-716-2252.	Tuesdays	10/10/2017	7:00-9:30 pm	Holy Family of Nazareth, 310 N. River Road, Des Plaines, 60016

Support Group	Meets on:	Time	Where:	Please take note:
Connections Recovery	Every Monday	4-5:00 pm	Beth Emet Synagogue, 1224 Dempster, Evanston, IL, 60201 <i>Ring bell at entrance to Education Building. Room 103, first floor.</i>	NO MEETINGS ON SOME JEWISH HOLIDAYS.
Connections Recovery	Every Saturday	4-5:30 pm	Lutheran General Hospital, 1775 West Dempster, Park Ridge, IL, 60068 <i>Use East B Elevator. Room 1055, Special Functions Dining Room, 10th Floor.</i>	NO MEETINGS ON HOLIDAY WEEKENDS.
Connections Recovery	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sundays	1-2:30 pm	Kenneth Young Center Drop In 1585 West Dempster, Mt. Prospect, IL, 60056 <i>Suite 110</i>	
Dual Solutions Peer Support	Thursdays	6 - 7:30 pm	Chicago Behavioral Hospital, 555 Wilson Lane, Des Plaines, IL 60016 <i>Follow parking directions to lot in rear of hospital; use rear entrance.</i>	Contact Kara Moonan with questions (847) 224-9740
Family Support	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Mondays	7-8:30 pm	Skokie Hospital, 9600 Gross Point Road, Skokie, IL 60076 <i>East parking lot, main entrance, Abramson Conference Room behind Information Desk</i>	
Family Support	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays	7-8:30 pm	Lutheran General Hospital, 1775 West Dempster, Park Ridge, IL, 60068 <i>Use A or C Elevator. Sasser Conference Room, 10th Floor, east side of Cafeteria.</i>	
Family Support	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursdays	7-8:30 pm	Highland Park Hospital, 777 Park Avenue West, Highland Park, IL 60035 <i>Meeting Room 1A, in Basement</i>	
Family Support	Every Saturday	9-10:30 am	St. Francis Hospital, 355 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201 <i>Glass House Room in Hospital Cafeteria.</i>	

Times and locations subject to change. Call 847-716-2252 or go to [www.nami.ccns](http://www.nami.ccns) for details.

Fundraiser	Day:	Date:	Time:	Where:	Please take note:
Special Kids Network: <b>Light up the Night!</b>	Friday	10/27/2017	7-11 pm	Loft 21 1501 N Milwaukee Lincolnshire	Stanley Cup Champion Brent Sopel shares his inspirational story of mental health recovery. Tix are \$75.