Please visit our website at www.namikitsap.org for the latest information. You can email us at info@namikitsap.org. All of NAMI Kitsap programs are free and available to the community.

OUR PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE EDUCATION, SUPPORT and ADVOCACY FOR FAMILIES AND FOR PEOPLE WHO FACE A MENTAL ILLNESS.

★ Study of Loneliness

In a recent Mayo Clinic Health Letter, there was an article about Loneliness as a serious health concern – in spite of the many technological means for connecting. “Loneliness means feeling an inadequate level of meaningful connection with other people. Even if you’re around others regularly, you can still feel lonely.”

“A 2018 survey by AARP found that 35% of Americans age 45 and older are lonely. That’s similar to what it was in 2010, the last time AARP did its loneliness survey. However one element changed dramatically during that time period – use of social media. In 2010, just 13% of participants used Facebook, Twitter or other platforms daily. In 2018, that number had ballooned to 42%. Still, the loneliness number didn’t budge!”

Sadly we don’t often connect it as a life issue. “Loneliness can be as damaging to long-term survival as daily smoking or obesity, and is associated with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.”

“Studies have associated long-term loneliness with developing dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease, later in life. Feelings of isolation also may trigger physiological changes that could worsen conditions such as arthritis and heart disease.”

What is needed is face-to-face interactions. The article gave some suggestions for making new friends or deepening the connections with current friends. • Be positive and interested – Asking people about their lives and listening to their responses. • Reach out – And unexpected phone, call, text or email from a friend is always a nice surprise, and a way to start a conversation. • Practice light conversations – A friendly exchange with a familiar face - such as a clerk at a store or waiter at a café - can provide important mood elevating benefits. • Say yes – If someone invites you somewhere you’d feel comfortable going, don’t find excuses - just go.

• Get out – Studies consistently show that face-to-face contact is important to maintain friendships and connections. • Tailor to your personality – You don’t necessarily need to go outside your comfort zone to find connections. A quiet, one-on-one conversation may be the best route for some personalities. A noisy social hour might be great for others. Find something your enjoy. • Think beyond human connection – Whether furry, feathered or scaled, a pet can provide many of the same companion benefits as human friendships.

Alone time is important, too. Don’t confuse loneliness with being alone. With a solid support system, you’re more likely to be able to navigate the alone times with ease or even pleasure. Find a good balance.
A Helpful Thought

When someone is broken
don't try to fix them.
{You can’t}
When someone is hurting,
don’t attempt to take away their pain.
{You can’t}
Instead, love them
by walking beside them in their pain.
{You can}
Because sometimes what people need
is simply to know they aren’t alone!

Washington State Lobby Day

Presidents Day found almost 200
NAMI members at the state capital to lobby
for legislation providing more beds for
patients receiving treatment for mental
health, housing for those who are
recovering, and money for getting more
professionals that provide mental health
care and better wages for those working in
county and state facilities. Washington
State needs to step up to the plate with
funding if we are to get out of the bottom
tier of mental health care.

Family-to-Family Classes

The Family-to-Family class is a
free, nationally standardized educational
class that is offered for family members or
friends who have a loved one with a mental
illness. Several topics are included, such as
understanding Mental Health, preparing for
a crisis, treatment options, communication,
and empathy.

As noted in the last Newsletter, the
Family-to-Family class has been consoli-
dated so it can be presented in eight weeks,
making it less of a time commitment for
families. This year we are presenting it in
Poulsbo, starting the Saturday after Easter
to the first Saturday in June, the dates being
April 18- June 6. It will run from 9 - noon
each Saturday morning.. To register please
contact Kim Ryder: ((206)201-3205, or
email: khryder23@gmail.com

NAMI National Convention

This year the NAMI National Conven-
tion will be in Atlanta, GA. The dates are: July
16-18 (Thursday to Saturday), with the theme:
“Together Toward Tomorrow.” Make your
reservations early.

A Day in the Real World

“God comes to you disguised as your life.”
(Paula D’Arcy)

Sometimes the storms of life send harsh
winds that blow holes in my heart space.
The ‘opportunity’ eludes me as I remain off
kilter. Struggling to ‘Center’ I experience the
deep ache that breaks me open. It is here that
I am uncovered and exposed. RAW.

I open my heart’s eye.
The miracle of wonder is revealed.
I see the inside of the inside
taking me to a place of AWE.
And I know....

My son, whom I love dearly, who struggles
with a brain disorder, is the beautiful person
that was gifted to me to cherish, love and
honor. His struggles are my struggles. He is
gift beyond measure.

With a grateful heart I say “Thank You”.
(Jeanette)

NAMI State Convention

A “Save the Date” notice was sent out
for the Annual NAMI State Convention which
will be in Olympia this year on October 17th.