

☞ NAMI Kitsap Newsletter ☞

♥ September, 2017 ♥

By Larry Brixius, NAMI Kitsap President

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

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September is National Suicide Prevention Month.

Fear, hate and a sense of deep divides, or isolation tend to increase violent activity, either against the perceived threat or against one’s self. These feelings have been on the rise in our country for several decades.

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death among all adults. Among peoples ages 10-24 it is second only to car accidents. This is an age when the brain is not fully aware of the consequences of one’s action. It is also a time when most mental illnesses manifest themselves. Not surprisingly, studies indi-cate that mental illness is involved in about 90% of suicides.

Violence against one’s self (suicide) in the past was dismissed as sinful behavior deserving the wrath of God and of moral people. Society blamed the victim or the family, and thus avoided dealing

with the problem. The result was that there was no compassion or understanding of the pain and brokenness that people were going through.

In 2002, Ronald Rolheiser wrote an article entitled: “*Suicide - When Someone Is Too Bruised to Be Touched.*” He asked: “What needs to be said about all of this: First of all, that suicide is a disease and the most misunderstood of all sicknesses. It takes a person out of life against his or her will, the emotional equivalent of cancer, a stroke, or a heart attack. Second, we, those left behind, need not spend undue energy second-guessing as to how we might have failed that person, what we should have noticed, and what we might still have done to prevent the suicide. Suicide is an illness and, as with any sickness, we can love someone and still not be able to save that person from death.

Suicide is an illness not a sin. Nobody just calmly decides to

commit suicide and burden his or her loved ones with that death. The victim of suicide (in all but rare cases) is a trapped person, caught up in a fiery, private chaos that has its roots both in his or her emotions and in his or her bio-chemistry. Suicide is a desperate attempt to end unendurable pain, akin to one throw-ing oneself through a window because one's clothing is on fire."

Understanding this challenges us to reach out when someone says

+ October 1-7, 2017 is **Mental Illness Awareness Week**. This year's theme is: "I'm in to mental illness: Inspired - Informed - Involved." It was started by an act of Congress in 1990 in recognition of efforts by NAMI to educate and increase awareness about mental illness. Since one in every four adults in the country are believed to be diagnosable with a mental illness in any given year, we want to raise awareness of this disease, and increase discussion of it.

We believe that mental health issues are important to address year round, but highlighting them during #MIAW provides a time for people to come together and display the passion and strength of those working to improve the lives of the tens of millions of American affected by mental illness.

By this activity we can help put an end to the stigma attached to this condition of a differently ordered brain – which is

something or gives signs of contemplating suicide. We can offer encouragement and support in their fears, struggles or sense of being worthless or a burden to others. We can also suggest seeing a doctor or counselor if appropriate.

Medications and treatment can be helpful. We may not be able to fix it but we can make an effort.

Sometimes just a caring word, will break through the pain or darkness and bring a light of hope that may enable someone to seek help.

essential if we are to get better treatment and recovery for our loved ones.

The state of Washington is ranked 48th in Mental Health care. The problems at Western State Hospital, the recent decision of Franciscan CHI services to not include mental health care beds in the new hospital in Silverdale and their ignoring those who are least able to pay for help are symptoms of the sad state of affairs we are facing. We can do better, and must.

+ **October 10th is World Mental Health Day!** This event, with actions in over 150 countries, was established in 1992 to encourage global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against the social stigma that still exists.

+ NAMI Washington recently alerted us to the most recent efforts to repeal and replace *ObamaCare* or ACA. with the Graham-

Cassidy bill. That bill would have “allowed states to change the rules so health plans don’t have to cover mental health care; slashed billions from Medicaid funding, which would make it harder for people to get local mental health services; ended the Medicaid expansion that covers adults with mental health and substance use conditions who don’t usually qualify for Medicaid; and cut financial assistance to buy health insurance, making mental health coverage unaffordable for many.” Because of the advocacy of many of you and those like you, it has been defeated. But we must stay tirelessly alert in the future.

+ Death of John Freeburg: At the end of September, John Freeburg was riding his bike, something he loved to do, when he stopped, entered a store where he fell to the floor and died unexpectedly. Our prayers go out to his family, and our own hearts are deeply saddened by the loss.

As one who knew mental illness
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President Donald Trump
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from the inside, he brought a perspective to NAMI and to the Mental Health care system that few can, and his energy in addressing the issues was unmatched. I had gone with him to the advocacy days at the Legislature this past Spring, and was amazed in the car at his wisdom in talking about the issues we were to be addressing that day. And at the meeting on the hill he ran into many people he knew from before, and he spoke up at our sessions with insight.

John was a member of NAMI Kitsap, and a past president; he served on the NAMI Washington Board recently, he served on NAMI National as the Washington Consumer Council representative, and ran three times for the NAMI National Board.

He was dedicated and brought a valuable perspective, though not agreeable to everyone. It is in dialogue that we all learn and become a better society. We come to wisdom only by engaging the other side. He will be missed. *R.I.P.*

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Wolfe
Commissioners Office, MS-4
614 Division Street
Port Orchard, WA 98366
360-377-7080

NAMI and other Support Groups

NAMI Family Support Groups
Bainbridge Island, 2nd Monday - 7
PM
Winslow Arms – Club house
(behind) 220
Parfitt Way
Contact: Jeanette Rerecich

360-697-5531

Silverdale, Last Tuesday - 7 PM
2819 NW Kitsap Place, Suite #204
Contact: Teri Tennyson 360-
440-6211

Peer Support Groups

Bainbridge Island, 2nd & 4th
Tuesdays -
12:30 PM (Home Town Bank Bldg)
921 Hildebrand Lane NE
Contact: Jane Cartmell 206-
898-6092

Poulsbo, 1st & 3rd Tuesdays - 1:30
PM
Hostmark Community Center
703 NE Hostmark Street
Contact: Ann Clark 360-697-
8509

Combined Support Group

Depression BiPolar Support
Group
Key Peninsula Lutheran Church
4213 Lacky Rd KP N
Lakebay, WA 98349
Contact: Kimberly Wood
dbsabremerton@gmail.com

*Donations can always be made to NAMI
Washington or NAMI Kitsap.*