



Pensacola

National Alliance on Mental Ill-

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Message from the President

National **Mental Health Month** was very active and successful for NAMI Pensacola this year. We held our annual NAMI Walk on May 21st at the **Blue Wahoos Stadium** and succeeded in raising awareness on a scale not achieved in the past. More than 300 people turned out for the event which brought in more than \$7000.00. The money raised from the event will be utilized in our community to:

1. Improve our response to inquiries from the community and;
2. Train additional Family to Family instructors so we can offer that program year round.

The event would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors:

West Florida Hospital, Buffalo Rock, Carpenters Campers, Santa Rosa Counseling Center, Purple Tulip Florist, Emerald Coast Roller Derby, Chick-Fil-A 9 Mile Rd, Jill Alexander Graphic Designs, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Cecil & Suzanne Carlson, and Pensacola Lighthouse & Museum

I would also like to recognize some of the organizations that formed teams:

West Florida Hospital, Lakeview Center, Pensacola Young Professionals, Pensacola State College Nursing Students, United Way Escambia Co., Active Minds, Girl Scout Troup #608, and Trinity Presbyterian



The board has met and reviewed information from the walk and established "lessons learned" that we will uti-



lize in planning the walk for next year.

One additional bit of exciting news: our website will be undergoing a complete redesign in the next few weeks that will make it much more user friendly and include the addition of additional functionality that will enhance its usefulness as a community resource.

Roger McBride, President

De-escalation and Compassionate Presence: Helping Loved Ones Weather Emotional Storms

The second Thursday educational meeting for July will be presented by Dannette Wallace, MSW, Mental Health Therapist for the inpatient units at the Pavilion, scheduled for Thursday, July 28 at 6:00 pm. Dannette gives a class on this subject for the whole hospital, both for new employees as a part of their orientation and on "Education Day" once a year, for which CEU credits can be earned.



"Behavioral outbursts do not occur in a vacuum. Usually you can feel the static in the air," she said, "and the way you react can escalate or mitigate the problem." She said that sensory overstimulation can be a problem for some individuals, and sometimes just being quiet with them and showing you care can help. "Work on approaching the person in a calm manner," she said, "respecting their personal space, and speaking with simple, concise language. Offer the assurance that you're there to help that person regain control."

"It is important to let a person vent, as long as there is no imminent danger, and try to identify needs and feelings," she said. "The emotion peaks and the energy is spent. We do not want to intervene prematurely and overreact, letting our anxiety complicate the situation. The goal of de-escalation is to help our loved ones regain control and ensure the safety of all present. Early intervention is key."

Dannette will discuss how to use debriefing after an escalation as a golden opportunity to help understand behavioral triggers. "Sometimes behavioral outbursts set us on edge and we need ways to ground ourselves," she said. "We need to change per-

Mental Health Therapist Dannette Wallace, MSW

spective from judgment to compassionate awareness and take responsibility for what our actions and attitudes bring in to the mix."

There are situations in which the person is imminently violent, and that's when you may have to call the authorities. If you call 911, ask for a CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) officer.

Upcoming Meetings Don't forget the second Thursday support meeting held at Lakeview Center, Bldg I, 1995 North Hernandez Street, 7:00-8:30pm, where you can talk informally with NAMI members who have been coping with a mentally ill family member or friend for years. Meetings for July will be Thursday, July 14th, 7:00-8:30pm at Lakeview Center and Thursday, July 28th, 6:00-7:30pm at The Pavilion. For more information, call 208-1609 or email namipensacola@gmail.com.