



NAMI

Pensacola

National Alliance on Mental Illness

P.O. Box 18124, Pensacola, FL 32523

(850) 208-1609

namipensacola@gmail.com

March 2016 Newsletter

namipensacola.com

Facebook: NAMIPensacola

Aromatherapy the Focus of the March 24th Educational Meeting

The educational meeting for this month will be held Thursday, 03-24-16, 6-7:30pm, at The Pavilion at West Florida Hospital. Victoria Willoughby, RN in the Intensive Outpatient/Partial Hospitalization Unit at The Pavilion, brings her experience in nursing and massage therapy to the table (a total of 12 years in health care) to demonstrate how to mix essential oils and how they are used.

Aromatherapy, also referred to as essential oil therapy, can be defined as the science of using naturally extracted aromatic essences from plants to balance, harmonize and promote the health of body, mind and spirit. It seeks to unify physiological, psychological and spiritual processes to enhance an individual's innate healing process.

The use of essential oils for therapeutic purposes goes back to a number of ancient civilizations including the Chinese, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. Oils are described by Dioscorides, along with beliefs regarding their healing properties, in his *De Materia Medica*, written in the first century AD. The French perfumer and chemist Rene-Maurice Gattefosse coined the term "*aromatherapie*" in 1937 with his publication of a book which contains early clinical findings for utilizing essential oils for a range of physiological ailments.

"The aroma itself is a therapy," said Willoughby. "You can smell it and it can trigger endorphins. You can apply it to the skin and when it is absorbed it can relax the muscles as well help the mind at the same time. The act of smelling it can reduce stress."

These delicate oils must be ordered, states Willoughby. They are a pure extract directly from a plant and bark, leaves and stems are used. The oils are used sparingly, to massage muscles and joints or breathed in to clear congested heads. Aromatherapy can be used as an adjunct to traditional medicine or as a stand-alone treatment for people who might want to use an all natural remedy.

She will be demonstrating the use of lavender and eucalyptus, among other oils. "Lavender is good for relaxation and can be used in combination with other oils, like lemon and frankincense," she said. "And they all smell good!" Eucalyptus from the leaves of the plant is good for stress and for congestion, she said: "Breathing it in will clear the sinuses."

Don't miss this unique opportunity to discover new ways to combat anxiety and depression!

May is Mental Health Month 2016 Since 1949, May has been observed as National Mental Health Awareness Month, a time when advocates and activists across the country draw

attention to the mental health issues that affect as many as one in four Americans. Today, more people die from suicide in the United States than from traffic accidents or homicides. Join us for special activities in Pensacola including our annual walk, designed to raise awareness and help put to end stigma. To volunteer, email namipensacola@gmail.com or call 208-1609.

Support the “Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act” (HR 2646)

Following is an Op-Ed which appeared in The Palm Beach Post March 7th, written by Dottie Pacharis and sent to us to bring attention to HR 2646, now in committee in the US Congress. The act would increase the number of inpatient psychiatric beds, authorize court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment for individuals with a long history and pattern of proving a danger to themselves or others, and make adjustments to medical privacy laws by helping patients to get treatment for their illness before it's too late.

POINT OF VIEW: Mental illness a disease, not character flaw

12:00 a.m. Monday, March 7, 2016

Nuts, crazy, lunatic, maniac, psychopath, wacko — these are words I frequently hear used to describe people suffering from mental illness. Would we refer so callously to people suffering from cancer, muscular dystrophy or Parkinson's disease?

Mentally ill individuals have a disease, not a character flaw. Mental illness is not something people choose. It does not discriminate based on age, class or ethnicity. About 10 million Americans struggle with serious mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression), but millions are going without treatment as families struggle to find care for their loved ones.

As with any serious illness, people suffering from mental illness need medical treatment. Therein lies the problem.

State laws vary, but all states set strict controls on involuntary hospitalization, limiting it to circumstances when a person is an imminent danger to self or others, or likely to become so. These laws give people with severe mental illness the right to decide when, where, how or even if they will receive treatment. Today's laws, although well-intended, were mostly written decades ago, when doctors and hospitals had broad control over their patients.

“Mental institutions,” as they were called then, became a dumping ground not only for the mentally ill but for the disabled and the elderly. Eventually, a public outcry led to laws forbidding the state from forcing treatment or medications on mentally ill people. Once you turn 18, you have a right to refuse treatment and to remain mentally ill.

Severely mentally ill adults are not capable of making rational decisions regarding their treatment. They can lack the ability to recognize they are ill. Families must watch their loved ones descend, because current laws do not allow them to push help onto a deteriorating person until he or she reaches the crisis stage.

Only when an ill person becomes a danger, as determined by a judge at a commitment hearing, can they be involuntarily hospitalized and treated. But it is sometimes too late.

What about proactive treatment before tragedy? Mass shootings are on the rise. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S., killing more than 42,000 people yearly. Untreated mental illness not only results in suicide, and homicide, but in substance abuse, crime and homelessness.

Our failure to care for the mentally ill comes at a high cost — not just in economic terms but in wasted human potential. Yet with proper diagnosis and treatment, many patients are able to overcome mental illness, contribute to society, and live a normal and happy life.

In November 2015, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act (HR 2646) was introduced by Tim Murphy, a Republican from Pennsylvania and the only clinical psychologist in the U.S. House; and Eddie Bernice Johnson, a Democrat from Texas and a psychiatric nurse. The bill has the strong bipartisan support of 183 co-sponsors.

The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act would increase the number of inpatient psychiatric beds, authorize court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment for individuals with a long history and pattern of proving a danger to themselves or others, and make adjustments to medical privacy laws by helping patients to get treatment for their illness before they reach the violent breaking point.

I lost an adult son to suicide. He suffered from untreated bipolar disorder. Although too late to save him, HR 2646 would save the lives of others struggling from mental illness by enabling them to receive treatment sooner.

DOTTIE PACHARIS, FORT MYERS BEACH

You can help by calling or emailing our Florida Representatives who are not cosponsors of HR 2646 (14 out of 27 total Representatives) and asking them for their support. Listed are phone numbers; emailing can be accomplished by going to each Representative's web site. This information came from Rep. Jeff Miller's office.

Rep. Jeff Miller – [202-225-4136](tel:202-225-4136) (Web site is jeffmiller.house.gov)

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz – [202-225-7931](tel:202-225-7931)

Rep. Alan Grayson – [202-225-9889](tel:202-225-9889)

Rep. Patrick Murphy- [202-225-3026](tel:202-225-3026)

Rep. Ted Yoho – [202-225-5744](tel:202-225-5744)

Rep. Federica Wilson – [202-225-4506](tel:202-225-4506)

Rep. Ron DeSantis – [202-225-2706](tel:202-225-2706)

Rep. Gwen Graham – [202-225-5235](tel:202-225-5235)

Rep. Kathy Castor – [202-225-3376](tel:202-225-3376)

Rep. Curt Clawson – [202-225-2536](tel:202-225-2536)

Rep. Lois Frankel – [202-225-9890](tel:202-225-9890)

Rep. Bill Posey – [202-225-3671](tel:202-225-3671)

Rep. Rich Nugent – [202-225-1002](tel:202-225-1002)

Rep. Daniel Webster – [202-225-2176](tel:202-225-2176)

Upcoming Meetings Don't forget the second Thursday "Caring and Sharing" 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 April will be Thursday, April 7th, 7:00-8:30pm at Lakeview and Thursday, April 21st, 6:00-7:30pm at The Pavilion. For more information, call 208-1609 or email namipensacola@gmail.com.