



NAMI

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National Alliance on Mental Illness

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Educational Meeting for March will Address Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a chronic mental illness that causes dramatic shifts in a person's mood, energy and ability to think clearly. People with bipolar have high and low moods, known as mania and depression, which differ from the typical ups and downs most people experience. With mania, people may feel extremely irritable or euphoric. People living with bipolar may experience several extremes in the shape of agitation, sleeplessness and talkativeness or sadness and hopelessness.

People's symptoms and the severity of their mania or depression vary widely. Although bipolar disorder can occur at any point in life, the average age of onset is 25. Every year, 2.9% of the U.S. population is diagnosed with bipolar disorder, with nearly 83% of cases being classified as severe.

The median age of onset for bipolar disorder is 25 years, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). However, bipolar disorder can begin in childhood and sometimes doesn't manifest until a person is much older – in their 40's and 50's. Bipolar affects people of all races, ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds. Also according to NIMH, it is an inherited disease. More than two-thirds of people with bipolar disorder have at least one close relative with the illness or with unipolar major depression.

According to Dr. Wes Burgess in his book, *The Bipolar Handbook: Real-Life Questions with Up-to-Date Answers*: "It is estimated that 2 to 7% of people in the United States suffer from bipolar disorder. Almost 10 million people will develop the illness sometimes during their lives. About half of these will never receive the correct diagnosis or treatment."

The Educational Meeting on Thursday, March 23 at 6pm will shed some light on this subject. It will be held at The Pavilion at West Florida Hospital, 2191 E Johnson Avenue (corner of Johnson & N Davis Hwy).

Family to Family Class Starts Tuesday, March 14

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people living with mental illness. Research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to an individual living with a mental health condition.

NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who have been there, and includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises.

The class not only provides critical information and strategies for taking care of the person you love, but you'll also find out that you're not alone. Recovery is a journey, and there is hope.



The group setting of NAMI Family-to-Family provides mutual support and shared positive impact—you can experience compassion and reinforcement from people who understand your situation. You can also help others through your own experience.

To register for the Family to Family class, send an email to namipensacola@gmail.com with your name, phone number, email address and the names of any others you are bringing with you. Make sure you can commit for 12 weeks, as space is limited and no one will be allowed to join the course after the third session.

Princes William and Harry and Kate Middleton are fighting mental health stigma

Following is a link to an article on a new focus for the English Princes and Princess regarding the stigma surrounding mental health.

<http://people.com/royals/we-all-struggle-with-mental-health-at-times-says-prince-william/>

Prince William made a speech at a Guild of Health Writers event to highlight their Heads Together campaign, which unites several charities under one umbrella. “On average it takes a sufferer 10 years to admit to a problem,” William said. “This means that what often starts as a fairly minor issue becomes something serious and medical after time. Silence can kill; but talking can lead to help and support.”



Thanks to member Sharlene Philbin for bringing this to our attention.

Monthly Meetings for March for Family & Friends:

Second Thursday **Family Support Meeting**, Thursday, March 9, 6 to 7:30pm, at Lakeview Center, Building I, 1995 N H Street (between Hernandez & Lakeview). At the family support meeting, you can talk informally with NAMI members and bring your concerns to a health professional as well.

Fourth Thursday **Educational Meeting**, Thursday, March 23, 6 to 7:30 pm, at The Pavilion at West Florida Hospital, 2191 E Johnson Avenue (corner of Johnson & N Davis Hwy). The Educational Meeting is led by an expert, and covers a different subject each month.

Monthly Meetings of the Connection Recovery Support Group:

First and third Tuesdays of each month, 6-7:30 pm, at Lakeview Center, Building I, 1995 N H Street (between Hernandez & Lakeview). This peer-led support group is for all adults who are concerned about their mental health. Meetings will be March 7 and March 21.

Family to Family Class

The next Family to Family class will start Tuesday, March 14, 2017, 6:30-9pm at The Pavilion at West Florida Hospital, 2191 E Johnson Avenue (corner of Johnson & N Davis) and will run for 12 weeks. To register, email namipensacola@gmail.com.