

INDIANA UNIVERSITY: A ROLE IN ENDING STIGMA

“The stereotype of all people with mental illness as ‘not able’ is just wrong.”

So says Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Director of the Indiana Consortium for Mental Health Services Research Bernice Pescosolido. She has played a major role in researching and documenting the fact of prejudice that surrounds mental illness in cultures all over the globe as part of ‘Stigma in Global Context - Mental Health Study’, a National Institutes of Health-funded study in 16 countries. Although some countries could be said to be more accepting of mental illness than others, in every case, the data revealed evidence of a persistent ‘backbone’ of stigma in every culture.

Ms. Pescosolido was not originally interested in stigma and did not focus on it for the first 15 years of her career but frequently encountered the claim that stigma surrounding mental illness in America had dissipated, a claim which rang hollow after conducting research in psych units of two leading hospitals. She went on to discover that there had been no national stigma studies since 1955 and filled this gap by overseeing a study on stigma in 1996 with follow-up a decade later and plans for additional study in 2016. “It turns out stigma is alive and well in the U.S.”

“About 50% of Americans express prejudicial attitudes towards people with mental health problems, and about 60% of Americans think that people with mental health problems are dangerous,” according to her study.

Good News/Bad News

The good news arising from this study is that the American public understands that mental illness is a disease like any other. The bad news is that this shift of awareness has not brought about a corresponding shift away from prejudicial attitudes toward the people who live with these disorders. Also on the positive side, this distinguished researcher documented a tremendous increase in the willingness of people

to be open and honest in talking with family and friends about mental health problems.

A New Strategy of Inclusion

Having won the battle of stressing mental illness as a disease, researcher Pescosolido favors a new stigma-reduction target of inclusion and integration. “We need to rid ourselves of the idea that people with mental illness are dangerous and **include** them



in our families, our workplaces, and our schools,” she says. She urges every individual to mindfully fight against structural barriers that keep those with mental illness apart from the rest of us.

Bernice Pescosolido is on the Board of Directors and chairs the Scientific Advisory Council of Bring Change 2 Mind (BC2M), a national anti-stigma campaign aimed at correction public misconceptions about mental illness. co-founded by Glenn Close. For further information, go to: www.bringchange2mind.org or “blank” www.bringchange2mind.org

This article is adapted from The College Magazine, Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences, Winter 2014. Bloomington, Indiana with special thanks to NAMI Far North friends and supporters Milt and Judi Stewart for sharing its content.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I am honored to have been elected as NAMI Far North’s new President. I’ll do my best to carry on the tradition of bringing mental health issues out of hiding and into the light of advocacy, recovery, and public awareness.

As you may already know, the NAMI

Far North board members all have loved ones living with mental illness or are living with mental illness themselves or both. We are a unique board. We are motivated by our own life experiences to participate at this grass-roots level to support and educate our local community’s mental health initiatives.

My personal area of interest is to bring hope to families of people with mental illness.

Trained in the NAMI curriculum, I lead the Family Support Group that meets following the general meeting (see calendar on the last page of this newsletter for meeting dates and times). I’ll be joining our board members in looking for and reporting trends/updates/advancements especially as they relate to families. I hope to attend the 2014 NAMI National Convention in our nation’s capital this fall to bring back more inspiration and hope to our local members.

—Amber Snoddy, President
NAMI Far North

WHAT NEXT?

CIT Academy # 6 is history with another class of law enforcement officers and other personnel are trained to better recognize and aid people in the midst of mental health crisis. What happens next when officers in North Idaho act as first responders? In a speech in January, 2014 Gov. Butch Otter stated “Routinely in Idaho, people with any combination of mental health and substance issues are taken to local emergency rooms or county jails when their condition or behavior puts them or others at risk.” Kootenai Behavioral Health has limited space for involuntary mental holds and once that space is filled, the patients must be taken to Lewiston and when that is not available, the next closest facility is in Boise, according to a letter signed by Kootenai County Sherriff Wolfinger, requesting a crisis center in CDA. The crisis center would also benefit people in the outlying communities that rely on mental health services in CDA.

According to a January CDA Press article “the number of people in crisis taken into Idaho’s ERs is trending steadily upward, with police bringing in about 4,600 patients in fiscal year 2012, up from about 4000 in 2010. The numbers for

fiscal year 2014 are projected to hit nearly 5200.” The Treatment Advocacy Center reports nationwide there are 10 times as many people with mental illness in the prisons as in hospitals.

To help alleviate this mental health crisis, Idaho lawmakers approved a proposal to create three crisis centers in Idaho to be located in Coeur d’Alene, Boise, and Idaho Falls. However the lawmakers reduced the requested operational funding for the facilities from \$4.56 million to \$1.52 million, enough to fund only one crisis center.

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare is in a 6-8 week process of location determination. They are sending a Request for Information (RFI) to each of the three regions and will base the selection on the following criteria: community need, community readiness, community organization, community contribution, proposed outcomes/ measures, and estimated operating costs.

According to Catherine Perusse of NAMI Far North, a North Idaho planning group is formed including representatives from Heritage Health, Kootenai Medical Center, Kootenai Behavioral Health, Panhandle Health District, United Way, Region I Department of Health and Welfare, Law Enforcement, Suicide Prevention Network/North and NAMI Far North. Together they will submit the RFI to the Department of Health and Welfare. More news on the location will follow in the next NAMI Advocate. Keep your fingers crossed. It’s a long, long way from Bonners Ferry to Boise.

NAMI FAR NORTH CONNECTION:

NAMI Connection is a support group for people who struggle with or are in recovery from mental illness. We meet the third Wednesday of each month from 7-8:30 p.m., after the general NAMI meeting at 6 p.m. at Bonner General Hospital. I am a trained NAMI Connection facilitator, personally struggling with and in recovery from manic-depression, O.C.D. (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and a mixed anxiety disorder.

We begin each Connection support group by reading the Principles of Support:

- We will see the individual first, not the illness.
- We recognize that mental illnesses are medical illnesses that may have environmental triggers.
- We understand that mental illnesses

are traumatic events.

- We aim for better coping skills.
- We find strength in sharing experiences.
- We reject stigma and do not tolerate discrimination.
- We won’t judge anyone’s pain as less than our own.
- We forgive ourselves and reject guilt.
- We embrace humor as healthy.
- We accept we cannot solve all problems.
- We expect a better future in a realistic way.
- We will never give up hope.

During the meeting, the facilitator is able to refer back to these principles as we do group work when someone’s personal issue can be connected to a universal goal we’re all striving for; someone faces illness problems over which they have little control; or someone in the group is negative or hopeless.

These principles represent what we are striving for, our goals and aspirations as we struggle to come to terms with our mental illnesses. This is our belief system regarding universal, necessary truths which guide and strengthen us when life deals us this particular challenge. Using Principles of Support increases group participation. Everyone has something to say about these higher goals. Sometimes, when we have a small group we pick a principle and discuss what that principle means to each of us or which one is a favorite and why.

Because we embrace humor as healthy, when we have extra time, I might read from my book of clean jokes. There is nothing like a good laugh to lighten our mood and end the meeting on a positive note.

Questions about Connection? Feel free to email me at: dannjanburt1@gmail.com.

—Jan Burt

Connection Facilitator

PREPARING FOR A MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY

An emergency is a sudden, urgent and usually unexpected occurrence or occasion requiring immediate action. It is a state of need for help or relief, created by an unexpected event. We all know that in almost every circumstance of life, it is possible that an emergency will arise and we will have to deal with it. Physical health emergencies occur frequently in family life, and if you have a loved one who lives with mental illness, you should expect and be prepared for the occurrence of a mental health emergency. Being prepared for an emergency will enable you to be more

effective when crisis comes. Here are some steps you can take to be prepared:

I. Learn about mental illness

You can find facts about mental illness and its treatment at [“http://www.nami.org/”](http://www.nami.org/) \t “blank” www.nami.org, in NAMI publications or at regular meetings of NAMI. NAMI’s 12-week free Family-to-Family class provides practical and useful information about living with someone who has a mental illness. You can also ask to meet with your loved one’s mental health provider to obtain information about triggers and effective interventions.

II. Identify community resources

A great source of information and support is your local affiliate of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Contact NAMI Far North at 208-597-2047 to find out the time and place of the next meeting. Network with others you meet at NAMI meetings to learn what strategies and interventions have been successful with their loved ones. Seek out contact information for caring and effective service providers and other resources. Identify community facilities to which you can turn in an emergency.

III. Develop an emergency file

An emergency file will enable you to compile in one place an up-to-date and complete list of key people and information that will make it faster and easier to get appropriate help in the event of an emergency. In your emergency file, you should keep the names and phone numbers of your loved one’s mental health service provider, the local hospital/emergency room, local law enforcement, friends of your loved one, suicide prevention hotline, Department of Health and Welfare. Keep several copies of this list: at home, at work, in your car, in your briefcase — anywhere you might be when a crisis arises. Store it in your portable electronic device if you have one.

Your emergency file should also contain an up-to-date psychiatric and medical history of your loved one, containing full name and date of birth, address, psychiatric diagnosis, other pertinent medical conditions, current symptoms and condition, treating mental health person, medications that have helped in the past, and medications that have NOT been helpful, history of

symptomatic behaviors, dates of previous hospitalizations and/or arrests and incarcerations.

It is important to obtain a signed release of information form from your loved one. This document will permit health care providers to talk with you in a crisis. Your loved one's mental health provider, or the local hospital should be able to provide you with the form.

Keep all of this together in a three-ring binder, a file box or some other easy to locate and use system. Keep it where you can find it easily in the event of a crisis. Using single sided, letter-size sheets for everything in the file will make it easier to fax or copy documents, if necessary, when a crisis takes place.

IV. Know the laws in your state

Sometimes psychiatric intervention is necessary to address a serious mental health crisis. These interventions may include emergency hospitalization (possibly called "psychiatric hold"), civil inpatient or outpatient commitment, or court-ordered treatment. The laws governing these interventions vary widely from state to state. You can find a summary of the laws in Idaho by going to "<http://treatmentadvocacycenter.org/>" & "[blank treatmentadvocacycenter.org](http://treatmentadvocacycenter.org/)

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH: *Mind Your Health*

May is Mental Health Month was started 65 years ago by Mental Health America, to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of good mental health for

everyone. Learn more at "<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may>" <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may>

Please save the dates for some of the ways NAMI Far North will be celebrating Mental Health Month, including information tables at both the Bonner and Boundary County Health Fairs and our annual "Walk in the Woods".



HR 3717 *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013*

When Rep. Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania introduced the Helping Families Bill in December of 2013, I wonder if he could foresee the strong differences of opinion held by individuals, family members, and advocates of those affected by mental illness. One thing that everyone seems to agree on is that mental health reform is long overdue. Then the path splits on how that is best legislated. Basically one faction argues for individual rights and choices regarding treatment and recovery. The other faction argues that there are people with serious mental

illness who are unable to make appropriate decisions for their own treatment and care.

Author and mental health advocate Pete Earley's blog at "<http://www.petearley.com>" www.petearley.com is posting blow by blow testimony from people of all positions and experiences on the issues surrounding this bill. An understandable summary of this bill is available at "<http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/3717>" <http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/3717>.

Changes in the mental health care system are on the horizon. People are sharing their own experiences and listening to others to learn a different perspective. Inform yourself with information from credible sources, add your own experiences and enter the dialogue.

IDAHO GIVES

Idaho Gives is a one-day, statewide online fundraising event designed to connect donors across the state with the organizations they care about most. The BIG DAY for donating is May 1, coincidentally the first day of Mental Health Month, but you can make your donation to NAMI Far North any time between now and the middle of May. Clicking on the following link will take you to the donation site, where it is easy to make your gift to advance the work of support, education and advocacy on behalf of individuals and families affected by mental illness "http://www.razoo.com/story/Every-Little-Bit-Helps-1?referral_code=share" & "[blank http://www.razoo.com/story/Every-Little-Bit-Helps-1?referral_code=share](http://www.razoo.com/story/Every-Little-Bit-Helps-1?referral_code=share).



BECOME A MEMBER OF **NAMI Far North**

Membership in NAMI Far North entitles you to membership in NAMI and NAMI Idaho. You will receive the NAMI Advocate magazine as well as the NAMI Far North Advocate newsletter.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Optional Information:
I AM A: _____ CONSUMER _____ FAMILY MEMBER _____ FRIEND
_____ MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL _____ OTHER

Directory:
The NAMI Far North membership directory is intended to facilitate communication and support among NAMI Far North members. It will only be distributed to NAMI Far North members who are current in their dues and who have consented to have their names and contact information published in the directory. It will not be distributed to anyone else for any purpose.

Would you like to be listed in our directory? _____ YES _____ NO

Make checks payable to NAMI Far North and send to:
NAMI Far North • P.O. Box 2415 • Sandpoint, ID 83864
You may also give your application and check to a NAMI Far North board member at a monthly meeting.

- MEMBERSHIP TYPES (check one)**
- INDIVIDUAL / FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (\$35.00 annual fee)
 - PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP (\$35.00 annual fee)
 - OPEN DOOR MEMBERSHIP (\$3.00 annual fee)
(full annual membership for individuals and families on limited income)
 - SCHOLARSHIP MEMBERSHIP (full annual membership is paid by anonymous donor for individuals and families unable to afford the Open Door Membership)
 - I want to make a tax-deductible donation to NAMI Far North

NAMI FAR NORTH 2014 CALENDAR

<p>APRIL 4/28 Bonners Ferry Family Support Panhandle Health District 6-8:30 pm DVD of Pete Earley Presentation to NAMI Idaho</p> <p>MAY MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 5/3 Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce Health Fair Bonner County Fairgrounds 10-2</p> <p>5/7 NAMI Connection Sandpoint Gardenia Center 11:30 Lunch 12-1:30 Support Group</p> <p>5/10 Boundary County Hospital Health Fair 9 am - noon</p>	<p>5/18 NAMI Far North Annual Walk in the Woods 12:30 City Beach: Lunch provided, followed by walk on the Pend Oreille Trail RSVP needed for planning food or special needs, 597-2047 or namifarnorth@yahoo.com</p> <p>5/21 Regular Monthly Meeting Bonner General Hospital 6 pm: Cpl. Leslie Lehman, Idaho State Patrol (CIT International) 7-8:30 Family Support 7-8:30 NAMI Connection</p> <p>JUNE 6/2 NAMI Connection Sandpoint Gardenia Center 11:30 Lunch 12-1:30 Support Group</p>	<p>6/18 Regular Monthly Meeting Bonner General Hospital 6 pm: Catherine Perusse <i>Idaho Lives Project</i> 7-8:30 Family Support 7-8:30 NAMI Connection</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS VITAL TO THIS GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION</p> <p>Send your completed application (page 3 of this Newsletter) and membership dues of \$35 (Open Door membership: \$3) to NAMI Far North, P.O. Box 2415, Sandpoint, ID 83864."</p> </div>
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 email: namifarnorth@yahoo.com
 Website: www.nami.org/sites/namifarnorth
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Gini Woodward, Editor
 Donna Brosh, Graphics
 If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please email namifarnorth@yahoo.com

NAMI Far North meets the third Wednesday of every month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Bonner General Hospital Classroom.



Affiliated with



For more information about NAMI, please go to www.nami.org

Find help. Find hope.

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 Sandpoint, ID 83864

