



nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Luzerne-Wyoming
Counties PA

2019 2nd Quarter Newsletter

**18th Annual
NAMI Mental Health Walk & Recovery Fair
Sunday May 19th Noon till 3 P.M.**



Walkers gather at 12:00pm
(walk begins at 12:30pm) at the [Guard Insurance Group](#)
parking lot at the corner of River and Market Street
in Wilkes-Barre.

The walk will conclude at Kirby Park
where the remainder of the program will be held.
Please call or email the office for additional information.

This Year's Theme is

YOU COUNT!

**IMPORTANT NEWS
&
ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES**

To All Members:

On April 24, 2019, after 5 years of service, we received the announcement that Mary Giliberti was submitting her resignation as Chief Executive Officer of the national NAMI office. NAMI Luzerne-Wyoming Counties will issue an update when a new CEO is selected by the national board of directors.



We are now located at:
259 Wyoming Avenue
Lower Level
Kingston, PA 18704

Join Us at Our Open House
May 31, 2019 11am-2pm

Legislative Action

Show your support of retaining the “carve-out” component of Behavioral Health Choices by voicing your concerns to your legislative representatives.

You may use the form letter included on the next page of this newsletter. If you need assistance finding your local legislative representatives or their contact information use the following link [find your legislator](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/) or by visiting <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at
570-371-3844 or namiluzernewyomingcounty@gmail.com

Your action can make a difference!

Your Name
Address
Email (if applicable)

[Date]

The Honorable _____
Legislative Chamber _____
Address

Dear _____:

I am writing to strongly appeal that you oppose HB 335, which, if passed, would reverse the improvements made under the “carve-out” portion of the Behavioral Health Choices (BHC) program. While the intention of the Bill is to improve the integration of behavioral and physical healthcare, it would stifle the progress made under the current BHC.

Over the past 20 years, the BHC carve-out has transformed what integrated care means in Pennsylvania. BHC has proved to be a critical component in expanding and developing services, expanding system capacity and increasing access to care; all while preserving resources and allowing for reinvestment dollars to be used for new service implementation based on the unique needs of local communities. These developments would not be fiscally possible without the use of reinvestment dollars available under BHC. The “carve out” structure allows counties to apply their unique perspective to meet emerging constituent needs of their local area. Counties are better equipped to monitor service providers, ensuring both accountability and fiscal responsibility.

The carve-out component of BHC allows local governments to develop and transform programs to meet the precise needs of community members. The financial incentives of BHC allow localities to increase their fiscal efficiency through the granted use of reinvestment dollars; rewarding sound fiscal practices. This has proved to be invaluable to communities, allowing for program expansion, increased coordination of care among providers and most importantly, giving more county residents access to receive much needed services while maintaining program integrity.

The reinvestment proposals are developed with several collaborative partners in the community in order to accurately identify local needs and ensure the best use for the redistribution of funds. These collaborative teams often consist of local government officials, area service providers, family members, consumers as well as other community leaders. This approach results in inclusive programming with greater achievements all while cutting costs. In fact, OMHSAS reported that BHC saved an estimated \$4 Billion Dollars while increasing patient access to care.

HB 335 would hamper the strides made in the behavioral healthcare field. In fact, when analyzing other states with “carve-in” practices, the access to services is reduced; the amount of people served is considerably lower and there is still difficulty integrating services among providers. This type of legislation actually reduces the amount of funds spent on mental healthcare and is often used to achieve a profit margin for the Managed Care Organization using the funds. Additionally, administrative costs are higher, treatment quality suffers and there is an increase of incarceration, homelessness and suicide among the mentally ill population.

If passed, this legislation would compromise all of the efforts made to establish better integrated-care, treatment and an increase in access to services of vulnerable populations. It is in the best interest of all Pennsylvania residents to retain the “carve-out” of BHC and oppose the current legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the above, your action to oppose HB 335 is much appreciated.

Respectfully,

Your Name



An Inspiring Story by: Joseph Fedak

I have been sharing pictures of the clovers I have been coming across this season. There has been a reason above what you all are seeing. I guess it is time to talk a little about my journey with mental illness to help explain the pictures and the clover count.

Last July I had to have a hip replacement due to some of the medication I took while on my journey. Most of you that follow my journey know that I have been making sleeping mats for the homeless out of plastic shopping bags. A bunch of you even contributed in one way or another which is phenomenal. That project is still in process and, although going slow, it is going well.

What most of you don't know is that I have been struggling with a different path of this journey of mine and it has taken me a while to figure out why I seemed to be a fish flopping out of water. Sometime around the March timeframe, I figured out a part of what has been happening with me. As some of you know, I speak with one of our local mental health agencies monthly. I always ask them for the topic they want to discuss the next month. Well, the topic they wanted to discuss was depression. While speaking to the group and listening to my own words, I discovered that I was going through depression. It was/is presenting itself in a different manner than I am used to, but it was/is depression, nevertheless.

I was excited to understand what has been happening because it gave me a chance to work toward a solution. But things were still different, and my journey was much more difficult than it has been for years. Understanding gave me goals but not solutions. I have been working very hard to get to a brighter path than I was on. I am getting there but still in some of the darkness.

Weeks after understanding the depression side of this journey, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop on traumatic brain injury (TBI). I was happy to attend this workshop because one of the individuals that I try to help through my journey deals with TBI and I was hoping to find more information on how I can help him. What I discovered though is that I am floundering about, trying to pinpoint some causes and working hard on solutions to my darker path.

I listened to stories of how hard someone with TBI works just to form sentences that seem to make sense. I listened to stories on how energy is used just to make it through a few hours of a day. I listened to a lot and I understood.

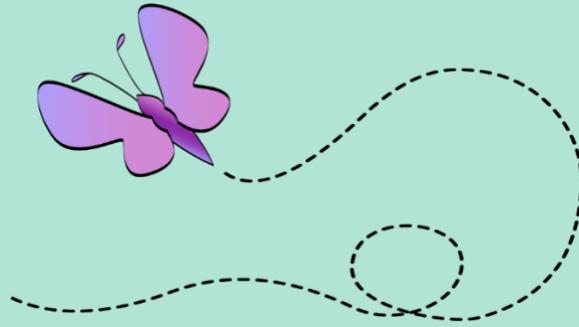
For those of you who know and those of you who are just beginning to see part of my journey, I have not had even 10 seconds of silence since 12/02/2010. My audio hallucinations have not stopped for a minute since that date. What I am discovering is that the long-term effect of no silence is cognitive fatigue. Simply put, my brain is tired. I work so hard just to know who is talking that my brain gets no rest. It hasn't had rest in over seven years. Every moment, my brain is working to understand voices to see who is talking. My brain is focused on every noise in the house to see if it is external or internal. Even while watching a television show or a movie, my brain needs to focus intently just to follow the show or movie.

That being said, I was super excited to grasp the concept of cognitive fatigue. It again gives me something to work with. The challenge for me is that I have not developed skills that only deal with trying to rest my brain while out and about in the community. I currently have over 180 tools to work with on my "typical" challenges to my well-being and use them appropriately. I have not realized the fatigue my brain is feeling so I have not worked on skills needed for me to take a break, even in the middle of a busy day.

Well, right now, I have been working hard on discovering tools to help. My count of tools is up to 10 tools that I can pull out to attempt a brain break. So far, the tool that seems to work the best is looking for four leaf clovers. It is the only time, that even during a break from a long meeting, I can spend a moment and let my voices just have at it. I do not need to focus on my surroundings, my voices, my symptoms. I can just look for clovers. Moments of peace find me as I am just walking through grass. For now, it is just moments of peace. Moments when I am looking at a clover patch. It is not carrying through for the rest of the day. I will find more tools I can use to take a brain break. I am not quite there yet, but it is something to work on.

For me, it is exciting to at least understand that I am on a new path, it may be darker and different, but it is a new path, nonetheless. I get an opportunity to work differently than I was yesterday. I have a chance to grow in other ways than I have been working recently. So, for now, I will look for clovers, share my finds with others, and experience brief moments of peace.

I am Joseph. I have mental illness; however, I am not my mental illness.



UPCOMING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & EVENTS

**NAMI Connection and Family Support Meetings
6:00pm on 2nd & 4th Mondays of each month at our office**

Family to Family Class Graduation Wednesday, May 29th

18th Annual NAMI Mental Health Walk & Recovery Fair on Sunday May 19th

NAMI Open House- May 31, 2019 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

At Our New Address:

259 Wyoming Avenue, Kingston, PA 18704

ACCESS TO PARKING LOT

There is a parking lot in the back of the next-door building available for visitor's use. The parking lot is located directly behind Rebennack's Appliance.

The easiest way to access the parking lot is to turn off Wyoming Avenue onto East Hoyt St. (opposite side of Wyoming Ave. as the Hoyt Library).

You will then make the 1st right-hand turn onto Ridge Avenue and within a few hundred feet, you will see several parking lots. Look for the Rebennack's Appliance sign and use the lot immediately behind their store.

There is one building between Rebennack's and our building. Access to our building can be gained through either the front or rear doors. Elevator access is only accessible from the rear of the building.

Please note, we are on the Ground Floor. Either take the elevator or stairs down to our office. We will post signs on the doors of the building to help guide you.

***For more information on any of the above events,
please contact the office @ 570-371-3844 or namiluzernewyomingcounty@gmail.com***

Family, Food & Fun

Camping Grilled Corn



Ingredients

4 ears of corn

Oil, for grates

1 tablespoon butter, cut into 4 pats

Coarse salt and ground pepper

Chili powder or paprika

1. Peel back husks, leaving them attached at the base of the ear. Remove and discard silk; pull husks back over corn. Place ears in a large bowl or pot; cover with cold water. Let soak 10 minutes.
2. Preheat grill to high; lightly oil grates. Drain corn. Arrange ears on grill. Cover and cook, turning occasionally, using tongs, until husks are slightly charred, and corn is tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove ears from grill. Holding bottom of hot ears with a towel, peel back husks and, with a knife, coat kernels with butter. Season corn with salt, pepper, and chili powder or paprika. Serve.

DID YOU KNOW ???:

CAMPING CAN RELIEVE STRESS & DEPRESSION

You might think that camping and hiking trips are only good for your physical health, but they're also great for your mental and emotional well-being. When you raise your levels of oxygen, serotonin, and melatonin — which happens when you partake in outdoor physical activities — your stress level will automatically decrease. Plus, it's difficult to be upset when you're partaking in an enjoyable activity.

It's one of the best things we can do for our bodies, our minds, and our spirits.

**NAMI LUZERNE-WYOMING COUNTIES
259 WYOMING AVENUE
LOWER LEVEL
KINGSTON PA 18704**

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