

NAMI GWINNETT NEWSLETTER

Volume 15, Issue 1

July 2004

CIT is Heading to Gwinnett

First, what is CIT? It is Crisis Intervention Team Program. The program was developed and implemented by Major Sam Cochran of the Memphis Police Department and Dr. Randy Dupont. CIT has been accepted and utilized in more than 150 cities across the nation. The purpose is to train officers in a formal 40-hour course to prepare them to deal with the complex issues that pertain to people suffering from mental illness. Instead of incarceration, CIT goal is to provide appropriate treatment for these individuals.

This training is to address the problems of appropriate care for our citizens afflicted with this medical problem. . NAMI Georgia is overseeing the CIT initiatives for Georgia. There are plans for two law enforcement officers from Gwinnett County to take the CIT officers training. Though there are several steps to be taken before the CIT program can be fully operational, this CIT officers training is a huge step in the right direction.

CIT – Continued on page 8

Are You Ready??

Across the country there are many non profit organizations. These organizations range from self-improvement (such as AA), research support (American Heart Association), to family support (NAMI). Though each of these organizations has a unique purpose, they have one fundamental attribute in common. That fundamental attribute determines the success or failure of an organization and that attribute is membership involvement. It doesn't matter what you are activity involved in, the same basic rule applies.

This past year the board has worked hard to keep NAMI Gwinnett as responsive organization. As the result of the surveys from last year, we have modified our general meetings provide more support as well as informative speakers. But there is more to a support organization than monthly meetings.

At the bottom of the article is a list of the activities are needed to keep NAMI Gwinnett a successful organization. Take time to review this list. What activities can you be a part of? Unfortunately the time has come that we can not say that someone else will volunteer. Everyone in the NAMI Gwinnett family is important. Everyone has a quality/skill that will enable our organization to move forward. Let's face it. Life is getting more complicated by the minute. Our mentally ill loved ones are losing to the more publicized issues. If you don't believe me just take a moment and read the AJC article (July 9) about the 71-year-old mentally ill man who was beaten to death in jail. Due to a clerical error was the reason he was in jail. Due to a lack of concern or priority on our part, nothing will happen. Yes, one person can make a difference. But it is much easier to make a difference as a team.

Please review this list. If you are not sure about some of the activities, attend the board meetings. They are open to the general membership and the board would love to see you there.

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Presidents Corner

The National NAMI office surveyed approximately 3,000 consumers and family members from all 50 states to answer questions focused on demographic information, clinical history, treatment and services access, housing and employment issues, criminal justice system involvement, and barriers to care. Their findings follow:

1. **Consumers are poor** 62% of the consumers were between 18 and 44; mostly unmarried (62%); living with parents (24.5%) or alone (31%); unemployed (67%); and poor (55% with an annual income from all sources of \$10,000 or less; and 71% receiving \$20,000 or less). Most rely upon public funding for income (37% receiving SSDI; 35% receiving SSI) and health insurance (37% on Medicare; 37% on Medicaid) **We can train/help the family members to get their consumers on SSI and SSDI. Our last meeting presenter addressed this issue. We have no program to help with employment but we could and GRN does have a job coach to help.**
2. **Consumers have severe and disabling mental illness** 52% of the consumers have received a diagnosis of schizophrenia; 42% bipolar disorder. Virtually all – 99% - have taken medication for their mental disorder; have been hospitalized – 85%; received crisis services – 65%; and have received some form of psychotherapy – 83%. In the last year alone, 48% of the consumers were hospitalized and 40% received crisis services. **We cannot cure the mental illness but we can help them to learn about their illness and support them in our NAMI Cares program that meets the same night (different room) as our family members meet and we have a library of books for this purpose.**
3. **Consumers are not receiving services** Only 19% were ever enrolled in an ACT program; only 28% ever received supported employment; 36% ever participated in consumer-run programs. In the last year, only 23% received supported employment services and only 16% participated in an ACT program. **We need to educate our consumers and family members better on the “system” and ACT specifically. We can do that but not without active members stepping up to the plate to help.**
4. **Lack of affordable, appropriate housing** Many of the respondents described significant barriers to housing, with expense – 50% saying housing was too expensive and 40% indicated lack of appropriate housing with supports. **Lack of cost effective housing could be addressed by this affiliate by becoming active and developing a housing program within NAMI Gwinnett. The money is available in grants, the houses are available as HUD houses and we have talked to GRN about their leasing and managing the houses. You want affordable housing? Then call me and lets talk.**
5. **Doors closed to jobs** The respondents – 45% called stigma and discrimination a significant factor. Fear of losing benefits was another important barrier reported by 40%. **We have the “Open Your Mind” power point presentation that we want present to the public to bust stigma through education about mental illness. We need people to do this and we will train you. We currently have no training program to address the consumers’ fear of loosing benefits if they work but this is a real problem. We can address this issue in both our NAMI Cares consumer support meetings and family support meetings through a program of education.**
6. **Criminalization** 44% of the consumers have been detained by the police or arrested; 29% of them in the last year alone. Of those who were detained, 50% received no treatment while in the criminal justice system. **We have the Crisis Intervention Program that has been in development for years that is just now getting started to teach police officers how to deal with crisis involving the mentally ill. If you have a loved one in jail that is not receiving treatment we need to hear about it.**

President's Corner – Continued on page 5.

Stop This Hurricane in My Brain!

One in 50 adults in the U.S. suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. For those who suffer from OCD their life can be perpetual chaos.

Stop This Hurricane in My Brain: An OCD Survival Guide is written by Dina Siers.

A little about Dina: “I have suffered from OCD all my life (age 34) but have learned how to live with it. I both started and facilitate my local OCD support group in Cary (Raleigh area), NC. I wrote “Stop This Hurricane in My Brain” to help OCD sufferers and family members to know they are not alone in their struggles and they will survive. I also hoped to bring about further awareness of this debilitating disorder. I have just begun to schedule speaking engagements locally and I hope to one-day travel to groups across the US speaking on OCD.”

Stop This Hurricane in My Brain is a book about survival for people who suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. My book demonstrates that there is life with OCD and it is possible to live happy and productive lives.

My story of recovery details the exact steps I took to become 95% OCD free. Numerous OCD sufferers’ personal journeys are included in my book as well. Our stories of suffering and survival discuss many aspects of OCD primarily covering three prominent categories of OCD-checking, contamination and intrusive thoughts. Additionally my book includes several stories from loved ones of OCD sufferers discussing how OCD affects their lives. Also included in my book, I cover various treatment options where Jim Claiborn, PhD., ABPP offers his contribution on treatment methods. I further discuss serotonin, a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in OCD and also have written numerous scenarios to help define what OCD can or cannot be.

Written by: Dina Siers

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Finding The Answers In Managing Your Fears and Anxieties

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Looking for all of the answers in how to manage your most persistent fears and anxieties? I deal with fear on a personal level and I found it difficult to find all of the answers in managing my anxieties. I read some anxiety books and talked to various professionals, however I still had trouble dealing with certain fears and anxieties. Eventually, I wrote a book that presents all of the ways to help manage those hard to manage fears and anxieties and it is located at www.trebleheartbooks.com/mvStanPopovich.html

Let me explain the process of how I found those answers

I first went to my local bookstore to find those books that dealt with fear and anxiety. I looked for those books that reviewed the techniques in how to manage certain fears and anxieties. As I read these books, I wrote down some notes on those techniques that I found most useful in managing my fears. I noticed that each book said something different and there wasn’t always a complete review of all the techniques to manage fear and anxiety. As a result, I started a notebook and every time I found a technique that was useful in managing my fears, I would write it down in my small notebook.

Secondly, I talked to various professionals in the psychology and religious fields and they provided me with additional information. Again, I would write down the information that the professionals gave me that I felt was most useful in managing these fears.

The professionals were very helpful, however there were times they were not able to answer all of my questions. Although I had a lot of good information, I still had trouble dealing with certain fears and anxieties.

I realized that it would have to be up to me to find the solutions to some of my problems. The first thing I did was to review my notebook of all the techniques that I learned from my research. I then started to practice using these techniques. I made it a point that every time I could experience a fearful or anxiety related situation, I would use the information in my notebook to help me. After the anxiety would go away I

Fears & Anxieties – Continued on page 10.

Board News

For the past several months, the board has been busy on a number of items.

Based on several comments made by members, Ted and Daryl worked with GRN and developed "Access to GRN-CSB Services" flowchart. It is our hope this document, which is included in the newsletter, will assist you in time of trouble. If you experience any changes to these documented procedures, please contact the board immediately.

Since NAMI Gwinnett is now incorporated, our Bylaws needed to be reviewed and updated to reflect our new organization. Included with this newsletter is a brief description of the bylaw changes. The general membership must approve these changes before they can be adopted. This vote will take place in the September meeting. A special thanks to Daryl and Ted for documenting these changes.

Another element of the Bylaw changes is to create a NAMI Gwinnett Advisory Council. The purpose of this council is to get community leaders involved in our affiliate and partner with the board. Who do we want as members of our Advisory Council? Key congresspersons, doctors, local officials, law enforcement officials, are some people whose experience would benefit our organization. We also want to encourage NAMI Gwinnett members to participate. Contact any board member for more information.

Noel Young, CPA, has audited the NAMI Gwinnett Treasurer records. He provided the board with a written approval of our accounting records.

Lastly, we have an opening on the Board of Directors. JoAnne Burgoyne informed the board that due to her expanded travel requirements of her job, she will no longer be able to fulfill her duties as Recording Secretary. JoAnne has been a valuable member of our board and we will miss her involvement. If you are interested in joining the board, please contact Ted McVay or any board member for information.

Written by: Carol McEntee

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Special Recognition

A special "thank you" to Alice Burns who spent time to organize and lead our first Facilitator Training class. The session was great and we appreciate Alice's leadership and enthusiasm.

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Reflection:

On June 11, our good friend Ellis Sikes passed away. Ellis and Claudia Sikes have been active NAMI Gwinnett Members for over 15 years. They were volunteers for activities such as the consumer's Thanksgiving Day Party. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to Claudia and her family.

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May Guest Speaker

If you missed the May support meeting, you missed an excellent speaker Ms. Ty Johnson, who works for Abbot Laboratories. The topic discussed was medications. Ms. Johnson provided information about the latest meds and she took time to address specific questions from family members and consumers.

After she left, the room was buzzing with positive feedback about the information she provided.

We want to thank Ms Johnson again for spending time at our meeting.

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July Guest Speaker

Our July guest speaker was Cynthia Horton, who is an attorney specializes in SSDI and SSI assistance. She provided us with some general guidelines to initiate a social security case. Below is some of the information that Ms. Horton discussed.

SSDI & SSI Guidelines – Continued to page 6.

Legislative Issues

Elections are coming and with that a new year for legislation. Last year we were unsuccessful in getting the legislation passed to allow free access to medications. We are already seeing “fail first” methods tried in Georgia. One of the State Board members, psychiatrist Patrice Harris, stated that she knew of a child with attention deficit who was placed on one of the ADH drugs that was a stimulant. He started having heart palpitations and the insurance company required that he try another of the stimulants instead of allowing him to take the one drug for that disease on the market that is not a stimulant. Please see how dangerous this is and help us defeat this trend. This bill will be tried again this year and we will be gathering your email addresses and lining up a telephone tree for those of you who do not have email so that when it is we will have enough people lined up to send emails, letters and make phone calls.

Another piece of important legislation at the Federal level is the insurance parity legislation. Your Georgia congressman, John Linder’s response to correspondence about this was that he does not believe in the government telling private enterprises what to do. How do you feel about this? My view is that we would not have passed legislation like child labor laws, right to work laws, affirmative action laws, etc. if we believed government should allow industry to operate without interference. It is clear to me, at least, that the only way the insurance industry will be willing to cover mental health equitably is if the people demand they do so and therefore, this law must be passed. I would appreciate your views on how our affiliate may help in this effort.

Written by: Virginia McVay, NAMI Gwinnett

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President’s Corner Continued from page 2.

- 7. Peer provided services work** The bright light in the results is how valuable consumers and family members find consumer-provided services and family-provided services and family-provided education and support. 85% of respondents rated the family-to-family program as very helpful. Nearly half rated consumer-provided services as very good or excellent in quality. Unfortunately, less than 1.3% of consumers assess peer-provided services; and only a little more than half of the families received any education and support. **Peer provided services in the Peer to Peer program at the CSB’s day care center has proven very successful as a way to provide jobs to consumers and support only a consumer can relate to. While we have had a several Family to Family training programs, we need volunteer teachers to continue our high level commitment to the education of our family members and consumers about coping skills and how to succeed in our effort to concur help with mental illness.**

What can you do about the above and the problems of reduced Medicaid funding, closing of hospitals and possible closing of your GRN CSB because of lack of funding by the State of Georgia? We all feel that one person cannot make much difference and that is true especially if that person does nothing. You must not despair; instead, work together with your NAMI Gwinnett affiliate where as a group we can make a difference through our programs in Advocacy, Education and Support. We are trying to do to address these problems and we need every able person in this affiliate to help. You nor I or your board can make much difference alone but **we can accomplish anything by working together**. Please get active in your affiliate we all need you. Call me at 770-736-5605. Thanks for the memories!

Written by: Ted McVay, NAMI Gwinnett President

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To initiate a social security case.

1. Fill out application. Remember, the condition must be at least 12 month duration. You obtain/submit an application can do this three ways:
 - a. online at www.ssa.gov
 - b. go to the office
 - c. mail it.

Approximately 90% of cases are turned down going into appeals is a normal process. To appeal one must ask to for reconsideration (but they usually agree with the first person) or order medical records.

2. Certain conditions usually covered (e.g., osteoporosis where a woman has lost 2" in height)
3. Educational testing (sometimes discover learning disabilities)
4. Go before the judge (Clairmont Rd) for a hearing. This has about a 60 to 65% success rate at this level. Bring backup documentation, friends to testify, etc.
5. Appeals council – Washington DC sometimes reverses cases. If remanded, the case comes back to the same judge (to help him see the errors of his ways).

SSI: Poverty level – house, care, \$1600 in the bank allowed.

Medicaid—“adult medically needy” is less known than others. This must be applied for separately.

Questions/Answers:

Q: Can individual order their own medical records?

A: Good idea, especially if you change treatment or move to another state. Same thing applies with school records that may reflect a growing disability. Don't wait too long because they don't keep these records forever.

Q: Who should these records be sent too?

A: To the Disability Unit of the Social Security Office. Don't send it too early because they can be lost. Once assigned, call and tell that individual you are faxing records over.

Q: What about patient who has just moved here?

A: Get name, address, everything of former adjudicator. Save appointment and business cards of who has treated your loved one.

Q: On what amount of award is based?

A: Work history. May drop lowest-paid 5 years starting at age 22. If young person who never worked, file dependent's claim (you) – here's where old records are a must. The child's amount is about 50% of the parent's amount. According to government regulation, those in the category “Disabled Adult Children” (DAC) may never marry, unless they marry another DAC.

Q: How long can this process take?

A: It can take years, but minimum is a year. It is retroactive, however, although it will only pay unpaid bills. It will not reimburse. Try to pay as little as possible out of pocket until you qualify.

Q: Can you be eligible for some kind of Medicaid if Social Security or SSI has turned your down?

A: Not technically. But if you get even \$1 from SSI, you qualify for Medicaid.

For more information or assistance, you can reach Cynthia L Horton at 678-380-5827. Her office is located in Norcross. We want to thank Ms. Horton for

Information provide by: Sara Burns

Your comments and suggestions are important. Are you ready to make a difference??

Bell South Golf Classic is our main fundraiser. The main purpose of the proceeds is to fund the consumer activities, primarily the Christmas gifts, which was started the same year we started working the concession tents at the Classic. We will be calling you around February 2005.

Board of Director opening needs an individual who is willing to meet monthly and provide suggestions to enable our support organization to grow. If you are interested, please contact Ted McVay (770-736-5605) or just attend the next board meeting.

Christmas Tree decorates the Gwinnett Justice & Administrative Building each year. It is our way of advertising the needs and concerns of the mentally ill. If you have time to help decorate and remove the beautiful tree, please contact Daryl Myers at 770-963-2809.

Consumers Thanksgiving Party is a tradition that NAMI Gwinnett has hosted for over 14-years. This party is given at the day treatment centers in Lawrenceville. Volunteers are needed to prepare party snacks (i.e., cookies, vegetable trays, fruit trays, and finger food) and service the consumers. The tentative party date is November 12. Contact Virginia McVay (770-736-5605), Patsy Illick (770-922-6129), or Bettye Britt (770-979-1610).

Consumer Christmas gifts and “goody” bags are another NAMI Gwinnett Tradition. Many of the consumers do not have family support. This has been our way of saying that we care and that their feelings count. We have given “goody” bags to the consumers for over 14 years. In the early 1990s, we distributed over 220+ “goody” bags among three Day Treatment Centers. Today, we continue that tradition and distribute around 125 bags that contain personal care items, socks, and other donated items. If you would like to help, contact Carol McEntee at 770-339-1149.

Hospitality Refreshments are provided by volunteers for each meeting. If you have the time to bring a tray of cookies, fruit, etc. Scott and Marilyn Boulware have chaired this committee for the past few years. If you have time to meet with members during the support meeting to schedule the refreshment, please call Marilyn at 770-564-3094.

Legislative Advocacy is primarily a NAMI Georgia function but we must also advocate our specific legislators on many issues involving support of our mental health system. If you believe that the welfare of our consumers will always be provided by our congresspersons then you are sadly mistaken. Community health service boards like GRN have lost funding and been closed. GRN is now operating with extreme over crowding in the down sized day care centers. The state has tried to close several mental hospitals this last year as well as cutting Medicaid cost by 5% this last year. There is a 10% cut on the books for this year even though gross revenues coming to the state are increasing dramatically over last year. This activity is critical to the long-term support of our consumers and we need your help now. We are starting the planning for this year’s efforts to address the new legislators as soon as possible after the election and we need your help now. Please call Virginia @ 770-736-5605.

NAMI Gwinnett Newsletter is published quarterly. If you have some time to identify articles that would be of interest to our members, please contact Carol McEntee at 770-339-1149.

“Open Your Mind” Power point presentation – This informative presentation was created by Brenda Vinson and Bruce Beck to educate the public about NAMI and mental illness and reduce stigma. A few presentations have been made and warmly received. More presenters are needed call Virginia @ 770-736-5605.

Rich’s Discount Ticket Sales is another fund raiser that enable us to continue our focus of family support. Proceeds from this event help with the educational items such as the Community Help Booklet. For more information, contact Cynthia Collard at 770-963-2937.

Telephone Tree is a group who contacts our members to remind them of our meetings and activities. If you are able to spend about half -hour per month calling a small number of people, please contact Daryl Myers 770-963-2809.

Web-site designer is needed to help create a new site for NAMI Gwinnett. Contact Ted McVay at 770-736-5605.

The following article is based from the notes taken at the CIT Meeting held on June 25. The speaker was Sam Cochran.

Basic sequence of events on CIT model.

1. Call comes into dispatcher, dispatcher listens to and questions caller about disturbance.
2. If mental problem may be involved, dispatcher notifies trained CIT officer in that precinct. Regular officers may also respond. CIT officer takes charge.
3. If the CIT Officer believes mental illness is evident, CIT officer takes person to Triage Center for mental health. This Triage Center is opened 24 hours / 7 days.
4. Professionals called to Triage Center to determine kind of treatment facility is needed and make the arrangements.

What is the Triage Center, which is staffed 24 hours / 7 days.

1. The facility where consumer is separated from the law enforcement.
2. Must have professionals on call 24/7 with quick availability.
3. No refusal at center in accepting consumers from CIT officer.
4. Law dictates commitment policy
5. If consumer cannot be committed (not mentally ill or other reasons), person is returned to the police (jail or not charged).

In Gwinnett County who must be involved and committed to program: (Note: This list is formulated from the Memphis partnership.)

- ◆ County Government (commissioners)
- ◆ City Government (Mayor and councils)
- ◆ County and City Police (Trained with each precinct covered 24/7)
- ◆ Sheriff's department (Jail)
- ◆ GRN-CSB and/or other mental health providers
- ◆ Hospitals
- ◆ Advocacy organizations such as NAMI and NAMI Gwinnett
- ◆ County/City Court systems
- ◆ Solicitor's Office

Note: That all of these exist in Gwinnett County. The key and crucial agency not in existence is the Mental Health Triage Center. The CIT model will not work without this center. The GRN-CSB emergency arrangement at Gwinnett Medical Center (GMC) **does not** meet the Triage Center requirements for two reasons.

1. Police cannot leave a person at the GMC.
2. Typical four to six hour wait for professionals does not meet the quick response requirement.

CIT Model Basic Requirements

- ◆ Need for advanced police training.
- ◆ Fast response – be at disturbance scene in 5 to 10 minutes.
- ◆ Safety of consumer and police officer is a must.
- ◆ Must have a mental health system in place for proper care of all types of consumers

CIT officers selection considerations are: Personality/Disposition, Judgement/Action in past crisis situation, Seniority, Maturity, Leadership skills, Prior exposure to the mentally ill (Do they have a negative feeling towards the mentally ill?)

The real key to success of the CIT model is having all of the agencies involved and needed to cooperate in a true and total partnership arrangement.

Information provided by: Daryl Myers, NAMI Gwinnett

Calendar of Events

AUGUST NAMI SUPPORT MEETING

CARING AND SHARING MEETING

LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AUGUST 3 AT 7:30 P.M.

AUGUST NAMI BUSINESS MEETING

LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AUGUST 10 AT 7:00 P.M.

SEPTEMBER NAMI GWINNETT MEETING

GUEST SPEAKER – JARVIS WOOTEN

LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 7 AT 7:30 P.M.

SEPTEMBER NAMI BUSINESS MEETING

LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 14 AT 7:00 P.M.

OCTOBER NAMI GWINNETT MEETING

POT LUCK DINNER

LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OCTOBER 5 AT 7:30 P.M.

OCTOBER NAMI BUSINESS MEETING

LAWRENCEVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OCTOBER 12 AT 7:00 P.M.

September Guest Speaker

At the September 7 meeting, our guest speaker will be Jarvis Wooten, Mental Health Director at the Gwinnett County Detention Center (Jail).

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October's Pot Luck Dinner

In the past, our Pot Luck Dinner has been during the September meeting. Since we have a guest speaker scheduled for September, our Pot Luck Dinner has been moved to October.

So note this change on your calendar and bring a dish to share. Join us in our traditional Pot Luck fellowship meeting. This is a wonderful time to meet and get to know other NAMI Gwinnett members.

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Officers:

- Ted McVay, President
- Daryl Myers, 1st Vice President/Program Chair
- Evelyn Triana, 2nd Vice President/Membership Chair
- Carol McEntee, Treasurer
- Sara Bums, Recording Secretary
- (Vacancy) , Corresponding Secretary

Directors:

- Bruce Beck
- Cynthia Collard
- Debbie Elrod
- Virginia McVay
- Debbie Taylor

NAMI Gwinnett's Address:

There has been some confusion about our zip code, which is 30042. Please note that our correct mailing address is listed below.

P.O. Box 464053
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30042-4053

would write down in my notebook what techniques worked and which ones didn't work. In every anxiety related situation I experienced, I began to learn what worked, what didn't work, and what I needed to improve on in managing my fears and anxieties.

At the same time, I would continue to talk to various professionals to learn and to become better at managing the many types of fears and anxieties. I would review what I have learned with these professionals and they would provide me with additional information so that I would be better able to deal with my fears in the future. I did this research for around fourteen years and during this time, I gained a lot of valuable information on how to manage fear and anxiety. Eventually, I realized that my notes contained a lot of information and personal experiences that could help a lot of other people deal with their fears. I eventually wrote a book that focuses on result-oriented techniques in managing fear.

The main point of this article is that no matter how difficult it is to manage your fear and anxiety, the answers are out there if you look hard enough. It might take some hard work and persistence, but it is possible to find those techniques that work for you.

BIOGRAPHY:

Stanley Popovich endured his share of fear and anxiety over the years. Unable to find the help he needed, the author decided to undertake his own research. The result is "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear Using Psychology, Christianity and Non Resistant Methods" - an easy to read book based on a combination of research and personal experience. For additional information go to: www.trebleheartbooks.com/mvStanPopovich.html

Written by: Stanley Popovich

NAMI Gwinnett Newsletter:

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