



nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Springfield

Volume 2 : Issue 4

April 2012

Calendar:

Support Groups

- Saturday April 7th
1pm-3pm
- Wed. April 18th
7pm-9pm
- Saturday May 5th
1pm-3pm

NAMI Connections.

- Saturday April 7th
1pm-3pm
- Wed. April 18th
7pm-9pm
- Saturday May 5th
1pm-3pm

First Christian Church

Located at 700 S. 6th
Springfield, IL

CONTACT US!

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What is Self-Injury, Self-Harm, Self-Abuse?

Self-injury, self-harm is when someone deliberately hurts or injures themselves. Self-injury is a coping mechanism and not an attempt at suicide.

It's a perplexing phenomenon with many names: self-injury, self-harm, self-mutilation, self-inflicted violence, self-cutting, and self-abuse to name some. Those who come across it - family members, friends, supporters - even many professionals - struggle to understand why people do it, and find the behavior disturbing and puzzling. Recent reports imply that it is reaching 'epidemic proportions,' particularly among young people. Furthermore, research suggests that it is a frequent companion to eating disorders, alcohol abuse and drug abuse, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, borderline personality disorder, and dissociative disorders. Those caught in its clutches claim that it is difficult to stop due to its highly addictive nature, or say they are reluctant to try because it helps them 'feel better,' 'more in control,' 'more real,' or simply 'it keeps them alive.'

- Jan Sutton, author "Healing the Hurt Within: Understand Self-Injury and Self-Harm, and Heal the Emotional Wounds"

What is Self-injury?

Self-harm is a way of dealing with very strong emotions. For some

people it gives the relief that crying may provide for the rest of us.

Some self-harming people feel so angry and aggressive they can't control their emotions. They become afraid that they may hurt someone, so they turn their aggression inwards to get relief. People who self-harm are often labeled as 'attention seeking'. However, a person who self-harms may believe this is the only way to communicate their distress, and self-harm can be a hidden problem that goes on for years.

It may start as a spur-of-the-moment outlet for anger and frustration (such as punching a wall) and then develop into a major way of coping with stress that, because it remains hidden, generates more stress. (Read Cutting: Self-Mutilating to Release Emotional Stress)

The severity of self-harm doesn't depend on the severity of a person's underlying problems. Usually, as time passes, the person who is self-harming becomes more accustomed to the pain they inflict on themselves and so they harm themselves more severely to get the same level of relief.

This spiral can lead to permanent injury and serious infections.

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Self-Injury is Different Than Attempting Suicide

It's important to make a distinction between self-harm and attempted suicide, though people who self-mutilate often go on to attempt suicide.

In the case of attempted suicide (most usually by swallowing pills), the harm caused is uncertain and basically invisible. By contrast, in self-harm by cutting, the degree of harm is clear, predictable and often highly visible. Many people indulge in behavior that's harmful to themselves, such as smoking or drinking to excess. But people don't smoke to damage themselves - harm is an unfortunate side-effect. The reason they smoke is for pleasure. Yet people who cut themselves intend to hurt themselves.

Addiction and Abuse: What's the Difference?

There is no definition of addiction in the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR), but substance abuse is defined for drugs like nicotine, heroin, marijuana, alcohol and others.

Substance abuse is defined as any of the following over a 12-month period:²

- Dysfunction in work, school or home because of substance abuse
- Repeated use of substance in dangerous situations
- Substance-related legal problems
- Personal problems as a result of substance use

This definition of abuse can be applied to behaviors as well as substances. Drug abuse or abuse of a behavior describes use that harms the self or others. Addiction is not the same as abuse, however.

More than just abusive use of the drug or behavior, the definition of addiction is characterized by psychological changes and changes to behaviors in daily life such as:

- Craving
- Compulsivity
- Inability to stop; relapse
- Fixation on addiction
- Loss of control over addiction

Continuing addiction in spite of negative consequences

Stigma of Addiction and Mental Illness Blog Excerpt

I have stopped reading tweets and Facebook messages about Whitney's death because so many revolve around the, "I'm not shocked, she had it coming due to her choices" and "She threw her talent and life away for drugs" themes. Maybe I am so frustrated and upset because I struggled with an addiction. Maybe it's because my parents found me many times in the bathtub, sitting, and having to wake me up because I had blacked out. Maybe it is because I know the ins and outs of the torment of an addiction.

Whitney Houston's struggle was not so unfamiliar with those people we know in our lives, she just happened to struggle in the public eye. People have made comments how they do not understand how a person with so much money, and all the resources, could continue to make the same bad decisions.

I cannot seem to understand why people continue to believe people who struggle with an addiction have a choice. It is not like I woke up one day and thought, "I want to become physically addicted to alcohol, and ruin my life."

United Way Announces 2-1-1 Information & Referral Service

United Way is bringing the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Service to Sangamon County this spring. This easy to remember, toll-free number connects individuals with the community's network of health and human services. Callers will have access to information on a wide range of support programs including senior care, job training, healthcare resources, housing and rent assistance, counseling, and after school programs.

"2-1-1 is United Way's gift to our community. We know an increasing number of individuals and families are seeking assistance from social service agencies and we want to make access to help easier," said John P. Kelker, United Way President.

Trained specialists will respond to callers' inquiries 24 hours, seven days a week with multi-lingual and hearing impaired capabilities. The 2-1-1 database will be built with the information received from local health and human service agencies and community service providers.

When 2-1-1 goes live this spring, our community will join over 86% of the nation already realizing the benefits of this service. In Illinois, Sangamon County and Rockford will join McLean County, St. Louis Metro East area, and the Quad Cities in offering this service.

Upcoming Conference

Piecing It All Together

March 9, 2012
Edwardsville

April 27, 2012
Palos Hills

How Children's Mental Health & Mental Illness Affects Home, School & Community

Piecing It All Together (PIAT) strives to bring parents/caregivers of children who have mental health conditions together with school and mental health professionals all under the same roof, hearing the same message of hope for our kids.

- Have you ever attended a conference specifically for children with mental health conditions?
- If you have, were parents, school and mental health professionals all hearing the same message?
- Does having presenters give the most up-to-date information available strike you as important?
- Would you like speakers to come and explain early intervention methods to all three groups?
- If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, then PIAT is a conference you will want to attend!

For the latest information on both conferences (PIAT South and PIANorth), visit the NAMI Illinois website at <http://il.nami.org/piat.htm>

NAMI Springfield
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POSTAGE



National Alliance on Mental Illness

Announcements

Save the Date:

3rd Annual Road to Recovery Walk/Run
On **May 5th** at
Washington Park from
10am-12pm.
Registration information
to follow.

NAMI Springfield's Annual Membership Meeting
Tuesday, May 22nd, 6:30-8:00
First Christian Church
700 S. 6th St., Springfield

The 2012 NAMI National Convention June 27th-30th, 2012 will be held at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel.

The Sheraton is located in the heart of Seattle, an area rich with restaurants, shopping, attractions, and the world famous Pike Place Market.

The 2012 convention theme, Think, Learn and Live: Wellness, Resiliency and Recovery, highlights this year's focus on developing effective programs and resources to increase resiliency and advance recovery.

For more program information and rates go to www.nami.org/convention.

We hope you will be able to join us for NAMI Springfield's Annual Membership Meeting. It will be a great opportunity to hear the latest news on affiliate activities and to socialize with old friends from classes, support groups and other more. The meeting will also include the President's report, instillation of new board members, accomplishments and looking towards the future. No charge and no reservations needed. Hope you see you there!!!