



The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

## MULTICULTURAL PARTNER COALITION

MULTICULTURAL  
ACTION CENTER

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### Multicultural Action Center Announces Events at NAMI National Convention in Austin, Texas, June 18-21, 2005

#### Asian American and Pacific Islander Mental Health Symposium

The AAPI Mental Health Symposium is a half-day event to address the most pressing mental health care concerns in the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The event will feature a plenary session, three concurrent workshops and networking opportunities. As NAMI partners with the National Asian American and Pacific Islander Mental Health Association, Asian American Family Services and other leading organizations in the field, the symposium promises to bring together NAMI grassroots leaders, AAPI community leaders, families, people with mental illness and mental health professionals from across the country to share their knowledge, information and resources about mental health issues that affect these communities. Furthermore, it will provide other mental health professionals and organizations the opportunity to learn more about AAPI communities and how to engage them in a culturally competent manner.

The Symposium will be held Sunday, June 19, 2005, from 9AM-2PM at the Austin Hilton Hotel. Registration is separate from convention registration and free for NAMI members. The registration rates for non-NAMI members are: \$50 for mental health professionals, \$25 for family members and free for consumers.

#### Spirituality and Faith in Communities of Color: A Family Perspective

This track will bring together African American faith community leaders and

families to discuss the role of faith and religion in the treatment and acceptance of mental illness. Using panel discussion and work groups, the goals of the track are to educate and build trust in faith communities, address stigma, shame and discrimination, speak to the role of the faith community in healing and provide tools and guidelines to implement programs in congregations. The track will be held Monday, June 20, 2005 from 2:30-6:30PM at the Austin Hilton Hotel.

#### Salud Mental: Una Realidad Posible

The Spanish language track, entitled "Mental Health: A Possible Reality", is an event for the Latino community and led by Latino leaders in the mental health field. Topics of discussion will include general information on mental illness in the Latino community, the role family plays in support and recovery and lessons on advocacy, as well as opportunities for questions and answers. Above all, this track hopes to lend an opportunity to get to know other Latino leaders in mental health and share ideas to take back to home communities. The Spanish language track will be held Monday, June 20, 2005 from 9AM-1PM at the Austin Hilton Hotel.

Registration for both tracks is separate from convention registration and free for all participants.

**For more information or to register for any of these valuable events, please contact [MACenter@nami.org](mailto:MACenter@nami.org)**



#### NAMI Celebrates Black History Month

During Black History Month, we focus our attention on disparities that exist for African Americans facing mental illness.

**African Americans are less likely to receive diagnoses and treatments for their mental illnesses than Caucasian Americans are:** Only 2% of psychiatrists, 2% of psychologists and 4% of social workers from the U.S. are African American. African Americans tend to rely on family, religious and social communities rather than turning to health care professionals, although at times this may be necessary.

**African Americans are disproportionately more likely to experience social circumstances that increase their chances of developing a mental illness:** 40% of the homeless population and nearly half of the prison population are African American. People experiencing homelessness and prison inmates are at a greater risk for developing mental illness.

**Read on for articles from African American NAMI leaders!**

**We would like to use these events as venues to highlight our Partners' resources and programs! If you would like us to include your materials, please contact us at [MACenter@nami.org](mailto:MACenter@nami.org)**

## Breaking the Silence By, Diane Colburn Onley; NAMI Delaware

On June 10<sup>th</sup> of 1994, my nephew and Godson, my sister's first child and my family's first "everything", Chawan, put a gun to his head and ended his life. Life the way we knew it would never be the same again. He was also the first, although we didn't recognize it at the time, of our immediate family to bring to the surface what would be found to be a history of Clinical Depression in our family. It was during the months and years during the "fallout" of his suicide that his mother (my sister) Wanda, my brother Curtis and I would be diagnosed the same.

Over the years, with the death many family members to mental illness, as well as cancer and AIDS, I was literally brought to my knees in pain, grief, and Depression, which had become so serious that by the year 2003 I would have to retire early on Full-Term Disability because of it. Under medical care, which felt inadequate to help me, I turned to prayer, and one day, I simply decided to SURVIVE. I had a wonderful husband and a beautiful 17 year old daughter who needed me. I returned to church, as did Wanda after being away a very long time. I knew in my heart that with both God's help and the help of the doctors that I would be okay.

Wanda, who had recently emerged from a deep Depression that had threatened to take her life too, and I became angry – especially after discovering a history of mental illness in our family going farther than we had known because members of our family had never talked about it. Because of stigma. Because of the long-standing belief in the Black community that, "Black people do not go to psychiatrists. Black people do not commit suicide. You must be strong. If you have a mental illness you are weak and your faith in God is not strong enough. "

And so together we did as much as we could to learn about the illness. We wanted to protect ourselves and the rest of our family from anything like this happening to us again. We saturated ourselves with books on faith and inspiration, books about mental illness and its treatment and paths to recovery.

Today we can say that we are true survivors and have found new meaning for our lives. Many things had come together in unpredictable ways to bring us to the place we are today. One of the most important is that we are the first African American teachers of the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program.

Wanda and I have broken our silence, and are committed to encouraging others to do the same. We have told our stories at our own Churches and others, on radio and local television, and in a recent article that was published in the local newspaper of our hometown of Wilmington, Delaware. Through our classes at NAMI-DE we have found a way to reach out, to teach others, and to share our stories with the hope that perhaps someone may hear something in our lives that mirrors their own and give them the courage to do the same. The classes have added a new purpose to our lives. Nothing is better for my heart than to hear someone at the end of a class say with a smile that they are glad to be there, and wish they had known what they learned a long time ago.

"All you need to do is pray" is not meant to be the only antidote for mental illness. No one would say to a Diabetic, "You don't need that insulin. All you need to do is pray." I was taught that God helps those who help themselves. You can do that by seeking the treatment that is available to fight these illnesses. With God's help **and** treatment, perhaps the dark hopelessness of wanting to end your life can instead turn into the light of hopefulness.

**For more information on about Family to Family and resources about African American mental health issues, please visit [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)**

### Multicultural Partner Coalition Members

Alianza Nacional de Salud Mental (Mexico)

Alianza Para la Depresión (Spain)

American Psychiatric Association

American Society of Hispanic Psychiatry

APOIAR (Brazil)

Asian Community Mental Health Services

Asociación Argentina de Ayuda a la Persona que Padece de Esquizofrenia y su Familia (APEF)

Asociación Maníaco Depresivos (Colombia)

Asociación Salvadoreña de Familiares y Amigos de Pacientes Esquizofrenicos (El Salvador)

Black Psychiatrists of America

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University

Circles of Care Evaluation Technical Assistance Center

District of Columbia Department of Mental Health

Federación Colombiana para la Salud Mental (Colombia)

## New Bilingual Mental Health Newspaper Premieres



Two years in the making, the inaugural issue of *Salud Mental* has just been released. The new bilingual, bicultural mental health education quarterly comes to us from the publisher of the

award-winning, New York based *Mental Health News*.

Reactions to the 48 page premier issue of *Salud Mental* and the story behind the project's founder and publisher are nothing short of inspirational.

A survivor of a ten-year, life threatening battle with depression, which left him homeless and destitute, Ira Minot of White Plains, New York wowed the northeast's mental health community six years ago with the creation of *Mental Health News*. Working without staff or funds on the kitchen table of his one-bedroom 'shelter-plus apartment,' Minot's *Mental Health News* quickly caught the attention of the mental health community. Today, a nonprofit organization, the publication reaches an estimated 70,000 readers made up of consumers and their families, clinicians, mental health providers and decision makers at the local, state and national level. The organization's Board and Advisory Council reads like a 'who's who' of notables from the most prestigious mental health organizations, psychiatric hospitals, medical colleges and universities.

"My goal was to provide a roadmap for

mental health education, information and resources and to give our mental health community the recognition it deserves for saving the lives of people with mental illness each and every day," states Minot. The unassuming publisher and founder who came from a background as a psychiatric social worker and a fundraising director for nonprofits, was struck down with severe clinical depression in his late 30's. "Even with a graduate degree in mental health, I could not find my way out of an illness that strikes one-in-five people in the United States."

The new *Salud Mental* contains a wealth of articles in English and Spanish written by some of the northeast regions most influential leaders and provider organizations from the local and national Latino mental health community. Working with a "Field of Dreams" principle of 'build it and they will come,' the new publication is gaining momentum in attracting the funding required to expand distribution beyond the metro-New York region. Initial funders for the pilot project include: The New York Community Trust, The United Way of New York City, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Forrest Pharmaceuticals and the New York State Office of Mental Health.

*Salud Mental* is available in a full readable format on its new website funded by the Verizon Foundation at:

[www.mhnews-latino.org](http://www.mhnews-latino.org).

**For further information you may call Mr. Minot directly at *Salud Mental* at: (914) 948-6699.**

### Multicultural Partner Coalition Members:

Fundación Contener (Argentina)

Fundación Costarr para Personas con Esquizofrenia (FUCOPEZ) (Paraguay)

Fundación Luz y Vida (Paraguay)

Health Watch Information and Promotion Services, Inc.

INGENIUM (Mexico)

International Association of Psychological Rehabilitation Services

Latino Behavioral Health Institute

Malaysian Mental Health Association (Malaysia)

Massachusetts Mental Health Services Program for Youth

NAMI India

National Asian American and Pacific Islander Mental Health Association

National Council of La Raza

National Latino Behavioral Health Association

National Medical Association

National Organization of People of Color Against Suicide

## Upcoming Mental Health Diversity Events

### American Psychiatric Association Roundtable

On March 15-16, 2005, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) will convene an *Action Roundtable on Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Mental Health Care* in Bethesda, Maryland. The goal of the conference is to raise awareness of the problem and forge a coalition of organizations to build an agenda for collective action. The Roundtable will engage a wide range of stakeholder organizations concerned with mental health disparities and will be attended by 29 representatives from such organizations as NAMI, National Hispanic Medical Association, American Psychological Association, National Business Group on Health, and the National Urban League. Proceedings of the meeting, reflective of what the collaborating organizations developed during the conference, will be produced. For information, contact Alison Bondurant at (703) 907-8639; [abondurant@psych.org](mailto:abondurant@psych.org)

### NAMI Huntsville's African American Family Outreach Program By, Ruth Karr; Coordinator AAFOP

NAMI Huntsville celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2004 facing the realization there were far too few African Americans amongst us. We started developing an African American Family Outreach Project, with the focus on *families*, knowing those in need will stay in treatment with encouragement and support from their peers.

We started AFFOP modestly, with a grant to develop African American information kits containing information about serious mental illnesses, coping skills, NAMI and special cultural issues. With 20 years of experience as a community activist and strong "networker", Program Coordinator Ruth Karr made a list of African American community leaders she had worked with over the years.

Two 2004 lunch meetings were held with the AAFOP Associates, as these leaders came to be known, to brainstorm ways to reach out to the African American community. The suggestions were divided into five broad categories, then ranked in order of priority: Work through the churches, Use black-owned media outlets, Work through the systems (Education, Mental Health, Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice, Hospital Intake, etc.), Visit African American human service organization events and Conduct programs similar to the NAMIH *Serious Mental Illness Course* at historically Black Universities in the area.

We're forging ahead on the first four categories; enlisting outstanding Black leaders to join AFFOP Associates, providing NAMIH *Grassroots* and *AAFOP Extra* newsletters and information kits to families of black mentally ill and associates. We have barely begun! For more information, or to join our efforts, please contact Ruth at [RuthKarr@aol.com](mailto:RuthKarr@aol.com)

### ADS Center Conference Calls

The ADS (Address Discrimination and Stigma) Center, part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will sponsor a series of conference calls in 2005 entitled, "Decreasing Stigma through Public Education Models that Address Specific Racial and Cultural Barriers." The goals of these calls are to provide facts, raise and discuss issues and successful culturally competent programs, as well as to provide recommendations. Focus groups will include the African American, American Indian, Asian American and Pacific Islander and Latino communities and conversation will center around exploring barriers to cultural competence in mental healthcare for each racial and/or ethnic group. To find out more about the ADS Center, please call 1-800-540-0320 or visit on the internet: [www.samhsa.gov/stigma](http://www.samhsa.gov/stigma)

### Multicultural Partner Coalition Members

National Youth Advocacy Coalition

New Jersey Asian Association for Human Services, Inc.

New Jersey Mental Health Institute

New Vision Consumer Services

Richmond Fellowship (New Zealand)

Samaritans Nepal

Self Reliance Foundation

Student National Medical Association

The Alliance for the Mentally Ill of R.O.C (Taiwan)

The Depression and Anxiety Support Group (South Africa)

West Virginia Substance Abuse Coalition

Voz Pro Salud Mental (Mexico)

Zenkeren (Japan)

**Publish your organization's news in the Multicultural Partner Coalition Newsletter! Send articles to: [MACeter@nami.org](mailto:MACeter@nami.org)**