



NAMI Contra Costa

Contra Costa's Voice on Mental Illness *May 2007*

The NAMI Contra Costa Newsletter is available on the website: www.namicontracosta.org

Contra Costa Mental Health Commission

COMMISSION DEBATES CRISIS

The Mental Health Commission debated the current crisis in the mental health system at their April meeting.

There was concern over the loss of the chief psychiatrist, Dr. Nancy Ebbert, and the chief psychiatrist in the Psych Emergency unit, Dr. Scott Weigold, along with some of the staff in what was called PES (Psychiatric Emergency Services).

A report was given on a visit to the psychiatric units made by three of the commissioners (Cynthia Miller, Teresa Pasquini and Dave Kahler). The report raised concern over the number of experienced staff who were leaving.

There have been extensive changes to the systems and procedures the psychiatric units have been following since last fall. All patients taken to the hospital now are processed through the ER (Emergency Room) instead of

(Continued on page 6, column 2)

NATION IN CONSTERNATION OVER VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTINGS

Editors Note: Below are selections from the April 20, 2007 issue of the Treatment Advocacy Center's ENEWS online publication.

Cho Seung Hui has joined an infamous and maddening list of killers who were mentally ill, whose treatment—if any— was inadequate, and whose ultimate act might have been averted had the warning signs been noted and the law properly written and implemented.

As with every name added to that list, society now proposes to react. Ban all guns, barricade all buildings.

(Continued on page 4, column 1)

May General Meeting

Thursday, May 17
7:00pm

Speaker

Jacqueline Persons
Ph.D. Clinical Psychology

Topic:

Cognitive Therapy
How it Works.

SPECIAL:

“60 Minutes” ran a special segment on the Virginia Tech shooting and the current laws. This video will be run at 7:15 pm

This will be the **ONLY** time this video will be run.

John Muir Medical Center
Concord Campus
(Note: Formerly Mt. Diablo Medical Center)
www.namicontracosta.org

NAMI Walk 2007
Saturday, May 12, 2007 9:00am
San Francisco Golden Gate Park-Speedway Meadow
1-800-556 2401 xnamicc@aol.com

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NAMI-CC Care and Support Groups

Central Contra Costa County

1st Tuesday of each month, 7:30-9:00 pm Hillcrest Congregational Church, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Contact Peggy Luna, Dave Kahler, or Willie Mack 925- 676-5771 or e mail: xnamicc@aol.com

3rd Monday of each month, 7:15-9:15 pm, John Muir Hospital, Downstairs in the Stern Conference Room.. The group is facilitated by Dr. Mary Olwin and Gloria Hill. The Consumer Group will not be meeting. Call: Gloria Hill 925- 957-5146.

East Alameda County

4th Monday of each month, 7:00-8:30 pm., St. Claire's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hopyard Road. Pleasanton.

Contact: Russell or Donna White E mail: russdonnawhite@comcast.net 925-455 6901

BIPOLAR CHILL (CLIENT RUN)

Manic Depression Support Group
Wednesday 7:00—8:30 pm
710 Broadway #3G Walnut Creek
Contact Lisa or Scott 925-743 1160

TRI-VALLEY BIPOLAR (Consumer Run)

Bipolar and Depression Support Group
Wednesdays, 7:15 pm to 8:45 pm
St. Clair's Episcopal Church, Pleasanton
Contact: Bob Hogan: 925-462 5481

SELF-INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

(Consumer Run)

For self-injury sufferers to talk about ways to change these behaviors and resolve feelings brought on by trauma.

Call: Veronica 925-845 7871

NEW HOPE

BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children and adolescents diagnosed with a mood disorder.

2nd Monday of each month

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Room #4

Contact: Anette 510-733 0577 or

Joani 925-962 9952

www.newhopesupportgroup.com

NAPA STATE HOSPITAL FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP (NSHFSG)

Meets the 2nd Saturday of each month

Where: Hospital's Volunteer Conference Room

For Information: Bill Schrader 707-433 9250

FAMILY ADVOCATE HOURS

Gloria Hill, Contra Costa County Mental Health Advocate

Mondays: 12:30—3:30 pm Tuesdays All Day: 925-957 5146 Thursday Morning: 925-957 5146

After 1:30 pm 925-646 5844 Pager: 925-476 2618 Any day of the Week.

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National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

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**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**
BY ART HONEGGER

We are deeply saddened by the tragedy at Virginia Tech. I am hoping that this doesn't fuel fear of people with mental illnesses. As we all know, they are far more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators.

I was encouraged to hear several interviews of professionals asserting that even if the shooter had sought help for his mental illness, the mental health services are woefully inadequate. This is the case throughout the country, but most especially true in Contra Costa County.

Let's assume a cancer patient were provided health care similar to a mental health patient. If the cancer patient were to require three sessions of chemo therapy, they would be told that one session will be given. After that, the health care provider would assume that you'll probably be OK, and that one treatment is all that is allowed anyway. I defy anyone to prove this comparison inaccurate.

In a more positive vein, our Second Vice President and Monthly Program Chair Kay Derrico is doing a fabulous job! She has programs lined up through September, and all are terrific and in response to questionnaires she circulated through the membership.

In other good news, three of our consumers are to attend Peer to Peer training April 26th through the 29th in Santa Clara! We owe a great deal of thanks to State Peer to Peer Coordinator Rebecca Williams for facilitating this opportunity. Thank you, Rebecca!

...

FREE Classes
**FAMILY TO
FAMILY
CLASSES BEGIN
MAY 23, 2007**

The summer session of NAMI's Family to Family program will begin Wednesday, May 23, 2007. Sign up now.

It will be at the Hillcrest Congregational Church at 404 Gregory Lane in Pleasant Hill. The class begins at 7:00pm. There is a map on the website for those not familiar with the location.

The class will cover all the particulars of mental illness and the resources needed to help the loved one to recover.

Marie Overby: 925-284 5240
E mail: dk122932@aol.com
Phone: 925-676 5771

**CORNWALL'S
RETIREMENT**

Mike Cornwall has retired from the Mental Health Division after 27 years. Mike used his Ph.D. for 3

years in the county hospital, 9 years in Adult Mental Health and finally for 15 years in Children and Adolescent Mental Health. He



Mike Cornwall

found time to be the President of Local #1 for 16 years and the Chair of the Mental Health Coalition for 12 years. There was a farewell celebration at the Henry Clark Union Hall which was M.C.ed by his daughter, Stephanie. Mike will be missed.

NATION IN CONSTERNATION OVER VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTINGS

(Continued from page 1)

find a system that instantly spreads notice of trouble far and wide. These are responses using hindsight, and with the presumption of a next time.

What we need is a system of foresight and prevention, a system that identifies severe cases and has a myriad of treatment options. There is one that is legal in many states but used far too seldom: a court for involuntary commitment to fully determine and deliver care—inpatient or monitored outpatient care.

There was not just one red flag to signal Cho's condition. Cho Seung Hui planted a field of them. The failure to find out what was wrong with Cho is indicative of the reluctance of most individuals and our society to step in and aid those in *obvious mental crisis*.

When his "poetry" was read in class, it was so terrifying that at the next meeting of the class, only seven of 70 students showed up. Cho was removed from that class and another professor began to tutor him one-on-one, but only after establishing a secret code word with her assistant to signal when she should call security.

There are many reasons for the current trends in permissive laws. The rise in psychotropic drugs, budget cuts, expanded conceptions of civil rights—and one intellectual current behind the trend was a moral disempowerment of sanity. One of the most influential academics of the late

May General Meeting COGNITIVE THERAPY WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

Jacqueline Persons, who has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Pennsylvania will be the speaker at the General Meeting, May 17. (See the box on page 1 for information on the meeting)

Her topic will be cognitive therapy. Dr. Persons provides training in cognitive behavioral therapy to professionals and has published a series of video tapes to train professionals.

Cognitive therapy is a very helpful tool in working with bipolar disorder.

Michel Foucault, argued that attempts to label and treat madness were inherently arbitrary and repressive. Academia has been celebrating "transgression" ever since.

Any attempt to romanticize madness has an incontrovertible answer in Cho Seung Hui. This is what madness can be: lonely, painful, shattering and potentially murderous.

Behind some of the complaints of Virginia Tech staff that nothing could be done about Cho, you can hear the undercurrent: who are we to judge? Of course, if he had occasionally uttered racial slurs rather than frightening those around him with bizarre behavior, the full apparatus of administrative power at Virginia Tech would have been brought down on him.

16th ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC

Friday, June 15
10:30 am to 2:00 pm

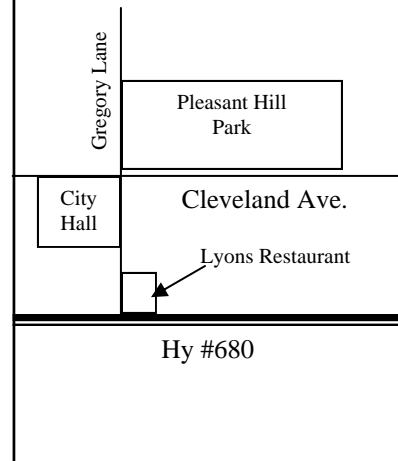
Pleasant Hill Park
147 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill



- Hot Dogs
- Hamburgers
- Bar B Q Chicken

And All the Trimmings!

For the 16th Year, MHCC, Crestwood, Anka and NAMI Contra Costa are coming together for a summer celebration. The event is always attended by over 200 consumers and family members. All the food and beverages are FREE!



SURVIVAL GUIDE

A Practical Plan For Supporting A Loved One with A Mental Illness

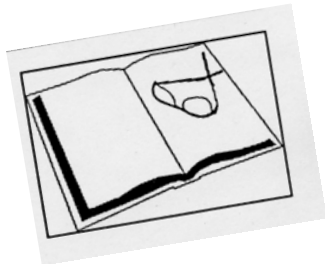
Great progress has been made in the diagnosis and treatment of the mentally ill in recent decades. There have been major breakthroughs in medications and types of treatments. Resources never before available are now a real prospect in the management of your loved one's case.

When you have a serious legal problem, you engage an attorney to guide you through the legal system. When you have a loved one with a mental illness an advocate is needed to guide the case through the mental health system. That someone must be familiar with the basics of mental illness and the resources in the field to assist in pursuing your loved one's recovery.

Almost certainly that someone must be you. Mental health facilities and programs have been overloaded and under funded for decades. You are the one that really cares and are the one who has been and will be in close contact with the case. But you must gain a familiarity with the basics of mental illness and the system. Listed below are some practical suggestions to get you started.

1. **JOIN A STRONG SUPPORT GROUP.** You can't do it alone. You will need the education, information and support of an organization. NAMI Contra Costa is one such group.
www.namicontracosta.org E mail: xnamicc@aol.com
2. **START AND KEEP A JOURNAL.** Get a 3-ring binder, fill it with lined paper, divide it into several parts and make entries as you have the time and the need. Setup one section to record observations about your subject, one on notes about ideas and concepts you think important, one on listings of various locations, facilities, programs and other resources that might be helpful in your efforts.
3. **SETUP FILES.** Setup a permanent set of files to receive all the paperwork the case will generate. Ask for a copy of any document you come in contact with. Especially copies of diagnosis's and prescriptions. Follow the rule that you never let an original out of the file, but make many copies and make certain that all the folks involved in the case have a copy.
4. **ONE PAGE SUMMARY.** Do not go from office to office endlessly repeating the basics of the case. Create a summary, as you would a resume for a job search, that gives the particulars of the case up to the present time. Put the subjects name, address, phone number, e mail address, and contact person (you). At the top of the sheet. Use a type size that will get a lot of information on one page, but large enough to be legible (Font 10). Leave the document in the computer memory for future use. The page should be limited to just one page as that encourages the reader to actually read the material.
5. **COVER LETTER.** A very brief cover letter (Optional) may add to the flexibility of your message. Leave that in the computer's memory.
6. **RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIALITY.** Get your loved one to sign a Release of Confidentiality at each office or facility that your loved one goes to. This is imperative. You can't talk with the doctor or his staff without that signed document.
7. **EDUCATION AND INFORMATION.** In a very short period of time you can educate yourself on the basics of mental illness. NAMI-CC offers a FREE 12 week, one night weekly, course that give you the information you need.
8. **SUPPORT GROUPS.** These groups will give you the continuing support and information you will need. They are held monthly throughout the county. For information: E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

BOOK REVIEW



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) A Case Formulation Approach by Claudia Zayfert and Carolyn Black Becker, Series Editor: Jacqueline Persons. (Speaker at the May General Meeting) 252 pages, \$32. at Borders.

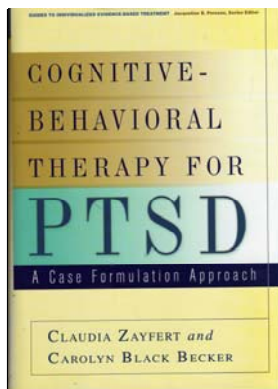
Available in the NAMI library.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is widely

recognized as an effective treatment for many disorders. This is a highly practical manual that provides step-by step information on applying CBT in a flexible manner to address the varying needs.

The book is written by experienced therapists who know what works. The book shows what the process of therapy looks like and offers a wealth of troubleshooting suggestions and clinical tools.

The authors begin by explaining the fundamentals of cognitive-behavioral assessment and treatment. Of crucial importance, they demonstrate how to



use a case formulation approach to conceptualize the difficulties faced by each patient and develop a *treatment plan* with clear priorities and goals.

Although the book is written for professionals, families that want to know what CBT is and how the therapist applies it to their loved one's case, would do well to read it.

There is no reason that family members cannot incorporate the principals into their relationship with their loved one. Much can be accomplished in the casual setting of the home away from the clinical environment.

COMMISSION DEBATES CRISIS

(Continued from page 1, column 1)

Psychiatric Emergency. This change resulted in several of the patients simply walking away from the hospital. The local police departments protested that they have not been properly informed about the changes.

The Commission concluded that more information and documentation was needed before conclusions could be reached. A second site tour of the psychiatric units has been scheduled for May 18.

Note: The California State Legislature mandates that each of the 58 counties have a Mental Health Commission. Each of the five Supervisors appoints three commissioners. There currently is one opening on the Commission. Those interested should E mail Karen Schuler, the secretary for the commission at:

kschuler@hsd.cccounty.us

Clubhouse Report

Editor's Note: The effort to establish a Clubhouse in Contra Costa County is a major ongoing NAMI-CC effort. There will be a report on the progress in each NAMI newsletter.

By Molly Hamaker

A Clubhouse is the place where people will look into the eyes of your loved one with a mental illness and say, "you are welcome and needed here." It's a community that celebrates the experiences, talents, and dreams of each and every person who joins. The Contra Costa Clubhouse is well on its way to becoming an active and important part of our community.

It will connect members with services, schools, jobs, housing, and friends. The Clubhouse will create hope, inspiration, and real opportunities for our loved ones to successfully live and work right alongside everyone else.

Please visit: www.ccclubhouse.org to find out how you can help. Tax-deductible donations can now be made to: CCClubhouse, Inc. - NAMI-CC, 89 Stowbridge Court, Danville, Ca 94526. The Putman family will generously match all contributions up to \$50,000! For more information, call:

Molly Hamaker at 945-1382.

DONATE A CAR

Donate a car to NAMI-CC to help the mentally ill. One phone call or E mail will do it all. 925-465 3864 xnamicc@aol.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

The issue of accountability is huge, but that so often means blame. The SYSTEM so often sets up staff and patients for failure by not adequately identifying goals or monitoring progress along the way, and then holding those down the line "accountable."

Those in charge are so caught up in all the competing political and budgetary agendas that they end up making the decisions least likely to cause political/financial backlash, rather than decisions that will actually benefit anyone involved. They don't feel they have the time or authority to actually determine the best practices from the literature available and from others in the field and then take the heat for making the hard decisions and sticking to them until the evidence shows changes are needed, even though this will anger unions, politicians, families, long-term employees, voters, etc.

However, those ultimately responsible (the Board of Supervisors and voters) would rather have administrators pump sunshine up their skirts, use the fake budget to get rid of problem employees rather than stand up to the unions and lawyers, and pretend everything is under control, and, ultimately, make everyone feel that, "we're all good people who can't seem to catch a break."

Seems to me that it is the job of the top management to MAKE those things true in the real world - even when it ticks off many of the important people. Every one of the competing interest groups (including the Commission, unions, NAMI, the contractors and the Board of Supervisors) has to be prepared to periodically be told, "No, you're wrong and you hired experts to run the system because we know the difference. *The fact that you want it does not make it true.*"

If the Director of Health Services and his/her senior staff don't see that as their job description, then I just don't see that there's much point in spending the enormous money to employ them. But all the way up the line, every team leader, supervisor, manager, and director is expected to micro-manage every single interaction without ever making a difficult or unpopular decision.

"This is no way to run a railroad." I don't believe government should be run like a corporation, but an agency, like HSD, is expected to DO something - not make everybody feel good about not doing anything.

Fred Gunderson



MAY DONATIONS

Donation

Michael Cohen
Long Time Supporter

Donation

Katherine Heldt

DONATION FORM

Make check payable to NAMI-CC
Mail to: Treasurer, NAMI-CC
P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA. 94521
NAMI-CC Tax ID # 68-0209474

Name

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City State Zip

Phone: _____

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- Peer to Peer Program
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- Family to Family
- K.I.D.S. Program
- Housing

COMMENTS

Comments for the newsletter should be sent to:

xnamicc@aol.com
Fax: 925-476 1444 or

P.O. Box 21247
Concord, CA., 94521

All letters are subject to abridgment and those unpublished can be neither acknowledged nor returned.

NAMI Contra Costa
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Stamp

NAMI Walk 2007
 Saturday, May 12, 2007 9:00 am
 Speedway Meadow, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
 1-800-556 2401 xnamicc@aol.com

NAMI Contra Costa

The annual membership dues are \$40. This makes you a member of NAMI National, NAMI California and NAMI Contra Costa. You are automatically a member of all three organizations.

If you are solicited for membership or special donations from the State or National organizations, give generously if you can, but all such donations are voluntary and would be over and above your membership in NAMI Contra Costa.

Dues paid in October, November and December provide membership for the following year.

Send your membership application to:

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 Make check payable to NAMI Contra Costa
 Complete this information cut-out and return it to:
 Treasurer, NAMI-CC
 P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA., 94521
 E Mail Address: xnamicc@aol.com

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City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

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E-mail _____

Membership is: New A Renewal

<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Client	\$ 20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Affiliate	20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> General Membership	40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Membership	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Century Club	100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	500.00