

NAMI Butler OUTREACH

December 2021
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Butler County PA

Your local NAMI News...



Mission: NAMI Butler County PA works to reduce stigma and build better lives through educating and supporting those affected by mental illness.

Vision: NAMI Butler County PA envisions a world where all people affected by mental illness live healthy, fulfilling lives.

NAMI Butler County PA

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From the Desk of the Executive Director....



From left to right: Jim and Mary Lindsay (board member) and Gloria (board member) and Jim Winters



Donna Lamison, Executive Director

Celebrating Volunteerism — Board members and guests gathered at NAMI Butler's new office in the Holly Pointe building in Butler for a Holiday Party on Dec. 7, celebrating a year of volunteerism and successes in supporting individuals living with mental health conditions.

In addition to moving into new offices in 2021, NAMI Butler offered for the first time NAMI's Bridges of Hope for Butler County faith leaders, launched an inaugural Scramble for Mental Health Golf Outing, initiated a bi-monthly Book Discussion Group, and expanded its Support Group offerings to five monthly meetings throughout the county.

The new programming is in addition to NAMI Butler continuing its ongoing activities, which include facilitating two NAMI Family to Family 8-week educational programs, supporting Butler County's annual Veterans Stand Down, participating in NAMI Keystone's yearly Fundraising Walk, and board members sharing their lived experience with mental illness with 19 area First Responders during a Crisis Intervention Team training in Butler, a week-long program that helps them more effectively respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis.

While each of these activities are team efforts, we couldn't have accomplished any of this without our volunteers and donors. Our sincere thanks to each of you.

In order to continue our programs and services **free of charge, WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!**

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experiences a mental health condition each year, and 1 in 25 has a serious mental illness that significantly alters their lives and the lives of those who love them. These numbers have only increased since the appearance of COVID.

With Butler County's population nearing 190,000, that means an estimated 7,500 of our family, friends, and neighbors have a serious mental illness, in which an individual's ability to engage in and sustain normal activity is severely impaired. We at NAMI Butler work to **destigmatize** these life-altering illnesses and provide education and support for all persons affected by mental illness and their families and loved ones. NAMI Butler's services are needed now more than ever!

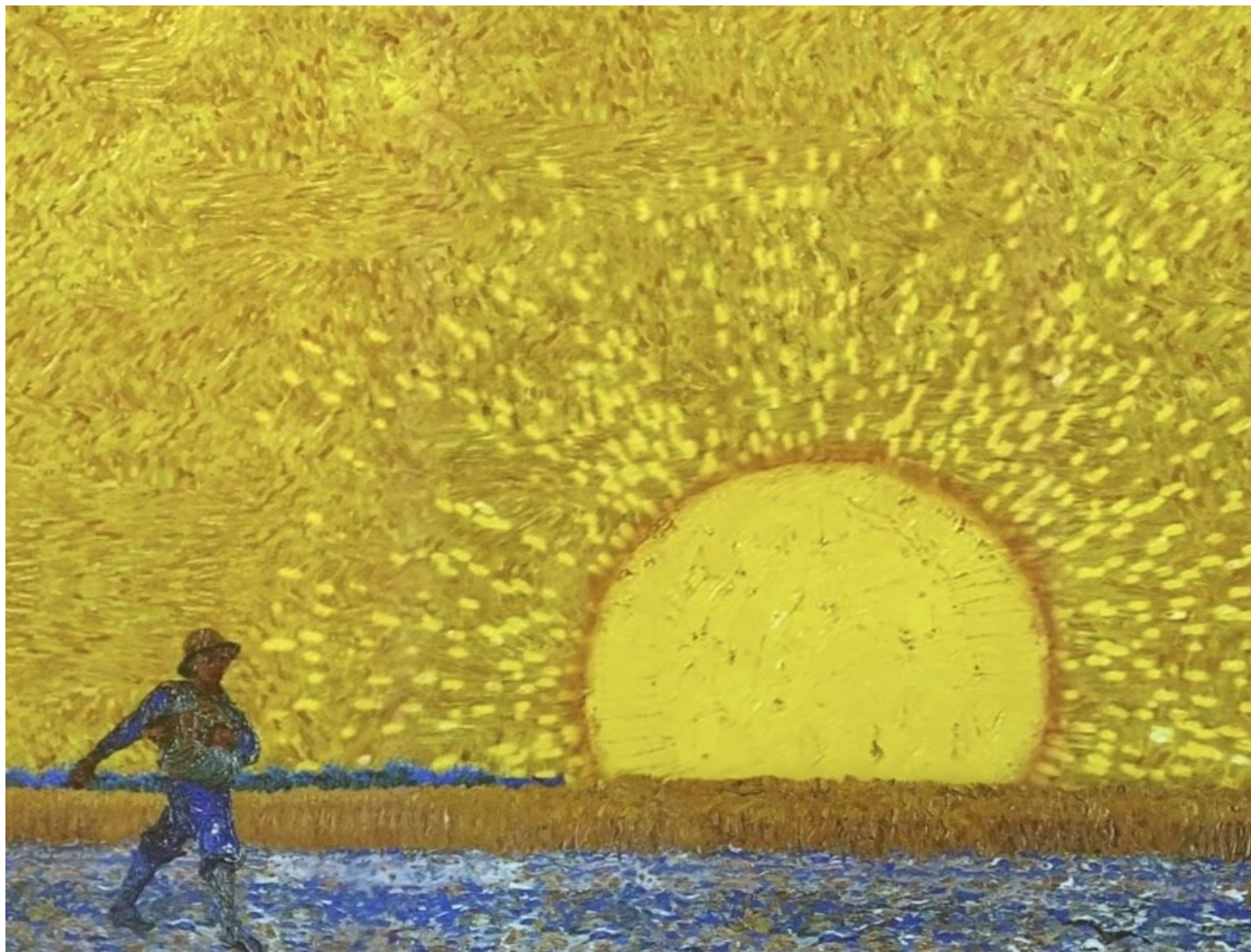
Please consider a year-end donation to support our effort to help those living with these life-altering conditions. Donations can be sent to NAMI Butler, PO Box 1943, Butler, PA 16003-1943.

If you're interested in joining us in our work, you can learn about volunteer opportunities by contacting me at 724.321.0069 or info@namibutler.org. We also hope you'll consider becoming a member of NAMI Butler. You can join [here](#) or mail your check together with the form on the back cover of this newsletter.

My best to each of you, *Donna*

Gray Skies?

Add a little sunshine to those wintry days



Pittsburgh was ranked as “the cloudiest city in the United States” by worldatlas.com in 2020. According to the website, the ‘Burgh averaged 77 percent cloud cover, which means we only saw sunshine for 2,021 hours out of the 8,760 hours in a calendar year! These calculations may be approximations, but one thing is undeniable: People living in western Pennsylvania see lots of gray skies.

With the onset of winter, people often experience what the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) calls Major Depressive Disorder with a Seasonal Pattern, formerly known as Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. It’s characterized by recurrent episodes of depression in late fall and winter, alternating with periods of normal mood the rest of the year.

The symptoms are different from classic Major Depression, where people tend to sleep less and lose weight. In Depressive Disorder with a Seasonal Pattern, people are likely to sleep more and gain weight. Not everyone experiences all the following, but the major symptoms include:

- Hypersomnia (or oversleeping)
- Daytime fatigue
- Overeating
- Weight gain
- Craving carbohydrates

Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health were the first to suggest this condition was a response to decreased light and experimented with the use of bright light to address the symptoms. Scientists have identified that the neurotransmitter serotonin may not be working optimally in many people with the disorder. It also noted that the disorder is more prevalent in younger people, those living in northern latitudes, and women.

Symptoms usually begin in October/November and subside by March/April. Some people begin to experience a “slump” as early as August, while others remain well until January. Regardless of the time of onset, most people don’t feel fully “back to normal” until early May.

As with most depressive disorders, the best treatment includes a combination of antidepressant medications, cognitive behavioral therapy, and exercise. Unlike other depressive disorders, this condition can also be treated with light therapy. Light therapy consists of regular, daily exposure to a “light box,” which artificially simulates high-intensity sunlight. Be aware that ordinary indoor light is not sufficient to treat this condition

If you have a seasonal pattern depression, ask yourself “How can I plan for this?” Because this disorder has a specific pattern, those who experience it can prepare for its arrival by exercising more toward the end of summer, getting into therapy and using a light box in early fall, and, if possible, vacationing somewhere sunny in the winter.

This is an abridged article from NAMI’s website; you can read the full article [here](#).

5 Monthly Support Groups Offered in Butler County

NAMI Butler County is offering five free monthly **Family Support Group** meetings, four in-person and one via Zoom.

The following support groups are for family members, significant others, and friends of people with a mental illness:

- Butler—Trinity Lutheran Church, 120 Sunset Dr., second Thursday of every month, 6:30 p.m.
- Evans City—St. John’s United Church of Christ, 501 E. Main St., third Monday of every month, 5:30 p.m.
- Saxonburg—ABBA’s House, 320 Main St., last Tuesday of every month, 6 p.m.
- Zelenople—Passavant Retirement Center, 105 Burgess Dr., second Tuesday of every month, 5:30 p.m.
- Online via Zoom—first Thursday of every month, 7 p.m. To receive a link for the online meeting, register for a link at <https://namibutler.org>.

2022 Spring/Winter Program Offerings

Family-to-Family Educational Course to Begin March 9

NAMI Butler County is offering the free Family-to-Family course beginning March 9. The Wednesday classes continue through April 27, and all course materials are furnished at no cost. Classes will be held in-person, but NAMI Butler will comply with CDC Guidelines for in-person meetings. They will continue via Zoom if in-person meetings are suspended. The 2.5-hour classes will be held at the NAMI Butler office in the Holly Pointe Building, 220 South Main St., Butler.

The 8-session educational program—taught by trained family members with lived experience—is for family members, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions. Course topics include current treatments and therapies, finding local support services, handling crises, solving problems, communicating effectively with your ill loved one, managing your own stress, and understanding the impact a mental health condition can have on family and friends.

Registration will open Jan. 15 at <https://namibutler.org>. For more information, email info@namibutler.org or call 724-431-0069.

Crisis Intervention Team Training



NAMI Butler Board members Linda Schmitmeyer (left) and Joyce Saunders spoke to nineteen First Responders in Butler on Nov. 4 as part of a 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to help them more effectively respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis. Joyce and Linda shared personal stories about the challenges they faced while dealing with their loved one's mental health condition. Also sharing their perspective during the week-long training were family members David Saunders and Steve Schmitmeyer, who talked about their experiences with law enforcement while having a mental health crisis.

Sponsored by the Southwest Regional CIT, the program is a local initiative designed to improve the way First Responders and the community act in response to someone experiencing a mental health crisis. The

program supports strong partnerships between law enforcement, mental health provider agencies, and individuals and families affected by mental illness. The training includes information on mental health and mental illness, crisis resolution skills, and access to local community services.

Initiated by the Memphis Police Department and other community partners in the late 1980s, CIT training is available in more than 2,700 communities nationwide. After implementing CIT programs, communities report a reduction of injuries to police officers and community members, a decrease in the number of arrests, an increase in health care referrals, and a dramatic decrease in the need for such intensive police intervention as SWAT.

The Butler CIT training is supported financially by Butler County Human Services and other community resources. For more information, contact NAMI Butler County Board member Rich Wozniak at 724.406.5681 or visit www.NAMI.org/cit.

Veteran Stand Down

NAMI Butler Board members Steve Sutton (left) and Bruce Wood share a laugh during Butler County's 6th annual Veterans Stand Down at the Tanglewood Senior Center on Nov. 5. NAMI Butler was there to provide information about programs and support available to veterans with mental health conditions. Stand Downs are held annually across the United States to provide vets at risk with free medical screenings, hygiene products, food, haircuts, etc.



Save the Date: May 21, 2022

NAMI Butler County will be holding its 2nd annual **Scramble for Mental Health Golf Outing** on **Saturday, May 21**, at **Bonniebrook Golf Course, 104 Serene Lane, Butler**.

Welcoming golfers and guests to the links will be **Butler County Commissioner Kevin Boozel**. If you're not a golfer, there are many ways to enjoy the day. In addition to food being served and the opportunity to win one of the many Bountiful Baskets being given away, there will be a 50/50 raffle and Chinese auction.

This is NAMI Butler's biggest fundraising event of the year. Want to help us as we support those living with or assisting someone who has a mental health condition? You can volunteer your time, donate a Bountiful Basket, or ask your favorite local business to keep the NAMI Butler's Golf Outing in mind as they plan their charitable contributions for 2022. For more information, call 724-431-0069 or email info@namibutler.org. **We look forward to seeing you there!**

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete and mail the form to our office, or you can join by clicking [here](#)

_____ **YES**, I want to become a member of the NAMI Butler County PA

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP PER YEAR

_____ \$40.00 (Regular)

_____ \$60.00 (Household)

_____ \$5.00 (Open Door)

\$_____ Donation *

*NAMI Butler County PA is an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; EIN 25-1805693."

Please make check or money order payable to:

NAMI Butler County PA, PO Box 1943, Butler, PA 16003-1943