

## JENNIFER'S REVIEW OF SOME SESSIONS AT THE NAMI NATIONAL CONVENTION 6/2017

### ANDREA PETERSEN "ON EDGE; JOURNEY THROUGH ANXIETY"

In her talk this author explained that anxious people are not weak, but have an attention bias of threat & a greater anticipation of pain "a what if" syndrome. They tend to self-stigmatize & need to set limits. She suggests meditation, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) & neural feedback for those afflicted. Andrea urges the anxious to "gather evidence of their specific fear" & very gradually expose themselves to actual or virtual scenarios of the thing or situation that worries them. Andrea stressed the role of diet/probiotics, medications (e.g. ketamine), thyroid & hormones. She suggested reading "The Primer of Anxiety Disorders" & checking out the Judd Foundation's "Active Minds" Treatment Program, as well as the Anxiety & Depression Association of America (ADAA).

### CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER & RECOVERY SUPPORTS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

Caregivers often have high levels of stress & pay both physically & psychologically in caring for their loved one with a brain disorder. They have difficulties with time management, as well as fatigue & need to be included in care team planning, respite & guidance. Caretakers perceived that lack of rewards & transportation/financial demands add to their burdens. They must seek validation, develop coping skills & strive to meet their own needs. Most importantly caregivers must set limits, i.e. clearly communicate what they are willing & not willing to do. Hospitals, providers & insurance companies should play an important role in helping caretakers find NAMI. Keris recommends reading "On Pins & Needles; Caregivers of Adults with Mental Illness". The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA.gov) has additional advice for caregivers. Listen to our CD copies (#12, 39 & 45) on this topic.

### NAMI TALKS: DAVID LEITE, RON POWERS & NAOMI JUDD

David was very funny & entertaining, as was Naomi Judd. I found Ron Powers powerful in his analysis of our so-called "system" of care for those with brain disorders. NAMI Jeffco purchased this CD, so listen!

### WEIGHT LOSS & OVERALL HEALTH

Dr. Stephen Bartels of Dartmouth named obesity as the major cause of death of middle age persons with brain disorders (PBDs). Using "motivational interviewing" SAMHSA determined "what matters most" to PBDs. The value of wanting combined with knowledge of ways to make changes & motivational support enabled PBDs to follow through with behaviors that generated improvement.

### COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

At this session Aaron Beck was given an award for his research on this subject, originally proposed by Albert Ellis in the 1960s. CBT teaches us to examine our thinking & identify the way our negative beliefs & limiting words (e.g. never, always, must, should, have to, horrible & terrible) determine how we feel & behave. The researchers stressed the need for acknowledgement of progress to self & from others & found hope & connection the keys to recovery.

### DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY (DBT)

DBT teaches a step-by step approach for dealing with difficult emotions. It emphasizes validation of feelings & explains when & how to use it. Regarding a primary emotion DBT's 3 steps are: Observe, Describe, Respond.

### HILL DAY

The motto for Hill Day was "Facts Support. Stories Move". Wednesday's preparation consisted of speeches by lobbying experts, a review of NAMI priorities, key talking points & roles in each group. On the day of our visit to the Capital those of us from the 6<sup>th</sup> District were not able to visit Senator Murray, because the time was changed & conflicted with our meeting with our Representative. Derek Kilmer met us in the hall in between voting. He was warm, welcoming & down to earth. After introductions, we shared our messages of concern, then Christina told Peter's Story with a photo of him before he became ill & another of his artwork, which won 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the 2016 Jefferson County Fair. Finally, we left a "legislative package" & thanked Representative Kilmer for his support. Other members visited our Senators with similar scenarios. In the late afternoon we held our WA State Caucus to tell of our experiences on the hill & learn about future WA State activities.