



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

North Central MA

Affiliate Newsletter

February 2018

Family Support Groups

Messiah Lutheran Church
750 Rindge Road, Fitchburg
7:00-8:30 p.m.

1st and 3rd Thursdays

Contact Gregg or Maryann
860-212-9363
978-342-0988

Clinton Hospital, 2nd Floor
Conference Rooms A & B
6:30-8:30 p.m.

Contact Edie
978-345-2214

Connection Recovery Support Groups

Messiah Lutheran Church
750 Rindge Road, Fitchburg
7:00-8:30 p.m.

Every Thursday

Contact Maryann
978-342-0988

Heywood Hospital
242 Green St., Gardner
Dining Room, Conference
Room B (inside Cafeteria)

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Every Tuesday

Contact Cortney
508-331-2921

Hi Everyone, I'm Chelsea Gaudet and I will be assisting with editing the NAMI newsletters. I am a recent graduate of William James College and have earned my Masters degree in Counseling with a concentration in Expressive Arts Therapies. I currently work at both the YWCA, providing domestic violence advocacy, and The Bridge of Central Mass, providing residential mental health services. Moving forward, I plan to begin working in the mental health field as a clinician who specializes in Expressive Arts Therapy in the Central Mass area. I have been a NAMI member for about three years. I hope that you enjoy the newsletter!

3 Things I Wish People Knew About Living with OCD

Jacqueline Ledoux, October 6, 2017

This Mental Health Awareness Week, did you know that 1 in 40 adults in the U.S. is currently struggling with [obsessive-compulsive disorder \(OCD\)](#)? That's 2.3% of the population or over 5 million Americans. Being one of them, I'd like to tell you a bit about it and clear up some misinformation regarding what the disorder is like.

The [International OCD Foundation \(IOCDF\)](#) defines obsessive-compulsive disorder as "a mental health disorder that affects people of all ages and walks of life, and occurs when a person gets caught in a cycle of obsessions and compulsions." Obsessions are unwanted, intrusive thoughts, images, or feelings that trigger intense feelings of distress and anxiety. Compulsions, on the other hand, are the behaviors or rituals that an individual engages in order to get rid of the obsessions and/or decrease their levels of distress and anxiety. Together, they make up the seemingly endless cycle that is struggling with OCD.

As someone who has dealt with OCD since childhood, here are the three biggest things I wish more people knew about it:

1. Having OCD is more than just being clean and organized.

In pop culture, such as in the 1997 film, "As Good as It Gets," OCD is depicted as being all about cleanliness and organization. Realistically that's not always true. While contamination OCD does exist and remains a standard form of OCD, there are also other subtypes that are just as common.

Some subtypes of OCD include:

1. Hoarding
2. Emotional contamination, in which people with OCD fear contact with a specific person or place will somehow contaminate and/or endanger them.
3. Perfectionism, in which things must be done in often time-consuming, highly specific ways.
4. Scrupulosity, in which the people with OCD obsesses over religious and moral perfectionism.
5. Intrusive thoughts, in which the people with OCD struggle with unwanted, intrusive thoughts and/or images that are often violent or sexual in nature.

I struggle with contamination OCD as well as intrusive thoughts, emotional contamination, and some perfectionism.

2. Yes, I know that my obsessions and compulsions are irrational; no, that doesn't matter.

Rationally, I know that allowing someone to move my laundry from the washer to the dryer is not going to magically contaminate it. I know that flushing a toilet while I'm taking a shower is not going to contaminate my water. I know that allowing a friend to borrow a hoodie isn't the end of the world and that I could wear it again if I wanted to. But in the end, my irrational fears win out. Every. Single. Time.

If someone moves my laundry from the washer to the dryer, it's going back in the washer for an additional cycle. If someone flushes the toilet while I'm in the shower, I'm starting over from the beginning. If a friend asks to borrow a piece of my clothing, reluctantly, I'll give it to them, but I'll also tell them to keep it after because I won't ever wear it again.

It doesn't matter if you can explain away my obsessions or my compulsions. I know that they're irrational – there's no question about that. It's the intense feelings of distress, namely anxiety, that cause me to worry and perform irrational rituals in order to calm myself down. When it comes to OCD, facts don't matter. You can tell me how the pipes work and assure me that there's no way the toilet water can cross with the shower water, but I'll still have to turn off the water and start my shower over or else I'll feel overwhelmingly anxious for the next several hours.

Knowing that my fears are completely irrational and that my rituals are nonsensical is probably one of the single most frustrating things about having OCD. That said, the fact that my obsessions and compulsions are irrational doesn't make my experience or my distress any less real. That's why I, along with many other OCD sufferers, continue to ritualize after my OCD is triggered.

3. There is no cure for OCD, only treatment.

I went to McLean Hospital a few years ago to participate in their renowned [OCD Institute](#) program. I spent three months in residential treatment where I participated in classes throughout the day and spent several hours daily working on exposure and response prevention (ERP) therapy.

ERP therapy is a type of [cognitive behavioral therapy \(CBT\)](#) that involves exposing yourself to the things that you obsess over and then not allowing yourself to ritualize in order to calm down. According to the IOCDF, “when you don't do the compulsive behaviors, over time you will actually feel a drop in your anxiety level,” a method called habituation.

When I did ERP therapy, I would have to get dressed without first checking the tags on my clothing. I'd then sit with the anxiety that came with not knowing whether they had changed since the last time I wore them, though rationally I know that they couldn't, and face any feelings of overwhelming discomfort head-on.

One misconception that some friends and family members had after I left McLean was that ERP therapy had somehow "cured" me. That was not the case. ERP therapy will not provide a person with a permanent cure as OCD obsessions and compulsions can, and do, change over time. Treating OCD is a constant battle and ERP needs to be done continuously to keep OCD symptoms in check.

While a person may get their obsessions and compulsions under control via utilizing CBT, they will likely struggle with OCD for the rest of their lives since, in most cases, it's a lifelong disorder.

If you or someone you know is struggling with OCD, check out the [International OCD Foundation](#) and/or [find a CBT therapist near you](#).

Jacqueline graduated Cum Laude from Southern New Hampshire University where she earned her BA in Creative Writing and English. Her work has been featured in Essig Magazine, The Penmen Review, and The Mighty. All of her work, both published and unpublished, can be viewed on her [website: https://jacquelineledoux.com/articles/](https://jacquelineledoux.com/articles/).

Save the Dates

- February 26, 7– 9 p.m. - Edinburg Center, 205 Burlington Rd. Bedford –**DMH Mass Health Dialogue - Come to Learn About Important Changes That Will Affect Many DMH Clients.**
- February 28, 2018, 7:00 - 9:00 pm – Employment Options, 82 Brigham St., Marlborough – **DMH Mass Health Dialogue** – If interested in attending please contact NAMI MetroWest – 508-251-9595 namimetrowest@naminetrowest.org
- February 28, 2018 – Leominster High School – 5:30pm – 8:00pm -Chris and Kathi Sullivan share their story of hope, love, change, strength and personal struggles with the impact of alcohol and substance use, underage/binge drinking, and loss and recovery.
- March – Hannaford's Lunenburg – buy a used book and the proceeds go to NAMI NCM!
- March 13 – Great Wolf Lodge, Fitchburg – Brian Scalabrino – Tickets \$60 each, include social hour at 5:00 p.m., dinner at 6:00 p.m. and program at 7:00 p.m. Please reserve tickets in advance: online at www.gardnerma.com, call 978.632.1780 or email info@gardnerma.com.
- March 18 – 2:30 pm -Temple Isaiah, 55 Lincoln St., Lexington MA - "Spirituality and Mental Health: Creating Your Own Connection" The keynote speaker will be David H. Rosmarin, PhD
- April 9 – Advocacy Day – Boston
- May 19 – NAMI walk – Artesani Park

Mental Health Referral Services

The **William James INTERFACE Referral Service** maintains a mental health and wellness referral Helpline **Monday through Friday, 9 am-5 pm, at 888-244-6843** (toll free). This is a free, confidential referral service for individuals across the lifespan living in participating communities.

Communities currently served are: Acton-Boxborough, Ayer-Shirley, Chelmsford, Cohasset, Concord, Carlisle, Dedham, Framingham, Groton, Dunstable, Leominster, Lincoln – Sudbury, Littleton, Marshfield, Medfield, Medway, Melrose, Middleborough, Natick, Needham, Newton, North Middlesex, Reading, Scituate, Wakefield, Waltham, Westford, Westwood.

If you live in one of these communities, and need access to mental health care, call 888-244-6843.

Centro

Established in 1977, CENTRO, formerly Centro Las Americas, is the largest minority led, community based, multiservice, multicultural, multilingual, nonprofit organization in Central Massachusetts. CENTRO's primary purpose is to assist individuals and families striving to reach self-sufficiency while promoting social responsibility, fostering cultural identity, and encouraging families to be significant contributors to the community as a whole.

Services provided include: Family Support Services, Adult Family Care, Latino Elder Program, Emergency Food Pantry, Children's Behavioral Health Services, and Children and Family Services.

For more information go to: www.centroinc.org or call 978-343-5836

Fitchburg office: 437 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Gardner Suicide Survivor Support Group

The Gardner Suicide Survivor Group meets the second Wednesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Heywood Hospital, 242 Green St., Gardner, MA. This is a peer support group open to anyone 16 or older who has lost someone to suicide. All are welcome to attend.

For more information, contact Peer Facilitator Brenda.Melanson@heywood.org.

Learn to Cope Support Group

Meets Tuesdays, 7 – 8:30 pm in the Kenneth & Doris Pierce Board Room (near Gift Shop & Pharmacy) at Heywood Hospital.

Learn to Cope is a support network for families dealing with addiction and recovery. They offer compassionate, experienced facilitators who have been there, support, resources, educational materials and guest speakers who are in long-term recovery or professionals in the field.

These meetings are confidential and open to all who have a loved one struggling with addiction.

For more information, contact the Learn to Cope office at (508) 738-5148 or visit the meetings tab at www.learn2cope.org.

Military Family Support Group

Meets the Wednesday of the month at 6pm in the Dining Room B at Heywood Hospital.

NAMI North Central Massachusetts, Newsletter (January 2018)

www.NAMINorthCentralMA.org

The Military Family Support Group offers a safe place for family members of both active and former military members to share their experiences, struggles and hope in overcoming the invisible wounds of war that affect the entire family unit.

Veterans and their loved ones can suffer from one or many of the following: survivor's guilt, separation anxiety, emotional numbing, adrenaline seeking, depression, anxiety, insomnia, alcohol and substance abuse, PTSD and traumatic brain injury. The group coaches and supports military family members to find healing, balance, and strategies for positive re-integration for military members with their family and society. We also connect families with local resources.

For more information, please contact Crystal Bean at (978) 320-9804.

MENders Support Groups

MENder's brings together guys facing similar issues including illness, anger, stress, substance abuse, relationship problems or major life changes. By using a whole host of techniques, participants can develop the skills to deal with stressors. Members of support groups often share experiences and advice.

Athol - Men's Support Group takes place the on the first and third Monday of each month from 7:30 – 9 pm in Athol Hospital's Hillis Board Room. For more information, please call (978) 846-8201.

Fitchburg- Men's Support Group takes place the on the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 7 - 9 pm at First Parish Church of Fitchburg (923 Main Street). For more information, please call (978) 846-8201.

Gardner - Men's Support Group takes place the on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7 – 9 pm in Heywood Hospital's Community Education Conference Room. For more information, please call (978) 630-6455.

Leominster - Men's Support Group takes place the on the first and third Thursday of each month from 7 - 9 pm at St. Mark's House (62 West Street, Leominster)For more information, please call (978) 846-8201.

Important Telephone Numbers

NAMI Information Helpline	1 (800) 950-NAMI (6264)	
NAMI Massachusetts Information and Helpline	1-800-370-9085	
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255	Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK	Free, confidential 24-hr. emotional distress line
Mass Substance Abuse HELPLINE	1-800-327-5050	Free, confidential information and referrals
Samaritans of Massachusetts	1-877-870-HOPE	24 hour Crisis Intervention/Hotlines
Samaritans of Massachusetts	1-800-252-8336	Teen Line (statewide)
Samaritans of Massachusetts	1-617-247-0220	24 hour Helpline
Emergency Services Programs (ESP)	1-800-977-5555	In-person behavioral health crisis assessment. Note: After dialing this toll-free number, you will be prompted to enter your Zip Code and will then be given the local number to call
Alzheimer's Association	1-800-272-3900	For information and support. Free and confidential, 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
MAA Substance Abuse Information	1-800-327-5050	

Hotline		
The Partnership at Drugfree.org	1-855-378-4373 (DRUGFREE) - tollfree	assistance to families concerned about a teen's drug use or drinking. Trained specialists can help parents outline plans for prevention, intervention and other services. They also can direct parents to local and national resources.
SAMHSA's National Helpline	1-800-662-HELP (4357) 1-800-487-4889 (TTY)	Free and confidential information in English and Spanish for individuals and family members facing substance abuse and mental health issues. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. https://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/

Board of Directors, NAMI North Central Massachusetts

Cathy Gaudet, President	978-870-8887 (c) 978-348-2165 (h)	catherine.gaudet@leominster.mec.edu c_e_s13@yahoo.com
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Membership Form

AFFILIATE #119, NAMI NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS, INC.

NAME _____ Telephone _____ e-mail _____
ADDRESS _____ Town _____ Zip Code _____
DATE _____

New members: Please tell briefly how you heard about NAMI _____

Check only one membership choice

<input type="checkbox"/> Household (\$60.00)	New member <input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$40.00)	New member <input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Open Door/Low-Income (\$5.00)	New member <input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Donation - Thank you!			\$ _____
TOTAL enclosed (Please make check payable to NAMI NCM)			\$ _____

Please mail to: NAMI of NCM, P.O. Box 442, Fitchburg, MA 01420-0442

NAMI North Central Massachusetts, Inc., is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

Membership is at all three levels: national (NAMI), state Chapter (NAMI Massachusetts), and local Affiliate (NAMI North Central Massachusetts)

You may also join on-line at www.nami.org (click on "Become a Member").



P.O. Box 442
Fitchburg, MA 01420

SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Creating Your Own Connection

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2018 at 2:30pm

Temple Isaiah, 55 Lincoln St., Lexington, MA

Keynote Speaker: David H. Rosmarin, PhD, is director of the Spirituality and Mental Health Program at McLean Hospital and an assistant professor of psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He supervises the provision of spiritually-integrated services in clinical units throughout the hospital's divisional structure, and collaborates with laboratories to study the clinical relevance of spirituality to anxiety, mood, psychotic, substance use, and other disorders.



Panel including:

- Opening teaching by Rabbi Howard Jaffe, Senior Rabbi, Temple Isaiah
- Shana Alexander, a Temple Isaiah and Mental Health Initiative member, will share her story of how spirituality has supported her mental well-being.
- Rev. Anne Mason, minister at First Parish in Lexington, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation
- Rev. Dr. Eno Mondesir, President of Agape Global Health and Senior Pastor of the Haitian Baptist Church of Cambridge

The program will also include a question and answer session and small group discussions followed by a reception with light refreshments and resource tables with more information from local organizations.

Free admission - handicapped-accessible

Co-sponsored by the Temple Isaiah Mental Health Initiative, First Parish in Lexington, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and Lexington Youth and Family Services (LYFS). This event is made possible in part through a grant from the Community Endowment of Lexington to LYFS.