



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

North Central MA

Affiliate Newsletter

August 2018

Family Support Groups

Messiah Lutheran Church
750 Rindge Road,
Fitchburg
7:00-8:30 p.m.
1st and 3rd Thursdays
Contact Gregg or Edie
860-212-9363
978-345-2214

Clinton Hospital, 2nd Floor
Conference Rooms A & B
6:30-8:30 p.m.
2nd and 4th Fridays
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,

During the summer months I get great enjoyment in gardening. Every year is an experiment with new vegetables, flowers, and methods of gardening. There is something about being in the sunlight and being warm that is comforting and calming to me. Eating vegetables that I grew seem to taste better than the ones from the store, and sharing the bounty of my garden with neighbors and friends brings self-fulfillment and the feeling of community.

The other day, while meandering through my garden, I noticed a monarch butterfly. I watched in delight, knowing that they do not come around as much as they used to in prior years. I am not the neatest of gardeners. I have weeds that I allow to grow as long as they are not affecting the veggies and flowers. Some of those weeds are quite beautiful and seem to attract the “beneficial” insects like the monarch butterfly.

I had a moment of clarity, an epiphany of sorts...our life is like a garden; there are weeds, good and bad bugs, droughts and downpours, and yet out of it comes life, sustenance, beauty and pleasure.

Make the most of your garden!

Cathy G.

first person

Please Stop Merchandising Mental Illness

There’s no way to make this pretty.

By Rhiannon Picton-James

July 28, 2018
New York Times

I was seeing a guy from London, and he told me Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald were his favorite couple. He was charming, exciting and “got” me. His choice sounded so romantic, so like him. Obviously I knew [who they were](#), but I wasn’t familiar with the details of their relationship. I lay in bed and Googled eagerly. Was this the kind of great love he envisioned for us?

Zelda Fitzgerald was intensely glamorous and hauntingly beautiful. Scott called her the [original flapper](#). Oh, and they had a turbulent relationship wracked with infidelity and excessive drinking: a love affair that ended with her dying after a fire broke out in the mental institution where she was a patient. She was schizophrenic and spent the last of her years hospitalized.

Is this how he saw me? I had clinical depression, not schizophrenia.

In my head (and, clearly, mine alone) we shared a blind devotion. When the reality of our relationship sank in, he got busy at work fast before disappearing entirely. He told me, over text, that he was “gut-wrenchingly sorry.”

Although the devastation passed, his words lingered.

I pulled up more articles on the Fitzgeralds. The Guardian [wrote](#) that Scott Fitzgerald’s “troubled wife” was a “beautiful and damned” socialite, per the title of his [second novel](#), who would be played by Scarlett Johansson in an upcoming drama. The romanticism was bothersome to me.

Elsewhere, on Facebook, an ad for a sale at [Skinnydip](#), a London brand, popped up. It included a cute miniature backpack, emblazoned with the words “I’ve got issues” and embroidered pink roses. The catchy Julia Michaels hit played in my head, her soft voice gently singing, “When I’m down, I get real down,” before breaking into the chorus: “‘Cause baby I’ve got issues.”

Looking further, I found gold nameplate necklaces that spell “[Anxiety](#)” and “[Depression](#)” in a trendy bold italic font, available at ban.do for \$48. Their manufacturer claims the pendants will “open a dialogue.” They’re sold out.

The problem with the prettification of mental illness is just how out-of-kilter it is with reality. It’s almost suggested as a desirable character trait for women to have. In my experience, partners find it frustrating, not nearly as endearing and whimsical as these statements and products would suggest.

Don’t expect an honest depiction from television and the movies either. The 1986 movie “[Betty Blue](#)” turned men on to a concept of women with mental illness as impossibly chic, French and sexually insatiable. More recently the Netflix series “13 Reasons Why,” which has been commissioned for a third season, has explored the reasons a pretty high school teen takes her own life from the point of view of her classmate and colleague Clay, who is in love with her.

Clay “sure has a thing for complicated girls,” one character on the show says. But the conceit falls apart when you replace mental illness with something physical. “You sure have a thing for girls with respiratory problems” doesn’t work. Nor do I forecast Skinnydip achieving the same sales results with accessories that read “I have Lyme disease.”

At the beginning of “13 Reasons Why” Season 2, a popular cheerleader named Jessica, returns to school to face her rapist. Her pal reassures her “you’re pretty and sad, people love that,” as if sadness only added to her magnetism and allure.

At least Lena Dunham’s character Hannah Horvath, suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder on “Girls,” presented mental illness in an unvarnished way (remember the Q-tip scene?). Still, when Hannah calls her boyfriend (Adam Driver) to tell him she’s “unraveling,” he runs the streets of New York to be with her. His topless chiseled torso is slightly dampened and glistens under the beam of streetlights. Upon arriving at her apartment, he boots down the door and scoops her up into his safe muscular arms. Really?

My experience was closer to Miss Havisham’s in “Great Expectations.” Only instead of refusing to take off a wedding gown, it was a worn-out robe I rattled around in, with one of the pockets hanging loose.

The limp fabric which used to form a pocket now dangled free, because my depleted partner ripped it off in a fight. A fight in which he begged and pleaded with me to take it off, only for a day, only so he could wash it, like a spent parent bargaining with a toddler to eat just one spoon of their vegetables. I wanted to be alone, but I was nothing like [Greta Garbo](#).

Seeing or experiencing illness makes any glamorization of it entirely ridiculous. Depression is not an effective way of ensnaring a man. Nor is it a love song to bop along with, a fashionable illness, or a fad for bloggers to wear for a few weeks, post about on Instagram, favorite and then disregard.

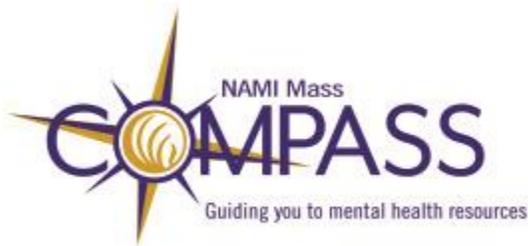
A version of this article appears in print on July 29, 2018, on Page ST3 of the New York edition with the headline: Please Stop Merchandising Mental Illness

*Please let me know if you wish to submit an article or have a topic of interest that you wish for us to include in a future newsletter! Please send to ce_s13@yahoo.com or mail to NAMI NCM, P.O. Box 442, Fitchburg, MA 01420

**We are looking for members interested in being trained to be Family Support or a Connection Recovery Support facilitator. Please reach out if interested!

Save the Dates

- **August 19 – SUNDAY-** The Suicide Prevention Taskforce presents their 6th annual Ride of Your Life
8 am - 2:30 pm
Kickstands up at 10 am!
Monty Tech Regional School
1050 Westminster Street, Fitchburg, MA
Rain or Shine!
See link for more information. This event is fun for the whole family!
<http://www.suicidepreventionontaskforce.org/events/annual-ride-of-your-life>
- September 8 (Saturday): Clinton Olde Home Days
- **Family-to-Family, a FREE 12-session course, starts September 12** for family caregivers of individuals over 17 with mental illness. The course is free, but **PREREGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. IN LEOMINSTER Wednesdays 7:00 – 9:30 PM**, for 14 weeks Sept. 12 – December 5
Contact Paul at 978-514-2942, pbois56@gmail.com or Steve at 978-621-3253, shadden@hadlorgroup.com
- October 7 (Sunday): Annual Candlelight Vigil, 7:00 p.m. Carter Park, Leominster
- October 11 (Thursday): Yearly membership dinner/meeting – 6 pm, place to be announced.



Navigating the mental healthcare system can be complicated—we help individuals and families affected by mental health issues find their way.

The NAMI Mass Compass is **operated by peers and family members** who have dealt with these issues first hand. Navigators are available to **answer a wide range of questions** and **refer to NAMI support & education programs and other community resources.**

Please call us at (617) 704-NAMI (6264) or toll free, (800) 370-9085 Monday-Friday 9am to 5pm or go to our webpage: <http://namimass.org/resources/compass>

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

Families Anonymous

A 12-step Support group for families of someone with a substance addiction or someone with behavioral health issues. Meets at the Groton Senior Center, 163 West Main St. , Groton, weekly on Tuesday nights from 7-8:30. Contact Kathy 978-448-3402

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.

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 Hotline	1-800-327-5050	
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

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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