



# nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

# PITTSBURGH SOUTH

January 2018

## January Meeting Information

Wednesday, January 17, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Featured Presenter: Alice Mullinary, Psychiatric Nurse, speaking on "Electric Convulsive Therapy (ECT) and Transmagnetic Stimulation (TMS) as Treatment for Chronic Mental Illness"

### Contact us via email...

Get in touch with NAMI Pittsburgh South at [nami.south@gmail.com](mailto:nami.south@gmail.com). NAMI Pittsburgh South meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month (excluding the month of August) from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. In the case of cancellation due to bad winter weather, information will be listed on KDKA-TV.

### 2018 Meeting Calendar

**February 21:** Care and Share support group format, 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

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### ACHIEVA Family Trust/ACHIEVA Advocacy - 2018 Speaker Series

Feb. 9, 9:00 am - 11:00 am: *Housing Options for Individuals with Disabilities*. Speaker: Michelle Stockunas, Manager, A Home of My Own, ACHIEVA.

March 9, 9:00 am - 11:00 am: *Understanding Guardianship and Power of Attorney - What's Best For My Loved One?* Speaker: Nora Gieg Chatha, Esq.

April 13, 9:00 am - 11:00 am: *Update on Medicaid Services in Pennsylvania*. Speakers - Janice Meinert, Paralegal, Pennsylvania Health Law Project and Erin Ninehouser, Pennsylvania Health Access Network.

All Sessions are held at ACHIEVA, 711 Bingham St, Pittsburgh, PA 15203. Visit <http://www.achievafamilytrust.org> for registration information.

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<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/comorbidity-addiction-other-mental-illnesses/why-do-drug-use-disorders-often-co-occur-other-men>

### Why do drug use disorders often co-occur with other mental illnesses?

The high prevalence of comorbidity between drug use disorders and other mental illnesses does not mean that one caused the other, even if one appeared first. In fact, establishing causality or directionality is difficult for several

NAMI Pittsburgh South meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month (excluding the month of August) at 7:30 p.m. at Southminster House. Southminster House is at 801 Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon, directly across the drive from the Mt. Lebanon Public Library.

Email contact: [nami.south@gmail.com](mailto:nami.south@gmail.com)

**President:** Gerry Dugan  
**Vice-President:** Carol Cadonic  
**Treasurer:** Rick Beran

**Have something to add to the newsletter?** Email at [nami.south@gmail.com](mailto:nami.south@gmail.com) to have your piece reviewed and added to the next newsletter.

For local support groups contact  
**NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania:**  
412-366-3788 or 1-888-264-7972  
**Web:** [www.namikeystonepa.org](http://www.namikeystonepa.org)  
**Email:** [info@namikeystonepa.org](mailto:info@namikeystonepa.org)

NAMI Southwestern PA Advisory Board Meetings — These meetings are held bimonthly on Saturdays from 9am–11am in the NAMI office which is located at 105 Braunlich Drive, McKnight Plaza, Suite 200, Pgh, PA 15237. Although space is limited, the meetings are open to all members. If you wish to attend, please call the offices of NAMI Keystone PA at 412-366-3788.

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

If you need assistance dealing with any type of mental illness, the following organizations are available.

### **National NAMI Help Line**

1-800-950-NAMI/ Web: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

### **SUPPORT**

**ALANON** 412-572-5141

### **Allegheny County Warmline**

1-866-661-WARM (9276)  
10 am – Midnight daily

### **Bipolar and Manic Depressive Support Group**

— Meets in Washington, PA at Rochester Methodist Church, 341 Jefferson Street every 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. Contact Ann at 724-775-6304 for information.

St. Clair Hospital has partnered with Chartiers Mental Health to facilitate a **Mental Health Support Group** in Bridgeville. Family members are welcome to attend.

1st Tuesday of each month.  
6:30 - 7:30 pm.

Bridgeville Library, 505 McMillen Street

Additional Information: St. Clair Hospital Psychiatry and Mental Health Services at 412.942.4850

### **Mental Health Support Group**

Christ United Methodist Church  
Village Square, Bethel Park  
412-942-4800

### **NAMI McKeesport Support Group**

2nd Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm.  
Penn State McKeesport Campus  
Contact: Violet 412-373-7977.

### **NAMI Borderline Personality Disorder, Family Support Group**

3rd Saturday of the month, 11- 1 pm.  
105 Braunlich Dr, Suite 230, Pgh PA 15237

VISIT [www.namiswa.org](http://www.namiswa.org) for MORE  
NAMI SUPPORT GROUPS

reasons. Diagnosis of a mental disorder may not occur until symptoms have progressed to a specified level (per DSM); however, subclinical symptoms may also prompt drug use, and imperfect recollections of when drug use or abuse started can create confusion as to which came first. Still, three scenarios deserve consideration:

- Drugs of abuse can cause abusers to experience one or more symptoms of another mental illness. The increased risk of psychosis in some marijuana abusers has been offered as evidence for this possibility.
- Mental illnesses can lead to drug abuse. Individuals with overt, mild, or even subclinical mental disorders may abuse drugs as a form of self-medication. For example, the use of tobacco products by patients with schizophrenia is believed to lessen the symptoms of the disease and improve cognition.
- Both drug use disorders and other mental illnesses are caused by overlapping factors such as underlying brain deficits, genetic vulnerabilities, and/or early exposure to stress or trauma.

All three scenarios probably contribute, in varying degrees, to how and whether specific comorbidities manifest themselves.

## **Common Factors**

*Overlapping Genetic Vulnerabilities.* A particularly active area of comorbidity research involves the search for genes that might predispose individuals to develop both addiction and other mental illnesses, or to have a greater risk of a second disorder occurring after the first appears. It is estimated that 40-60 percent of an individual's vulnerability to addiction is attributable to genetics; most of this vulnerability arises from complex interactions among multiple genes and from genetic interactions with environmental influences. In some instances, a gene product may act directly, as when a protein influences how a person responds to a drug (e.g., whether the drug experience is pleasurable or not) or how long a drug remains in the body. But genes can also act indirectly by altering how an individual responds to stress or by increasing the likelihood of risk-taking and novelty-seeking behaviors, which could influence the development of drug use disorders and other mental illnesses. Several regions of the human genome have been linked to increased risk of both drug use disorders and mental illness, including associations with greater vulnerability to adolescent drug dependence and conduct disorders.

*Involvement of Similar Brain Regions.* Some areas of the brain are affected by both drug use disorders and other mental illnesses. For example, the circuits in the brain that use the neurotransmitter dopamine—a chemical that carries messages from one neuron to another—are typically affected by addictive substances and may also be involved in depression, schizophrenia, and other psychiatric disorders.

Indeed, some antidepressants and essentially all antipsychotic medications directly target the regulation of dopamine in this system, whereas others may have indirect effects. Importantly, dopamine pathways have also been implicated in the way in which stress can increase vulnerability to drug addiction. Stress is also a known risk factor for a range of mental disorders

**Obsessive Compulsive Support Groups**  
412-363-6231 or [www.ocfwpa.org](http://www.ocfwpa.org)

**Survivors of Suicide WPIC**, Contact:  
Sue Wesner 412-246-5633

**Warm and Friendly Call Program** —  
Sign up for reassurance calls and/or  
reminder calls 412-894-2364 Sunday  
through Thursday 2 p.m. – 10 p.m.

**Well Spouse Support Group** — Meets  
the first Wednesday of each month in  
Churchill. Contact: Mim Schwartz  
412-731-4855

**Trichotillomania Support Groups**  
412-363-6231 or 412-END- OCD1  
[www.ocfwpa.org](http://www.ocfwpa.org)

### **ALLEGHENY COUNTY PEER-SUPPORT/ DROP-IN CENTERS**

The drop-in centers welcome all individuals diagnosed with a mental illness. These centers are located throughout Allegheny County and provide a safe and comfortable environment where people can go to have fun, eat a warm meal, interact and socialize with their peers. There are also many trained professionals on site who are available for those in crisis or those who just want to talk!

Chain of Hope – 710 Wood Street,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15521, 412-247-5018.

Maverick – 1005 Fifth Avenue, New  
Kensington, PA 15068, 724-334-2386.

New Horizons – 616 Lincoln Center,  
Bellevue, PA 15202, 412-766-8060.

Olive Branch – 215 Corbet Street,  
Tarentum, PA 15084, 412-224-1600.

Peoples Oakland — 3433 Bates Street,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213, 412-683-7140.

Wellsprings – 903 Watson Avenue,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219, 412-263-2545.

#### **Interested in Peer support?**

Looking to use your story to inspire recovery? The Pennsylvania Peer Support Coalition offers information on statewide peer support initiatives, job openings, training opportunities and much more! Visit

<http://www.papeersupportcoalition.org/index.html> for more information.

and therefore provides one likely common neurobiological link between the disease processes of addiction and those of other mental disorders.

The overlap of brain areas involved in both drug use disorders and other mental illnesses suggests that brain changes stemming from one may affect the other. For example, drug abuse that precedes the first symptoms of a mental illness may produce changes in brain structure and function that kindle an underlying propensity to develop that mental illness. If the mental disorder develops first, associated changes in brain activity may increase the vulnerability to abusing substances by enhancing their positive effects, reducing awareness of their negative effects, or alleviating the unpleasant effects associated with the mental disorder or the medication used to treat it.

### **The Influence of Developmental Stage**

**Adolescence—A Vulnerable Time.** Although drug abuse and addiction can happen at any time during a person's life, drug use typically starts in adolescence, a period when the first signs of mental illness commonly appear. It is therefore not surprising that comorbid disorders can already be seen among youth. Significant changes in the brain occur during adolescence, which may enhance vulnerability to drug use and the development of addiction and other mental disorders. Drugs of abuse affect brain circuits involved in learning and memory, reward, decisionmaking, and behavioral control, all of which are still maturing into early adulthood. Thus, understanding the long-term impact of early drug exposure is a critical area of comorbidity research.

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<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320508.php>

### **What are Cluster B Personality Disorders?**

By Lana Burgess, January 2018

A personality disorder is a mental health condition that affects the way a person thinks, behaves, and relates to other people. There are many types of personality disorders. To help with diagnosis, doctors organize them into different groups called clusters.

This article explores the different types of cluster B personality disorders, their symptoms, and how they may be treated. It also considers some coping mechanisms that may help those with the condition and their loved ones.

#### **What are cluster B personality disorders?**

Cluster B personality disorders are a group of mental health conditions that affect a person's emotions and interpersonal relations. Cluster B personality disorders are characterized by very emotional or erratic behavior.

Doctors use a diagnostic manual called *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition*, or (DSM-5), to help diagnose mental health conditions.

## ASSISTANCE

Physical Health Plans  
Member Services Gateway  
1-800-392-1147

UPMC Health Plan, Inc. /UPMC for  
You 1-800-286-4242

MedPlus 1-800-414-9025

PA Health Law Project 1-800-274-3258  
or 1-866-236-6310 TTY.

The PennFree Program is a twelve month rental subsidy program designed to empower recovering men and women to regain their independence. Participants in PennFree are homeless, recovering, single men and women, single men and women with children and families. Please go to [www.familylinks.org](http://www.familylinks.org). Click on "Housing" for various housing programs.

Refer the Uninsured Project  
The PA Health Law Project is presently asking for uninsured persons to call their Helpline at (800) 274-3258 or TTY line (866) 236-6310. All callers will be screened for any possible insurance or free health care services currently available to them.

Squirrel Hill Health Center — For uninsured individuals, the co-pay is \$15 if the individual is above 200% of the poverty level. Hours are M-TH 9am-5pm, Fri 8 am – 4 pm. Tuesday evening and Sunday morning hours are also available. They provide primary care and have a number of specialists working with them. Please contact Rebecca LaBovick, Director of Therapeutic Homeless Services at the Community Human Services Corporation at 412-621-6513 x 101 for more information.

Community Care Behavioral Health  
Member Services 1-800-553-7499

COMPASS is a website that allows individuals and community-based organizations access to screen for, apply for, and renew a broad range of social programs. It is a single access point for:

## DSM-5 defines three main clusters of personality disorders:

- **Cluster A:** People diagnosed with cluster A personality disorders may find it hard to relate to others. They may behave in a way that others consider odd, eccentric, or paranoid.
- **Cluster B:** People diagnosed with cluster B personality disorders may find it hard to regulate their emotions. This may cause relationship problems. They may behave in a way that others consider overly emotional, dramatic, or erratic.
- **Cluster C:** People diagnosed with cluster C personality disorders may be seen by others as antisocial or withdrawn. They may feel very anxious and behave in a fearful manner.

Within each cluster, there is a range of related personality disorders. This article looks at cluster B personality disorders.

## Symptoms

Experiencing the symptoms of a personality disorder may cause a person to behave in ways that are distressing for them and others. Understanding the symptoms of cluster B personality disorders may help a person seek treatment. Increased awareness of symptoms may also help friends and relatives support those experiencing a cluster B personality disorder.

## 4 Types of Cluster B personality disorders

### Antisocial personality disorder

A person diagnosed with an antisocial personality disorder may behave in ways that suggest they do not care about other people's needs. A person diagnosed with the condition may:

- lie or manipulate the truth
- break rules or other societal conventions
- deceive other people
- use fake names to defraud others

It may seem that they are behaving in this way for their own benefit. A person with this condition may develop behavioral patterns that are:

- aggressive
- violent
- impulsive
- irresponsible

A person who has an antisocial personality disorder does not usually show remorse or feel sorry for the way they are acting. If they do not get treatment, their behavior may cause problems with law enforcement.

### Borderline personality disorder

A person with borderline personality disorder may have difficulty maintaining relationships, as their behavior may be considered manipulative. A person with borderline personality disorder may have low self-esteem and a fragile

- Health Care Coverage
- Food Stamp Benefits
  - Cash Assistance
  - Long Term Care
- Home and Community Based Services for individuals with mental retardation
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Free or Reduced Price School Meals
- SelectPlan for Women (Family Planning Services)
- Child Care Works

COMPASS also provides screening for the programs above, which allows a user to provide basic information to determine if they potentially qualify for a service. For more information, visit <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/compass.web/cmhom.aspx>

### **RESOURCES**

Allegheny County MH Emergency Line  
412-350-4457 (24 Hour Service)

Allegheny County Jail Forensic Service  
412-350-4273

Allegheny County Ombudsman  
1-877-787-2424

Re:solve Crisis Network  
1-888-796-8226. Call before a crisis becomes a crisis.

Depression & Anxiety  
1-800-888-9383

Research Into the Causes of Schizophrenia  
412-624-0823

Research Brain Tissue Donation Information  
412-624-0331

**NAMI Veterans Resource Center**  
NAMI launched this online portal to mental health resources for American veterans, active duty service members and their families. To check out this resource visit [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh Hotline  
412-687-8005

sense of self. The way they feel about themselves may affect the way they relate to others. They may feel:

- afraid of being abandoned or alone
- empty
- paranoid about how others think of them or behave toward them
- Feeling this way may lead to unhealthy thought patterns and extreme reactions to interpersonal stress.

They may react with intense anger or sadness to minor things other people say or do that would not be considered distressing to most people. These exaggerated reactions can cause difficulty in relationships. Interpersonal stress may cause unstable patterns in mood, with high and low periods.

Sometimes a person with borderline personality disorder may talk about — or carry out — self-harming behavior. They may experience suicidal thoughts and are at risk of acting on these feelings.

### **Histrionic personality disorder**

A person diagnosed with histrionic personality disorder may behave in an attention-seeking manner that is not always appropriate. The following traits may be noticeable in a person with this condition:

- behavior that is overly emotional or sexually provocative
- speech that uses lots of dramatic expressions and emphasis
- a tendency to be overly keen to express strong opinions that may seem unsubstantiated
- believing and behaving as if people are closer to them than they are

Like borderline personality disorder, this condition is also linked to suicidal behavior. If a person with histrionic personality disorder experiences suicidal thoughts, they should call a suicide prevention line or emergency medical services immediately.

### **Narcissistic personality disorder**

A person diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder may act in a way that suggests they believe they are superior to others. They may:

- overreact to criticism
- believe they are very important
- focus on grand plans and visions of success
- have a strong need for admiration
- act with a sense of entitlement
- have trouble empathizing with others

Others may feel that a person with narcissistic personality disorder is using or manipulating them to improve their own situation.

If left untreated, cluster B personality disorders may make it hard for a person to maintain positive relationships. With treatment and the right supports however, many people with cluster B personality disorders can manage their condition well and sustain healthy, happy relationships.

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/how-stress-hurts>

## How Stress Hurts

Evolution was pretty savvy about danger. See a saber-tooth tiger, get moving! Today, flight—or fight, if necessary—still triggers major bodily changes, such as:

- Sugars in the bloodstream increase to supply energy
- Muscles tense so they're poised for action
- Heart beats faster to get blood pumping
- Digestion and other functions slow to save energy needed elsewhere

The problem is that our brains react to ominous loads of laundry and upcoming dentist visits like they were vicious predators. And the onslaught of today's stressors is fairly nonstop. When our bodies stay triggered for too long, lots of possible health problems can develop or worsen.

Stress may contribute to:

- high blood pressure
- heart disease and stroke
- decreased immune defenses
- cancer
- stomach problems
- poorer brain functioning

Stress also can lead to serious mental health problems, like depression and anxiety disorders.

Of course, you can't necessarily remove the sources of stress. But you can figure out ways to cope better

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20180110/Changing-belief-patterns-about-causes-of-mental-illness-may-increase-social-acceptance.aspx>

## Changing belief patterns about causes of mental illness may increase social acceptance

January 10, 2018

Belief that mental illness is biological has increased among both health experts and the public in recent years. But campaigns to treat it as a disease and remove stigma may be lacking because other factors, such as bad character and upbringing, still are viewed as playing a role, a Baylor University study has found.

“Individuals who endorse biological beliefs that mental illness is ‘a disease like any other’ also tend to endorse other, non-biological beliefs, making the overall effect of biological beliefs quite convoluted and sometimes negative,” said lead author Matthew A. Andersson, Ph.D., assistant professor of sociology in Baylor’s College of Arts & Sciences.

The study, which focused on stigma toward individuals suffering from depression, schizophrenia and alcoholism, is published in the American Sociological Association’s journal *Society and Mental Health*. Findings suggest that beliefs about causes of mental illness could be addressed in public campaigns and by policymakers in different and more beneficial ways than they are now, according to Andersson and co-author Sarah K. Harkness, Ph.D., assistant professor of sociology at the University of Iowa.

Although many in the mental health community -- including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services -- see the shift in views toward genetic or chemical causes as encouraging, mental illness unfortunately still draws negative social reactions, researchers said. That reaction often is measured by how much people want to keep a distance from those dealing with mental illness or viewed as being potentially dangerous.

The study analyzed data from the 2006 General Social Survey administered by the University of Chicago. The survey presented a random sample of 1,147 respondents with theoretical situations involving individuals suffering from symptoms of depression, schizophrenia or alcoholism.

Respondents then completed six items from the General Social Survey about how likely they thought it was that certain factors had caused the mental health problem. Those factors included:

- Bad character
- A chemical imbalance in the brain
- The way he or she was raised
- Stressful circumstances in his or her life
- A genetic or inherited problem
- God’s will

with whatever comes your way. And decades of research suggest which steps are most likely to work.

### Are You Too Stressed?

Your stress reaction can boost your performance and get you through a crisis. But too much stress can lead to serious problems.

If you're concerned about your well-being, take a look at the symptoms of stress overload:

- fatigue
- headaches
- loss of concentration
- difficulty making decisions
- inability to control anger
- increased use of alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes or drugs
- increased or decreased eating
- feeling overwhelmed
- thinking often about what you need to do

### 10 Tools to Manage Stress

These 10 proven tools can help you feel stronger and more hopeful. Check out each page for specific, easy-to-follow tips.

- Connect with others
- Stay positive
- Get physically active
- Help others
- Get enough sleep
- Create joy and satisfaction
- Eat well
- Take care of your spirit
- Deal better with hard times
- Get professional help if you need it

Finally, to measure stigma, respondents were asked how willing they would be to have a person like the one in the vignette (1) move next door; (2) start working closely with them on a job; (3) marry into their family; (4) spend an evening socializing with them; (5) become their friend; or (6) move into a newly established group home in their neighborhoods for people in that condition.

“There’s a debate about whether biological beliefs in genetic causation or chemical causation lower stigma as long as we aren’t blaming bad character, too,” Andersson said. “That’s an unknown and part of the reason for this study. For all three illnesses examined here, how important is it to look at how multiple beliefs about the nature of illness combine to produce stigma? That’s what we were trying to figure out.”

That combination of opinions was held by about 23 percent of respondents who considered the scenario about a depressed individual; and 25 percent of those who were presented with the scenario about a person with schizophrenia, the researchers said.

In contrast, among respondents who were presented with the scenario about an alcoholic, the most common combination of beliefs about causes included bad character, chemical imbalance, the way one was raised, stress and genetic abnormality. That combination -- held by 27 percent of respondents -- attributes alcoholism to all causes except for religious or divine forces.

“One specific piece of advice is clear for combatting stigma toward depression or alcoholism: Bad character or personal weakness needs to be absolved explicitly for biological explanations to reduce stigma effectively,” Andersson said. “But for schizophrenia, the role of an individual’s character in stigmatization is far less clear, likely because of the relative severity and rarity of the illness.”

The study is significant because it adds to the knowledge of how subtle but widely held theories about mental health may contribute to stigmatizing the mentally ill, Andersson said.

“Re-working anti-stigma policy initiatives around the belief patterns we linked to lowered stigma may help increase the social acceptance of people who suffer from these illnesses,” he said.

While researchers focused on the six mental illness attributions used in the General Social Survey, future research delving into other, more specific beliefs about causes -- such as marital or family troubles, work stressors, various brain dysfunctions or specific negative life events -- could prove valuable, Andersson said.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check for a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_. I am interested in helping with the work of your organization.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check for \$60 for a Household membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check for \$40 for an Individual membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check for \$5 for an Open Door/Limited Income membership

Our United Way Contributor Choice number is # 802088.  
Make checks payable to: NAMI Pittsburgh South and mail to NAMI South Hills Chapter,  
PO Box 14884, Pittsburgh PA 15234.

**NAMI Pittsburgh South Membership Form 2018**

NAMI South Hills Chapter  
PO BOX 14884  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

**FIRST CLASS**