

SEPTEMBER 2013



NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, supports and research and is steadfast in its commitment to raising awareness and building a community of hope.

NAMI – BEAVER COUNTY is an educational, advocacy and support group for families, consumers, and professionals dealing with serious mental illnesses or brain disorders. We support each other by educating ourselves through research, attending conferences, and sharing this information with others. NAMI-BC members also offer support through our years of experience n dealing with these illnesses on a personal level.

**In this issue: VIDEO GAME ADDICTION...OK2TALK...
...BRAIN PLASTICITY... HEALTHY LIVING HINTS – SNACKS**

*Assume the feeling of the wish fulfilled.
Neville Goddard*

**Meetings are held at
Heritage Valley – Staunton Clinic, 176 Virginia Avenue – 2nd Floor, Rochester
7:30pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month**

*****SEPTEMBER MEETING SEPTEMBER 19, 2013*****

~ SEPTEMBER MEETING – SHARE AND CARE ~

**What is Video Game Addiction?
By Macy Jaskiewicz**

Video games are extremely popular and many people get hours of enjoyment from playing them. So why are so many drawn to video games? The Association for Psychological Science attempted to answer this question. Primarily, video gamers adopt a new identity and enjoy the chance to play a role. In addition, gamers feel freedom, competence, accomplishment, a thrill of victory and ultimately, a good feeling about themselves.

On the positive side, several studies suggest benefits from video gaming. The results showed improvement in literacy, hand-eye coordination, following instructions, problem solving, logic, quick decision making, multitasking, accuracy, strategy, situational awareness, perseverance, pattern recognition, estimating skills, mapping, memory, concentration, risk taking, handling frustration, cooperation and teamwork, education, family bonding, social interaction, and even exercise.

In contrast, numerous studies identify evils with video gaming. Issues include social isolation, a lack of other activities (homework, sports, etc.), health problems, bad language, bad behavior, stereotyping, aggression, trouble differentiating reality from fantasy and academic under-achievement.

Video game addiction is when the extreme use of video games interferes with daily life. A few signs include preoccupation with the game, downplaying computer use, having a lack of control, neglecting personal hygiene, poor work ethic, poor grades, guilt, misuse of money, denial and defensiveness. Gaming becomes a problem when the gamer feels isolated and plays video games to seek refuge from negative situations.

Therefore, video game addiction is a controversial idea on which many experts disagree. The American Medical Association defines heavy game use as more than two hours a day. The National Harris Poll survey found nearly one in 10, youths ages 8-18, showed signs of video game addiction, yet the American Psychiatric Association has not recognized video game addiction as a diagnosis.

Since I am interested in psychology, I conducted a science project to determine if my peers showed signs of video game addiction. I used six parameters that indicate addiction: happiness from playing the game, ability to limit playing time, social relationships, amount of time spent playing, affect on school performance, and their history with trying to quit playing. My data indicated that 5% of the 238 participants displayed signs of video game addiction. This is lower than the 10% national average, but is cause for concern.

Clearly, there is no obvious formula to determine between healthy and obsessive game play, therefore, I recommend a self-evaluation and the use of video games in moderation. If you or someone you know shows sign of video game addiction, please contact a health care professional.

Strength of Us Empowers Young Adults

By Macy Jaskiewicz

Strengthofus.org is a useful tool for young adults who are impacted by mental health issues. The website is easy to navigate and hosts an online community which enables users to connect with one another. The Wire, the sites' own form of Twitter, is a great asset for teens to communicate with others dealing with similar issues. Groups within the website offer tips on relationships, college, and self expression, to name a few. There are numerous blog entries that are highly informative and cover a wide variety of topics, ranging from Mental Health Conferences to guidance on all aspects of life. Everything on the site is fueled with hope and a positive attitude that is sure to provide comfort and assurance to its users. It is evident how much the Strength of Us administrators care about these young adults through the detail of their posts and encouraging advice. The helpful and positive nature of this website makes it a safe haven to many young adults, facilitates new friendships, and enforces a feeling of being less alone.

TRY THE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL – SEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meet Macy Jaskiewicz
By Carla Braund

We were fortunate to have two articles written by Macy Jaskiewicz this month, one a school assignment and the other an exclusive review for our newsletter. Macy's contributions are a welcome addition from a transition age youth. This remarkable girl is a senior at Quigley High School in Baden. Involved in numerous activities, she excels in more than one area. A Mock Trial team member, her team has won state and regional awards. For PJAS she has won first place science awards. She also takes part in the arts with chorus roles in school musicals and plays snare drum in the school band. Macy has been a member of the Diocesan Youth Council. She writes for the school newspaper and has an international book blog called, "It's a Book Thing". She reviews teen literature and helps set up author book signings. In her limited spare time she enjoys cake decorating, knitting and her loveable cat, Romeo. Macy's plans for the future are to get a teaching degree in secondary psychology and counsel students. Thanks Macy for a wonderful job on the two articles.

What is PA Families, Inc.?

Source: Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania (VBH-PA)
Member Newsletter June 2013

PA Families, Inc. (PFI) is Pennsylvania's Statewide Family Network federally funded by Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Parents, youth, and young adult leaders across the state are connected, supported, and receive training through PFI to help them be more effective in the work they do in their communities. Families, youth, and young adults are needed to participate in decision making at the county, state, and federal levels.

In addition, PFI is in the beginning stages of forming a statewide network of family organizations. By identifying all entities needing to be part of the collaborative, PFI will have endless resources for families. PFI already has a communications and information network established.

PFI assures that family members have a support network and can share information from local family support groups to state and federal boards. When a family is in need, PFI can reach out to over 15,000 listed resources within the 67 counties in Pennsylvania and request help for a family in need.

If you would like more information on PFI, visit their website at www.pafamiliesinc.com. If you need assistance, contact Dianna Brocius at [1-800-947-4941](tel:1-800-947-4941) or pafamilies@comcast.net.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Yoga Basics Class

For Women Only ~ pay what you can.
Beaver Area Memorial Library
100 College Avenue, Beaver, PA 15009
Fridays at 12:Sept.13,27
Saturdays at 3:30: Sept. 14, 28.
Contact Info:
paula@intersectionswellness.com
724-709-9553

7TH ANNUAL FAMILY FORUM

Broadening Our Possibilities, Hope For Tomorrow
October 4, 2013, Doubletree Hotel
101 Mall Boulevard, Monroeville, PA 15146
Sponsored by Value Behavioral Health.
cindy.andrews@valueoptions.com

The Primary Health Network Charitable Foundation supports the network of clinics that provide health services to people with little or no insurance, including the clinic in Beaver Falls. The Foundation underwrites the expense of transportation to and from medical appointments in the region encompassing Akron to Pittsburgh. A prescription assistance program designed to help with co-pays, **Caring for our Neighbors**, will be available in July. More information about the foundation can be located at www.phnfoundation.net.

NAMI WALK Sunday, October 13, 2013.
Check in: 9:00 am. Location: South Side Works & Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Info: Darcey Garda: 412-366-3788, dgarda@namiswpa.org. namiswpa.org
Donate by mail: NAMI SWPA, 105 Braunlich Drive, McKnight Plaza, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Donate online: namiswpa.org, NAMI WALKS,

DONATE NOW, SEARCH TEAM: NAMI BEAVER COUNTY2013.

SYSTEM OF CARE BEAVER CTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAKEHOLDER MEETING: September 17, 2013, 1:30-4:00pm, Comm. Coll. Bvr County, Learning Resource Center, RSVP, K. Hall, 412-244-1244

NEW SMARTPHONE APP

It's the Treatment Advocacy Center's new mobile "Psychiatric Crisis Resources Kit," a smartphone app that puts critical information into the hands of families when a loved one is in an acute psychiatric crisis – whenever and wherever the emergency strikes. SEE WEBSITE
<http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/get-help/psych-crisis-resource-kit>.

Book Club Next Book, *Wishes Fulfilled*, Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, subject, self-actualization. 4 copies Beaver Library System. \$8.82 Amazon. "Everything that now exists was once imagined." Read the book or not, come to discuss this prolific author. A PBS special. October 9, 2013, 6:30 pm. Beaver Library.

NAMI STATE CONFERENCE

October 24-27, 2013, Harrisburg, PA, nami-pa.org. ekitz@namipa.org

NEWSLETTER CHANGES:

Due to budget! White paper. Try email instead of paper! Contact Below.

Please contact Carla Braund at (724)728-3243 or namibc12@gmail.com with questions or concerns regarding any of the events listed above.

HEALTHY LIVING HINTS

Back to college? Or looking for healthy snacks?

Try these 25 healthy dorm snacks:

- **Granola** - not only is granola great for snacking right from the container, it's also a hearty cereal and topping for yogurt.
- **Peanut butter** - what's not to love about peanut butter? It's inexpensive, has a long shelf life and versatile. Just make sure to use a spoon or spreader rather than your fingers in the jar.
- **Oatmeal** - it's easy to make and is the perfect to-go breakfast on cold mornings.
- **Fruit cups** - a sweet tooth alternative to a candy bar. Try warming the fruit in a container with some granola for variety.
- **Energy or protein bars** - perfect for keeping the edge off of hunger between meals.
- **Soup** - there are canned, bagged and dry soups to satisfy every taste. Make sure you have a microwave safe soup mug for easy heating and eating.
- **Dried fruit** - raisins, dates and other dried fruits are perfect for snacking and loaded with nutrients.
- **Cheese** - great alone or with crackers. You'll need a small refrigerator and either a container or reusable wrap to keep cheese fresh though.
- **Trail mix** - another perfect grab and go snack. We make ours with mixed nuts, raisins and M&Ms. Make a big batch and store in single serve containers for convenience and to control portion size.
- **Applesauce** - sweet and nutritious, applesauce is great both as a snack or side dish.
- **Hummus** - perfect dip for crackers, veggies and pretzels.
- **Apples** - inexpensive and they store well in containers or bags.
- **Low-fat popcorn** - popcorn is viewed by many as unhealthy, but low-fat microwave varieties offer the benefits of popcorn, like fiber, without all of the fat.
- **Whole wheat crackers** - perfect for satisfying the need to crunch something. Top with peanut butter, cheese or hummus.
- **Nuts** - these can be pricey, but they are hearty and an easy grab and go snack.
- **Baked potato** - the ultimate frugal food! Baked potatoes are super easy to make in the microwave. Need toppings? Try some cheese or plain yogurt.
- **Kale chips** - so much healthier than snacks like potato chips. Don't want the expense of buying them? Try making them yourself with one of the many recipes on the internet.
- **Roasted chickpeas** - these are so simple to make in the oven from canned chickpeas. Again, the internet has dozens of recipes for roasting chickpeas.
- **Noodles** - ramen noodles were the noodles of choice when I was in school, but if you are on the hunt for a slightly healthier alternative, try making your own with thin or fine wheat noodles and chicken broth in a microwave noodle container.

- **Bananas** - this inexpensive fruit is perfect for snacking and is loaded with nutrients like potassium. To keep them fresh for up to two weeks, try using a Banana Bag.
- **Yogurt** - this is another healthy breakfast or snack food that is inexpensive.
- **Carrots, celery and radishes** - perfect for dipping in hummus, these healthy veggies can be stored in a small round container in the refrigerator.
- **Tea** - drinking a cup of tea is healthier and can be less expensive than other drinks such as hot chocolate. Need some caffeine and carbs to make it through a hard night of studying? A cup of tea and an energy bar is a healthier alternative to soft drinks and chips. Store bags or loose tea in an airtight container to preserve freshness.
- **Berries** - loaded with vitamins and minerals, strawberries, raspberries and other berries are a healthy way to satisfy a sweet tooth, especially when topped with yogurt or dipped in low fat pudding. We use our Banana Bag to keep berries fresh.
- **Pudding** - pudding? Yep. Just make sure it's low fat. Pudding is perfect for serving by itself or as a dip for fruit.

From Living Innovative Blogspot

FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

Source: Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania (VBH-PA)
Member Newsletter June 2013

The VBH-PA Family Advisory Committee is committed to representing the views of families who support children and youth with the goal of ensuring appropriate delivery of behavioral healthcare services to all HealthChoices members. We are currently seeking family members of both adults and children who currently have mental health or substance abuse services, or have had services in the past, to serve on this committee. Members of our committee receive a stipend for their attendance and, in some cases, mileage reimbursement. If you are interested in joining our committee, please contact Karan Steele at (724) 744-6537 or email her at karan.steele@valueoptions.com.

It's OK2TALK about Mental Illness

By Sara Battista and Joni Agronin, NAMI Communications Interns Nami Blog July 25, 2013

On Tuesday, July 23, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) launched their new "OK2TALK" campaign aimed at educating the public and encouraging youth to start a conversation about mental health. The campaign features a series of TV and radio PSAs to be used as a platform to spark a productive, nation-wide dialogue about the realities of mental illness and the availability of help and support.

The NAB initiated their OK2TALK campaign following the National Conference on Mental Health last month. NAB President and CEO Gordon Smith has a special connection to the cause given that his son took his own life in 2003 after living with depression for many years. At the launch, Gordon shared his personal story and his hopes that encouraging families to have honest conversations about mental illness will help prevent other families from experiencing the tragedy that he faced with the loss of his son.

The launch featured a multitude of speakers including senators and house representatives advocating for a bipartisan effort toward improving public accessibility to mental health care. NAMI Northern Virginia member Ellie Hoptman gave a face to the campaign when she shared her personal story of struggle and recovery. Her perspective as a teen growing up with bipolar disorder served as a call to action, proving that talking about mental illness can be a powerful step in the healing process. In her speech, Ellie recalls the pivotal moment at which she finally opened up to her peers and realized that she was not alone. “There were people out there like me and it made all the difference in the world.”

If you or a loved one is touched by mental illness, or if you simply need a safe and supportive place to talk, we encourage you to become a part of the conversation by visiting OK2TALK.org.

More than one-fourth of young adults avoid talking about mental illness, but having a conversation could save a life.

NEED TO TALK? 1-800-273-TALK

NEW BOOK ABOUT BRAIN PLASTICITY

Soft-Wired: How the New Science of Brain Plasticity Can Change Your Life Paperback by Dr. Michael Merzenich PhD (Author) Amazon \$12.31

What if you had the power to change your brain for the better?

In *Soft-Wired*, Dr. Michael Merzenich--a world authority on brain plasticity--explains how the brain rewires itself across the lifespan, and how you can take control of that process to improve your life. In addition to fascinating descriptions of how your brain has produced your unique memories, skills, quirks, and emotions, *Soft-Wired* offers sound advice for evaluating your brain and gives clear, specific, scientifically proven guidance for how to rejuvenate, remodel, and reshape your brain to improve it at any age.

TRY THE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL – SEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

NAMI ON CAMPUS *from NAMI Website*

NAMI on Campus provides information and resources to support students' mental health and to empower them to take action on their college campuses. It helps to ensure that all students have positive, successful and fun college experiences.

There is much we now know about students and the mental health issues they experience while attending college. Here are some brief facts and stats about college students and mental health. This data undoubtedly makes the case for the importance of addressing the mental health needs of all students on college campuses and why everyone should care about this issue. Check out NAMI's resources for faculty, staff and students to begin to address these important issues.

Mental health issues are prevalent on college campuses.

- 75 percent of lifetime cases of mental health conditions begin by age 24.(1)
- One in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness.² More than 25 percent of college students have been diagnosed or treated by a professional for a mental health condition within the past year.(3)
- More than 11 percent of college students have been diagnosed or treated for anxiety in the past year and more than 10 percent reported being diagnosed or treated for depression.(4)
- More than 40 percent of college students have felt more than an average amount of stress within the past 12 months.(5)
- More than 80 percent of college students felt overwhelmed by all they had to do in the past year and 45 percent have felt things were hopeless.(6)
- Almost 73 percent of students living with a mental health condition experienced a mental health crisis on campus.(7) Yet, 34.2 percent reported that their college did not know about their crisis.(8)
- Colleges across the country have reported large increases in enrollment.⁹ At the same time, college counseling centers have also observed an increase in the prevalence and severity of mental health issues experienced by students and an increase in the number of students taking psychotropic medications.(10)

Mental health issues are a leading impediment to academic success.

- In an American College Health Association report released in 2011, students cited depression and anxiety as among the top impediments to academic performance.
- 64 percent of young adults who are no longer in college are not attending college because of a mental health related reason.¹¹ Depression, bipolar disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder are the primary diagnoses of these young adults.(12)
- 31 percent of college students have felt so depressed in the past year that it was difficult to function and more than 50 percent have felt overwhelming anxiety, making it hard to succeed academically.(13)

College students are not seeking help.

- More than 45 percent of young adults who stopped attending college because of mental health related reasons did not request accommodations. 14 50 percent of them did not access mental health services and supports either.(15)
- Overall, 40 percent of students with diagnosable mental health conditions did not seek help. 16 57 percent of them did not request accommodations from their school.(17)
- Concern of stigma is the number one reason students do not seek help.(18)

Suicide is a real concern.

- 7 percent of college students have “seriously considered suicide” during the past year.(19)
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death on college campuses.(20)

More campus-based mental health services and supports are needed on campus.

- The demand for mental health services and supports in community colleges is expected to increase in the next several years.(21) The increase in enrollment alone is justification for expanding and enhancing mental health services and supports available on college campuses and communities.
- Without adequate treatment, young adults experiencing a mental health issue are more likely to receive lower GPAs, drop out of college or be unemployed than their peers who do not have a mental health challenge.(22)
- Students have emphasized the critical need for the following services and supports to be available on campus:(23)
- Mental health training for faculty, staff and students
- Suicide prevention programs
- Peer-run, student mental health organizations
- Mental health information during campus tours, orientation, health classes and other campus-wide events
- Walk-in student health centers, 24-hour crisis hotlines, ongoing individual counseling services, screening and evaluation services and comprehensive referrals to off-campus services and supports NAMI ON CAMPUS

**WHETHER YOU THINK YOU CAN, OR YOU THINK YOU CAN'T – YOU'RE RIGHT.
HENRY FORD**

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NAMI – THE NATION’S VOICE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

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MEMBERSHIP FORM 2013

*Several changes have happened with memberships and renewal. The \$25 level of membership has been dropped. In order to keep the membership process streamlined, we **prefer** renewals to be processed early in the year. It is also possible to renew your membership online at www.nami.org. At this time over half of our memberships are due for renewal. A BIG THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIP. Any questions or concerns please direct them to Carla Braund, 724-728-3243 or namibc12@gmail.com. All NAMI – Beaver County memberships include subscriptions to all four newsletters.*

_____ Enclosed is my check for \$35 for 2013 memberships in NAMI – Beaver County, NAMI, NAMI – PA, and NAMI – SW PA

_____ I am on a limited income. Dues are \$3 for full membership.

_____ I wish to make a tax deductible donation of \$ _____ to NAMI – Beaver County.

NAME(S) _____

Please check one: Family member Consumer Mental health professional

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Make checks payable to: **NAMI – Beaver County**
Send to: Carla Braund, NAMI – Beaver County
967 4th St. Street -- Beaver, PA 15009

