



NAMI  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Wichita Synapse

September/October, 2021

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Volume 24, Issue 5

**NAMI monthly education programs and support groups will continue to use the ZOOM format at least through October programming. A decision will be made at that point to determine if in-person meetings may resume at the Breakthrough Club. Continue to follow safety guidelines published by our local, state and national health organizations, and choose to schedule a Covid-19 vaccine injection as soon as you can to protect yourself, your family and friends. Continue watching for reminder messages about meeting schedules and other upcoming activities.**

## **FIRST TUESDAY NAMI EDUCATION PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGH ZOOM AT 7 PM**

**Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>:** NAMI Wichita member, Nicole Cox will present "Calmin' Sense". This presentation teaches participants how to use their eight (not just five) senses to help regulate their emotions. These techniques can be useful for everyone! This opportunity to immerse yourself in many types of multi-sensory materials will prove to be interesting for all.

**Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>:** Information about this month's program is not yet available. Please stay tuned to our website, [www.namiwichita.org](http://www.namiwichita.org) and additional emails for more.

## **NAMI CONNECTIONS RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP/FAMILY-FRIENDS SUPPORT**

**GROUP: INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have not participated thus far but wish to join the groups, please contact David Larson either through email ([D.LARSON@NAMIWICHITA.ORG](mailto:D.LARSON@NAMIWICHITA.ORG)) or phone (316-461-5755), at least a couple of days before the meeting so he will know you will be on-line that night. Otherwise, he may not be able to authorize your joining the meeting.

Sign-in will go much more smoothly if you download ZOOM beforehand onto your computer or phone, for whichever device you are going to use to join the meeting. It can be downloaded from the app store on your phone or by going to <https://zoom.us> on your computer. Also, register with Zoom for a free ZOOM account. Keep a record of the username (email address) and password you selected. Contact David with questions. **We send emails with sign-on information several days before each meeting.**

**How the ZOOM meetings work:** Because this meeting is for authorized attendees only, you will need to sign in using your email address and the password you chose earlier when you installed ZOOM. You will find the dates and links for the meetings below. Please make sure you are signing into the correct meeting for the correct date. **They must be typed exactly as you see them! CASE IS IMPORTANT:**

**7 PM, September 7,** Education Meeting  
<https://tinyurl.com/SeptEd21>

**7 PM, October 5,** Education Meeting  
<https://tinyurl.com/OctEd21>

**6 PM, September 21,** Ask the Doctor  
Hour and Support Groups  
<https://tinyurl.com/09Support21>

**6 PM, October 19,** Ask the Doctor  
Hour and Support groups  
<https://tinyurl.com/10Support21>

The evening of each meeting, David will convene both support group meetings at the same time for general announcements and instructions, and we'll then separate into the specific Connections and Family Support sections. Vicki Shook, Valerie Morley and Gerry Lichti will facilitate the Family Support Group, while David will do the same for Connections.

**SHARE AND CARE SUPPORT GROUP:** The Share and Care Support Group is a combined experience for both family members and adults living with mental illness. We benefit greatly from learning to know each other better.

6:30 PM, September 28, Share & Care

<https://tinyurl.com/SC0921>

6:30 PM, October 26, Share & Care

<https://tinyurl.com/SC1021>

**ASK THE DOCTOR HOUR:** We have resumed our question time at 6 PM with Psychiatry residents from KU School of Medicine before our support group sessions on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Seven new 3<sup>rd</sup> year psychiatry residents will join us over the next year.

**MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT LINE:** COMCARE of Sedgwick County offers a Support Line for individuals who may be experiencing an elevation in mental health symptoms during this pandemic period. You may call **316-660-1111 from 7 AM to 7 PM Monday through Friday**. You'll receive resources, coping skills ideas and encouragement to keep doing what you need to do to stay healthy, both emotionally and physically. **Residents who are experiencing a mental health crisis should call the Community Crisis Center at 316-660-7500 for assistance.**

### **Mark Your Calendars for these Upcoming Activities in 2021**

1. Sunday, October 3: Mental Illness Awareness Week Candlelight Ceremony
2. Tuesday, December 7: Annual Awards Ceremony, Election of Officers and Holiday Celebration.

### **Greetings from our President, James Hook:**

Greetings NAMI Wichita,

I hope this newsletter finds everyone well. The Board has been busy the past month discussing all the recent changes and updates related to Covid-19. It was decided that meetings would continue to be virtual for just a little while longer. We hope that in person meetings can start soon. I miss seeing all of you.

We need some additional NAMI volunteers. Gerry Lichti has resigned many of his volunteer responsibilities. Thank you for all you have done Gerry! NAMI is forever grateful for all you've done. It will take many new volunteers to fill your shoes. Please reach out if you're interested in helping with newsletter, answering the helpline, or planning monthly meetings. We have a lot of jobs open we need help with. Thank you NAMI Wichita.

James Hook

**NEWLY REVISED COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK NOW AVAILABLE:** The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of NAMI Wichita's *Community Resource Guidebook* is now available on the website with a print copy coming shortly. Check out a considerably expanded edition at [www.namiwichita.org](http://www.namiwichita.org). A huge "Thank You" to Nicole Cox for spearheading this revision!

## **NAMI WICHITA SYNAPSE**

A Publication for Family and Client Support, Advocacy Education and Research for Major Brain Disorders.

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Wichita Affiliate

NAMI Wichita

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Facebook:

NAMI Wichita, KS, Inc. is a non-profit organization with 501 (c) 3 status, an affiliate of NAMI and NAMI Kansas

### **Officers and Board of Directors:**

**President: James Hook**

**Vice President: Brittany Brest**

**Secretary: Dan Smading**

**Treasurer: Teresa Carter**

**Members at Large: Nicole Cox, Esther**

**Granados, David Larson, Laura**

**Rosenbaum, Rommy Vargas and**

**Bernestine Williams**

### **Other Volunteer Positions:**

**Family Support Group Facilitators: Gerry**

**Lichti, Valerie Morley and Vicki Shook**

**NAMI Connection Facilitators: Darla Carra**

**-Denton, Eli Hess and David Larson**

**NAMI Exhibit Coordinator: Treva Lichti**

**NAMI In Our Own Voice Coordinator: Lynn Kohr**

**NAMI Wichita Phone: Monthly**

**Assignments: Michelle Madison, Nancy**

**Ross and Bernestine Williams**

**Community Projects Coordinator: Gerry Lichti**

**Program Planning Chair: Laura Rosenbaum**

**NAMI Kansas Affiliate Council**

**Representatives: James Hook, David**

**Larson and Nancy Ross**

**NAMI Kansas Peer Leadership Council**

**Representatives: Brittany Brest and Darla Carra-Denton**

**NAMI Kansas Veterans' Council**

**Representative: Tony Nutz**

### **Summer Picnic and awards:**

For the first time since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NAMI-Wichita community came together outside on June 19th at O.J. Watson Park to celebrate the beginning for summer, recognize outstanding volunteers, share support, and eat! About 50 NAMI members and supporters gathered on a rather "warm" summer day to visit, support, and eat hot dogs and other summer goodies! Reports from those attending said it was a great time to gather and see friends they hadn't seen in over a year. Thanks to those who helped put the event together, Nicole Cox, Bernestine Williams, David Larson and their committee members and to Cargill for the donation of the yummy hotdogs and President James Hook for his help in making this event possible.

**NAMI Volunteer Coordinator: David Larson**

**NAMI on Campus-WSU Contact: To be determined**

**NAMI Basics Support Group: Laura Rosenbaum**

**NAMI FaithNet Contact: Eli Hess**

**Ending the Silence Presenters: Esther Granados, Kara Carter**

**KU Residents Liaison: To be determined**

**NAMI Wichita Synapse Newsletter: Lynn Kohr and Teresa Carter**

**Brainstorming Editor: Lynn Kohr**

**Website Managers: Nicole Cox, Darla Carra- Denton and David Larson**

Views published in the [NAMI Wichita Synapse](#) are those of individual contributors and do not reflect local, state, or national NAMI positions.

### **NAMI Wichita also publishes a Resource Guidebook funded by an anonymous donor.**

We support the activities of law enforcement agencies, hospitals, COMCARE, the medical community, other non-profit organizations, families, caretakers, friends and clients of mental health services directed towards improving the lives of persons living with mental illnesses. Membership in NAMI Wichita includes persons living with mental illnesses, their family members, community friends, behavioral health professionals and students.

**Newsletter Mailing List Guidelines:** This newsletter is sent by email to any NAMI Wichita members/contacts for whom we have an active email address. Print copies are sent only to those members who have no email service.

Community Leaders and Behavioral Health Professionals receive complimentary newsletters and are invited to support NAMI Wichita's programs and activities by becoming members.

Dues include membership in local, state and national and receipt of the [Advocate](#), a magazine published three times annually by NAMI. **PLEASE SEE MEMBERSHIP FORM ON LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSLETTER.**

**Thank You to volunteer Gerry Lichti!** THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Earlier this summer the NAMI-Wichita Board of Directors received a letter that they hoped they would never receive.... a retirement letter from Gerald Lichti. For anyone who has been around NAMI Wichita for even a brief moment, you will have met Gerry. He has been for many of us at support groups, the FACE of NAMI Wichita. From greeting you at the door and making even the most scared newcomer feel welcome, to drafting the NAMI newsletter, to a 1000 other jobs in our affiliate Gerry has done it all. His constant compassion and passion for our mission is one of the reasons we have been able to continue our support to our community. As Gerry steps back from the majority of his volunteer roles, the Board of Directors realizes it will take many volunteers to fill his shoes. But don't worry Gerry says he will still be around to help and guide as new volunteers take over some of these responsibilities. Again – Gerry – THANK YOU!

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP UPDATED:** You might have received an email recently if your NAMI membership indicates a lapsed status in the national database. If you have already sent in your membership dues to P.O. Box 2435, Wichita, KS 67201, please disregard this reminder. However, if you have not sent in your dues, you will want to do this as soon as possible so that you don't miss another issue of the national NAMI magazine, the ADVOCATE. You may renew your membership in a couple of ways. First you may go to [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) and click on RENEW on the upper right area of the screen. If you would like to write a check, please print out the membership form at the bottom of the newsletter, fill it out and mail the form with your check to the P.O. Box listed on the form. If you have any questions at all, please contact David Larson, Affiliate Development and Volunteer Coordinator of NAMI Wichita, at 316-461-5755 or at [d.larson@namiwichita.org](mailto:d.larson@namiwichita.org). New memberships are encouraged and appreciated. Thank you for your consideration.

**NAMI Wichita's Treasurer's Report:**

NAMI – Wichita

Fiscal year 7/1/2021 thru 6/31/2022

Income and Expense as July 31, 2021

“Dashboard version”

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$192	\$68,928
Expenses	\$296	\$68,447
Net Income	(\$104)	\$481

Thank you to the following Companies and Organizations for Grants and Gifts to NAMI Wichita During the 2021-2022 operating year. Their support makes NAMI Wichita able to continue its support during the COVID pandemic to those living with and affected by mental illness.

Kendra Scott @ The Waterfront

NAMI Wichita also thanks those making contributions in memory or in honor of the following persons: \*

In Honor Of	In Memory Of
	Kayla Deines

\* Contributions through 8/2021

**September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month** — a time to raise awareness on this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. In addition to shifting public perception, this month spreads hope and vital information to people affected by suicide. The goal is ensuring that individuals, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help.

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

For more information see NAMI's web site at <https://www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-awareness-month>

**If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call [The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 800-273-TALK (8255) or call 911 immediately.**

**NAMI Art Group News:** The NAMI Wichita Board of Directors hopes to sponsor art classes soon for all who are interested. If approved by the board, we hope to apply for funding to have at least a quarterly class led by an official art therapist, but we hope the grant will also allow for more peer and family led classes and events. Our goal is to also have a quarterly painting class led by a peer and weekly craft nights and other special events. In the past, the NAMI Art Group has provided us with beautiful decorations for various events, potlucks and meetings. Please keep this in mind and watch for future emails for further details. There are two articles in the September/October edition of *Brainstorming* (which follows) which have more information on Art Therapy.

**Hunter Health Nurse Available:** The Episcopal Social Services - Breakthrough building (1010 N Main St, Wichita, KS 67203) has a Nurse from Hunter Health Clinic that comes in every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month through December that sees anyone who walks into the building needing care at no cost. She also administers Covid-19 vaccines if needed.

### **Changes coming to Kansas' Nursing Facilities for Mental Health (NFMH):**

**Background:** Under threat of a lawsuit, the state of Kansas recently entered into a multi-year agreement with the Disability Rights Center of Kansas (DRC) and several other entities to reform the 10 NFMH's in the state currently serving more than 600 persons living with severe symptoms of mental illness. The DRC investigation concluded that Kansas was "violating (resident) rights by supporting a system that left them languishing in a state-funded, privately-operated Nursing Facilities for Mental Health with inadequate access to treatment or community-based alternatives." \* Instead of going to court, the groups involved agreed on actions that would improve the facilities and develop more satisfactory paths for clients to return to community life.

NAMI Wichita includes a number of families with family members residing in a Kansas NFMH. For most of these cases, community-based mental health services were available but found inadequate in providing appropriate care for the individual. Extensive periods of hospitalization were usually involved and the client's inability to follow a treatment regimen, including accepting or maintaining medication. The placement in a locked NFMH allowed safety for the person, supervision of medication and socialization/activities depending on the interest of the client. These placements served as an alternative to full hospitalization when community treatment had not been successful. They also provided a time of rehabilitation while medication was evaluated. Over the past several decades, a number of clients did return to their communities successfully.

(continued) Having said this, one must recognize certain realities concerning the different NFMH's in the state. The first is inconsistency: some did a much better job establishing a supportive, treatment-oriented environment for clients than others. The rehabilitative aspect of the different facilities was not high priority in most cases. Also, a number of clients were long-term without necessarily having a clear opportunity to determine appropriateness of continuing the placement. In a number of cases, outside professional expertise was not available.

Changes: 1) The current agreement will require the assignment of a case manager for each client to assist in development of a treatment and discharge plan before placement in an NFMH, and clients must receive information about community treatment options; 2) Supported housing, employment opportunities and access to quality services must also expand across the state; 3) The state's goals will be to move towards reducing referrals to NFMH's by 10% each year for five years, to reduce residential stays of more than six months and return to community services 20% of residents annually for five years; 4) Monies to begin funding these changes are supposedly included in the next year's state budget. One state legislator with long experience in assessing the role of NFMH's in mental health care in Kansas indicated that plans must be reasonable and not overly optimistic in that if adequate housing is not available in communities, increased homelessness is a risk when residents return to their communities.

Questions for NAMI Wichita and potential advocacy issues: First, over many years, a number of our members have experienced placement in an NFMH with varying outcomes. In the 1990's, when Mental Health Reform efforts reduced state hospital beds in favor of community mental health services, some of us remember that the money supposedly saved did "not follow the patient," and community services took a direct funding hit. Will this new agreement be adequately funded so that appropriate and necessary mental health services will actually be available for clients in the community setting?

Second, the continuum of care requires a full array of MH/substance use services: specialized hospitals, longer term care in a secure facility, case management/therapy/medication management/supported housing/supported employment/integrated substance use services and other types of assistance in the community setting. How do we best help persons who cannot recognize their own disorder, cannot safely manage their life in the community, require rehabilitation time to adjust to medication following what is usually a very brief hospital stay or are so ill and not responsive to treatment that a secure care facility is needed?

Third, since hospital beds are in short supply in Kansas, might reformed NFMH's provide a necessary mental health service as part of our "continuum of care?" The DRC investigation identified weaknesses in the current NFMH structure that could be addressed if they continue to receive state money. They could also be placed geographically for better state coverage. Most people would benefit from a "rehabilitation" model following hospitalization and before being expected to return to the community. This would affect hospital recidivism.

The NFMH developments will be well worth NAMI Wichita's continued attention in the future.  
Gerry Lichti

\*from "Kansas to Implement New Policies for Mental Health Institutions after Threat of Lawsuit," Katie Bernard, *Wichita Eagle*, August 11, 2021

**CHECK OUT OUR NEWLY REDESIGNED WEBSITE – [www.namiwichita.org](http://www.namiwichita.org):** Thanks to David Larson for leading the website revision process. Some continued work is being done to finish the task, but the improvements are immediately noticeable. Take a look!!

**Mental Illness Awareness Week Kick-off Presentation:** This year, our Mental Illness Awareness Week Kick-Off Presentation to promote awareness of mental illness, will be held on Sunday evening, October 3, 2021. As we did last year, we are again providing a virtual presentation via YouTube. This presentation will take the place of our usual Candlelight Ceremony. This year our speaker will be Eric Smith, a consultant, a mental health advocate and a nationally known speaker who will talk about his experiences with his own severe mental illness and his subsequent referral and treatment through AOT, or Assisted Outpatient Treatment initiated after being arrested and jailed for a nonviolent offense in 2009. The AOT program offered an innovative solution to problems born from his mental illness. It gave him a team – a judge, a social worker, a psychiatrist, a nurse and others to support him. As he says, it was the first time he was able to look towards the future. He then graduated *Magna cum laude* with a degree in psychology from the University of Texas at San Antonio and is now a graduate student training to become a professional advocate and mental health expert. And to think he dropped out of high school due to the realities of his mental illness!

**NAMI Wichita Education Classes for 2021:** All new classes are offered virtually through ZOOM. Please check [www.namiwichita.org](http://www.namiwichita.org) and click on the various “Programs” for further details on each class and for instructions to connect with ZOOM on your computer or phone. **ALL CLASSES ARE FREE FOR PARTICIPANTS.**

**HOMEFRONT EDUCATION PROGRAM:** A series of six classes helps family members, partners and significant others understand and support military service members and veterans living with mental health conditions while maintaining their own wellbeing. Some aspects of the class are managed on-line. Registration for these classes is required by calling Tony at 316-558-1888 or Eli at 316-207-5136.

**Peer-to-Peer** is offered for adults living with mental illness. This series of 8 weekly classes focuses on helping persons understand their illness and gain skills to help establish and maintain wellness. Classes last two hours each. Check [namiwichita.org](http://namiwichita.org) for details about a possible Fall 2020 class. You may register interest in a class at 316-686-1373 or email [peer2peer@namiwichita.org](mailto:peer2peer@namiwichita.org).

**Family-to-Family (English language)** is offered for family members, caretakers of or support persons for adults with the lived experience of mental illness. The class is provided in two and a half hour sessions for 8 weeks. **A Fall 2021 class will begin on Monday, September 13 and conclude on November 1.** This virtual class meets by ZOOM from 6:30-9 PM. To Register, contact Victoria at 316-220-5951, Janet at 316-734-2082 or Tim at 316-259-7945.

**Family-to-Family Spanish Language Class:** Class description is the same as for the class above. To express interest and for additional information, contact Rommy Vargas at 316-250-7231 or [rommyvargasb@yahoo.com](mailto:rommyvargasb@yahoo.com) or Alejandra Prendes at 316-299-8728 or [Tatiana\\_prendes@hotmail.com](mailto:Tatiana_prendes@hotmail.com).

**NAMI Basics** is offered for parents or caregivers of children and adolescents who experience mental health and behavioral disorders. This series of 6 weekly classes is offered in a two-and-a-half-hour format. To learn more about upcoming classes, contact Laura at [lauros@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lauros@sbcglobal.net).

## JOIN NAMI TODAY

The NAMI Wichita mission is to provide education and support for persons living with mental illness and their families; to provide support for research on brain disorders; and to provide public education and advocacy to promote mental health systems change with the hope that persons with mental illness may achieve the highest possible quality of life.

<input type="checkbox"/> HOUSEHOLD	\$60	Annual dues include membership at the local, state and national levels. <b>Make checks payable to NAMI Wichita.</b> All dues and donations are tax deductible.
<input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL	\$40	
<input type="checkbox"/> OPEN DOOR DUES*	\$ 5	
<input type="checkbox"/> GIFT/DONATION =	_____	

(Please complete **ALL** requested information.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE \_\_\_\_\_

9-DIGIT ZIPCODE \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO:

NAMI Wichita, KS

P.O. Box 2435

Wichita, KS 67201-2435

New Membership     Renewal Membership

I have served in the military.     An immediate family member has served in the military.

*\*No one will be denied membership for their inability to pay the full fee. The minimum payment is \$5.*

*The September/October 2021 issue of Brainstorming follows:*





# BRAINSTORMING

Volume 6, Issue 5

September/October 2021

Brainstorming is an on-line publication of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Wichita Affiliate. It is made up of articles encompassing the topic of mental illness. Information provided in this e-magazine is for informational purposes only, has not been researched or independently verified and is not intended as medical advice. Views published in Brainstorming are those of the individual authors and contributors and do not reflect and are not endorsed as local, state or national NAMI positions. To read the full articles, click on the "Read more" link following the introduction to each article. To submit articles and other material to be considered for inclusion in this e-magazine, contact Lynn Kohr at [l.kohr@namiwichita.org](mailto:l.kohr@namiwichita.org).

## **Creativity and Recovery: The Mental Health Benefits of Art Therapy**

Art – no matter whether you choose to create it yourself or simply observe and enjoy it – is a relaxing and inspiring activity for many people. However, the particular benefits of artistic expression go much further than relaxation and enjoyment. Studies suggest that art therapy can be very valuable in treating issues such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and even some phobias.

[Read more](#)

## **5 Art Therapy Exercises to Add to Your Self-Care Routine**

Creativity can be a wonderful way to support your mental health, and with everything going on in the world, it might be an especially healing and underrated mode of self-care right now. If the news cycle has you feeling stressed, hopeless, overwhelmed, angry, depressed, or any number of emotions, allowing yourself to get messy through art could be the outlet you're looking for.

[Read more](#)

## **Mourning Mania or Savoring Stability?**

A common barrier to seeking treatment for bipolar is the fear that life will be dull and unproductive without the energy of mania or hypomania.

[Read more](#)

## **Know the Science: How Medications and Supplements Can Interact**

Many Americans take both dietary supplements and prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

[...] It's important to tell all your health care providers about all dietary supplements and drugs you take. That way, they can help you avoid harmful interactions.

[Read more](#)

## **Mentally Tough Athletes Win by Putting Their Mental Well-Being First**

Simone Biles' decision to withdraw from the 2020 Olympics to prioritize her mental health is a victory for professional sports.

[...] Biles' powerful display of vulnerability and self-awareness challenged what it means to be a mentally tough athlete, and helped reshape some of the expectations we place on our favorite sports idols. Self-actualized athletes show us there can be strength in vulnerability, honor in humility, and even victory when there's no win at all.

[Read more](#)

## **If We Want to End Mental Health Stigma, It'll Take More Than Talking**

Brave conversations need to happen — but we need to think bigger if we want to end stigma for good.

[...] More than half of Americans with a mental health condition still remain untreated, impacted by a deep societal stigma that leaves us reluctant to reach out.

[Read more](#)

## **Obesity Is a Risk Factor for Brain-Structure Changes in Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder, 2 Studies Show**

Years of imaging studies have revealed to researchers that schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression are accompanied by structural changes in the brain.

[Read more](#)