

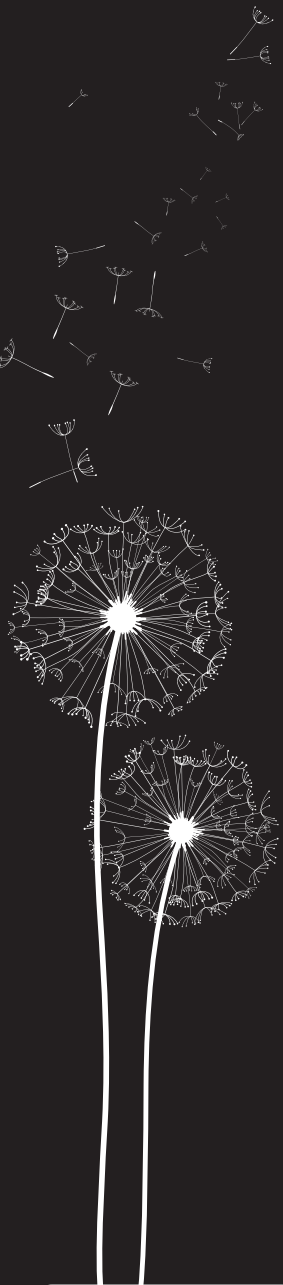


National Alliance on Mental Illness

# NAMI | Washington County

THE

NEWS  
LETTER



SPRING/  
SUMMER

I have been attending NAMI Teen Connections for 2 years. Over my time spent with NAMI, I have gained so much. I've gained new ways to cope, friends, a support system, and better problem solving.

I came into NAMI, with basically no way to cope with my mental health and life. The only ways I knew to "cope" were crying, screaming, lashing out, bottling my feelings, hurting myself, and talking to my counselor. Granted, I could talk to my counselor anytime but my visits with her were once every two weeks, and I wasn't good at reaching out to her when I needed it. Once I came to NAMI, I began to see other ways to cope like my huge bag of "squishies" I now have that I can feel and squeeze when I need to. I've also learned from others experiences other things I can do. I have a mantra to repeat, coloring books, breathing exercises, and habits to use as well. These skills have been vital in my recovery.

I've not only gained new ways to cope, but friends and a support system as well. Before NAMI I had trouble making friends, and when I had them, I ended up losing them. When I started coming to NAMI, I was able to connect with the people there, and they helped me come out of my shell and become the person I am today. They helped give me confidence and helped me learn to accept myself. I also have a support system in NAMI. I can tell them what's going on with me, and they can help me figure out to handle it better, and even give me ideas on how to go about the situation. I know I have a group that will support me in life, and people that will help me become the person I'm meant to be. Even though I don't like what's happened in my past, I wouldn't take it back, because it would mean that I wouldn't have met this wonderful group of people.

Another upside to coming to group is how my problem solving skills have improved. I've learned to handle situations better, like standing up for myself, talking with my Mom and Oma, and talking with adults in general. I feel much more confident in facing these situations than I have in the past. Normally I would have just yelled at my mom, and granted I will still yell at her at times, but now I can also talk to her calmly and listen to her side of the story as well as better understand where she's coming from. I can stand up for myself and say no. I used to just go along with them, but now I can say that I don't want to, and I don't need to do something I'm not comfortable with.

NAMI has helped prepare me for the life ahead of me, with coping skills, strategies, and communication skills I didn't have previously. I know that I'm going to be using these skills in the future OFTEN! When I'm at college next year, I'm sad to say that I won't be able to attend the group unless I'm on break. I'm going to be heartbroken when I don't get to hear everyone's helpful comments, and have their support at my side. But luckily, I'll have the social and life skills I've gained at NAMI. I hope to be able to continue to see the massive positive impact Teen Connections has on the community teens, and I look forward to seeing them flourish, and myself rise above. I'm very thankful to them for all that they have taught me, the support they've given me. Without Teen Connections I wouldn't be where I am today, nor would I be able to continue my journey to success..... -G.D.

# A Letter From the Executive Director

Dear friends,

Thank you to all of those who continue to support NAMI Washington County (NAMI WC) and the work we do to help those affected by mental health illness in Washington County.

I am excited to have joined the NAMI team. I bring with me 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector and a solid understanding of fund development, fiscal management, and community resources. My passion is helping people reach their full potential regardless of the challenges they have to overcome.

My plans for the next year at NAMI WC include building a strong infrastructure, raising revenue from new sources, and increasing public awareness about NAMI WC and the programs we have to offer those affected by mental illness.

As NAMI WC moves forward I look forward to sharing with you our growth, new programming, and our successes with Washington County residents.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Krenke



## MANAGING INTERPERSONAL STRESS

**PEOPLE CAUSE STRESS. IT'S A FACT OF LIFE!  
DEAL WITH IT! BUT HOW?!**

Join us as Espen Klausen, Ph.D., a licensed clinical psychologist, will provide strategies and tips for managing interpersonal stress as well as dealing with difficult people. The emphases will be on strategies for minimizing the stress before it is even triggered and on ways of communication that increase the chances that your needs will be met.

Date: **Tuesday, May 7, 2019**

Time: **7:00pm-8:30pm**  
(Doors open at 6:30pm)

Where: **The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Washington County (Room 201)**

Address: **400 S. University Dr.  
West Bend, WI 53095**

Cost: **FREE** and open to the public

**For more information call:  
262-339-1235**

Website:  
**[www.nami-positiveimage.org](http://www.nami-positiveimage.org)**

### **NAMI Washington County, Inc.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in helping my neighbors affected by mental health illness.

Please find my gift of \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Add me to your eblast mailing list: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me more information on volunteer opportunities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me more information on becoming a member of NAMI Washington County.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me one of your Spring & Summer Program Offering Books.

**Please return this form to: NAMI Washington County, Inc., P.O. Box 1074, West Bend, WI 53095**

NAMI Washington County, Inc. (NAMI WC) provides advocacy, education support, and public awareness so that individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

# Ask An Expert



"Living with depression can make a person feel hopeless. Their view of the world may be shrouded in darkness. But, you can help them feel hopeful. Remind them that there is help, resources, mental health services and support out there for them. "

## Please don't React; Respond

**By: Sky Lea Ross**

Many people don't know how to provide comfort or respond appropriately in times of need or crisis. Instead of listening and taking the time to provide a constructive response, they jump to conclusions. They say the first thing that comes to mind, or in other words, they react. This can be unhelpful, or possibly even detrimental to the person in distress. In order to respond in a helpful way, a person must think beyond their initial reaction.

### How Best to Respond

#### Validating

A person going through depression wants to feel heard, understood and comforted. Saying things like:

- "I'm really sorry you went through that"
- "That must have been tough"
- "Wow, that sounds stressful"
- "You've been through a lot"

Responses like this mirror feelings and show that you've been listening, you really care and you're acknowledging and imagining what they've been through. It shows that you empathize with their struggles and can make them feel better.

#### Reframing

Those who live with depression tend to look at life through a negative lens, and you can help them to see the positive side. If they make a statement like, "I'm a failure," rephrase it in a more realistic way. "No, you had a setback. But it's a lesson learned, and now you can try again." Or, "No, you struggled to get the results you wanted. But that doesn't define you." You can also compliment them by reinforcing their strengths, skills and accomplishments.

#### Having a Sense of Humor

Making a bad situation funny can be a great way of making someone feel better. But it's essential to assess the needs of who you're talking to and their communication style. Do they like to laugh things off? Or would they prefer you to be serious? You may be able to tell based on previous conversations, or you can always ask. Everyone has different needs at different times.

### Instilling Hope

Living with depression can make a person feel hopeless. Their view of the world may be shrouded in darkness. But you can help them feel hopeful. Remind them that there is help, resources, mental health services and support out there for them. You can offer to take them or go with them to therapy or a support group if they don't want to go alone. You can also give them consistent support and reassurance. Let them know you believe things will improve for them. Let them know that you are there for them and will support them every step of the way.

*Born and raised in the poorer parts of Northern Pasadena, Sky had to navigate the resources available to her at a very young age. Having a family history of chronic mental and physical illnesses as well as disabilities, she was exposed to abuse and neglect and went into foster care at age 15. This opened more doors for her, introduced her to a loving and supportive foster mother, and allowed her to pursue higher education. Now, working towards her doctorate of psychology (Psy.D.) in Marriage and Family Therapy, she has dedicated her life to fighting for social justice/human rights and providing therapy as well as educating others on the importance of mental health.*

\*NOTE: this article has been edited for length. In the full article the author addresses common responses and pitfalls (Ross refers to these as reactions).\*

Read the full article (and articles like this) online at [www.nami.org/Blogs](http://www.nami.org/Blogs). This article was published on the NAMI blogs on December 6, 2018. Read the full article at <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/December-2018/Please-Don-t-React-Respond>

Story from: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/December-2018/Please-Don-t-React-Respond>

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NAMI Washington County  
Welcome Center is located  
at 2030 Stonebridge Rd.  
West Bend, WI 53095



Please leave a message  
262-339-1235

Visit our website for events  
and program schedules  
[www.nami-positiveimage.org](http://www.nami-positiveimage.org)



United Way of  
Washington County

 **Aurora Health Care®**

We are  **AdvocateAuroraHealth**

Washington County  
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