



**NAMI**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Stark County**

Winter 2021

## **Good Bye 2020; Hello 2021!**

As Stark County continues to respond to the outbreak of COVID-19, our thoughts and prayers are with the people affected and the medical professionals working around the clock to help those most in need. At NAMI Stark County, we're working to do our part by ensuring the safety of our employees, striving to protect the health and well-being of the communities in which we operate, and providing online education, tips and resources to our clients to help them do their best while remote. As we continue to work from home, we will be offering virtual educational classes and support groups.

Please stay safe, continue to wear your masks, wash your hands and get vaccinated so we can all beat this virus in 2021!

### **Happy New Year from NAMI Stark County**

**Kay Raga:** Wishing everyone the very best for 2021. As we continue to adjust to our new normal remember we are here and you are not alone. Remember to Dream Big, Live Simply, Give Love, Laugh Lots and Be Grateful!

**Robin Holland:** Happy New Year! May your troubles be less, and your blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door! (What can I say...I'm Irish)

**Cindy Kisik :** Thank you, NAMI Family, for sticking with us through these uncertain times. It wasn't always easy, but 2020 showed us that life is so precious and even the slightest form of reaching out sometimes helps the most. Here's to a happy, healthy & gracious 2021; let's continue to find love & joy in the little things!"

**Sheryl:** I want to wish everyone a Very Happy New Year!! This has been one of the most challenging years in my life. I've had lots of valleys this year, however, I have continued to keep climbing up those hills. My family and my NAMI Family have been a huge part of my ability to persevere through the storms. For that, I am forever grateful. What a wonderful, kind, caring, intelligent, and passionate group of volunteers and staff that I have the privilege to being a part of. I am ready for some HOPE in 2021. May 2021 bring you hope, grace and gratitude.

H = Happiness

O = Opportunity

P = Positivity

E = Empowerment

Stay safe, happy and healthy!

**Jewell:** Happy New Year!

### **Mental Health First Aid** **COVID Edition**

**Mental Health First Aid is a course that teaches you how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The training helps you identify, understand, and respond to signs of addictions and mental illnesses.**

**Through Stark MHAR, NAMI instructors are teaching virtual classes of both Adult and Youth MHFA.**

**In this blended learning course, you take a 2 hour course online, then join a ZOOM Class through Stark MHAR's Training site. CEUs are available**

**Please go to <https://starkmhar.org/trainings-and-events/mental-health-first-aid/> to register for an upcoming class.**

# Get Ready for a celebration!!

**Look for information soon on our yearly event to celebrate 2020 – 2021 Volunteers and Nominees!**

**It will be held via ZOOM to honor our  
Volunteers**

**Volunteers of the Year  
Professionals of the Year**

**Peers of the Year  
New “Starfish Award”**

## Survival Tips for Living With a Mental Illness

**Find a provider, psychologist and/or psychiatrist who treats you with compassion and respect.**

**Once you find a treatment plan that works, stick to it.**

**Do not stop taking your medication when you feel better**

**Ask for help when you need it.**

**Get to know your symptoms.**

**Practice self-care.**

**Find a purpose.**

**Accept love into your life.**

**Accept yourself for the beautiful and unique person that you are.**

**Connect with people who are going through similar issues.**

**Educate yourself on your mental illness**

**Learn to advocate for yourself.**

**Never give up on yourself!**

## **Steve Pryce: Hope after Schizophrenia**

**By David Thomas and Steven Pryce**

**On October 31 of 2020, I interviewed Steven Pryce. I was first introduced to him by his writings about overcoming schizophrenia and wanted to interview him for the Thomas Report. I hoped people could draw hope and inspiration from his life and what he has overcome. It is a great privilege that I introduce Steven who will finish our brief but informative article on schizophrenia.**

Schizophrenia is difficult to overcome. I couldn't do it alone. I tried. It takes support and acceptance and it is possible. Schizophrenia is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide and affects 20 million people.

I was born in Detroit Michigan with a twin sister and older brother. Our family moved to Canton Ohio when I was nine. My dad was hired by Aultman Hospital in administration. I was a student in the Plain Local School system and graduated from GlenOak High School. I grew up in a nice household. Schizophrenia is not caused by bad parenting.

I have always enjoyed sports. Growing up, I swam, golfed, and played soccer in youth leagues. In middle school, I wrestled. Like many adolescents, I also played a lot of backyard football. The sport I took to most was rugby. I found out about it at my first job washing dishes. A busboy gave me the name and number of one of the team's founders, and they let me play underage.

Rugby is a rough sport. It began at the Rugby School in England when a group of prep school students were playing soccer. One student picked up the soccer ball with his hands and ran with it, challenging his classmates to tackle him. It was played alongside American football in the United States in the early 1900s, but both sports combined had a lot of injuries. American football was chosen over rugby. It is now a growing club sport and played in high school, colleges, and the Olympics.

I played in high school for the Canton Maddogs and at Bowling Green State University, a Midwest powerhouse. I then transferred to Hillsdale College, where I pursued other interests such as writing. I won their Ambler Literary Award as a senior.

After graduation, I decided on a career in sales. To gain experience, I had an internship at AultCare selling group health insurance to small businesses. I sent my application to a recruiting firm, and was hired by Prudential in Cleveland. It exceeded my expectations. It was exciting, but I became paranoid about my co-workers. I thought they were conspiring against me and trying to have me fired. I also thought I was becoming a rising star that was going to "change the world." To avoid a termination on my resume, I resigned.

Schizophrenia is characterized by distortions in thinking, perceptions, emotions, and language, sense of self and behavior. Common experiences include hallucinations (hearing voices or seeing things that are not there) and delusions (fixed false beliefs). Schizophrenia is often diagnosed in young people during their late teens to early 30s. Symptoms commonly occur earlier in males than females. People with schizophrenia do not have split or multiple personalities. The term "schizophrenia" means a separation from reality.

My symptoms became worse. I worried that my food could be poisoned and that my neighbors were also conspiring against me. I left notes in their mailboxes asking them to leave me alone. It was reported to the police, and I was sent to the Crisis Center and then hospitalized.

After a one week stay at Mt. Sinai, I was prescribed medication and stabilized and starting working again in retail sales. I also took journalism classes and was eventually hired by a daily newspaper. However, I was not ready for the job stress, office politics, and confidentiality issues. I quit taking my medication and was fired. Stigma, discrimination, and violation of human rights for people with schizophrenia are common.

**Steve Pryce: Hope after Schizophrenia continued on page 4**

### Steve Pryce: Hope after Schizophrenia continued from page 3

For the next five years, I bounced around labor and temp jobs and lived at the YMCA for two months. With the help of my parents, I had an apartment. Although I worked at companies like BOCKO, Paarlo Plastics, and Grady McCauley, I kept quitting due to paranoid and grandiose beliefs.

There was also stress in my neighborhood. Three young men moved into the apartment next to me and were throwing parties every weekend. I reported it and they became angry with me. One night after getting my mail, they confronted me. They would not let me back to my apartment or to my car, and an altercation followed. It was broken up by the police and I decided it was time to get into treatment for good. The young men were sent to jail.

People with schizophrenia are not violent. Only 1 percent of the people struggling with schizophrenia have ever committed a violent act.

The second hospitalization was successful, but I could not get a job afterward. I couldn't even get an interview most of the time. Angry, I broke a chair in my parents' basement and was sent to a halfway house. It was a reality check to get the help I needed. Schizophrenia is treatable. I connected to other "peers" through group therapy and was also assigned to a case manager. She connected me to a job club and helped me gain employment at a local housing agency. She was great, often wearing a pink football jersey.

My stay at the halfway house lasted a month. During the last week, one of the young ladies who stayed there and attended group therapy passed away after going home. She had the same diagnosis that I did. About 20% of people with schizophrenia attempt suicide at least once. Research has found that black Americans are three to four times more likely than white Americans to receive a schizophrenia diagnosis. Her obituary was in the local newspaper. It was a sign to me that I must stay in recovery this time around.

My job at the housing agency went well and I also became involved with NAMI. With the assistance of counselor and medication, people with schizophrenia can not only hold a job, but excel at it. I went from a "Casual Labor" position to being a Housing Specialist. I also became a support group leader for NAMI and wrote book reviews for their newsletter.

After a decade and feeling like I recovered, I decided to join the mainstream workforce. With the help of Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, I landed a job in an assembly plant and went from temporary employee to Floater. For five years, I had perfect attendance. Not all people with schizophrenia belong in a mental hospital. They deserve the same chance at life as everyone else. With counseling and medication, they can have an amazing life.

Nami Stark County would like to thank Steve Pryce sharing his candid view of his Schizophrenia. We share this so that the stigma that goes with mental illness might stop after a person is educated by realizing that it is an illness and there IS HOPE!

Schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder in which people interpret reality abnormally.

Schizophrenia may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and extremely disordered thinking and behavior that impairs daily functioning, and can be disabling. People with schizophrenia require lifelong treatment. Early treatment may help get symptoms under control before serious complications develop and may help improve the long-term outlook.

Again, **Thank you Steve for sharing you experience, hope and strength**

**NAMI Stark County Support Groups are FREE to attend.  
No registration is required**

Virtual NAMI Stark County Support Groups using [Zoom.com](https://zoom.us)  
Join by computer [Zoom.com](https://zoom.us) Enter meeting #

Or

Smartphone Download Zoom app Enter meeting #

Or

Call in 1-646-558-8656 Enter meeting #  
Plan to join 10 – 15 minutes before start time

NAMI Stark County Friday Peer Support Group (Adults with Mental Illness)

7:00 PM – Group meets weekly Friday

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/386459766>

Meeting ID: 386 459 766

NAMI Stark County Tuesday Peer Support Group (Adults with Mental Illness)

7:00 PM – Group meets weekly Tuesday

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97629915727>

Meeting ID: 976 2991 5727

NAMI Stark County Sunday Night Support Group (Peers and Family Members)

7:00 PM – Group meets weekly Sunday

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/798097665>

Meeting ID: 798 097 665

NAMI Stark County Monday Family Support Group (Family Members)

7:00 PM – Group meets weekly Sunday

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/310500499>

Meeting ID: 310 500

499

NAMI Stark County Wednesday Lets Talk Support Group (Family Members and Peers with  
Mental Illness)

7:00 PM – Group meets weekly Wednesday

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/](https://zoom.us/j/91665633660)

[j/91665633660](https://zoom.us/j/91665633660)

Meeting ID: 916 6563 3660

**Support Groups: For those impacted by mental illness, Family Members and  
Natural Supports.**

**Help is available; you are not alone!**

**Support Groups are FREE to attend; NO registration is required.**

## 2021 Schedule Education Schedule

Day of Week	Dates	Location	Class Time
-------------	-------	----------	------------

**Basics**      6-week course for parents of school- aged children affected by mental diagnosis such as autism, AD/HD, Depression,etc. It is taught by trained parents.

Wednesday	February 3 - March 10, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm
Wednesday	April 14 - May 15, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm
Wednesday	September 1 - October 6, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm
Wednesday	November 3 - December 8, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm

**Family to Family**      8-week course for family members and other support people affected by a loved one's mental health. It is taught by trained family members.

Tuesday	January 12 - March 2, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:30 pm
Tuesday	April 6 - May 25, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:30 pm
Tuesday	June 1 - July 20, 2021	Virtual Zoom	Noon - 2:30 pm
Tuesday	July 13 - August 31, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:30 pm
Saturday	September 4 - October 23, 2021	Virtual Zoom	9 - 11:30 am
Tuesday	October 12 - November 30, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:30 pm

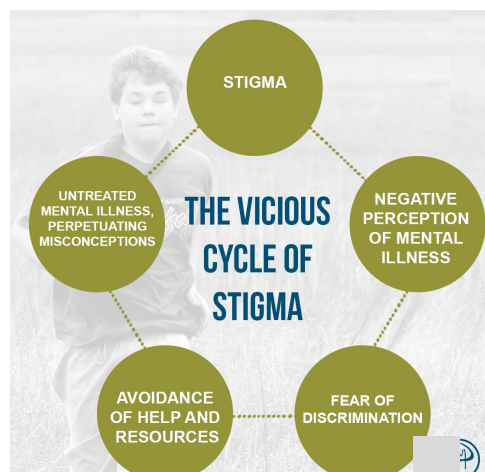
**Peer to Peer**      8-week course for individuals living with a mental health condition. It is taught by trained peers.

Thursday	January 21 - March 10, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm
Saturday	February 20 - April 10, 2021	Virtual Zoom	9:00 - 11:00 am
Thursday	April 8 - May 27, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm
Thursday	June 3 - July 22, 2021	Virtual Zoom	10:00 - 12:00 pm
Thursday	July 1 - August 19, 2021	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm
Thursday	September 30 - November 18	Virtual Zoom	6:00 - 8:00 pm

**You must pre-register for classes by calling 330-455-6264**



**NAMI Stark  
County's  
Mission is to:  
  
Support  
  
Educate  
  
Advocate**



# My name is Michael.

## A CIT officer saved me.

Six years ago, I was prescribed Vicodin for back pain associated with my construction job. I became addicted.

I did whatever I could to get more pills, including breaking the law. Eventually I was arrested, and a CIT officer was at the scene. That officer recognized I needed treatment for substance use as part of the response. They connected me with the right help, and now I'm in recovery.

**CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Training** is a partnership where police and behavioral health experts work together so calls about substance use and mental health result in help for anyone who needs it. In Stark County, StarkMHAR ensures this training is available to first responders in the county.



**StarkMHAR**  
StarkMHAR.org

# My name is Jessica.

## A CIT officer saved my neighbor.

Mary has lived across the street from me ever since we moved in. When I hadn't seen her for a couple of days, I got worried. Soon, I was really concerned that something was wrong.

I called the police for a well check. Thankfully, they found that she was physically safe. But, the CIT officer who responded recognized that she had isolated herself and was showing signs of depression. That officer knew what to do in the moment, and also connected her with ongoing support.

**CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Training** is a partnership where police and behavioral health experts work together so calls about substance use and mental health result in help for anyone who needs it. In Stark County, StarkMHAR ensures this training is available to first responders in the county.



**StarkMHAR**  
StarkMHAR.org

## New Stark Mental Health & Addiction Recovery Crisis Intervention Trained Officers Ads

### Do you know who to call if a behavioral health crisis occurs?

9-1-1 and ask for a Crisis Intervention Team (C.I.T.) trained officer

Stark County Crisis Hotline: 330-452-6000 or National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

National and Ohio Crisis Text Line: Text 4HOPE to 741741 [Veterans can also text to 838255]

Opiate Helpline: 330-454-HELP (4357)

Homeless Hotline: 330-452-4363

Domestic Violence Helpline: 330-453-SAFE (7233)

Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQ Youth: 1-866-488-7386

**Don't forget to ask about the Youth and Adult Mobile Response Units:**

**330-452-6000**

 STARK COUNTY  
**Mental Health &  
Addiction Recovery**

Thank you to Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery (StarkMHAR) for assistance with this newsletter!

 **NAMI** Stark County  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

The County's Voice on Mental Illness  
121 Cleveland Ave., S.W.  
Canton, OH 44702



 **NAMI**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Stark County

**Board of Directors**

**President:**  
Bart Fredrick

**First Vice President:**  
Zach Hostetler

**Second Vice President:**  
Josh Pedrozo

**Secretary:**  
Dale Rush

**Treasurer:**  
Will Regula

Penny Paige Card  
Travis Johns  
Dr. Shishuka Malholtra  
Megan Elkins  
Kendall Kennedy  
Leah LePar  
Robb Lightell  
CJ Stantz  
Tom Stone  
Sean Steward

**Staff**

Kay Raga: Executive Director  
[kraga@namistarkcounty.org](mailto:kraga@namistarkcounty.org)

Sheryl Falcone: Program Coordinator  
[sfalcone@namistarkcounty.org](mailto:sfalcone@namistarkcounty.org)

Jewell Oppermann: Outreach Liaison  
[joppermann@namistarkcounty.org](mailto:joppermann@namistarkcounty.org)

Cindy Kisik: Outreach Coordinator  
[ckisik@namistarkcounty.org](mailto:ckisik@namistarkcounty.org)

Robin Holland: System Navigator  
[rholland@namistarkcounty.org](mailto:rholland@namistarkcounty.org)

NAMI Stark County Main Office:  
121 Cleveland Ave SW; Canton, OH 44702  
330-455-NAMI [6264]

NAMI Stark County @ Heartland Behavioral Healthcare:  
330 833-3135 ext. 2170