



April 4-10, 2016 is National Public Health Week. To many, this title alone may make one think of such things as one's need to keep an exercise routine, monitor heart rate, get a physical check-up from their doctor; but did you know that taking care of your mental health is just as important to live a long and healthy life? It is just as important for your doctor to complete a mental/emotional status exam as it is to have a physical exam completed by your doctor.

Mental health refers to your overall psychological well-being, which can include the quality of your relationships, how you feel about yourself, and your ability to manage your feelings in difficult situations and in day to day tasks. When a person has an issue with their physical health, most would go to their family doctor to get a checkup. During this checkup, they may have various tests completed such as blood pressure, temperature, weight, or getting their blood drawn. Issues with mental health can have many different symptoms, just like physical health; questions can be asked and tests can be taken to discover mental health issues, just like with physical health issues.

In order to stay on top of your physical and mental health you can get plenty of rest, add regular exercise to your schedule, eat a well-balanced diet, and get regular check-ups by your doctor for both your physical and mental health status.

During National Public Health Week, April 4-10, 2016, think of your health as a whole, mind and body, and what you can do to improve both your physical health and your mental health!

-Leah DeMarest, M.S.

Executive Director



Free Services Offered by NAMI Central Iowa

DAILY

Support and activities for persons with mental illness at the Mental Health Wellness Center, Monday to Friday, 1-4PM

WEEKLY

NAMI Connection support group for persons with mental illness:

Thursday 2-3:30PM Wellness Center

MONTHLY

Educational meetings featuring local specialists speaking on topics relating to mental health

3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM (location varies, see events page)

Support group for family members
4th Thursday of the month at 7:00PM

YEARLY series of educational classes offered for persons with mental illness and for family members

- Family to Family for family members of adults with mental illness
- Peer to Peer for adults with mental illness
- Basics for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with serious mental or emotional disorders

****All activities and the office are located at**

**416 Douglas Avenue, Suites 203/205
Ames, Iowa**

Have questions or need help?

Call or email the office at

(515) 292-9400;

[namiofci@gmail.com;](mailto:namiofci@gmail.com)

<http://namici.org/>

Therapeutic Writing

by Debbie Johnson

In 2010, I had the opportunity to take a therapeutic writing course for those with disabilities. I felt the healing potential writing had to offer, and joined a weekly writing group. I also joined an online writing community and writing became a passion.

Several studies have shown the benefits of writing, especially if it becomes part of a daily routine. Mood is greatly improved and physical symptoms are reduced. Subjects and genres have been shown to be less important than the actual activity of writing. There is much cathartic benefit in writing about difficulties and a strong feeling of success when any piece is completed. Creativity is enhanced and the inner self is explored.

A writing group, whether face-to-face or online, gives a feeling of support and connectedness. It is never too late to begin writing. I wrote my first poem six years ago. All that is needed is a pen and notebook. There are books and web pages of writing prompts available to provide ideas.

Unless planning to publish, spelling and punctuation aren't important. It is the act of putting thoughts on paper that is healing. Writing has given my life new purpose and meaning. It brought me out of pain, depression, and hopelessness. Therapeutic writing has been a great blessing to me, one I hope to share with others.

Debbie's work was displayed at NAMI Central Iowa's Recovery Through The Arts program in March through her anthology titled *Debbie's Friends*. The goals of her thirty-four page book are to demystify disability, promote acceptance of the disabled, and to show how similar the disabled and non-disabled are. The author hopes by introducing these concepts to children at a young age, the next generation will demonstrate increasing acceptance. Debbie plans to distribute *Debbie's Friends* free of charge to schools, libraries, churches, and other settings where it may be useful. Please email debbiesfriends1@gmail.com for further information.

Debbie's Friends

A Book for Children about Disabilities



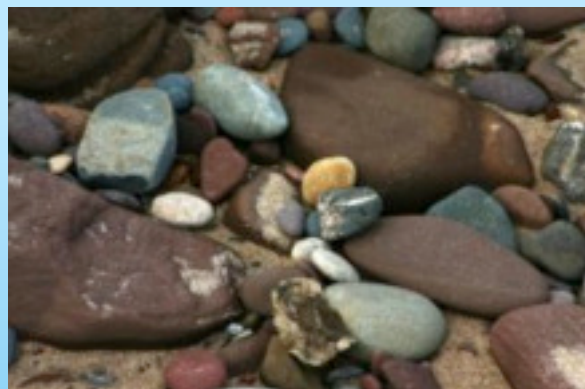
Written by Debbie Johnson
Editorial Assistance by Lois J. Funk
A Project of The Disability Experience
Disability Advocacy Agency
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Poem by Debbie Johnson (Editor's Choice):

tanka (a boulder crashes)

*a boulder crashes
and splinters into sharp pieces
eventually
to become smooth stones
with the flow of healing waters*

~~~~~



## NAMI Central Iowa Spring 2016

**Sherri McLerran,**

**Office of Substitute Decision Maker**

**Tuesday, February 19, 7:00PM Ames Public  
Library**

**PEO Room (upstairs)**

Have you or a family member needed help making medical or financial decisions? Did you know that there is a state office that can help with that?

Sherri McLerran with the Office of Substitute Decision Maker will speak at the NAMI-CI educational program on April 19 at 7pm at the Ames Public Library PEO Room.

Come learn when these services might help you, what this office can do for you, and how to access their services. Join us for this informative event.

NAMI Central Iowa will have a booth at the **Transition Resource Fair** hosted by Heartland AEA held on **April 5, 2016** from 6:30pm-8:30pm at 511 17th street, Ames, Iowa (Ames Heartland AEA office).

The resource fair is a free event that focuses on linking transition-aged students with special needs to valuable community resources.

Boone and Story County families, educators, and agency staff who support individuals with special needs are invited to attend.



Invites you to join our fourth annual

*Trivia Night*

**Saturday,  
April 16  
6:00PM  
City Church  
2400 Oakwood  
Road (Ames)**

Get involved by:

- volunteering ahead of time or on the night of the fundraiser
- registering a team to compete
- donating a dessert
- becoming a sponsor (individual or corporate)



For more information on sponsorships, registration, and everything else, check out the flyer on the previous page or the website: <http://www.namici.org/trivia-night/>

Want to volunteer or have more questions? Email or call the office!



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NAMI**

**Central Iowa**

Invites you to join our fourth annual

# Trivia Night

Saturday, April 16, 2016

Doors open at 5:30, Trivia begins at 6:00pm

City Church, 2400 Oakwood Road- Ames, Iowa

Maximum of 8 people per table play for \$100/table

Winning team receives \$200 & a free entry into the next NAMI Trivia Night; door prizes will be given throughout the night; Costumes encouraged but not required.

Bid for sweets during the Dessert Auction throughout the evening  
Bring your own food and beverage; NO alcohol permitted

Table fee and donations support NAMI of Central Iowa and may be tax deductible. *NAMI CI is a 501(c)3 organization*

Contact us to register at 515.292.9400 or at [namiofci@gmail.com](mailto:namiofci@gmail.com)

Tables are limited

For more information about NAMI Central Iowa, or to donate towards a great cause,  
visit us at [www.namiofci.org](http://www.namiofci.org)



NAMI CI Wellness Center  
 416 Douglas Ave, Suite 205 | Ames, IA  
 Open Weekdays 1 pm – 4 pm

# April 2016

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Monday                                                                              | Tuesday                                                                 | Wednesday                                                 | Thursday                                                                                   | Friday                                               | Saturday                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                     |                                                                         |                                                           |                                                                                            | 1-3 Art w/Wendie                                     |                                                                                 |
| 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 4<br>1-2 Current Events<br>2-3 Media Discussion<br>(books, TV, movies, music, etc.) | 5<br>1-3 Writing Group<br>2-3 Hangout w/Nick                            | 6<br>1-2:30 WRAP ®                                        | 7<br>1-2 Updates and Q & A w/Leah<br>2-3:30 Connections Support Group<br>5:30 Peer to Peer | 8<br>1-2:30 Potluck                                  | 9                                                                               |
| 10<br>1-2:30 Sign Language w/Suzie<br>3-4 Music on Monday                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 11                                                                                  | 12<br>1-3 Writing Group                                                 | 13<br>1-2 Yoga w/Marie<br>2-3 Wellness Round Table        | 14<br>2-3:30 Connections Support Group<br>5:30 Peer to Peer                                | 15<br>1-3 Card & Paper Crafts                        | 16<br>6 Trivia Night (doors open at 5:30)                                       |
| 17<br>2-3 Macrame & Jewelry w/Glenn                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 18                                                                                  | 19<br>1-3 Writing Group<br>2-3 Hangout w/Nick<br>7 Educational Program* | 20<br>1-2:30 WRAP ®                                       | 21<br>2-3:30 Connections Support Group<br>5:30 Peer to Peer                                | 22<br>1-3 Knitting w/Janet                           | 23<br>1-4 Saturday Trial Run – Options include movie, games, crafts, discussion |
| 24<br>1-3 Coloring                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 25                                                                                  | 26<br>1-3 Writing Group                                                 | 27<br>1-2 Affirmations w/Gail<br>2-3 Wellness Round Table | 28<br>2-3:30 Connections Support Group<br>5:30 Peer to Peer<br>7 Family Support Group      | 29<br>1-2 Uplifting News Stories<br>2-3 Funny Friday | 30                                                                              |
| <p>Scheduled activities are subject to change.<br/>         Closed for winter weather when Ames Public Schools are closed.<br/>         Questions? Contact the Coordinator 515-292-9400 or <a href="mailto:namiwellness@gmail.com">namiwellness@gmail.com</a></p> |                                                                                     |                                                                         |                                                           |                                                                                            |                                                      |                                                                                 |

## EVENTS

### \*Office of Substitute Decision Maker

Have you or a family member needed help making medical or financial decisions? Did you know that there is a state office that can help with that? Sherri McLerran with the Office of Substitute Decision Maker will speak at the NAMI-CI educational program on April 19 at 7 pm in the Ames Public Library PEO room. Come learn when these services might help you, what this office can do for you, and how to access their services.



NAMI Central Iowa  
 416 Douglas Ave Suite 203  
 Ames, Iowa 50010

**Change Service Requested**

**April 2016 Newsletter**

The NAMI-CI newsletter is published six times a year by NAMI Central Iowa ([NAMI-CI](#)). NAMI-CI is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. Our mission is to provide them with [support](#), [education](#), and [advocacy](#).

NAMI-CI is a [United Way](#) partner agency and is an affiliate of [NAMI Iowa](#) and of NAMI, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#).



To make changes to your contact information, to receive your newsletter by email, or if you no longer wish to receive the NAMI-CI newsletter, email or phone the NAMI-CI office at [namiofci@gmail.com](mailto:namiofci@gmail.com) or 515-292-9400.

**Becoming a member of NAMI-CI is easy.** Just complete this form and mail with appropriate dues to:

NAMI-CI  
 416 Douglas Ave Suite 203  
 Ames, IA 50010

**Membership Dues**

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| ___ Family/Individual | \$ 35.00* |
| ___ Limited Income    | \$ 3.00   |
| ___ Extra donation    | \$ _____  |

\*Includes \$15 Local/\$10 State/\$10 National

**Member Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Check here to receive newsletter by email