

“Education and awareness about mental illnesses to reduce stigma and promote recovery.”



August 2009 -WUMH News and Information

●Reporting on Mental Illness in the State of Washington:

A new program designed to improve public understanding and news reporting of mental health and mental illness is being launched today by the University of Washington's School of Social Work and the Washington State Mental Health Transformation Project. "There is a widely held **misperception by the general public that there is a strong link between mental illness and violence,**" said Jennifer Stuber, a UW assistant professor of social work and lead author of a new report on how mental health is covered in the state's newspapers. "**There is no such link.** Study after study has shown that mental illness is not a defining characteristic of violence." she said.

The report includes a content analysis of 856 stories published in the state during three time periods over 10 years that mentioned mental health or mental illness. The stories ran from 1995 to 2005 in four of the state's major media markets. **Nearly one-third of the stories, 31 percent, used negative or derogatory language about people who had mental health issues,** the study found. Looney, psycho, scumbag, whacked out, ticking time bomb, mentally defective and bonkers were among the terms used to describe these individuals. These negative references most commonly appeared in front-page stories or in reviews of movies, plays and TV programs. Few stories covered prevention programs or reported on significant improvements in quality of life or a reduction of symptoms in people with mental illness.

“**Language around mental illness is very important,** and if people and the news media only do one thing it should be to avoid using words such as "schizoid" or "the schizophrenic" to describe a person living with schizophrenia,” said Stuber. "Using such labels is equating people with their illness and **making their illness their predominant characteristic.** So is the false link between violence and mental illness. **It stigmatizes people.** Persons with mental illness talk about it as something that is lifelong. It affects their well being, their day-to-day living and their ability to find employment and housing." **The project's Web site,** <http://mentalhealthreporting.org>, contains more information and a link where individuals can post mental health events and story ideas.

●Mental Health Teleconferences

DHS hosts regular teleconferences that you can join right from your own office! Copies of the current and previous teleconference handouts and the schedule for the **Mental Health Teleconference** can be found at the teleconference website:

http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh_bcmh/confandtraining/Teleconferencesch.htm . For more information, contact Kay Cram-- Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for questions, comments, or suggestions at: Kay.Cram@wisconsin.gov, (608)261-6743 voice, (608)266-1533 Fax, (608) 266-7376 TTY.

●Unique Stigma Reduction Event:

NAMI-Wisconsin invites you to breakfast at Inn on the Park, 22 S. Carroll Street in **Madison** on **Friday, September 25, 8:30-10:30 am**. Kjell Magne Bobdevik, former prime minister of Norway (1997-2005) will share his story of living with depression. Bondevik took a leave from office due to his illness—he is known as the **highest ranking world leader to disclose his mental illness while in office**. Come and hear his inspiring message! Opening entertainment provided by the Stoughton Norwegian Dancers; remarks by Madison's Mayor Dave Cieslevicz. **Call or email to pre-register:** NAMI Wisconsin: 608-268-6000 or visit their web site: www.namiwisconsin.org.

●Free Peer to Peer Training:

A nine week **educational class for mental health consumers** will be offered in the Madison area by NAMI Dane County. The Peer to Peer training sessions will begin at 6pm on August 24. The class is free but you must **rsvp for intake interview by August 17**. Call 608-249-7188.

●More Peer Training Opportunities:

Four professional peer educators will work with **Grassroots Empowerment Project** this year to plan and provide a **new training program for peer specialists**. They are **Paula Verrett, Danielle Summers, Carmen Cerna, and Sandra (Sam) Ahrens**. The program will be based on the curriculum written by Steve Harrington of the **National Association of Peer Specialists**, and will fulfill core competencies required for Wisconsin certification. We will offer two training weeks (same course repeated):

- September 27th through October 3rd in Ashland
- October 11th through 17th in Wausau

Watch for details to follow. **This opportunity is for those who have not gone through any peer specialist training program. For more information, contact Gregory Smith**, Vocational Coordinator, Grassroots Empowerment Project, 608-206-3346 / 800-770-0588 or email: newgoals@gmail.com.

●Serious Mental Health Events Warning to be Required for Chantix and Zyban:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced that it is requiring manufacturers to put a Boxed Warning on the prescribing information for the **smoking cessation drugs Chantix (varenicline) and Zyban (bupropion)**. The warning will highlight the **risk of serious mental health events** including changes in behavior, depressed mood, hostility, and suicidal thoughts when taking these drugs. "The risk of serious adverse events while taking these products must be weighed against the significant health benefits of quitting smoking," said Janet Woodcock, M.D., director, the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. "Smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States and we know these products are effective aids in helping people quit."

Similar information on mental health events will be required for bupropion marketed as the antidepressant Wellbutrin and for generic versions of bupropion. These drugs already carry a Boxed Warning for suicidal behavior in treating psychiatric disorders. Woodcock said health care professionals who prescribe Chantix and Zyban should monitor their patients for any unusual changes in mood or behavior after starting these drugs and patients should immediately contact their health care professional if they experience such changes.

Neither Chantix nor Zyban contain nicotine and some of these symptoms may be a response to nicotine withdrawal. People who stop smoking may experience symptoms such as depression,

anxiety, irritability, restlessness, and sleep disturbances. However, some patients who were using these products experienced the reported adverse events while they were still smoking.

●New Statewide Consumer Network

An invitation from Molly Cisco, Director of **Grassroots Empowerment Project** to join Wisconsin's first unified **statewide mental health consumer network**, on-line.

<http://groups.google.com/group/united-we-stand-wi>. Welcome to the new public group dedicated to people with lived experience of mental illness and recovery living in Wisconsin. Please pass this information on to anyone who you think would be interested.

The purpose of this public group is:

- To promote recovery for ourselves and others*
- To announce new events and training opportunities*
- To share information on issues that we find important to our recovery*
- To share ideas and opinions on the issues*
- To work together to improve the services we receive*

●Upcoming Conferences/Education:

Visit the WUMH website calendar for a monthly listing of events, trainings and conferences across Wisconsin and nationwide www.wimentalhealth.org.

-- **NAMI Wisconsin Consumer Leadership Summit. Stevens Point, WI, August 14, 2009, (register by August 7---expects to fill to capacity)** NAMI Wisconsin, Inc.(800) 236-2988 or (608) 268-6000

--**Veterans, the ADA and Employment—a forum.** Sponsored by WUMH and the West Central Disability Navigator Program (and others.) **August 27, 2009, 9:00am-12:00** in Two Rivers/Eau Claire, WI. Free event targeting employers. **Contact** Randi Johnson at 715-858-9671 or johnsonr@workforceresource.org. Please rsvp by August 20.

--**4th Annual Dialogue: *Crafting a Healthier Workforce: Defining the Impact of Mental Health and Learning What We Can Do to Effect Change.* September 15, 2009, 8:00 am- Noon**, Monona Terrace in Madison. There is no charge for this event but please pre-register. For info visit www.wwhf.org or call 608-251-1675.

--**UW-Madison School of Nursing Training Event: The target audience is nurses** who work with medical-surgical patients. The aim is to provide a solid **background/foundation concerning mental health issues and corresponding care** for all nurses who are likely to encounter patients who have mental health challenges. The public is welcome to attend. Details to come, date is **September 17, 2009**. Location: UW campus in Madison. **More info to come.**

--**Rally for Recovery! September 19, 2009, at Lakeview Park in Middleton, Wisconsin, 12:00-4:00pm.** This year's theme emphasizes the need to use all available resources to educate people about the disease of addiction and the healing journey of recovery. Sponsored by Wisconsin Association on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (WAAODA) and the Alliance for Recovery Advocates (AFRA). **For info: 608-829-1032** or www.waaoda.org.

--**13th Annual Crisis Intervention Conference:** Making Connections to Create Solutions. **September 24-25, 2009**, at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Presented by the Bureau of Prevention Treatment and Recovery of DHS.

--**Suicide Prevention Summit III—How to Save a Life.** Friday, **October 2, 2009**, 8:00 AM – Noon at American Family Insurance Training Center in Madison. www.safercommunity.net.

--**Wisconsin Department of Health Services:** 5th Annual Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Training Conference. **October 27-28, 2009.** “**Celebrating Strengths During Challenging Times.**” Appleton, Wisconsin. For more information, contact 800-898-9472 or www.uwsp.edu/conted/conferences/

● **Save these Dates: 2009 WUMH Joint Advisory Board and Steering Committee Meetings: September 11, and December 11.**

Fridays, 9:00-11:00 am in Madison with teleconferencing available.

Past issues of this monthly Update are stored on our web site www.wimentalhealth.org. Please send event information to the webmaster. Thank you!

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WUMH Purpose: A coalition to implement the Healthiest Wisconsin 2010 objective to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illnesses.
Mental illnesses are real, common and treatable.

DISCLAIMER: *The WUMH Listserv is intended to share information about mental health, stigma, and recovery. This information does not necessarily express the views of WUMH or the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation. If you wish to be deleted from this list, please reply with "Unsubscribe" in the subject or text. Thank You.*