



King County

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The Good Newsletter

➔ **Issue 10**

Editors:: Lenore Meyer & Steven Collins
Designer: Melisande Noe



King County

Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and
Dependency Services Division

From the Editor

This newsletter is an effort by the King County Regional Support Network (KCRSN) and the Quality Review Team (QRT) to document the thoughts and honor the achievements of consumers, youth, family members and supporting staff.

The KCRSN is responsible for publicly funded mental health services in King County.

Mission Statement

The knowledge and wisdom that come from personal experience gained as a consumer of the mental health system should be shared with all who have an eye and an ear to absorb what is written.

The pen is an excellent communicator. Our commitment is to make certain that the consumer voice is heard and acknowledged in King County.

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Spring 2008

Articles, poetry, and stories from readers of the newsletter. If you have a personal story to tell, helpful information you would like to share or creative work such as poetry, pictures or art, please mail them to: Steven Collins or Lenore Meyer, Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division- 401 5th Avenue, 4th Floor, Seattle, WA 98104-2333
Steve's Phone # 206-263-8966; Lenore's Phone # 206-263-8963. Our e-mail addresses are: Steven.Collins@kingcounty.gov or Lenore.Meyer@kingcounty.gov. All letters, articles and information will be considered. Items selected for publication may be edited for clarity and content. Remember this is the **Good** Newsletter!

UPDATES FROM THE QUALITY REVIEW TEAM (QRT)

Resource Fair

The Division of Home and Community Services Health Fairs took place June 2007 and February 2008. Participating were King County vendors of mental health recovery, physical health maintenance organizations, and home repair companies for those needing disability related construction. Lenore Meyer and Steven Collins staffed the King County Regional Support Network booth and distributed Good Newsletters and the King County Mental Health Plan brochure.

Hero Award

Steven Collins, Meghan Szczebak of Harborview Employment Services, and Merv Ehman of the King County Bar Association were co-recipients of the "Hero Award" for contributions to the "Certificate of Rehabilitation Pilot Project". The "Hero Award" was presented by the Washington Community Mental Health Council for contributions to mental health services in Washington State. The award presentation took place at the



Washington State Behavioral Health Conference in Yakima on June 14, 2007.

The pilot project is still under development and will eventually assist

King County mental health consumers who have a history of minor violations of the law. Often undiagnosed and untreated, consumers sometimes become symptomatic and have lapses in judgment. Because of stringent background check policies by housing managers and employers, these clients cannot find decent housing or quality jobs. These clients are skilled and invested in recovery and need an avenue to the same rights as other citizens to have homes and decent employment.

Graduation

On Saturday, June 16, 2007 Steven Collins graduated from Western Washington University and received a Bachelor's Degree (BA) in Human Services. He received many congratulations from colleagues, friends and family on this achievement.



Steve will begin a master's degree program this spring.

Consumer Warm Line

Meetings are twice a month at NAVOS to develop a plan for a consumer run telephone helpline, also known as the Warm Line. The Warm Line will give consumers in crisis an avenue to have a trained peer to talk to. Having someone to listen is a good way to problem solve and avoid hospitalization.



In August 2007, King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division moved into a new office building located at

Chinook Building
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone (206) 263-9000

This building is energy efficient with plenty of windows for much appreciated sunlight.

Spring Is Here!

Consumer Training

On September 20 and 21, 2007, the Quality Review Team participated in a training titled "How to Start and Maintain a Consumer Run Organization". The training took place at the downtown Seattle Public Library. The trainers provided two very well written manuals. The trainers were Ruben Brazzile of the Washington Health Empowerment Network (WHEN) and Cindy Willey and Jonathan Beard from Washington Advocates for the Mentally Ill.

WRAP Training

Lenore Meyer and Steven Collins attended a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Training at NAVOS, formerly Highline-West Seattle Mental Health Center. They are now certified WRAP facilitators. The training will allow Lenore and Steve to share WRAP skills with all of the consumers in our mental health agencies. You can learn more online about the "Wellness Recovery Action Plan" by visiting www.mentalhealthrecovery.com.

SSI and SSDI Training

On October 4th and 5th, Steven Collins participated in a two-day training that taught the participants the essential steps needed to assist consumers in applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits.

A guide book titled "Stepping Stones to Recovery" was provided. It is a case manager's manual for assisting homeless adults with SSI and SSDI applications. Information in this manual can help assist anyone who might be eligible for SSI or SSDI. Please contact the QRT if you would like more information about either training.



FROM THE KITCHEN: Recipes From the Book Light & Tasty February/March 2007

Clip and put on fridge:

Banana Oat Muffins

Prep/total time: 30 min.
Yield: 1 dozen

3/4 cup all purpose flour
3/4 cup quick-cooking oats
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 egg whites
1 cup mashed ripe bananas (about 2 medium)
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup fat free milk
1/4 cup canola
1/2 cup chopped pecans

In a large bowl, combine the first six ingredients. In a small mixing bowl, beat the egg whites, bananas, brown sugar, milk and oil. Stir in pecans.

Coat muffin cups with non-stick cooking spray; fill two-thirds full with batter. Bake at 400 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack.

Nutrition facts: 1 muffin equals 180 calories, 9 g fat (1 g saturated fat), trace cholesterol, 102 mg sodium, 24 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 3 g protein. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 1-1/2 fat, 1 starch, 1/2 fruit.

Clip and put on fridge:

Crumb-Coated Baked Chicken

Prep: 15 min. Bake: 30 min.
Yield: 6 servings

1/3 cup buttermilk
2 teaspoons hot pepper sauce
3/4 cup seasoned bread crumbs
3/4 cup yellow cornmeal
3/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon dried cilantro flakes
3/4 teaspoon chili powder
3/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
6 bone-in chicken breast halves (6 ounces each), skin removed

Line 15 inch x 10 inch x 1 inch baking pan with foil, and coat the foil with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

In a shallow bowl, combine buttermilk and hot pepper sauce. In another shallow bowl, combine the bread crumbs, cornmeal and seasonings. Dip chicken in buttermilk mixture, then roll in crumb mixture. Place bone side down in prepared pan.

Spritz chicken with nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 425 for 15-20 minutes. Remove from oven, spritz again with nonstick cooking spray. Bake 15-20 minutes longer, or until a meat thermometer reads 170 degrees.

Nutrition Facts: 1 chicken breast half equals 197 calories, 4g fat (g saturated fat), 68mg cholesterol, 340mg sodium, 13g carbohydrates, 1g fiber and 27g protein. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 4 very lean meat, 1 starch.

Clip and put on fridge

Chicken 'n' Rice Hot Dish

Prep: 15 min. Bake 30 min.
Yield: 4 servings

1/2 cup uncooked instant brown rice
1/4 cup boiling water
1 package (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
1 tablespoon butter
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon curry powder
Dash pepper
Dash garlic powder
3/4 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
3/4 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
3 cups cubed cooked chicken breasts
1/3 cup shredded Parmesan cheese

Combine rice and water; transfer to an 11 inch x 7 inch by 2 inch baking dish coated with nonstick cooking spray. Top with spinach. In a nonstick saucepan coated with nonstick cooking spray melt butter. Stir in the flour, curry, salt, pepper and garlic powder until blended. Gradually whisk in broth and milk until smooth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from the heat; whisk in mayonnaise until blended. Top with chicken and remaining sauce.

Nutrition Facts: 1 serving equals 325 calories, 13g fat (5g saturated fat), 81mg cholesterol, 659mg sodium, 20g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 31g protein. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 3 very lean meat, 2 fat, 1 starch, 1 vegetable.

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SIX "I DIDN'T KNOW THAT" USES FOR SALT

by Lenore Meyer

Veggie Wash: Remove dirt from greens like spinach, arugula and kale by swirling them around in a bowl of salt water.

Keep Windows Frost-Free: Rub the inside of windows with a sponge dipped in salt water and frost won't collect.

Banish Bubbles: Get rid of excess suds when hand-washing garments in the sink or doing dishes by sprinkling them with a pinch of salt.

Clean a Greasy Pan: Shaking a little salt on the pan before washing absorbs most of the grease.

Fix a Sticky Iron: To remove gunk spots, sprinkle a little salt on a piece of brown paper and run the hot iron over it. Repeat if necessary.

Remove Water Marks from Wood Surfaces: Make water marks disappear by making a paste of salt and cooking oil. Gently rub the paste onto the ring with a sponge; let sit for a few minutes. Wipe with a soft cloth and polish as usual.



DOWNTOWN EVENTS

Please enjoy these spring and summer activities, courtesy of the Downtown Seattle Association website (www.downtownseattle.com, phone number 206-623-0364).

Pike Place Market Street Festival

Sunday, June 1
1531 Western Avenue



Pagdiriwang Phillipine Festival

Saturday, June 7 to Sunday, June 8
Seattle Center



CroatiaFest

Sunday, August 5
Seattle Center



BrasilFest

Sunday, August 17 to Monday, August 18
Seattle Center



TibetFest

Saturday, August 23 to Sunday, August 24
Seattle Center



Bumbershoot Arts Festival

Saturday, August 30 to Monday, September 1
Seattle Center



Korean Cultural Celebration

Saturday, September 6
Seattle Center



Italian Festival

Saturday, September 27 to Sunday, September 28
Seattle Center



Utsay South Asian Performing Arts Festival

Saturday, October 11 to Sunday, October 12,
Seattle Center



TurkFest

Saturday, October 18 to Sunday, October 19



The Seattle Downtown Association's Out to Lunch Concert Series starts in late June. Visit <http://www.downtownsummer.com/> for updates.

GOOD WORK AT OUTPATIENT AGENCIES

Achievement Club comes to the Downtown Emergency Service Center

by Ray Van Tassel

The year 2007 brought about the Achievement Club (AC) at the Downtown Emergency Service Center. Consisting of individuals who are interested in taking a personal and active part in their mental health recovery, the AC currently meets twice a week on Monday and Wednesday after drop-in center hours.

An essential element is the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). The club members agreed to a WRAP session each Wednesday for the first half of the meeting. This is so commendable on their part. What seems to make WRAP attractive is that it is a confidential and personal plan for recovery of the individuals involved. But the action component is what makes the plan successful, especially as one achieves his/her goals and optimum mental health.

The AC is also involved and responsible for a vending machine enterprise. Members maintain the stock and inventory of a snack machine. This involves a revolving fund that members use for club purposes. Future goals include the possibility of additional machines within the agency.

Another function of the club is encouraging volunteer work as well as preparing for entering the work force with resume writing software. We also have hope of various incentives to help in this endeavor.

Some comments from various members are "The Achievement Club is friendly and open." "The Achievement Club and WRAP has brought awareness of symptoms and what to do about them. It has brought relief from tensions and what to do to feel right."

It's been quite interesting to see the elements of group dynamics at work within

the Achievement Club. From the "storming" stage through the "forming", the group has made the transition, with some members becoming inactive but with new ones coming together to the "forming" stage. It's thrilling to see the cohesiveness in such group activities as picking up food donations and observing respect for one another in group discussions.

Plans for the future may best be summed up by one of the many club slogans: "If you can believe it, you can achieve it!"

Harborview Medical Center Receives Prestigious Prize

by Mike Donegan-Health Service Manager

Honoring the outstanding leadership, unwavering spirit of excellence and remarkable achievements in the community, Harborview Medical Center is the recipient of the prestigious 2007 Foster G. McGaw Prize. This is one of the most esteemed honors of excellence in community service in health care.

As one of two primary teaching hospitals for the University of Washington School of Medicine, Harborview is dedicated to providing and teaching exemplary patient care. Harborview, which is owned by King County, takes a proactive role in addressing the health and social needs of its underserved population, who typically face barriers in access to health care.

The Foster G. McGaw Prize recognizes health-care organizations that set a high standard for improving the lives of people in their communities. The winner and finalists this year are wonderful examples of the things that are happening in health care today, said Susan Manilow, chair of the prize committee. "Through innovative leadership and partnerships, sustained commitment, and wide-ranging initiatives that achieve striking results in community health and vitality, these organizations truly make a difference in people's lives."

Among other programs, Harborview was recognized for its involvement in these areas:

- ◆ Providing health care to the homeless
- ◆ Supportive housing and supported employment for the mentally ill
- ◆ Community House Calls: Overcoming Language and Cultural Disparities in Health Care
- ◆ Changing Health Behaviors: From the Emergency Department to Primary Care
- ◆ Injury-Free Coalition for Kids of Seattle: protecting children in their neighborhoods

Good Experience at Harborview Mental Health

by Lori Wilson

With the help of a grant from King County (administered by National Alliance on Mental Illness Greater Seattle), 12 consumer delegates from Seattle's Harborview Mental Health embarked on a journey over the Cascade Mountains to the 2007 Behavioral Healthcare Conference in Yakima. The theme of the 2007 conference was "Realizing Our Dreams Together". The conference was a positive and empowering one for the entire group. We came back with numerous reports of the knowledge and wisdom gained from the experience.

The opening keynote speaker, Dr. Courtney Harding, spoke on the topic of resilience. "Resilience is inherent in all of us, we just need to access it," she said. She further stated that "we all possess a natural urge toward health which promotes the healing and recovery process. Fostering physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual resilience is the key to sustaining an environment for the triumph of the human spirit."

Keynote speaker Amy Long spoke about the "Life Beyond Recovery" and the importance of "creating something possible from something seemingly impossible." Ms. Long also stated that a transformation of the mental health system was

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needed, including transforming attitudes, importing knowledge and consumer skill building. She also stressed the importance of community integration in the recovery process.

At a luncheon keynote address, Dr. Bryna Siegel gave a fascinating presentation entitled "The Autistic Learning Disabilities Approach: A Method for Individualizing Treatments for Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Siegel's focus was on how certain treatment strategies target specific areas, including deficits in non-verbal communication, receptive language, expressive language, play and imagination.

The members of our delegation were most inspired by speakers and workshops which focused on educating consumers and supporting client choice in ways that are respectful and that maximize client autonomy and efficacy.

The conference was valuable for both consumer and professional growth. We enjoyed the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of workshops. The hospitality and catered luncheons were superb. The opportunity to socialize with other mental health professionals and each other was invaluable to us. We had an excellent time together and felt like a more cohesive and energized team at Harborview Mental Health.

REALITY
by Christina M. Johanneck

I thought the world
Was against me,
When really
I was against me.
My only option
Was to destroy the
Enemy, meaning
Destroying me.
Through the help of many
Kind people
I went backwards
Through the eye of
The needle
And began to re-
Thread for myself
A new tapestry,
To reinvent a healthy,
Hopeful, happy, wiser me.

I'm not saying
No one can rip
This new fabric
From my mental
Stability.
But, once again I'm
Liking me
And the weaver I've
Become.
I have vitality,
Vigor, zest and a
Lust for life.
I am someone
Who is learning
It is more important to
Love than to seek love.
There is no finality
To loving, caring and
Sharing.
There is only the
Reality
Of doubting or
Daring.



**SALT:
TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING**

by Steven Collins



Americans eat too much salt. Eating too much salt can cause high blood pressure. High blood pressure can cause heart disease and other health problems. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggest reducing salt/sodium in your daily diet.

Table salt is made up of sodium and chloride. Salt and other sodium-containing ingredients are often found in processed or packaged foods. Most of the sodium in our meals comes from processed foods.

Sodium is the part of salt that increases blood pressure. There is more sodium in salt than any other food that we eat. We eat salt because it makes food taste better. It enhances the flavor of almost everything we eat. Yet eating too much salt is dangerous.

The body needs sodium to hold water in the blood vessels. Sodium also regulates water balance in all parts of the body. If too much water is held in the body, the amount of blood increases. If it increases too much, problems will arise.

The increase in blood makes the heart work harder. The result can be high blood pressure. Other conditions such as diabetes can cause high blood pressure. However, the most common cause is eating too much salt/sodium. When high blood pressure is not controlled it can lead to a heart attack, stroke or kidney disease.

How much sodium is too much?

Health experts recommend 1,100-3,300 mg of sodium per day for healthy adults. Most people eat 2,300 to 6,900 per day. This is too much sodium. Some people are salt/sodium sensitive. African Americans, Hispanics, and obese individuals are especially sensitive to salt.

Controlling the salt in your daily diet can reduce the risk of high blood pressure. Check your blood pressure often. If it is high, see a doctor. High blood pressure is a reading of more than 140/85. If your blood pressure is normal, keep it that way. Exercising, eating less salt and fat, and keeping your weight down will help your blood pressure stay normal.

Salt/sodium can hide in many foods. One teaspoon of salt contains 2,000 mg of sodium. The following suggestions can help lower salt intakes:

- ◆ eat fewer salty snacks such as potato chips, nuts, cheese and pretzels.
- ◆ Read the "Nutrition Facts" panel on food labels to see how much sodium you are eating.
- ◆ Read the label—look for the words low-salt or reduced-sodium on products to replace those with high salt.
- ◆ Use fresh or frozen vegetables instead of high sodium canned.
- ◆ Avoid pickled products like sauerkraut, deli meats, sausages and canned fish.
- ◆ Use herbs and spices like garlic powder, thyme, oregano, and basil to flavor food and use less salt. Season meat with lemon juice, bay leaf, crushed red pepper and rosemary. Season chicken with sage, seasoned vinegar and ginger.
- ◆ Limit the use of high-salt soy sauce, meat tenderizers, seasoned salt and Worcestershire sauce. Look for salt-free herb blends for cooking.

Many people have learned to reduce salt in their diets without missing the salty taste. You can, too. Cut back on salt slowly, allowing time for your taste buds to adjust. Replace the salty taste with another flavor.

Prepared by Drusilla Banks, Nutrition and Wellness Education, University of Illinois Extension.

New PACT Teams Accepting Clients with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness

by Sarah Lamont,
PACT Peer Support Specialist

The Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) is an evidence-based program serving adults with severe and persistent mental illness. Developed at Mendota State Hospital in Wisconsin in the late 1960s, the PACT model has been applied nationally, in Canada and abroad. While there are similar programs in operation, King County's PACT services rigidly adhere to the national standards that have been shown to work.

More than 25 research studies demonstrate that PACT services reduce hospital stays and improve housing stability while being more satisfactory than standard care. PACT is intended to help those who are most disabled by their mental illness and have been hospitalized many times for long periods.

PACT Services are voluntary and are intended to assist an individual's journey toward recovery by helping each

consumer achieve his/her potential and lead a meaningful life in a community of his/her choosing. King County PACT services are offered by Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) and the South-East coalition of Highline West Seattle Mental Health Center, Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation, and Transition Resources. spaces allotted for PACT participants. Teams will accept four to six clients each month until they are at full capacity. Both DESC and South-East have started to engage consumers

King County currently has a total of 180 spaces allotted for PACT participants. Teams will accept four to six clients each month until they are at full capacity. Both DESC and South-East have started to engage consumers with enrollments beginning in July.

PACT consumers benefit from person-centered treatment planning with a team approach and small caseloads. PACT consumers participate in planning their treatment; client-to-staff ratio is expected to be 10 clients per full time staff person. Staff teams consist of a psychiatrist, nurses, chemical dependency specialist, vocational specialist, social workers and peer specialists, who work together with the consumers in the community to help them achieve their goals. PACT services are flexible and based on the individual needs of each consumer—services change as the consumer changes. Because services are individualized, there

is no predetermined timeline for PACT participation. Consumers receive assistance as long as is needed. PACT programs provide 24/7 crisis services, and the programs are staffed during the holidays.

If someone you know is interested in PACT services, contact Bill Wilson, King County Project Manager, at 206.263.8949 or billr.wilson@kingcounty.gov, or Sarah Lamont, assistant to King County Project Manager and Peer Support Specialist at 206.263.8950 or sarah.lamont@kingcounty.gov.



For Those Who Put the Rainbow in Rainbow Creek

By Christina M. Johanneck

Rainbow Rainbow
Who painted you
Across the sky
To bring a little
Beauty into my
Mind?
Rainbow Rainbow
Please don't go yet
You come so seldom
And I don't want
To quickly forget
Rainbow Rainbow
You exist in everyone
Coloring our lives
Our skin tones
Our experiences
As they pass by
Rainbow Rainbow
Where have you been
All my life
When I needed a friend
And all the world was
Black and white
Rainbow Rainbow
Are you a little shy?
Is that why
I only see your loveliness from
Time to time?
Rainbow Rainbow
Your nature is to be
A fleeting form of
Nature
Your beauty makes
The bold sky cry
And the sad sun say

Goodbye
I know not when
We'll meet again
But my mental health
Is better
Since your appearance
Has brought to me
Such pleasure
Rainbow Creek
My place of safety
Where I keep
Going back
And come out changing
Week to week
And year to year
I saw the Rainbow
That wouldn't disappear
That rainbow was in clients
That rainbow was in staff
And I am grateful
For the vision so grand that
Rainbow Creek had
The rainbow I am

June 7, 2007



WHAT IS BIPOLAR DISORDER?

by
Lenore Meyer

Bipolar disorder is a condition characterized by periods of high moods in addition to the low moods that occur in the more common "unipolar" depression. Studies show that 1.5% of the population will have at least one hypomanic or manic episode in their adult lives. Genetics play a role. About 15% of children with one bipolar parent develop the disorder.

Who gets bipolar disorder:

- ◆ In a large survey, 1 in 25 adults showed signs of bipolar disease. That is over six million adults in the U.S.
- ◆ The illness affects both men and women, but men are less likely to get treatment.
- ◆ Most often the first manic episode starts in the late teens and early twenties, but it can also arise in young children and older adults.

When a person is hypomanic, they may feel unusually good and competent, or simply irritable. Their thoughts race and consequently their speech is often pressured; they may be distractible and go from topic to topic. They apply their heightened energy to multiple projects. Sleep seems less necessary. There is a drive for pleasurable activities with disregard for risk. Friends and family who know the person recognize that they are behaving differently—out of character. If the symptoms are so severe that they cause marked impairment in work or social functioning, then the condition is called mania.

What are the signs of mania?

During mania you may:

- ◆ Feel overly happy
- ◆ Feel hyper
- ◆ Feel grouchy
- ◆ Feel restless
- ◆ Have difficulty concentrating

This may lead to reckless behavior like:

- ◆ Causing problems at work
- ◆ Spending sprees
- ◆ Risky behaviors
- ◆ Alcohol and drug abuse
- ◆ Hypersexuality

Depression, the other pole of bipolar disorder, may also vary in severity from a relatively small decrease in enjoyment and interest, to a complete and painful lack of pleasure in anything. Often there are disturbances in concentration, sleep, appetite and energy, as well as paralysis of decision making. Guilt and low self-esteem are common.

Without treatment, bipolar disorder can be devastating. People with this condition divorce two to three times more commonly and show decline in occupational functioning twice as commonly as the average population.

Fortunately, there are a number of good treatments available for bipolar disorder. The first step in treatment is appropriate evaluation and diagnosis. Usually medication can help control the mood swings. It is essential to develop a trusting relationship between the doctor and the client, especially since many people initially don't recognize the danger of an elevated mood. If a strong alliance is present, medication can often be started sooner—before a crisis develops—and prevent a full blown mood swing. It is often a turning point in treatment

when the patient accepts the need to monitor their own mood and ask for help early on.

Medication is a critical part of the treatment for bipolar disorder. However, the emotional swings, the medication side effects, the disruptions in work or school all take place within an individual—and that individual usually has a family.

An episode of mania or depression can make a family member seem like a stranger. The experience can be frightening and disorganizing for the entire family. In such a state, the family members may become hostile, fearful and controlling. They may blame themselves or the affected individual.

Bipolar disorder may involve long periods of remission between episodes. Everyone can be lulled into a false sense of security. This can cause denial of the illness and premature stopping of medication. Some individuals who are usually quite responsible may temporarily lose their insight during the early stages of an acute episode.

Family therapy can help the entire family unit regain healthy relationships after a period of mania or depression. It can help the patient and family identify and deal with the stresses that may trigger acute episodes. The patient and family may need to distinguish the patient's usual personality from an episode of the bipolar disorder. On the one hand, the patient and family need to work through denial and learn to accept this as a biological condition. However, excessive worry, or relating every personality quirk to the illness is counterproductive.

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Families do not cause bipolar disorder, but they can do a lot to support treatment, speed recovery, and help the individual identify early recurrence.

Bipolar Treatment Options:

Medication:

There are many medications available for treatment. The individual and the doctor decide on which is right for them.

Psychotherapy:

Therapy can help you manage your illness in these ways:

- ◆ It can help you look for signs that tell you an episode is coming on so you can get the right treatment as soon as possible.
- ◆ It can help you see the role stress plays in your illness and ways to lower stress and conflict in your life.
- ◆ It can help you understand why taking your medication the right way can help you treat your illness.

Bipolar Support Groups in King County

Central Seattle

Depression and bipolar support alliance Patients and Family Group. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Harborview Research and Training building (corner of 9th Avenue and Alder Street), Room 121, 206-748-1577. Meets second Thursday.

Depression and Bipolar support alliance, consumers with dual diagnosis (alcohol and bipolar). 8:00 p.m. Capitol Hill Alano Club, 19th Avenue and East Madison Street, downstairs in Room 2B. Please note this is a 12-step meeting. Call Brian S. 206-422-4650 for more information. Meets every Wednesday.

WHAT IS BIPOLAR DISORDER?

Eastside

NAMI Eastside CARE (Consumer Group). 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Crossroads Mall Community Room (near information desk), 15600 NE 8th Street, Bellevue. Call Helen at 425-885-6264. consumers@nami-eastside.org.

North End

NAMI-GS Bipolar-Patients ONLY. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. NAMI-GS Office, 802 NW 70th Street, Seattle. Fifth Wednesdays are potluck! Contact Noel at 206-784-1894. Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesday.

University District

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Patients and Family Group. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., University Medical Center Cafeteria Conference Room (206-748-1577). Meets 4th Wednesday.

South/Southwest

Dream Catchers Consumer Support Group. 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Valley Cities Counseling, 2704 I Street NE, Auburn (John, 206-870-6079). Every Wednesday.

Dream Catchers Consumer SG 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Valley Cities Counseling, 33301 1st Way S, Suite C-115, Federal Way (253-661-0261 or Cindy at 253-874-1560).

