

December E-News

Welcome to NAMI Metro Suburban's Monthly E-News, a place to see upcoming events, read the words of other NAMI members and learn about the latest research and legislation in the field of mental health.

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Winter Schedule

December

How to Advocate for Improved Mental Health services

December 3 at
1:30pm
Oak Park Library

What We Put Into Our Mind/Body Affects Our Feelings of Wellness

December 4 at
7:00pm
Community
Wellness Center in
LaGrange

Beginners Yoga

Education and Advocacy Series Oak Park Library

Please join us on **Sunday, December 3 at 1:30pm** as Mary Stimming, PhD speaks on how to advocate for improved mental health services.



We all want to see improvements in mental health services, whether through expanded access to care, reduction of discrimination or equal coverage of care. The big question is how do we bring about those changes?

At this seminar, Mary Stimming will explain how to advocate for ourselves and others in hopes of improving services for all.

FREE CEUs are available. [Register Here](#)

Achieving Wellness Through Education The Community Wellness Center

The holidays are upon us and with that often comes overindulgence in things like fatty foods and sweets. Before you put that next treat in your mouth, please join us at the Community Wellness Center where Laura Maniacci, PsyD will be speaking on how what we put into our mind and body affects our feelings of wellness. Don't miss this fantastic presentation on **Monday, December 4 at 7:00pm**. FREE CEUs are available. [Register Here](#)



December 12 at
7:00pm
Community
Wellness Center in
LaGrange

Beginners Yoga
December 26 at
7:00pm
Community
Wellness Center in
LaGrange
December

January

**Basics Class
Begins**
January 8 at
7:00pm
First Presbyterian
Church in River
Forest

**WRAP Class
Begins**
January 8 at
7:00pm
Location TBD

Beginners Yoga
January 9 at
7:00pm
Community
Wellness Center in
LaGrange

**Youth Mental
Health First Aid**
January 16 at
8:00am
Community
Wellness Center in
LaGrange

**Involuntary
Commitment**

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Classes begin January 8

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan® or WRAP®, is a self-designed prevention and wellness process that anyone can use to get well, stay well and make their life the way they want it to be. [Register Here](#)

NAMI Basics Classes begin January 8 First Presbyterian Church in River Forest



NAMI Basics is a free education program for parents and family caregivers of children and teens who are experiencing symptoms of a mental illness or whom have already been diagnosed.

You'll learn the facts about mental health conditions and how best to support your child at home, at school and when they're getting medical care. The course is taught by a trained team with lived experience-they know what you're going through because they've been there. The program provides critical strategies for taking care of your child and learning the ropes of recovery. [Register Here](#)

Beat the Holiday Blues

Joy to the world! 'Tis the season to be jolly! Festive music fills the air; holiday cheer abounds. Everyone is happy at holiday time - right? Wrong. Truth be told, many people feel lonely, sad, anxious and depressed at this time of year. How can this be?

January 21 at
1:30pm
Oak Park Library

Beginners Yoga

January 23 at
7:00pm
Community
Wellness Center in
LaGrange

**Loving Someone
With a Mental
Illness**

January 25 at
7:00pm
Community
Wellness Center in
LaGrange

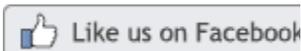
**Navigating
HIPAA and Other
Confidentiality
Laws**

January 28 at
1:30pm
Oak Park Library

**To register for
any of these
programs visit
our website**

www.namimetsub.org

**or call (708)
524-2582.**



There are many reasons why people feel down at holiday time. Here are the key causes for the holiday blues:

- Pressure to feel merry: Do you feel joyous when holiday decorations go up and store windows fill with gifts? If you don't, take comfort in knowing that you are not alone. The disparity between how you actually feel and what you think you are supposed to feel can cause you guilt and confusion. This phenomenon can start you off on the wrong foot, even before the festivities begin.
- Remembrances of holidays past: Consciously or unconsciously, you have a mental record of previous holidays. Your mood may be contaminated by the specter of sad holidays past. If your current life circumstances are unhappy, however, you may long for the happy holidays you once enjoyed.
- Reminders of loved ones lost: Holidays are a time for reflection. All too often your thoughts turn to beloved family members and friends who have passed away. The subsequent sense of loss you feel can spoil even the happiest of celebrations.
- Loneliness: Holidays can be dreadfully lonely if you don't have a significant other. Additionally, separation from family members (emotional or geographic) can be particularly painful at this time of year.
- Financial hardship: One of the joys of the holiday season is to give to others. If your financial resources are severely limited at this time of year you are likely to feel insufficient, and as though you are "on the outside looking in."
- In search of sunlight: Many people are adversely impacted by the relative loss of sunlight they experience during the winter months. This phenomenon even has a name: seasonal affective disorder or SAD. Your holiday blues will only be exacerbated by limited sunshine.

Do any of these reasons for feeling bummed sound familiar? Don't despair. Here are some ways for you to effectively beat those holiday blues:

- It's OK to feel what you feel: If you don't feel as happy as you think you should, don't fight it. Forcing feelings that aren't there will only make matters worse, and there really aren't any "shoulds" about it.
- Seek sun and endorphins: If you find yourself feeling blue, be sure to get at least 20 minutes of sunlight each day. This isn't always easy to do when winter weather hits, but do your best. And don't forget to exercise. Both sunlight and exercise help to fight any chemical causes for your holiday funk.
- Help someone else: It's hard to feel down while you are busy helping someone else. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, wrap gifts for unfortunate kids, or spend time with an elderly relative or friend. Instead of feeling glum you'll find yourself experiencing what the holidays are really about: Giving to others.
- Create your own traditions: Contrary to popular opinion, there are no rules for how you spend your holidays. So if old traditions bring up unhappy memories, start new ones. If you don't have family, share the holidays with good friends. Don't wait for them to include you; make them welcome in your home instead. If cooking a Christmas dinner feels like a drag, do brunch. If going to a synagogue or a church service dampens your spirits, have your own worship service outdoors, at home or wherever you wish.
- Stay busy and avoid unstructured time: If you know the holidays are difficult for you, why not plan ahead and minimize your difficult feelings. Try to fill your calendar with fun events. Too much time spent alone may bring you to an old, familiar place: down.

Now here's the most important thing you can do to beat those blues: No matter what is happening in your life, think of the blessings you do have. Taking

stock of all of the positives in your life - right here and now - can go a long way toward ending your "bah humbug" mood. With a little bit of planning and forethought, the holidays can be wonderful - and not because they are supposed to be.

Authored by Maude Purcell, LCSW CEAP. Reprinted from psychcentral.com.
Purcell, M. (2016). Beating the Holiday Blues. Psych Central. Retrieved on November 22, 2017, from <https://psychcentral.com/lib/beating-the-holiday-blues/>

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