

Agenda for 2014 NAMI-NYS Educational Conference
United We Stand: Shaping Our Future
November 14-16, Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, Albany, NY

Friday, November 14th

9:00am-**Registration and Exhibit Area Opens** – King Street 8

10:30am-11:45am **Multi-Track Session 1** (each session will feature a workshop on each of the following issues: Children and Adolescent Mental Health; Mental Health in the Military Community; and Criminal Justice)

A-Children-NAMI Programs to Educate and Support School Staff and Parents With Children With Mental Illness – High Street 24

NAMI has a variety of programs for parents and families of children with mental health issues, as well as lesson plans and in-service mental health education presentations for school professionals along with presentations tailored for middle-school and high-school students, which we offer to families and schools free of charge. This session will allow you to learn more about these programs; *NAMI Basics*, *Parents and Teachers as Allies*, *Breaking the Silence* as well as meet people who have recovered from mental illness who do in-class presentations to students.

[Deniece David, NAMI-NYC, State Trainer NAMI Basics](#)

[Jason Paden, NAMI Montgomery/Fulton/Hamilton, Catskill Center for Independence](#)

[Janet Susin, NAMI Queens/Nassau, Breaking the Silence](#)

[Jodie Terhune, NAMI Rochester Parents and Teachers as Allies Presentation Team](#)

[Jonna Terhune, NAMI Rochester Parents and Teachers as Allies Presentation Team](#)

[Judy Watt, NAMI Rochester Parents and Teachers as Allies Presentation Team](#)

B-Criminal Justice-Understanding CPL 330.20 “the Insanity Plea” – High Street 26

The criminal law, CPL 330.20, also known as “the Insanity Plea,” is one of the most misunderstood laws and legal defense strategies. Many believe that taking the insanity plea is a better alternative to being found guilty under regular legal proceedings as it will mean the defendant will avoid serving time in a prison. The reality of pleading insanity means that the defendant enters the forensic psychiatric system where outcomes are far more unpredictable than in the penal system. Often times one ends up spending more time in a forensic hospital than they would have spent in prison if found guilty of the same crime. This session will detail CPL 330.20 and explain the process of being confined in a forensic hospital.

[Sheila Shea, Director, Mental Hygiene Legal Services](#)

[Moderated by Jayette Lansbury, Criminal Justice Chair, NAMI-NYS](#)

11:45am – 1pm **Lunch Buffet** – King Street Courtyard

12:05pm **Welcoming Remarks** King Street Ballroom

[Irene Turski, President and Education Conference Chair, NAMI-NYS](#)

[Wendy Burch, Executive Director, NAMI-NYS](#)

12:10pm **Presentation of 2014 Criminal Justice Award to New York State Senator
Velmanette Montgomery**

[Jayette Lansbury, Chair, NAMI-NYS Criminal Justice Committee](#)

[Irene Turski, President and Education Conference Chair, NAMI-NYS](#)

[Wendy Burch, Executive Director, NAMI-NYS](#)

12:20pm – 2:15pm **Afternoon Plenary Session: Reforming the Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice Systems to Make Them More Comprehensive of Mental Illness** – King Street Ballroom

Part 1- Lessons from the Assisted Outpatient Treatment for serving persons with Severe Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System

Dr. Marvin Swartz of Duke University is one of the primary researchers of the criminal and juvenile justice systems and the changes needed to be introduced to accommodate the needs of adolescents and adults living with mental illness. Dr. Swartz is also the leading researcher of Assisted Outpatient Treatment and its effectiveness in reducing hospitalizations and entry into the criminal justice system for people living with severe mental illness. In 2005, Dr. Swartz delivered landmark testimony before the New York State Legislature explaining how his research results demonstrated the positive impact of New York State's AOT program Kendra's Law. He will detail his research and demonstrate the positive outcomes resulting from AOT.

[Marvin Schwartz, MD Professor & Head, Division of Social & Community Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Director, Duke AHEC Program, Duke University Medical Center](#)

Part 2-Crisis Intervention Trainings: Getting the Best Results in Bad Situations.

Major Sam Cochran developed the Memphis Model of Crisis Intervention Trainings, the leading model of teaching police and first-responders on how to properly interact with someone having a psychiatric episode. He will detail the incredible success CIT has had on communities across the country and how successful implementation of the program reduces injuries to both people living with a mental illness and law enforcement officials while ensuring that the person is brought to the proper service provider leading to the most successful outcomes.

[Major Sam Cochran \(Ret.\), University of Memphis](#)

2:30pm -3:45pm **Multi-Track Session 2**

A-Children-Mental Health Services for Children, Youth and Families –Fort Orange 5

NAMI-NYS is pleased to welcome Dr. Matthew Perkins, the Medical Director of the children's division of the New York State Office of Mental Health to describe the resources available to parents to address mental health issues in children and adolescents. Dr. Perkins will detail programs such as *Project Teach*, as well as other waiver and clinical services.

[Matthew Perkins, Medical Director, Children's Division, New York State Office of Mental Health](#)

B-Veteran & Military Families-The New Normal-An Overview of Potential Post Deployment Changes for Military Families –Fort Orange 7

For military families the homecoming of a loved one who served in the armed forces is a highly anticipated event and is supposed to be a joyous time. However, many times the loved one who returns home is different from whom they were when they were deployed. The alterations in both

the veteran's personality and the family dynamic become "the New Normal" that military families struggle to adapt to. This session will feature veterans, family members and professionals who will detail how to understand these changes, alter expectations and explore the steps both family members and veterans must take to acclimate themselves to the New Normal.

[Cheri Caiella, Military Family Member](#)

[Margaret Bristol, NAMI Syracuse](#)

[Ann Canastra, MS, NCC, LMHC, ACS, Syracuse VA Medical Center](#)

[Penny Coleman, SUNY Empire State College](#)

[Dominica Potenza, NAMI Syracuse](#)

[Glenn Read, Stratton VA](#)

C-Criminal Justice- Verbal De-Escalation: Performance and Skills Are The Mosaic Art of CIT –Fort Orange 9

Verbal de-escalation skills have been written about and studied for many years. Verbal de-escalation is recognized as an important feature role supporting CIT training. However, the dynamics of verbal skills is not always captured within the intended training roles of Crisis Intervention Team Training (CIT). This presentation will showcase some of the "Mosaic Art" features necessary for CIT Verbal De-escalation Training; practical applications will be demonstrated during role playing exercises.

[Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis](#)

3:45pm-4:15pm **Refreshment Break and Visit Exhibitors** -King Street Courtyard

4:15pm-5:15pm **Multi-Track Session 2**

A-Children- An Overview of Mental Health Issues Impacting Children and Adolescents – Fort Orange 5

NAMI-NYS is pleased to welcome Dr. Jeff Daly of Four Winds Hospital to provide an overview of mental health issues prevalent in children and adolescents. Dr. Daly will detail potential warning signs of mental illness in children at each point of the age spectrum from infancy through their teenage years. He will also describe how schools can address these issues and properly communicate these concerns to parents. Dr. Daly will also present case files from patients he has worked with and describe long-term treatment options. Along with detailing specific mental illnesses, Dr. Daly will also discuss other mental health issues commonly experienced by kids and teens such as bullying, substance abuse and body image issues.

[Jeffrey Daly, MD Medical Director, Child and Adolescent Outpatient Program, Four Winds Hospital](#)

B- Veteran & Military Families-An Introduction to NAMI Homefront and The Benefits of Incorporating NAMI Programs in VAs – Fort Orange 7

This session will explore the NAMI Signature Programs that are offered for veterans and military family members and demonstrate the benefits of partnering with Veteran Administration (VA) facilities. The session will introduce NAMI Homefront, the newest educational course for family, caregivers and friends of military service members and veterans living with mental illness. The course provides up-to-date information about a range of mental illnesses, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and co-occurring substance use disorders, as well as training in preparedness, emotional resiliency and skills related to managing crises, solving

problems and communicating effectively. NAMI-NYS was one of the first state NAMIs to offer the program and course leaders will discuss successful outcomes from the class. This session will also discuss NAMI Veteran Peer-to-Peer classes and introduce strategies to establishing partnerships between NAMI and VAs.

[Cheri Caiella, NAMI Homefront Teacher, NAMI Syracuse](#)

[Geraldine Burton, NAMI Homefront Teacher NAMI-NYC Metro](#)

[Ann Canastra, MS, NCC, LMHC, ACS, Syracuse VA Medical Center](#)

[Suzanne Robinson, Senior Education Program Manager, NAMI](#)

[Other panelists TBA](#)

C- Solutions to the Criminal Justice – Mental Illness Interface in NYS –Fort Orange 9

This presentation will begin by explaining an approach used to assess how localities assist individuals with mental illness who come into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Several projects will then be described that have been implemented in New York in recognition of the disproportionate amount of individuals with mental illness involved in the criminal justice system. The state-wide Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) initiative will be described along with the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program, the System of Evidence-Based Mental Health Practices for Individuals in Jail pilot, and the Academy for Justice-Informed Practice in New York City.

[Don Kamin, Ph.D, Director, Institute for Police, Mental Health and Community Collaboration, and Chief, Clinical & Forensic Services, Monroe County Office of Mental Health](#)

5:30pm-6:30pm **Update on NIMH RAISE Study** –Fort Orange 5, 7

The NIMH Recovery After Initial Schizophrenic Episode (RAISE) study is a milestone in fundamentally changing the trajectory and prognosis of schizophrenia through coordinated and aggressive treatment in the earliest stages of the illness. RAISE is designed to reduce the likelihood of long-term disability that people with schizophrenia often experience. NAMI-NYS is pleased to welcome Dr. Delbert Robinson one of the researchers on the team which developed the RAISE Early Treatment Program, a research study which was conducted in community clinics across the United States. Dr. Robinson will detail the results of his team's findings and how it will impact the future treatments of schizophrenia.

[Delbert Robinson, MD, Associate Investigator, Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience, Zucker Hillside Hospital](#)

6:45pm-9:00pm **Dinner and Presentation of 2014 NAMI-NYS Affiliate of the Year, Legislative Champion and Connie Lieber Research Awards** –King Street Ballroom

NAMI-NYS is honored to present the 2014 NAMI-NYS Legislative Champion Award to United States Representative Tim Murphy.

This award honors Representative Murphy's commitment to repairing the mental health system. Representative Murphy has used his position as Chair of the House Oversight and Investigations Sub-Committee and his experience as a child and trauma psychologist to hold hearings on the state of mental health services for more than two years. The result of these hearings was his authorship of H.R. 3717, "The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act." This landmark bill with bi-partisan co-sponsorship is the most comprehensive piece of federal legislation ever introduced to reform the mental health system, address the flaws in the delivery of mental health care and ensure the protection of those with the most severe forms of mental illness. NAMI-NYS is grateful that

Representative Murphy has introduced legislation that addresses concerns that NAMI-NYS grassroots advocates have been voicing for decades.

NAMI-NYS is delighted to present the 2014 NAMI-NYS Connie Lieber Research Award to Stephen Glatt, Ph.D, Director of the Psychiatric Genetic Epidemiology & Neurobiology Laboratory (PsychGENe Lab) at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse.

The award honors Dr. Glatt's work on candidate-gene and genome-wide association, expression, and functional studies of schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, autism spectrum disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, heroin dependence, and other psychiatric and substance use disorders. The ultimate objective of his research is to identify the causes of these illnesses, and to find biomarkers that will facilitate earlier identification, intervention, and prevention.

Following the award presentations Rep. Murphy and Dr. Glatt will give the evening's featured presentations.

Saturday, November 15th

8:00am **Breakfast** – King Street Courtyard

8:00am **Wellness Walking Group**

New this year, get the day started the right way with an invigorating walk outside around the Desmond grounds. Walking is the cheapest and easiest way to exercise and a first step in incorporating wellness in your daily routine. The walking group will meet by the registration desk.

8:30am-9:00am **NAMI Business Meeting** – King Street Ballroom

9:00am-9:30am **Meet the Board Candidates** – King Street Ballroom

Hear from the candidates for the NAMI-NYS board. Voting will take place in the courtyard on Saturday from 9:00am-4:00pm

9:30am-10:00am **Break Visit Exhibitors** -King Street Courtyard

10:00am-12:00pm **Update From Center for Practice Innovation**

The Center for Practice Innovation (CPI) is one of the country's exemplary examples of how to properly deliver unique mental health services. CPI's mission is to promote the widespread availability of evidence-based practices to improve mental health services, ensure accountability, and promote recovery-oriented outcomes for people living with a mental illness and families. The CPI serves as a key resource to the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) by spreading those practices identified by OMH as most critical to accomplish OMH's system transformation initiatives. In all its work, the CPI is informed and guided by core values and principles of recovery including choice, self-determination, transparency, shared decision

making, person centeredness and hopefulness. NAMI-NYS is excited to welcome CPI Director Dr. Lisa Dixon and Associate Director Paul Margolies along with key staff members to the conference to share with us the latest developments from their pioneering programs such as OnTrackNY.

[Lisa Dixon, MD, MPH, Director, Center for Practice Innovations, New York State Psychiatric Institute](#)
[Paul Margolies, Ph.D, Associate Director, Center for Practice Innovations, New York State Psychiatric Institute](#)
[Helle Thorning, Ph.D, MS, LCSW, Center for Practice Innovations, New York State Psychiatric Institute](#)
[Liza Watkins, LMSW, Center for Practice Innovations, New York State Psychiatric Institute](#)

12:00pm-12:30pm **Break Visit Exhibitors** -King Street Courtyard

12:30pm-1:45pm **Lunch, Presentation of NAMI-NYS Small Affiliate and Outreach and Awareness Awards-Presentation on NAMI-Advocacy** – King Street Ballroom

The presentation of these two awards along with program led by Mike Biasotti and DJ Jaffe will explore the various ways NAMI-NYS and our affiliates can project our advocacy voices and raise awareness of mental health issues and the need to ensure the proper delivery of services for people living with a mental illness. DJ Jaffe will detail why the “Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, HR-3717,” is the most important piece of legislation to improve care for people with serious mental illness and explain the politics of serious mental illness. Mike Biasotti will discuss advocacy efforts both in Albany and Washington, D.C.

[Mike Biasotti, Chief of Police, New Windsor, NY](#)
[DJ Jaffe, Director, Mental Health Policy Org](#)

1:45pm-2:00pm **Break**

2:00pm-3:00pm **Workshop Sessions 1**

A-Schizophrenia – Fort Orange 5

NAMI-NYS is pleased to welcome Dr. Dwight Dickinson from the National Institute of Mental Health’s Clinical Brain Disorders Branch. In this session Dr. Dickinson will detail his research and explore the various ways cognitive therapies are being incorporated into the treatment of schizophrenia.

[Dwight Dickinson, Ph.D, JD, Clinical Brain Disorders Branch, NIMH](#)

B-Bipolar/Depression – Fort Orange 7

Dr. Martin Lan will discuss his work on bi-polar disorder including the research he conducts at the New York State Psychiatric Institute as well as his strategies for treating the disease. Dr. Lan’s treatment philosophy is that treatment decisions are a collaborative process and he offers several modalities, including psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral and supportive psychotherapy, depending on what would work best for individual patients.

[Martin Lan, Ph.D, New York State Psychiatric Institute](#)

C-OCD and Hoarding Disorder: Clinical and Research Update – Fort Orange 9

This presentation will review the cardinal symptoms of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and hoarding disorder in order to increase awareness for individuals and family members who

may be affected by these conditions. Dr. Wheaton and Dr. Steinman will review the research evidence supporting the currently available treatment options (both medication and psychotherapy), with particular emphasis on clinical trials that have been conducted in the OCD and Related Disorders Program at the New York State Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University. Finally, they will discuss the current studies being conducted at their center, including treatment studies that are currently recruiting research participants.

[Michael Wheaton, Ph.D, Anxiety Disorders Clinic, New York State Psychiatric Institute](#)

[Shari Steinman, Ph.D, Anxiety Disorders Clinic, New York State Psychiatric Institute](#)

D-Dual Diagnosis (Developmental Disabilities and Mental Illness) – Town Hall

When most people hear the term “dual diagnosis” they think of a person who has both a mental illness and a chemical dependency or addiction problem. However, another prolific type of dual diagnosis is people who have both a mental illness and a developmental disability (such as autism). Dr. Paul Partridge will discuss the strategies of treating someone who has this type of dual diagnosis.

[Paul A. Partridge, Ph.D](#)

E- Clozapine: What Consumers and Family Members Should Know – Shaker Room

Clozapine remains the most effective antipsychotic for individuals with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder who have not responded to other medications. Yet psychiatrists often delay offering the medication for 5-10 years, if they offer it at all. If you or a family member have such an illness and have not been able to reach your goals because of poorly controlled symptoms, a trial of clozapine may help.

[Jay Carruthers, MD, Medical Director, Bureau of Psychiatric Services & Research Institute Support, NYS Office of Mental Health](#)

3:15pm-4:15pm **Workshop Session 2**

A-Geriatric Mental Health Issues – Fort Orange 5

This workshop will explore the unique mental health issues specific to aging and geriatric care. Dr. Dianne Annalett will detail the critical issues in geriatric mental health care, such as the newest treatment options being used to address the issues most common in older adults. Dr. Annalett will also discuss how the changes in services and benefits will affect the delivery of mental health care to the geriatric population.

[Diane Annalett, MD, Buffalo Psychiatric Center](#)

B- Mind/Body Skills and Mindfulness-Based Strategies for Caregiver Self-Care – Fort Orange 7

This workshop will introduce Mind-Body skills and mindfulness-based strategies to give you the tools and resources to begin and support the process of finding balance in your demanding role as a caregiver. Participation in a Mind-Body Skills Group has the potential to relieve symptoms and transform the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of your life; this program will provide self-care strategies that you can immediately integrate into your everyday living.

[Josh Hendrickson, LMSW, NAMI Central Suffolk](#)

C-Housing – Fort Orange 9

A major concern for many NAMI-NYS members is the need for safe and affordable housing for people living with a severe mental illness and how to get people living with a mental illness integrated into the community. This session will explore the steps being taking to create more independent living options throughout the state.

[Ralph Fasano, Concern for Independent Living](#)

D-Recovery Peer Service – Town Hall

One of the most common questions posed to NAMI-NYS is, “I have a loved one who has a mental illness diagnosis, what does recovery from their disease entail?” This question is difficult to answer as recovery is different for each individual, but recovery is achievable. John Allen, the Director of Recipient Affairs for New York State Office of Mental Health, will explore the different recovery models and employment options for people living with a mental illness.

[John Allen, Director of Recipient Affairs, New York State Office of Mental Health](#)

E-LGBTQ – Shaker Room

The GLBTQ community faces several unique mental health challenges. NAMI-NYS proudly welcomes Dr. Daniel Garza to identify these issues and describe different therapeutic options. Dr. Garza is a consulting psychiatrist for LGBTQ teens in foster care through the SCO Family of Services, and he is the psychiatrist for one of the largest LGBT adolescent primary care clinics in the country: the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center in New York City.

[Daniel Garza, MD](#)

4:15pm-4:45pm **Refreshment Break and Visit Exhibitors** – King Street Courtyard

4:45pm-5:45pm **Workshop Session 3**

A-How to Access Social Security Insurance and Disability Insurance – Fort Orange 5

The Social Security and Disability Insurance systems can be very difficult to navigate and many people struggle to find the proper way to apply and receive the coverage they are entitled to. This session will help shed light on both SSI and DI services and detail the proper steps to take to research and apply for both and ensure that you or your loved one are receiving maximum insurance payments.

[Tai Venuti AllsUp](#)

B-Cognitive Enhancement Therapy – Fort Orange 7

Cognitive Enhancement Therapy (CET) is a SAMHSA Evidence Based Practice that improves cognitive skills and social cognition for persons in recovery from schizophrenia and other mental illnesses. During 48 weekly sessions of computer exercises, social cognition group work and individual coaching, people learn how to be socially wise and vocationally effective. This presentation will demonstrate the hope and practical wisdom that CET offers.

[Ray Gonzalez, ACSW, LISW-S, Executive Director, Center for Cognition and Recovery](#)

[Danielle Alba, Rehabilitation Specialist II, Lake Shore Behavioral Health](#)

C-NIMH Research Participation – Fort Orange 9

A saying frequently heard at NAMI-NYS conferences is “research is our hope for the future.” While many sessions at the conference will report on the latest research findings, this session will discuss the importance of participating in clinical trials and serving as pioneers in carving out the latest discoveries in the next frontier of brain research. The session will aim to dispel any

fears or misconceptions people may have about participating in mental health research. The session will demonstrate the unique role the participant plays in the trials and how they are viewed as partners alongside the researchers. The session will also offer family members and providers the appropriate way to communicate the benefits of participation to people living with a mental illness. These include the opportunity to work with some of the country's leading doctors and being able to receive the most groundbreaking mental health treatments.

[Karen Bartholomew, Schizophrenia Research Unit, National Institute of Mental Health](#)

[Vince Del Balzo, Schizophrenia Research Unit, National Institute of Mental Health](#)

D-Faith Communities: Healing Places in a Hurting World-Engaging Those With Mental Health Challenges – Town Hall

Religious communities certainly provide healing places in a hurting world and they can be a place of solace for both people impacted by mental illness and their families. This session will explore the role faith communities can play in recovery from mental illness. It will also detail how we can educate the religious institutions on the realities of living with a mental illness and the impact it has on families. Also discussed will be how to reach out to the faith community to partner with NAMI affiliates.

[Moderated by Ceceile Green, Co-Chair, NAMI-NYS Multicultural Committee](#)

[Panel TBA](#)

E-Recognizing Potential Side-Effects of Long Term Use of Antipsychotic Medications – Shaker Room

While antipsychotic medications play an important role in the recovery from severe mental illness, long term use can also lead to harmful side-effects. This session will detail how to recognize the warning signs associated with the most damaging side effects such as Tardive Dyskinesia, Dystonia and Akathisia and how to communicate the concerns of these conditions with a doctor.

[TBA](#)

YOUNG ADULT FOCUS TRACK – Suite 120

NAMI-NYS is excited to introduce a focus track for young adults (18-25) at this year's conference. The Young Adult track will run parallel to the workshop sessions. The topics for these sessions are:

2:00pm-3:00pm NAMI on Campus

Help NAMI-NYS create NAMI on Campus clubs throughout the state. NAMI on Campus provides information and resources to support students' mental health and to empower them to take action on their college campuses. The program helps to ensure that all students have positive, successful and fun college experiences. This session will feature those who have started NAMI on Campus Clubs as well as students currently running successful clubs in New York.

3:15pm-4:15pm Becoming a Voice in Your Community and Supporting Your Peers

This session is vital as the young adult population of today is going to be the generation to change people's perceptions of mental health and mental illness. Learn how to successfully become a voice in your community, an advocate for mental health and a source of support for your peers. Hear from young adults who have participated in NAMI's *In Our Own Voice* and

Parents and Teachers as Allies programs, as well as those who have led unique mental health campaigns, appeared in the media or made in-school presentations. Whether your community is a college campus or your hometown, you can be the voice of change that brings a better understanding of mental health issues.

4:45pm-5:45pm **Drumming Up Your Feelings**

This is going to be a fun one. Join Saturday evening's featured speaker Mike Veny as he explores ways to drum up your feelings. Mike, a professional drummer will talk about how drumming has played a crucial role in his recovery from mental illness. Each participant will be given a drum and Mike will lead a jam session that you will surely never forget. You will never look at a drum the same way again.

5:45pm-6:45pm **Special Interest Sessions**

A-Estate Planning – Town Hall

A major concern for many NAMI families is how to ensure that a loved one with mental illness will be taken care of financially once the caregiver passes away. This session is designed to help ease these concerns by exploring different ways you can proactively organize for the future through estate planning. NAMI-NYS is pleased to welcome Louis Pierro and Robert Mascali, two of the country's premiere attorneys specializing in Estate Planning, Trust and Estate Administration and Elder Law services.

[Louis Pierro, Esq, Founder and Principal, Pierro Law Group](#)

[Robert Mascali, Attorney and Counselor, Pierro Law Group](#)

B-Healing Through Writing and Creativity – Fort Orange 5

Writing and creativity can be powerful cathartic outlets. Join NAMI Syracuse president and renowned author Karen Winters Schwartz as she explains her writing process and how it helped her when her own family was impacted by mental illness. Karen will offer tips to help you tell your story.

[Karen Winters Schwartz, Author, President, NAMI Syracuse](#)

C-Join the NAMI-NYS Wellness Team – Fort Orange 7

Healthy minds start with healthy bodies! This session explore different ways to incorporate wellness in your life. Nutrition, exercise, meditation and mindfulness strategies will all be discussed. The panel will feature people living with a mental illness and family members detailing how they incorporate wellness. Audience members are also encouraged to share their stories and tips on wellness.

[Moderated by Annie Romero Wright, Chair, NAMI-NYS Wellness Committee](#)

[Pat Anders, President, NAMI Columbia County](#)

[Fred Ellis, Concern for Independent Living](#)

[Jason Paden, Peer Recovery Advocate, Team Leader, Conference Wellness Committee, Community Inclusion Liaison, Catskill Center for Independence, Member, NAMI-Montgomery, Fulton, Hamilton](#)

6:45pm-9:30pm **Dinner- Tribute to NAMI-NYS Founding President Muriel Shepherd-Featured Presentation** –King Street Ballroom

Tribute to NAMI-NYS Founding President Muriel Shepherd

This past May, NAMI-NYS and the mental health community lost one of our greatest champions with the passing of Muriel D. Shepherd, the Founding President of NAMI-NYS. Everyone attending this conference owes Muriel a tremendous debt of gratitude and tonight we will pay tribute to this true hero.

Muriel was a constant crusader for bettering the lives of people living with a mental illness as well as empowering their families. She was a true visionary, whose tireless dedication allowed NAMI-NYS to become a provider of support, education and advocacy for families touched by mental illness in communities throughout the Empire State.

Anyone who was lucky enough to work beside Muriel will always remember her for her fighting spirit, keen mind, and most importantly her kind and generous heart. Tonight, we will hear stories from those who knew her well and view pictures from her remarkable life. Remembering and learning about her work will allow all of us to further commit ourselves to working to fulfill Muriel's dream of eradicating the stigma of mental illness and finding a cure for psychiatric diseases.

In celebrating our founder, we could not offer her a more fitting tribute than ensuring that Muriel's voice will never die and that her spirit and determination will always shine brightly within NAMI-NYS and all the work we do in guiding her legacy.

Finally, we can only imagine how much Muriel would have enjoyed being with us tonight to present the award which bears her name and to hear our featured presentation whose title speaks to the very heart of her life's work, "Transforming Stigma Into Strength."

The Muriel Shepherd Award will be presented following the tribute.

Featured Presentation Transforming Stigma Into Strength- Mike Veny

You will not want to miss this lively and inspiring presentation by Mike Veny, the founder of *Transforming Stigma*. A survivor of severe mental illness, Mike will share his remarkable story which includes being hospitalized, expelled from schools, and suicidal as a child to being a successful professional drummer, speaker, and entrepreneur as an adult. He will also detail how being confronted with stigma is an opportunity to educate and build relationships and how to find and maintain your own personal wellness. This knowledge is tremendously beneficial for both people living with a mental illness and family members. Mike provides audiences with a unique insight and understanding of mental health challenges and his firm belief that mental health challenges and people challenges go hand in hand and provides a guideline for people to see their challenges in a positive light. This incredible interactive experience is something you will never forget.

Sunday, November 16th

8:00am-9:00am **Breakfast** – King Street Courtyard

8:00am-8:30am **Interfaith Service** – Town Hall

Led by Lady Charmaine Day

8:30am-9:00am **Wellness Walking Group**

9:00am-10:00am **Ten Things You Can Do to Prevent Suicide** – King Street Ballroom

The death of Robin Williams stunned the world and prompted endless questions about the darkness and isolation that surrounds suicide! Suicide is the most preventable form of death and it is everyone's business. Staff from the Suicide Prevention Center of NY will present 10 practical things each of us can do to build safer and more competent communities.

[Gary O'Brien, Suicide Prevention Center, Research Foundation for Mental Health](#)
[Pat Breux, RN](#)

10:00am-11:00am **Fixing the Troubled Mental Health System** – King Street Ballroom

NAMI-NYS is pleased to welcome back Dr. Lloyd Sederer, medical director of the New York State Office of Mental Health. Dr. Sederer's informative and engaging presentations are always one of the highlights of our annual education conference. This year, Dr. Sederer will take a look at the state of the mental health system and the role both the Office of Mental Health and NAMI-NYS members can play in fixing the troubled system.

[Lloyd Sederer, MD, Medical Director, New York State Office of Mental Health](#)

11:00am-Noon **Ask the Doctor** – King Street Ballroom

After a weekend of learning about the latest in research and treatment of psychiatric diseases do you still have questions? As is tradition, our conference concludes with NAMI-NYS's trusted advisor Dr. Lew Opler answering your questions and offering his unique insights. NAMI-NYS is fortunate to have such a unique partnership and to be able rely on the wisdom of Dr. Opler who has been answering our questions both at the conference and in his "Ask the Doctor" column in the NAMI-NYS Newsletter for more than twenty years. If you are unable to attend this session, we encourage you to write your question down and we will give it to Dr. Opler for him to answer in the Newsletter column.

[Lew Opler, MD, Retired Medical Director, New York State Office of Mental Health](#)

Noon- **Conference Adjourns**