

Maintaining wellness and recovery when living with mental illness....

The fourth in a series of forums on behavioral health services in the Verde Valley-Sedona area will focus on NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and the services they provide in the Verde Valley and Sedona.

The series of forums, titled *Communities in Recovery*, is presented by six agencies, the Verde Valley Guidance Clinic, Mingus Center, Recovery Innovations Arizona, The National Alliance on Mental Illness-Sedona chapter, the Arizona Department of Economic Security's Rehabilitation Services Administration, and NAZCARE.

The NAMI presentation on March 10th will include the *In Our Own Voice* (IOOV) program in which two trained consumer speakers share compelling personal stories about living with mental illness and achieving recovery. Understanding recovery as having several dimensions makes its uneven course easier to accept. Recovery is the point in someone's illness in which the illness is no longer the first and foremost part of his or her life, no longer the essence of all his or her existence.

Throughout the IOOV presentation, audience members are encouraged to offer feedback and ask questions because the more audience members become involved, the closer they come to understanding what it is like to live with a mental illness and stay in recovery.

In addition to the IOOV presentation, the NAMI program will also include brief presentations by Bill Kennard, the Executive Director of NAMI Arizona, and Kathy Bashor, Manager at the Office of Individual & Family Affairs, Behavioral Health Services at the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Mr. Kennard will speak about NAMI Arizona's 2020 Vision: People with Mental Illnesses Freely Participating in the Full Life of Arizona's Communities. Transforming the community into places where people are not only welcomed but expected to participate and contribute to the good of the community is the mission of NAMI Arizona's 10-year plan. This strategy is based on a belief that, if together we change the way each community views the person with mental illness, then we will change the requirements, politics and resource decisions affecting behavioral health.

Ms. Bashor will speak about her role at both NAMI and AZDHS and her efforts to help the community get involved, identify resources and

collaborate towards our common goal of minimizing the impact of state budget cuts on behavioral health services

The monthly forums are held in the Community Room at the Verde Valley Guidance Clinic's Cottonwood campus, located at 8 E. Cottonwood St. This month's forum will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 10. The forums are free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

For information, call the Verde Valley Guidance Clinic's Community Relations Coordinator, Richard Dehnert, at 634-2236.