



The Thermometer Times

Published by The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Riverside, California

VOL. 20 NO. 5 Out of darkness . . . May, 2008

Dates to Remember

CARE & SHARE GROUPS

Clients and their guests are invited to come and participate.

Professional care providers very welcome.
Riverside County Mental Health Administration Building
(see page 13 for address & map)

Saturday 10:00 am - 12 noon
May 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31

TO FIND US ONLINE

Web Site: [DBSA, Riverside:](http://californiadbsa.org/dbsariv.html)

<http://californiadbsa.org/dbsariv.html>

E-mail: [DBSA, Riverside:](mailto:dbsaofriv1@aol.com)

[dbsaofriv1@aol.com.](mailto:dbsaofriv1@aol.com)

[DBSA, California:](mailto:dbsaofcal@aol.com) dbsaofcal@aol.com



Meetings start promptly at 10 am. Do yourself a good turn: Be on time to visit with friends before the meeting starts. If you come late,

please enter quietly. Announcements will be made at the close of the meeting.

Directions to

Jo Ann Martin's Home

Exit 91 Frwy at Van Buren. Go south 4.2 miles on Van Buren to Whispering Spur. Turn left.



2nd driveway on the right

16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504
951 / 780-3366

May is National Mental Health Month



Brian Wetzel

**Thursday May 1st,
6 pm**

**Riverside City College
Digital Library**

Auditorium

Side by Side:

'A Journey With Depression'

Brian was a successful stand-up comedian whose career and personal life became absorbed with his ongoing struggle with clinical depression and subsequent addiction.

He found himself on the brink of suicide through his 20's and 30's even as he built his successful comedy career, and spent hours volunteering with junior and senior high youth as a counselor and mentor. In 2002, Brian ended up at an emergency clinic being interviewed by a psychiatrist with a thick French accent making him feel like he'd landed in the middle of an absurd comedy. After years of having depression freeload off him, Brian finally told the depression to "Get a job!"

Out of his experience as a comedian and a person suffering with a serious brain/mood disorder, Brian began to write his autobiographical one-man show about his 20-year struggle with depression. He did this as a way to survive himself, and begin to help alleviate for others some of the horrible stigma that surrounds depression. He debuted his autobiographical one man show, in September of 2004 to sold out audiences in Sonoma County. Since then he and his depression have been touring the United States with *Side by Side: A Journey With Depression - a funny look at serious survival*, playing such diverse venues as Stanford University and Napa State Hospital. Since debuting his show, Brian has also been a popular speaker at colleges and universities as well as mental health conferences with his keynote message.

Brian was our Keynote Speaker at our State Conference last fall in 2007.

For those who missed the conference, this is your chance to see him in person.

For more info visit our website at www.wetzelproductions.com

Continued on page 3 (Mental Health Month)

a note from the Editor

We invite you to submit material for review and possible publication in the newsletter. Your articles allow us to get to know one another in greater depth and to learn of the many talents, interests and assets of our members.

Articles, poetry and/or drawings can be on anything pertaining to experiences you have to share regarding depression and/or Bipolar Disorder; what it is to live and cope with the disorder; how you learned of it, what helps, what doesn't. You may write on any other mental health issue or problem that you are passionate about. You can tell us about yourself and how you spend your time and what's important to you. You may want to write a report on a mental health event you attended or a mental health book you have read. We would appreciate that, too.

Drawings should be black and white, line or half-tone.

Your work may be submitted to JoAnn, Leroy or Lynne at DBSA Riverside meetings.

**It may be mailed to: *The Thermometer Times*
% Jo Ann Martin
16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504**

E-mail it to: JoAnnMartin1@aol.com

FAX to: 951/780-5758

Materials submitted may or may not be published, at the discretion of the editors, and may be edited for length.

Get your creative juices flowing and share your knowledge and experience with your DBSA friends through *The Thermometer Times*.

Thank you. Lynne Stewart

MOVIE NIGHT AT JO ANNS*

2nd and 4th Tuesday of April
6:30 PM

Tuesday, May 13

“The Flying Scotsman”

An obsession to achieve

Tuesday, May 27

“On The Edge”

**Chillian Murphy, often contemplating suicide
learns what life may offer him**

Enjoy pizza and an additional movie of your choice!

*Directions to Jo Ann's home on page 1, bottom of column 1 of this Newsletter.

The Thermometer Times 16280 Whispering Spur Riverside, CA 92504 (951) 780-3366

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Please feel free to reprint any of our articles. However, please acknowledge our publication, date, and author or source. It will please the authors and recognize their efforts.

Riverside Suicide Crisis Help Line

Call (951) 686-HELP [686-4357] if you need to talk to someone. It is available 24 hours - 7 days a week.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) if you need to talk to someone in any of 109 crisis centers in 42 states. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has just been launched by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) as part of the National Suicide Prevention Initiative (NSPI). In addition, a new Web-site has been established at

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Mental Health Month (continued from page 1)

More events:

ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH FAIR

Saturday, May 3, 2008

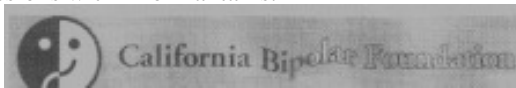
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. **Place:**
Magdalena-Ecke Family YMCA gymnasium
Encinitas, California (north coastal San Diego)

Sponsored by The California Bipolar Foundation

The YMCA is located just off Interstate 5, down the street from the Coaster train station.

The fair will be free to the public and all exhibitors. We are excited to announce that there will be representatives from both local and national mental health organizations, local psychiatrists and psychologists, renowned authors, nutrition experts, support group leaders, educational consultants, school and specialty program administrators, psychopharmacologists, resource center representatives, psychotherapists, advocacy programs, mentoring programs and clubs. The list is endless.

Throughout the day, there will be scheduled break out sessions with informal talks.



We Care Fair

Thursday, May 29, 2008

**Sponsored by the Riverside County
Department of Mental Health**

Hunt Park - Riverside, California

See Flyer for more details

14th Annual Meeting of the Minds

Conference

**“Pathways to the Future: Building
Tomorrow Today”**

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

8 am - 4 pm

Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, CA

**For more information, including registration,
call 714 / 547 - 7559**

CHALLENGES IN LIFE

By Bob Dillaber, Director, DBSA- Metropolitan Detroit

You know we all face many challenges in life, whether we have been dealt a mental illness or not. So called, “normal people” struggle with life...often daily. So do those of us who have been diagnosed with a mental illness.

It is so easy to consider ourselves in a different category because we have a mental illness. We are not different. Perhaps we have radical mood swings. Perhaps we have terrible times with depression. Perhaps we sometimes lose touch with the reality of everyday life. These are challenges we must and do face... daily, often.

“Normal people” face many of these same challenges. Unfortunately, for many of them, they don’t have the support systems we can have if we seek them out. People who help us in a struggle. People who help us become stronger. “Normal people” must make it on their own. I wouldn’t want to try to make it alone. I tried that for many years and it didn’t work well for me.

I think it’s time for us to acknowledge the fact that having a mental illness often brings with it many gifts. Gifts such as empathy, intelligence, creativity. I have met so many, many people with a diagnosis that are abundantly blessed with these attributes. What gifts have you been given that others do not have and that maybe you do not give yourself credit for having?

As I just turned 68 years old, I have come to realize that all of us human beings share the same fate. We are born, we live a life in the best way we can and we die. I believe that almost all human beings strive to be the best they can be and live an honorable life. Each of us has our own unique skills that we use to the best of our ability.

Challenges? Yes, we face them. But, so does everyone else. It is how hard we try in life that makes the difference. Having a mental illness can make us incredibly strong. Sometimes we may wilt in the wind of difficulties, but for most of us, we end up picking ourselves up and becoming even stronger. Who could ask for more?



Xavier Amador, Ph.D., NAMI's former research director and former member of the NAMI national board of directors, has had a dramatic life—one that has made, and continues to make, a difference in helping thousands of families.

He escaped from Cuba with his mother, sister and brothers, but his father was murdered when Fidel Castro came to power. At age 14, he read a book about psychology that inspired his career. As a stranger in a strange land, he was curious about people and “how we all fit together,” he said in a recent interview.

He is a clinical psychologist and adjunct professor at Columbia University, who has been a consultant to the National Institutes of Health and U.S. Department of Justice. For 15 years, he served on the faculty of Columbia's medical school and also was director of psychology at the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

“The trick is not to avoid a fight, but to fight right.”

He has been a consultant to or been interviewed by ABC News, CBS's *60 Minutes*, NBC's *The Today Show*, *The New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*, to name only a few.

He is a forensic expert who has worked for the defense on more than 30 death penalty trials. His first was that of Ted Kaczynski, the “Unabomber.” More recently, he was involved in the case of Zacarias Moussaoui, the only person thus far charged and convicted in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Both are today serving life sentences.

He is the author of eight books—including *“I'm Right, You're Wrong, Now What? Break the Impasse and Get What You Need,”* which is scheduled for release in bookstores on May 13, but can be pre-ordered through Amazon.com.

Among NAMI families, Amador is best known for *I Am Not Sick, I Don't Need Help: How to Help Someone with Mental Illness Accept Treatment* which defined the LEAP method—*listen, empathize, agree, partner*—for overcoming conflict, based on individual dignity, respect, and trust. *I'm Right, You're Wrong Now What?* offers the approach to a broader popular audience.

Neither book is about a “complicated therapeutic intervention.” Instead they are guides to practical communication.

“My older brother Henry developed schizophrenia and our relationship suffered terribly because we got into “I'm right, you're wrong” arguments about whether he had a mental illness,” Amador explained.

“Fifty percent of all patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder do not believe they are sick,” a clinical condition

known as *agnosognosia*. Lack of insight is caused by the illness itself.

“Meanwhile, millions of doctors and family members are dead certain they are sick and need help.”

The LEAP method helped Henry, as well as many other persons who were in denial about their mental illness, to nonetheless take their medication—helping to restore insight and move into more effective treatment.

LEAP is different from other conflict resolution or negotiation methods because it shows people how *not* to argue. Instead, people step aside in order to get what they need—while agreeing to disagree.

“There are situations that are inherently unresolvable,” Amador acknowledged. “But how you don't resolve it is far more important than the fact that you didn't resolve it.”

“The trick is not to avoid a fight, but to fight right.” Listening, understanding another person's perspective, and reflecting it back to them without rebuttals, comment or reaction strengthens empathy and helps convey respect and trust. When that happens, impasses can be broken.

Beyond mental illness, the LEAP method has been used to overcome conflict between a corporate CEO and his board of directors over eliminating a division of a company and a middle manager seeking to convince his boss to change his mind about laying him off—as well as a couple who disagreed about having another child and a couple in which a husband could not convince his wife that he had not had an affair.

Many personal crises pale next to the onset of schizophrenia—but they are no less real and can often tear families apart.

For Amador, his greatest satisfaction is in simply helping people—and seeing them want to change. He gets many letters and e-mails from people who have used LEAP to repair estranged relationships with children, spouses, parents and friends. “These letters usually make my eyes tear up,” he said.

“It is a great privilege to be trusted enough to hear the intimate details of another person's life. Because what's behind this leap of faith is an effort to face one's own demons and try and change.”

Seven Healthy Habits for Fighting

- 1. Don't insist you're right**—being adamant only makes the other person more stubborn.
- 2. Don't engage in insults or name-calling**—it only makes the other person angrier and more rigid
- 3. Pick the right time**—pay attention to whether you or the other person are too angry, defensive, stressed or tired to be receptive
- 4. Don't use absolutes**—people become more rigid or defensive in the face of absolute claims such as “you always” or “you never.”
- 5. Don't throw in the kitchen sink**—bringing up past conflicts or transgressions only makes another person angrier and more rigid and derails attention to the issue at hand.
- 6. Listen without defending**—let the other person feel that

continued on page 5 (LEAP)

LEAP (continued from page 4)

they are being heard or understood, which reduces defensiveness.

- 7. Reflect back what you hear**—one of the most effective ways to “lower the temperature” of an argument and open up the other person to your own point of view.

Source: NAMI Advocate, April 2008

History and a Mystery Solved

by Marcia Purse

Lithium, discovered in 1817, was noticed to have mood stabilizing properties in the late 1800s when doctors were using it to treat gout. (At least one doctor, in fact, concluded from this that gout was the cause of mood disorders.) It was Australian psychiatrist John Cade who, in 1949, published the first paper on the use of lithium in the treatment of acute mania. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration did not approve lithium for use until 1970.

It's important to know that bipolar disorder is not caused by a lithium deficiency. Rather, it happens that this naturally occurring substance has the fortunate effect of acting as a mood stabilizer.

For almost 50 years, manic-depressive people were treated with lithium even though medical science did not know why or how it worked.

Then in 1998, University of Wisconsin researchers unlocked the mystery. It has to do with nerve cells in the brain, and the receptors for the neurotransmitter glutamate. Neurotransmitters are released from one neuron (nerve cell) and may bond to the receptors of a neighboring cell or be picked up by autoreceptors from the releasing cell (among other things). The result varies depending on what the type of receiving cell and the type of neurotransmitter.

The University of Wisconsin researchers found that lithium exerts a dual effect on receptors for the neurotransmitter glutamate - acting to keep the amount of glutamate active between cells at a stable, healthy level, neither too much nor too little.

UW Medical School professor of pharmacology Dr. Lowell Hokin, who directed the research, said that from their research it could be postulated that too much glutamate in the space between neurons causes mania, and too little, depression. There has to be more to it than that, since antidepressant medications, for example, work on the receptors of other

When Relationships Go Bad and What We Can Do About It

John Trant, The Educational Speaker

for DBSA - Fox Valley 1/22/2008

Summary by Mark H.

Having a mood disorder can challenge many areas of our life including our relationships with others. But even those without a mood disorder can find it difficult to maintain healthy, successful relationships. For example, in the general population, regardless of the presence of a mental illness, it is estimated that 50% of marriages and remarriages end in divorce. Therefore it is to everyone's benefit to learn how to develop and sustain healthy relationships with others.

John Trant spoke to us on this topic at our educational meeting on January 22, 2008. He is a therapist associated with Central DuPage Hospital. He can be reached at 630-933-2888.

John started by asking, “What is the most stressful job?” After audience members made several guesses, he indicated that the most stressful jobs are those where one is responsible for something over which they have no control. For example, a waiter's tip may depend on the quality and timeliness of the food that is prepared by those in the kitchen. The waiter is responsible for serving good food, but they have no control over how it is prepared.

When it comes to relationships, this conflict between control and responsibility can cause serious problems. For example, this can happen when one person is responsible for making a decision, but the other person in the relationship maintains control by being the one to criticize the decision and judge whether or not the decision was a successful one.

A related source of problems in relationships is anger. Anger comes from unfulfilled expectations of yourself and others. When therapists are looking for the source of someone's anger, they will often look at the person's expectations. Once the expectations are dealt with, then the anger will naturally subside. But if the source of the anger isn't dealt with, then the anger can turn inward and develop into depression.

John indicated that for relationships to succeed, couples must verbally discuss expectations. Without clearly stated expectations, people are more likely to get angry and argue. He said that arguing is a waste of time because it is only negative communication and it is a hindrance to listening.

Anger produces energy which motivates one to action, for better or worse. It can be like a sword used for defense that ends up hurting yourself instead. It can lead to no compromise. For relationships to succeed, people must be able to compromise and must work at it every day.

What does it mean to compromise? It means that you relinquish control and share responsibility. It means that you openly discuss expectations and reach decisions together. It means that we encourage each other to be ourselves and to

continued on page 6, (Lithium)

continued on page 6, (Relationships)

Relationships (continued from page 5)

value each other just as we are.

John gave an example of a man who had a wife who cooked excellent meals. The man was asked, "What would you do if your wife couldn't cook?" The man replied, "If my wife couldn't cook, I'd just take her out to dinner." The man was saying that it didn't matter what his wife could or couldn't do well. He was committed to loving her as she was, and even celebrating her inability to cook by taking her out to dinner!

In addition to knowing and expressing one's own expectations, it is also crucial to know and express one's own feelings, and to recognize and respect another person's feelings. John pointed out that feelings are not the same as judgments or opinions. Feelings are more directly tied to a person's sense of self-worth.

John defined "therapy" as identifying something about yourself that you think is true, and then intentionally sharing it with others to get feedback. In fact, this is part of what it takes to build a friendship. And by making friends with our loved ones we begin a journey of self-discovery and mutual support that can last a lifetime.

Source: DBSA - Fox Valley Newsletter, Spring 2008

Lithium (continued from page 5)

neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine. However, this is certainly a giant step forward in understanding the biological basis of bipolar disorder.

Note: a large amount of extra glutamate can lead to epileptic seizures or even kill the second cell from overstimulation. Because of Lithium's stabilizing effect on glutamate receptors, scientists are also studying whether this medication can protect from the cell death that occurs in conditions such as Parkinson's, Huntington's and Alzheimer's.

Source: DBSA - Fox Valley newsletter, Spring 2008



Loving Your Losses

Sigmund Freud's seminal essay *On Melancholia and Mourning* published in 1917, discussed the link between loss and depression in such a way as to have an enormous impact on the way we have thought about depression

since. It compares mourning, characterised by deep sadness and withdrawal, to clinical depression, where sadness is not felt and is instead replaced by a debilitating attack on the self.

I have suffered from the latter state since the age of 20. (I am now 33), and have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder. All along I have been aware of losses in my life, and know that instead of grief I have experienced extraordinary symptoms as a way of processing these events. No psychotherapist has ever suggested how to manage this, nor have I been counseled in such a way that explores the link between psychotic illness and loss as strongly as Freud did.

So instead I ask the question, 'What if?'... what if it is possible to visualise your losses... to give them a shape, or a colour? What if, as education theory goes, it is possible to give your loss an image, or an imagined sound, or a movement, depending on your preferred learning style? Learning styles have been grouped into visual, auditory and kinetic, and as a teaching assistant, I know that this is actually true when observing and working with children.

So I know that I am a visual learner, and recently have tried to imagine some long standing, painful losses in as accurately a way as possible. One is shaped like a balloon, which is very like the blown up, manic states I am sometimes in. Another is like a very black, sharp-edged, hard object, which very well describes depressive feelings about a more recent loss. I hold these images in my mind and wonder, now that they are there, what do I do about them?

I am aware that I do not 'get over things' like other people. Fearful that as I get older, I will inevitably suffer more loss and my symptoms will accumulate, I need to have a plan of action. I need to ask again 'What if?'...

What if a way out is to, literally, love your losses? Love isn't a passive thing, it's a doing word, a verb. I have singularly failed to care for myself over the years because, as an extrovert, my 'self' in my inner world just isn't that tangible. But what if you could help people by making it tangible? What if any knotted, twisted emotion you feel could be personified and cared for until it loses its power? Then perhaps the effects of life events wouldn't escalate and make the underlying bipolar condition worse over time.

A thought: can you visualise a loss? Will you get better if you love it?

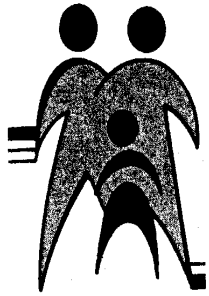
*Source: The Pendulum, Winter, 2007
The Journal of MDF
The Bipolar Organization,
London, England*

Even better than the feeling that someone will always be there to take care of you, is the feeling that...that someone is you.

J. Martin, 1975

2-1-1

**Need help? Don't know who to call?
Get answers. Always toll-free.**



Family/Friends Support Groups

Riverside County Dept. of Mental Health
Offers Support groups for families and friends
of people with severe
and persistent mental illness.
These Support Groups are offered
throughout the County of Riverside.

The County also offers the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program

This program is a 12-week series of
educational meetings for
family members.

There is NO COST TO YOU.

For information on dates, times and location,
Please contact:

Riverside Co. Dept. of Mental Health
The Family Advocate Program
951 / 358-4987 or 800 / 330-4522

Join friends of DBSA-Riverside

*At Jo Ann Martin's**

for the

Holidays

Picnics or dinners
at noon

~

Swimming, badminton, spa, food and more...
during summer months.

Friendly sharing during the winter.

~

Bring a salad, main dish,
or dessert.

If you can't bring a dish, come anyway.

Meat & beverage will be furnished.

~

Holidays include: Memorial Day,
4th of July, Labor Day,
Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

~

*Directions to

Jo Ann Martin's Home

Exit 91 Frwy at Van Buren. Go south 4.2 miles on Van
Buren to

Whispering Spur. Turn left.

2nd

driveway
on the right



16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504

951 / 780-3366



The Starting Point SUPPORT GROUP FOR DEPRESSIVES AND BIPOLARS

Mesa Clinic, 850 Foothill Blvd., Rialto

Mondays from 10:30 to 12:10

For more info: *82 (909) 864-4404

ORIGINAL MATERIAL WANTED

Do you have a story to tell, or a poem or art work?

We welcome submissions
to our newsletter.



If you have something you think
we could use, please send it to:



EDITOR

DBSA P.O. Box 51597 Riverside, CA 92517-2597

FAX 951/780-5758

Do you have a Medic Alert Bracelet?

Do you wear it? All the time?

In an emergency, would others know what
medication you are taking and why?

Always wear your
Medic Alert bracelet.

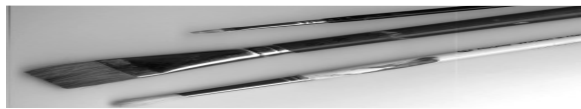
It could save your life.

If you don't have one,

ORDER ONE TODAY!

(Available through most pharmacies)





The Art Connection

Rhue Pritchard
is in charge.

May 10th - writing
May 24 - mixed media collage
at

Jo Ann's after lunch

Many of us who are dealing with depressive or bipolar disorders are creatively gifted. Here is a chance to try your "wings", learn from others, and share.

For more details:
call us at: 951 / 780 - 3366

DBSA - Riverside



Join us for the

Memorial Day Picnic

Monday, May 26, 2007
at 12:00 noon at Jo Ann's

We will be showing "The Secret".

This film can change your life!

Swimming, badminton, spa, food
Bring a salad, main dish,
or dessert.

If you can't bring a dish, come anyway.
Meat & beverage will be furnished.

See page 1, lower left column of this
newsletter for directions.

Coming soon on KCET



Millions of Americans are overcome by feelings of sadness, long periods of inactivity, difficulty thinking and concentrating, changes in appetite and time spent sleeping, feelings of hopelessness, and sometimes thoughts of suicide. These are all symptoms of depression – a public health crisis that needs our attention as it continues to go startlingly underdiagnosed and undertreated. Depression is a documentary that – by weaving together the history, science, and treatment of depression with intimate portrayals of families and individuals coping with its effects

– paints a picture of the illness that has never before been seen on television. Stay tuned after the documentary for a 30-minute discussion show that brings together a panel of experts and community activists to discuss this issue further. Check your local listings for date and time. ~

Six Chix

by Rina Picolo

