Where Do I Begin?

A basic guide to resources in Tulsa County for people with mental illness and their families.

***A Letter from the Board***

When it comes to mental disorders, sometimes it’s difficult to know what to do and in what order. The members of NAMI Tulsa understand, primarily because either we are living with mental illness ourselves or someone we love is doing so.

And most of us have been in your shoes—overwhelmed, don’t know where to turn, and, yes, even afraid.

It’s our wish that this little booklet may save you a few minutes. We hope it will lighten your load and give you a hand on your journey toward help and a more normal life.

Our thoughts and efforts are with you.

*NAMI Tulsa Board Members*

P.S. This booklet is not a complete list of services available in the Tulsa area. It is to be used only as a starter tool kit to assist you or your family member in your search for services.

***Arrange for Treatment***

The major thing to remember is that hundreds of thousands of families across America are facing the same experience as you and your family.

***You are not alone****.*

The first step is to reach out for help. Depending on your loved one’s condition, you will turn to various services, but the first step is to get a professional diagnosis. If all goes well, your loved one will be receptive to your setting up an appointment with a therapist, psychiatrist, family physician, or one of the agencies listed. If not, you will have a more challenging experience. It is, however, very important to talk to your loved one about your concerns and encourage him or her to see a professional health care provider.

***Recovery is Possible—Think Positive***

In the past, mental illness often meant a lifetime of pain, but, thanks to many years of research, it is now treated with an aim toward recovery. It’s true that the road to recovery is not an easy or simple one, but the key is DON’T GIVE UP. Don’t stop until you find the right combination of treatment, support, and services. And take good care of yourself. There’s no substitute for getting enough sleep, eating right, and taking care of your surroundings and yourself. Also, gather around you people who understand and care. That goes not only for the loved one who has a mental disorder but for family members as well.

***Advocate for your loved one***

 Every person with a major health issue needs an advocate, especially if the person is challenged with mental illness. A person with mental illness may be unaware of how disturbing his or her thoughts and actions are becoming. Often, she or he actually suffers from anosognosia or inability to know one has an illness. However, if your loved one is currently seeing, or will soon see, a mental health provider, you will be taking steps toward success.

Privacy laws prohibit health professionals from giving out information about an adult patient unless the patient has signed a **Consent for Release of Confidential Information**. However, ***patient consent is not required for you to give information to the professional***. This is important because patients may “present well” while talking to the professional, minimizing and often leaving out crucial information, i.e., past hospitalizations, substance abuse problems, or past traumatic events. Even if your loved one is currently having psychotic symptoms, these may not be observed during a brief interview or evaluation. So provide any and all information that the doctor/mental health provider needs to complete a full assessment.

Whether or not you are able to speak directly with the doctor, you can and should write a complete history and fax, email, or hand-deliver it to the doctor’s office or hospital as quickly as possible. Toward this end, you should begin keeping a log of prescribed medications and dosages and their effects, doctor visits/hospitalizations, and past and current behaviors and symptoms. Additionally, you should document job history and legal trouble. In the midst of a crisis, you may feel you will never forget the details, but as time goes on you will lose accuracy. So write it down!

Most mental health professionals are capable and caring, but trust your instincts. If after a prescribed length of time, a treatment or medication isn’t working, don’t be shy about urging a change. Speak up! If you don’t, then who will?

***If There is a Crisis, Act Promptly***

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, a crisis will arise. If your loved one is reaching a crisis situation, Tulsa County offers **COPES** (**Community Outreach Psychiatric Emergency Services**) at **744-4800**. This team of mental health professionals specializes in crisis intervention. If needed, COPES may offer crisis care for up to 23 hours at the Crisis Care Center, located at 1055 S Houston Ave. The number is 918-921-3200.

If the crisis involves personal or public endangerment, call 911. Many law enforcement agencies have officers specially trained to deal with people with mental disorders. When you call **911 or 596-9222** ***be certain to say that your relative is in crisis for a mental illness.*** The Tulsa Police Department and COPES cooperate to defuse crisis situations, so you might notify both.

 Sometimes nothing seems to work. If your adult loved one is unwilling or incapable of making a rational decision to seek treatment, you may pursue the involuntary treatment process. For more information, see our NAMI Tulsa booklet, “Emergency Detention and Civil Commitment.” Our offices are located at 708 South Boston, Tulsa. Our phone number is **587-6264**.

***Explore Medication***

Often, medication can be the key to recovery, but be prepared to go through numerous changes before finding the one that is right for you or your loved one. Most medications have some kind of side effects, such as tremors, dry mouth, sexual side effects, or weight gain.

Make sure you thoroughly research the types of medications that are being prescribed, particularly if a medication is causing a troublesome side effect. There may be other medications that will be effective, with fewer side effects. It’s a trial and error process, but the benefits will be well worth your persistence.

A frequent question is “How do we pay for medications?” Check with your health insurance company to see if the medications are covered. And if you or your loved one doesn’t have health insurance, don’t give up; there are options. Log on to **www.insureoklahoma.org** for information about low-cost health insurance.

 If you are receiving Supplemental Security Income **(**SSI**)** benefits, apply at the **Department of Human Services (DHS)** for **Medicaid ( Soonercare).** Call **581-2401** to see which office is closest to you. If you are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI**)**, apply at DHS **for help with paying your Medicare Part B (doctors) and your Medicare Part D (prescriptions) premiums.**

If you have no insurance, public or private, apply for mental health services at a community clinic contracted with the **Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS).** Medications may be provided free of charge. Both public and private physicians can help you apply for **Prescription Assistance Programs** to provide medications.

 Another resource for medication is **GenScripts,** a pharmacy selling only generic drugs. **GenScripts** does not accept insurance, which allows it to sell at lower prices:

3980 S Hudson, Tulsa 835-2112

666 W Houston, Broken Arrow 615-3354.

Many psychotropic medications, such as Zyprexa, Risperdal, Abilify, and even over-the-counter medications, are available free to low-income residents of Tulsa County at **Tulsa County Pharmacy**, 2401 Charles Page Blvd. For availability of specific medications, call 596-5575.

The bottom line is that you will have to be proactive about medications and the way you pay for them.

***Seek Financial Help, If Necessary***

Mental disorders can be very expensive diseases. Besides treatment costs, there are the fundamental costs of living. In many cases, there are periods when a person with a mental disorder is simply unable to work. Some public money is available, but obtaining the money is often a long and persistent battle.

People who cannot work because of the illness may be entitled to disability payments from **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** or **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**. Money for medical treatment will then be available through **Medicaid** or **Medicare**. The paperwork for these government programs is complicated and frustrating, so your loved one may need help with the application process. Legal Services of Oklahoma, 584-3338, may assist low-income applicants. Also, many private attorneys specialize in **SSI** and **SSDI**; their fee will be a percentage of the back pay received by the eligible applicant.

The place to begin is the **Social Security Administration**, **4750 S. Garnett, 1-866-931-7106, here in Tulsa. You can call for an appointment or walk into the office and take a number. You can also schedule an in-office or telephone appointment by calling the regional number 1-800-772-1213; ask to speak to an agent because the automated system is a nightmare. Another way to apply is online at www.ssa.gov, but the website may be frustrating to use.**

The key to obtaining **SSI** or **SSDI** is to keep all appointments they make for you with specialists (at their expense), fill out all questionnaires, and make sure to inform them about any address change. It’s best to have your loved one sign a form naming you as personal representative; then you, too, will receive a copy of all mailings, and Social Security will share information with you. Finally, do not give up! If the application is denied, immediately file for Reconsideration; if denied again, immediately file for a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge.

Though it might seem overwhelming, it’s worth the effort. The income could bring increased stability to the life of a person with a mental illness. So remember: be patient. Later, as someone moves into recovery, the **SSI** or **SSDI** will provide a safety net if the person should decide to re-enter the workforce.

***Look for Suitable Housing***

Finding housing is a difficult task, and your loved one dealing with mental illness will need your support while he or she searches for a decent and safe place to live. Naturally, having a place to call home is crucial to a productive and worthwhile life and is vital to continued stability. Rent charged by the following housing options is usually 30% of the renter’s adjusted monthly income.

 **The Tulsa Housing Authority (THA)**, **582-0021,** located at 415 East Independence in Tulsa, has applications for Public Housing and for Section 8 vouchers (extremely limited). Walk in during business hours to apply, or go to **www.tulsahousing.org** to print an application.

 **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** is another possible resource. Check the HUD Web site for privately-owned, HUD-subsidized apartments in your city. Apply at the apartment of your choice**: www.hud.gov**.

 **Mental Health Association of Oklahoma (MHAOK)** is working to provide safe and affordable housing for adults with mental illness. For more information contact **Mike Thomas (382-2472)** for the homeless program, **East Oak Property Management** for leasing information **(918-382-2474)** or go to **www.mhaok.org**.

 **Counseling & Recovery Services of Oklahoma, (CRSOK) 492-2554,** located at 7010 S. Yale in Tulsa, has housing for its clients with mental illness: **www.crsok.org**.

***Look for Suitable Housing (cont.)***

If your loved one is experiencing urgent housing needs, there are some emergency options in the Tulsa area:

 **DaySpring Villa for Women (245-4075)** Sand Springs  **Tulsa Day Center for Homeless (583-5588)** 415 W. Archer

 **Salvation Army**  **Shelter** **(582-7201)** 102 N. Denver  **Tulsa County Shelter** **(596-5584)**

2401Charles Page Blvd

 **Youth Services (582-0061)** 311 S Madison

 **John 3:16 Mission** **for Men (587-1186)** 506 N. Cheyenne

***Reach Out to Others for Support***

When you are beginning to deal with mental illness, it seems, sometimes, there are more questions than answers. Often, the best answer is to seek support in the community with people who share your experience.

One of those programs to put you in touch with the answers to your questions is the NAMI “Family-to-Family” Education Program. It’s a 12-week course for families of individuals with severe brain disorders. The course is taught here in Tulsa by trained family members who can lend their own experience to the curriculum and to you. The course is **FREE**,and all course materials are furnished at no cost.

The course discusses the clinical treatment of Bipolar Disorder (Manic Depression), Major Depression, Borderline Personality Disorder, Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorder, Panic Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Co-occurring Brain Disorders and Addictive Disorders. Family-to Family teaches the knowledge and the skills that family members need in order to cope.

To find out when the next course will be taught, call **NAMI Tulsa (587-6264)** between the hours of 9 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday or go to http://namitulsa.org.

NAMI Tulsa also teaches a course specifically for caregivers of children with brain disorders. It is called “Basics.” Like “Family-to-Family,” the program and its materials are **FREE**. Call **NAMI Tulsa** for the next scheduled course.

There are also support groups that offer their own kind of experience, education, and comfort.

A full list of NAMI support groups can be found on the NAMI Tulsa web site at http://namitulsa.org or by calling the NAMI Tulsa office at 587-6264.

In addition to the many support groups NAMI Tulsa offers, other local support groups for adults and for parents of children with mental illness are included on the support group list and can be found on the NAMI Tulsa website.

You can be added to the mailing list by calling **587-6264**,or you can read the information online at http://namitulsa.org.

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Never Give Up Hope

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***Reach Out to Others for Support (cont.)***

**Other Sources of Support**

 **Mental Health Association**

Located at 5530 E 31st Suite 1000, MHAOK provides Support Groups such as the Bipolar Support Group, Depression Support Group, Anxiety Support Group, Survivors of Suicide Support Group, and Parents Supporting Parents Support Group (caregivers of family members). More information is available at **www.mhaok.org** or **585-1213**.

 **Crossroads Clubhouse**

Located at 1888 East 15th, Crossroads provides adults with mental illness a place to have community, low-cost meals, support, and opportunities for support in employment, housing and education. For information, call **749-2141**.

 **PACT Teams (Program for Assertive Community Treatment)**

Prospective members must meet certain criteria. PACT Teams provide long-term assistance to those selected.

PACT Team 599-7404

OU IMPACT Team 660-3150

CO-PACT Team (for persons with co-occurring disorders)

582-7228

**“Suicide doesn’t end the chances of life getting worse; it eliminates the possibility of it ever getting any better.” – Unknown**

**Resources for Suicide Prevention:**

**Suicide Prevention Line: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)**

**De Prevention del Suicidio: 1-800-628-9454**

**Crisis Text Line:**

**Text “START” to: 741741**

**You Are Not Alone!**

***Mental Health Resources***

**Important Numbers**

COPES (Community Outreach Psychiatric Emergency Services) 744-4800

Crisis Care Center 921-3200

Tulsa Police Department 911 or 596-9222 (non-emergency)

Reach Out Helpline-Heartline Toll free 1-800-522-9054

Suicide Prevention Line 1-800-273-8255

**Outpatient Mental Health Services**

Counseling & Recovery Services of Oklahoma (CRSOK) 492-2554

CRSOK- Sand Springs office 245-5565

Calm Center (Children & Youth in Crisis) 394-2256

Day Break Family Services 398-6000

Family & Children’s Behavioral Health Services (F&CS)

102 N. Denver 582-1200

2325 S. Harvard 712-4301

3604 N. Cincinnati 425-4200

650 S. Peoria (Call for all new appointments.) 587-9471

Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa 588-1900

Laureate Psychiatric Clinic 481-4000

Parkside Psychiatric Clinic 588-8888

CREOKS of Tulsa 592-1622

Shadow Mountain Behavioral Health System 492-8200

Youth Services 582-0061

**Inpatient Mental Health Services**

Brookhaven 438-4257

Hillcrest Medical Center 579-1000

Laureate Psychiatric Hospital 481-4000

Parkside Psychiatric Hospital 588-8888

Tulsa Center for Behavioral Health (TCBH) Crisis Line 293-2100

Shadow Mountain Behavioral Health System 492-8200

**For services not listed above, call**

OK Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

(405) 522-3908

Oklahoma Disability Law Center 743-6220

Legal Aide Services of Oklahoma 584-3338

Helpline 211

**Find Help. Find Hope.** Call the **NAMI Tulsa** office to find free mental health education courses, support groups and advocacy resources at 918-587-6264 or email us at nami-tulsa@sbcglobal.net.

Compiled by NAMI Tulsa, an affiliate of NAMI Oklahoma and the National Alliance on Mental Illness, with the assistance of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services