
President's Letter

By Ray Atwater

As we begin a new fiscal year for NAMI-Orange, I assume the role of President with myriad feelings: a feeling of awe for the plethora of achievements of the past year; a feeling of anxiety of the awesome responsibility for the many tasks and needs before us!

My reflections on the past year led to an epiphany of sorts. While seeing the accomplishments led by various board members, I guess I have not realized how blessed and fortunate we are to have so many volunteers utilizing their particular knowledge, talents and gifts for NAMI's mission, until recently at the NAMI-NC Fall Regional Meeting I responded to a NAMI-NC board member's query about how many were on our Board. When I replied we had 14 board members, each involved in a specific area of meeting goals and our mission, she exclaimed that we were really lucky, as some affiliates have only that many members! We are indeed fortunate and want to thank the board members for the many hours they contribute to the cause.

Our Look Back

Past president **Barbara Nettles-Carlson** orchestrated events, programs, strategic alliances and accomplishments with support of long-time board members and new volunteers, but still, I suspect, she put in more hours to NAMI-Orange than we realize. Her energy, professional foresight, and network of contacts among those in the mental health care field, have insured that routine tasks and new goals were met with enthusiasm. Likewise, the contributions of **Muriel Easterling**, our longtime Treasurer, Interim President and Board of Directors' member, did more than sustain us. Rather, she has assured that we continue to flourish! We congratulate **Ruth Morrow**, Secretary, and **Miriam Green**,

Membership Chair, for their well earned retirement, and offer heartfelt thanks for the years of service they have offered to our organization.

Our Look Forward

Our look forward begins with an active, capable Board of Directors. **Jay Zaragoza**, President-Elect, will be involved in long-range planning and special programs. **Muriel Easterling** continues as Treasurer. **Tim Sussman** serves as Consumer Representative and UNC psychiatrist **Nancy Clayton** as Professional Representative. **Cheryle Atwater** leads our Family to Family Educational Program. **Susan Benda-Perry** is Advocacy Chair and liaison with the Mental Health Association. **Gove Elder** is Faith Community Outreach Chair. **Gary Gaddy**, At Large member, will be involved with affordable housing issues. **Wadleigh Harrison** manages the Helpline(929-7822), and is a housing advocate. **Barbara Nettles-Carlson** is *News & Views* editor and acting Membership chair. **Molly Pratt** manages our meetings. **Susan Spalt** directs Publicity and Development which includes Mental Illness Awareness Week.

A fresh look at the job descriptions reveals how extensively each board member is involved with day to day tasks that define our organization. Most have recruited excited and involved volunteers.

A number of positions remain OPEN! The needs are real: the workload would be lighter for everyone if all members are involved! Together we will make a difference in the live of those with a mental illness and the lives of their families! So I want to ask every member for three actions:

1. **Invite** your friends, neighbors and family to join NAMI-Orange.
2. **Take inventory** of your talents and areas of knowledge.
3. **Call** me (732-1512) or any board member to ask what you can do to help.



Holiday Potluck

Saturday December 18 6:30 PM

At the home of

Julia Trimmer & Keith Glidewell
222 Weaver Mine Trail
Meadowmont, Chapel Hill

Bring: a dish of your choice to serve 6-8. Dress casual. Family members and consumers, old-timers, newcomers, all are welcome.

To help hosts know how many to prepare for...please RSVP by phone or email to 942-1393 or unikorn@bellsouth.net

Directions: Go east on 54 Bypass (Raleigh Rd). From Glen Lennox Shopping Center go about 1/2 mile, through 3 lights. At the 4th light turn LEFT onto Meadowmont Lane (main entrance to Meadowmont, just across from the Friday Center). Take third left onto Sprunt St, go up the hill past Wellness Center. Turn right, on to Weaver Mine Trail. Our house, 222 Weaver Mine Trail, is at the end of the second block, at the corner of Parkridge Dr. Feel free to park in our driveway or on the street. Phone: 933-1979

"A low-stress event
For food and fellowship"

"God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference." Anonymous

OPPORTUNITIES AT NAMI ORANGE

by Muriel Easterling

We need new volunteers to fill "vacant chairs" in the NAMI Orange leadership.

The following are Board positions. That means an opportunity to work with a dedicated and lively group of people in the governance of your affiliate. Our Board meets every other month on the second Sunday, 3-5pm.

SECRETARY Do you enjoy writing and have an ear for detail? The secretary takes minutes at Board meetings (tape recorder available), distributes minutes by email, and maintains complete file of Board minutes and related material for archives.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR Are you a computer savvy person who would like to manage a (growing) data base? The membership chair is responsible for maintaining our membership and friends tracking system and sending out meeting notices. NAMI Orange has Access software with operating system XP Pro, to be installed on the Chair's computer.

PROGRAM CHAIR Do you like to plan and organize programs in an area rich in resources? The Program Chair is responsible for researching program ideas and engaging speakers for our regular NAMI Orange educational meetings.



INTERESTED IN FILLING ONE OF THESE
VACANT CHAIRS? CONTACT RAY
ATWATER

Holidays.....

By Steve Haebig

Holidays are usually spoken of as times of joy, but are often (at least for me) a source of irritation, humiliation, and exasperation rather than celebration. The same seems to be true for a lot of people with a mental illness. The first reason is obvious--"Vacation from WHAT?" Hey, for those with no idea of anything that seems desirable to do and/or no means to do anything with, every day fits a perverse definition of a "holiday." It's just not that much fun.

In a lot of ways, official holidays are even worse times than usual for a lot of people with a mental illness. For one thing, I haven't met a psychiatrist, psychologist, or any other "health professional" who makes a habit of working on holidays. Other things such as stores, libraries, are either on different hours or closed altogether. By the way, public transport is usually closed which makes getting out of the house, well, kind of difficult. I might seem paranoid, but it seems like the entire world is conspiring to make your life more difficult for a few days.

Should you actually travel during the holidays, you get the joy of traveling at the busiest, most stress-filled times of the year. A bitter part of holiday travel is that someone else is usually paying for your ticket, thus lending the inevitable tinge of "you aren't pulling your weight economically." That's probably true, but is also a horrible time to bring it up.

The worst thing about the holidays for depressed me is the drumbeat insistence that you must have "FUN!" Hey, I can't have fun, that's the problem! It does not help trying to simulate the impression having fun so that others can enjoy their fun more.

I like having my fun surprise me. If something fits the definitions of what a holiday should be (fun being one of them) then I like calling it what it is. I live a life pretty disconnected from the calendar, so I wonder why I should try and

reconnect with it at the most difficult time to do so?

One thing I like to do is put in new holidays at times that fit both me and the folks I want to celebrate with. I usually try to put in one in mid to late February. Presidents' Birthday aside, this is when I **need a holiday**. Not many people disagree with me on this one so far.

Give me a call, I'll bring the pizza.

Steve Haebig a member of Club Nova, can be reached at rudent4@aol.com.

Coping Strategies....

Holidays can be a difficult time when a family includes a person with mental illness. Substance abuse can further complicate the situation.

This time of year is difficult for many people, not just those with mental illness. The holidays are stressful times because they confront us with many expectations: to be happy; to function in social settings that involve large groups and family members we may not have seen for a year; to confront an abundance of liquor and perhaps also recreational drugs; to select gifts for people we do not know well, and to receive gifts with the proper emotions; and, sometimes, to take stock of our lives, when they may not be what we once expected.

Dealing with these situations can be difficult for anyone, but more so for people with schizophrenia and schizo-affective disorder. In addition to social reticence and paranoia, these illnesses involve many internal distractions (such as auditory hallucinations and bizarre thoughts) that are difficult to filter out. The stimulations of a family reunion or party setting can raise these distractions to overwhelming levels. And then, when the person must deal with distant family members, he or she must respond to (*continued on page four*)

(“Coping Strategies”, continued from page three)

small talk and questions about life, current activities and personal successes.

Holidays may also bring up memories of happier times, when the person was not ill and life was better- forcing him or her to reflect on the current situation and draw depressing comparisons.

Finally, there is the cultural expectation that the family will draw together during the holiday season, expressing love with Hallmark-card sentiments and matching cocktail napkins.

What can family members do to cope with these stresses?

First, BE CREATIVE AND FLEXIBLE. Change the family traditions to provide “reasonable accommodation” for the member with a mental illness. Change your expectations. Let the person know that he or she is welcome to participate to the limit of their capabilities. Allow time in the schedule for smoking breaks and outdoor walks that let the person get away from the pressures of interaction. Realize that the person may not show up at all due to heightened anxiety or deepening symptoms.

Second, PLAN AHEAD. Discuss situations your loved one may encounter. Remind the person about family members likely to be present. Help him or her strategize and rehearse responses to awkward questions. Avoid last minute changes of plan. Surprises may be upsetting.

Third, HELP DEFINE A ROLE OR A TASK AS AN ANCHOR POINT on holiday occasions. Taking photographs, preparing and serving food, doing a picture puzzle, a game in another room can provide a focus that takes the attention away from the anxieties of social interaction.

Fourth, BE SENSITIVE. Take time before the event to discuss the mixed feelings and expectations person may have about holiday events. Be aware of the pressure that the presence of alcohol can present to a recovering user. For people with dual diagnosis (defined as a mental illness combined with substance abuse), the holidays can be a treacherous time. Many may never have spent an

entire holiday season clean and sober. In addition, parties and their social stresses may be a personal “trigger” that leads to drinking or drug use.

Fifth, DE-EMPHASIZE GIFTS if they are a focus of stress. The exchange of gifts can be an uncomfortable experience: trying to anticipate the likes of people the person may not know well; and trying to react with enthusiasm when receiving gifts that may not match expectations. If gifts are an essential part of your holiday tradition, try to set up a less intensively personal situation, such as a grab bag or cost limits for all family members, which will reduce expectations all around.

All of these approaches are part of the general, everyday coping skills and guidelines that family members of people with mental illness need to adopt. Understand that you and the family can reduce stress, minimize recurring episodes and help your loved one through difficult times. In addition to helping and talking, there is value in backing off and offering less contact until the person feels better. Understand that relapse is to be expected and the family must treasure successes without being overly disturbed by failures.

Finally, FIND TIME FOR YOURSELF. Structure pleasurable activities that will take you away briefly from the situation and the situation’s problems. For all of us, a vacation, a time to “recharge your batteries”, can enable you to endure the long haul. Keep a positive attitude and hope for the future. Treatments for both mental illness and substance abuse are improving all the time. Peer programs, family education, therapy and effective case management and common sense strategies can help reduce holiday stress for persons with mental illness and their families.

Adapted from “Coping Strategies for Family Members During the Holidays” by Rebecca Woolis, summarized in “Speaker Notes” by Thomas T. Thomas.

Club Nova News

Dreams Came True in October

By Elizabeth Malphurs, MSW

Dreams came true in October: Club Nova's dream of replacing the dilapidated apartments behind the clubhouse with dignified, new housing; individual dreams of moving out of group living situations into independent housing; a community's dream of providing accessible, affordable housing for people with disabilities.

The **Club Nova Apartments** were completed at the beginning of October, and the first group of residents moved in on October 8. Over the course of the month, 24 residents, with lots of help from the community, moved into their new apartments. Thanks to the generosity of many individuals and groups, Club Nova was able to provide furniture and household items to any resident who needed them. The apartments themselves are beautifully designed efficiencies, each with its own balcony and floor-to-ceiling windows. Located directly behind the clubhouse in downtown Carrboro, the apartments are on the bus line and within walking distance of shops and other attractions.

Heather Nash, a new resident of the apartments, moved from a group house into the Club Nova Apartments. She describes the experience of living in her own place as "awesome, a dream come true." Heather has already turned her apartment into a home by adopting a cat, Wiggy, and adding her own creative decorating touches. But for Heather, this apartment represents more than just a place to stay. She states, "I have more independence now. I can do what I want to do, and I feel like I'm part of the community."

The Club Nova Apartments were initiated by Club Nova, but required the cooperation of a number of groups to come to fruition. Among the members of this partnership were the Chrysalis Foundation, Sarver Housing Group, Orange County Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Mental Health Association in North Carolina, who

is managing the apartments. Residents of the new apartments all receive Section 8 housing assistance, which allows them to pay one third of their monthly income in rent; the subsidy is a critical component of the new apartments' success. Most residents receive disability benefits and cannot afford housing in the private market.

Club Nova extends a huge "thank you" to the groups and individuals who helped make this dream a reality, including many members of NAMI. We invite everyone to come by to see the finished apartments and help us celebrate our dream come true.

Elizabeth Malphurs, a member of the Club Nova staff, can be reached at emalphurs@opc-mhc.org

"Brushes with Life" Gallery News

Good Things Are Happening

by Nancy Clayton, MD

Good things continue to happen with *Brushes with Life: Artists & Mental Illness* at UNC Neuroscience Hospital. Our seventh exhibition went up in July 2004, and will be rotated soon. Our next gallery reception will be Thursday February 17, 5:30pm to 7pm. Mark your calendars to attend!

In August we closed a very successful exhibition at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh. Beginning in January, 2005 that exhibit will travel to art centers around North Carolina.

A new Art Supply Fund will enable us to give gift certificates for art supplies to many of our artists over the holidays. Thanks so much to the many NAMI members who came out and shopped at Southern Seasons, which donated 5% of August 17 proceeds to the Gallery. We collected \$326.00, which was added to the Art Supply Fund. We're talking with the Carrboro Library located in McDougle Schools, to bring a traveling exhibit there from June to November 2005. As you see, STEP Art gallery committee and our artists are busy and the gallery activities continue to grow.

Nancy Clayton, who directs "Brushes with Life" Gallery,

Personal Notes

Rebecca Bailey recruits volunteers and coordinates our bulk mailing. Pictured below is a “mailing party” at work getting out the fall issue of *News & Views*. Give Rebecca a call if you’d like to help (929-5818).



Left to right, Alice Simmons, Jean Dubey, Rebecca Bailey, Molly Pratt, Paul Pratt (photo David Bibb)

Bill Collins died October 12 at his home at Carolina Meadows. He was 90 years old. He and Miriam have been longtime faithful members. We will miss Bill and extend our sympathy to Miriam.

The **Human Rights Committee** of John Umstead Hospital has given a memorial contribution to NAMI Orange in honor of the Rev. **Bob McClernon**. He was a member of that committee, a social worker at the hospital, a pastor, and a long time advocate for the mentally ill.

Tom and Samantha Maynard and family will soon be moving to Virginia where Tom has taken a position in the mental health system. Best wishes and Godspeed. We have deeply appreciated Tom’s able leadership as the Director of Orange Person Chatham Area Program for the past 14 years.

NAMI Orange membership year begins January 1, 2005. Please renew your membership or join us during December.

Outstanding Caregiver Receives Flamer Award

By Barbara Nettles-Carlson

For over a decade NAMI Orange has recognized direct caregivers at John Umstead Hospital with an annual award of excellence. Given to an outstanding health care technician, the award is named in honor of Mary Margaret Flamer, who died in a tragic car accident whilst a patient at the hospital, and is remembered by many staff members. Individuals from various departments are nominated for the award by their supervisors. Each nominee receives a certificate, and NAMI Orange presents a cash award to the winner.

Anna Rogers, HCT, EMT, received the 2004 award. She has worked in ADATC, the unit that treats individuals with substance abuse problems, since 1995. Her supervisor’s letter of nomination described Ms. Rogers as “conscientious, dependable, self-motivating and always an advocate for her patients. She is a strong supporter of the ADATC program and has a vast knowledge of the tenets it is based upon. On more than one occasion, when the group leaders have been called away, Ms Rogers has pitched in and led groups to ensure that the scheduled programming occurred”.

Pictured are the award recipient and nominees, NAMI Orange presenters and CEO **Patricia Christian**, RN, PhD, who presided at the event.



Left to right, Barbara Nettles-Carlson, Ray Atwater, Anna Rogers, Dennis Crudup, Brenda Hill, Willie Lawson, Dr. Patsy Christian. Nominees not pictured: Sarah Williams, Angela Lyon. (photo, Linda

Dameron)

A Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding

By Jaki Shelton Green

Across our land we pray a prayer of hope
and healing,
Across our land today we become the
architects
for a path of kindness, understanding and strength
We build within us a sacred house of invitation.

Peace is flowing like a river
while gentle strong hands hold harsh waves at bay
Gentle strong hands hold the whispers, the tears,
the disappointments, the fears, and the tragedies
Gentle strong hands hold the recovery, the smiles,
the dance, the celebration, and the joy
Gentle strong hands clasp other gentle strong
hands and lock together.

Our hands help the river flow more peacefully
The river of healing
The river of faith
The river of reconciliation
The river of service.

We extend our hands in a ritual of love,
We extend our hands in a ritual of caring and
concern
We extend our hands in a ritual of anxiety and
grief
We extend strong gentle hands for an anointment
of compassion and mercy.

O source of life,
By Thy mercy which embraces all things
By Thy power which dominates all things
Towards which all things are humble
By the knowledge which encompasses all things
By the light of Thy face through which all
Things are illuminated.

O all powerful
O all great
O all sublime
O first and O last

O that we may sing a song of praise and love
for all people living with mental illness.
O sing a praise of thanksgiving for the families,
the caregivers, the advocates and the wonderment
of science and technology that promises
breakthrough and insight.
O sing a praise of forgiveness for the ignorance,
the silence, the shame, the secrecy, the isolation
and ill treatment.
Enslave the spirit of meanness
and intolerance.
O sing multitudes of praises for recovery,
renewal, acceptance and grace
O sing a song of charity for the unspoken
needs and extend gentle hands offering
true tenderness for the broken spirits.

O sing rivers of kindnesses that we all might
surrender and wade into oceans of grace, oceans
of support, oceans of life
as we feel gentle strong hands holding, loving,
strengthening, and affirming us all.

*Poet Jaki Shelton Green, a member of NAMI Orange
who lives in Mebane, spoke and presented this poem at
a service of the Community Church, Universalist
Unitarian of Chapel Hill during Mental Illness
Awareness Week, 2004.*

SUPPORT RESOURCES

**Recovery Inc. Friday mornings at Caramore
Community. Phone 918-3677. Recovery Inc is
an international organization whose goal is to
help people manage anger, fears and other
emotional disorders and improve their mental
health. Weekly group meetings offer a system
of self-help techniques which members learn
and then practice in their daily life.**

**Mental Health Association in Orange County
sponsors support groups. Free, open to public.
Call 942-8083 or visit www.mhaoc.com Anxiety
Disorders, Depression/Bipolar, Schizophrenics
Anonymous, Family Advocacy**

**NAMI Orange confidential sharing time.
Family members and consumers welcome.
Second Saturday at Church of Reconciliation.
Phone 929-7822 for more information.**



Board of Directors

- Ray Atwater, president**
732-1512, atwaterhome@earthlink.com
- Nancy Clayton, MD professional representative**
962-9798, nancy_clayton@med.unc.edu
- Muriel Easterling, treasurer**
918-3538, easterling@mindspring.com
- Gove Elder, faith community outreach**
967-5403, ggelder@email.unc.edu
- Gary Gaddy, at large**
403-9520, garygaddy@mindspring.com
- Wadleigh Harrison, helpline**
942-0355, wadleigh67@yahoo.com
- Barbara Nettles-Carlson, newsletter**
942-1393, unikorn@bellsouth.net
- Molly Pratt, meeting manager**
929-6888, pratt.p@worldnet.att.net
- Susan Spalt, publicity & development**
967-3054, swspalt@mindspring.com
- Tim Sussman, consumer representative**
933-5584, eagleclawAone@bellsouth.net
- Jay Zaragoza, president elect**
732-7719, k1ywy@aol.com

Research Volunteers Needed

RECEIVE FREE THERAPY AND EARN \$85.00. If you:

- Have schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder
- Hear voices that are upsetting to you
- Are between the ages of 18-65

Then you may be able to participate in a research study looking at the effectiveness of Group Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Group Supportive Therapy (ST) for reducing auditory hallucinations. Details:

- 12 sessions of either CBT or ST over a three-month period
- It's **FREE**

To find out more please call Liz Evans at (919) 843-5262 or send her an email at elizabeth.evans@med.unc.edu. This research is under the direction of Dr. David Penn, and has been approved by the UNC-CH behavioral IRB.

Calendar

Saturday, December 18 6:30pm. Holiday Potluck. Hosts: Julia Trimmer and Keith Glidewell, 222 Weaver Mine Trail, Chapel Hill.

Saturday January 8 9:30-10:30am NAMI Orange meeting, Church of Reconciliation, for confidential sharing time. No speaker.

Sunday January 9, 3-5pm. NAMI OC Board meeting. Carol Woods Conference Rm.

Saturday January 22, 8:30-10:30am. LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST. Church of Reconciliation. Panel of legislators. Keynote address: "State Mental Health Reform: Unfinished Business" by Michael Moseley, Director NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities & Substance Abuse

Tuesday January 25 7-9:30pm. Durham Family to Family class begins. Contact: Renee Piere 598-7820.

Sunday January 30 3-5:30pm. Northern Orange/Person County Family to Family class begins. Contact: Sandy or Bill Moyer 382-7408(see flier page 9)

Saturday February 12 9:30-11:30am, NAMI Orange Meeting, Church of Reconciliation. 9:30. Sharing time. 10:30 speaker

Thursday February 17, 5:30-7pm. Brushes with Life" Gallery Reception. 3rd floor UNC Neurosciences Hospital

Sunday February 20, 3-5:30pm. Chapel Hill Family to Family class begins. Contact: Susanna Burns, 932-4304 (see flier page 9)

Saturday March 12, 9:30-10:30am. NAMI Orange meeting, Church of Reconciliation. 9:30 Sharing time. 10:30 Speaker TBA

Friday-Saturday April 1-2 NAMI North Carolina Spring Conference. N. Raleigh Hilton.

 **NAMI FAMILY-TO-FAMILY
EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**for family members
of close relatives with**

**Major Depression
Bipolar Disorder (Manic Depression)
Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorder
Panic Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Borderline Personality Disorder**

A series of 12 weekly classes structured to help family members understand and support their ill relative while maintaining their own well being. The course is taught by a team of trained volunteer family members who know what it's like to have a loved one with a serious mental illness in the family. **There is no cost to participate in the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program.** Over 30,000 family members in the U.S. and Canada have completed this course. We think you will be pleased by how much assistance the program offers. We invite you to call for more information. Classes are offered throughout North Carolina*.

Durham Classes Start: Thursday, January 25, 2005

Westminster Presbyterian Church, 3639 Old Chapel Hill Road Durham, NC

7:00-9:30 PM

Contact: Renee Piere (919-477-9604)

Chapel Hill Classes Start: Sunday, February 20, 2005

Advent Lutheran Church, 230 Erwin Road, Chapel Hill, NC

3:00-5:30 PM

Contact: Susana Burns (919-932-4304) or Cheryle Atwater (919 732-1512)

Northern Orange/ Person County Classes Start: Sunday, January 30, 2005

Ebenezer Baptist Church, 1210 Pleasant Green Rd, Durham, NC

3:00-5:30 PM

Contact: Sandy or Bill Moyer (919-382-7408)

For family members/significant others only

Registration required. Class size limited.

***Call NAMI NC at: 919-788-0801 for other locations**

Sponsored by NAMI NC, NAMI Durham, and NAMI Orange County with support from the OPC Area Program

Please join us or renew your membership. Annual dues are \$35.00. Open Door membership, \$3.00 is available to those with limited income. Your dues give you membership in the Orange County, North Carolina and National NAMI. Make your check payable to NAMI Orange County and mail with this completed form to: NAMI Orange County, PO Box 4201, Chapel Hill, NC 27515

Our membership year begins January 1, 2005

NAME _____ PHONE: _____ EMAIL _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

___ Annual membership dues (\$35.00 regular or \$3.00 open door)

___ Donation (tax deductible)

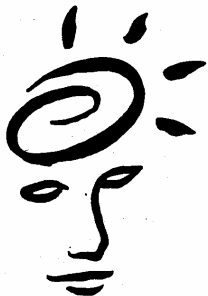
___ Please remove my name from your mailing list

NAMI Orange County is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is tax deductible.



Local Affiliate of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
PO Box 4201
Chapel Hill NC 27515-4201
www.namiorange.org

NON PROFIT ORG.
U S POSTAGE
PAID
Chapel Hill, NC
Permit No. 380



Open Your Mind

Mental illnesses
are brain disorders