Message from SARDAA, CEO

Dear Friends,

We wish everyone good health and the best for this holiday season.

There is so much stimulus around us throughout December. Even good times bring stress and over exertion, over indulgence and over expectations.

So this is a time to help ourselves to some self-care and lower our expectations of our self and others. Our frustrations with unrealized expectations can lead to exacerbation of depression and other triggered symptoms. So, if you set realistic expectations of yourself and others, the frustration can be reduced, even eliminated.

Some advice that I’ve found to be helpful include:

1. Manage Expectations

✓ Endeavor to be realistic in expectations of yourself and others. This is a time to enjoy your family and friends in a manner that is comfortable not stressful.

✓ This is a time to protect yourself and avoid/manage what you have learned is stressful for you.
2. Set a Budget
✓ Be realistic in how much you are able to spend and stick to your personal abilities. Remember, the best gifts can be of one’s self: artwork, music, handmade items – including cards, and your company or phone call.

3. Keep Your Healthy Habits
✓ This is tough around this time when food seems to be a theme. But try to limit your indulgences. A piece or two instead of half of the box can satisfy your taste buds.

4. Stop and Breathe
✓ Literally take time for refreshing deep breaths.
✓ Attend the party or parties that are truly enjoyable for you and you have the energy to attend.
✓ Ask yourself this: “does attending this event cause more stress than happiness?”

5. Self-Care!
✓ Journaling and tracking your mood can really help decrease your stress level over the holidays.
✓ Use the "daily mood" tracker in our Schizophrenia Health Storylines app and start tracking your mood with only a few clicks a day.
✓ You can journal by simply using our journal tool in the Schizophrenia Health Storylines app, then watch your progress over time.

Finally, know that you are indeed someone we care about and we wish you peace, safety, happiness and goodwill.
Warmest regards,
Linda Stalters, MSN
CEO
Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance of America

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**Message from FFS, Family and Friends, Coordinator**

Reflecting on gratitude, of which many are especially mindful of in November, I'd like to say that I'm not sure of much in life, but of this I am sure...I'm grateful for having met you on this challenging path which life has chosen for us. I've not met a stronger, more loving, committed group of people than we peers, we family. I wish you, and the special one in your life, love and serenity in the coming holiday season.

With Heart,
Mary Ross

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**Message from SA Staff Supporter**

Requirements to start an SA group
By Sandy Dimiterchik

Friday, December 1 was my first time to lead a Schizophrenia Alliance group. The meeting was held at The Extra Mile here in Lafayette, LA. The turnout was good – 8 people -- and all participated while we started off with an affirmation, read through various parts of the Blue Book about SA groups, and went over the Six Steps. Everything is laid out in the Blue Book. All you need is empathy and a good listener's ear. Well, and a couple of other things.

First of all, you need to have schizophrenia or a related disorder (mainly with an occurrence of psychosis). The disorders include bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, and depression with psychosis. Next, you need to have a place to hold the meeting. This can include other non-profit organizations (like I have), churches, libraries, anywhere that it is free to hold a meeting. Last of all, you need to contact SARDAA so that we can send you an SA Group Leader Manual, a couple of Blue Books, and some brochures on SA and SARDAA. Once you have contacted headquarters, you probably will hear from me, acting as a liaison and resource for SA Group Leaders.

Other things you might want to consider include participating in one of our five weekly teleconference calls. By calling in, you get a live version of how your meetings will flow. Everybody uses the Blue Book to outline meetings. So, all meetings have the similar format. Of course, we also stress that each group is independent and you can hold social events too if you want to. It is all up to the members of the group!

Also, we are holding a SA workshop in April 2018 at our annual SARDAA conference in Houston, TX. SA Group Leaders, including
myself, will train you to lead SA groups using the SA Group Leader Manual. This is an exciting opportunity. For more information about attending, contact info@sardaa.org.

Another thing you might consider is taking things to another degree, by training to be a certified peer support specialist. You will gain skills that will help you run the meetings more smoothly. Every state has its own certification process. Contact me if you want to learn more about that option! Of course, definitely contact me if you want to start a SA group – sandy.dimiterchik@sardaa.org.

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**Peer Submissions**

A Gathering
By Sandy Dimiterchik

A gathering of people can be called by different names. It is a meeting of people, sometimes to play games, or getting together to fellowship or network. Some events are fun, others to stop a jerk. What they have in common is a similar cause, and for everyone involved each takes a pause from life and one’s surrounding. Sometimes spiritual, other times just being a human being. It doesn’t make a difference how old the people are, just that they agreed to gather, nothing more.

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We welcome your message/art from SA Members for inclusion in the newsletter. Please submit your message to: info@sardaa.org or mail to SARDAA PO Box 941222, Houston, TX 77094-8222 for consideration for next month’s newsletter.

*Your story might be included in a SARDAA newsletter and might be published in a future edition of the SA Blue Book.*
Exciting holiday news!

SARDAA is participating in the Newman's Own Foundation $500K Holiday Challenge. It's a friendly fundraising campaign where nonprofit organizations compete to raise the most money with top teams winning grand prize cash donations.

SARDAA is raising funds to reclassify schizophrenia to a neurological brain disorder. Reclassification will mean more scientific research, access to hospital beds and improve treatment outcomes. Funds will help support trainings, travel to meet with legislators, education and promotion materials.

The Campaign launched on Tuesday, November 21st and a total of $500K will be given away to organizations in the Challenge.

Schizophrenia is a neurological brain disorder that requires treatment NOT incarceration or result in homelessness!

Together we can accomplish this!

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Join our team as a fundraiser by setting up a campaign for our cause and reaching out to your network of friends, family members, co-workers, everyone you know. It takes less than 5 minutes to set up your fundraiser.

Go to [https://www.crowdrise.com/sardaa](https://www.crowdrise.com/sardaa) and click Join the Team and Create Your Fundraiser now and donate. Then share your page with your contacts.

Thank you in advance for your support. Every dollar helps, big or small.

Let's work together to Reclassify Schizophrenia Now!
SARDAA extends its appreciation and gratitude to Board Member, Dr. Raymond Cho, for enthusiastically Co-Chairing the symposium.

Watch for more details in the newsletter and on the SARDAA website. Opportunities to sponsor the conference and vendor exhibits are available. Contact Flora Davis, Director of External Affairs for more information at flora.davis@sardaa.org or call 817.925.4421.
From the Desk of John P.
“Happiness Series”

How do we sum up all this business on happiness? First of all, those of us with mental illness need to be careful about self-blame if we are unhappy. Scientists believe that 50 percent of the equation on happiness is a result of inherited brain chemistry. As one scientist interviewed on ABC-News said: "There are certain brains that are more predisposed to experience happiness compared to other brains." It would be a double injustice, if we psychologically beat up on yourself over habitual unhappiness, or take seriously others who try to do so, when in fact the source of the problem is something biological over which we have little control.

We can take heart that human beings usually adjust to their circumstances and return to their original state of happiness after difficult periods. One study at the University of Illinois showed that physically disabled students had the same reported levels of happiness as able-bodied students, to within one percentage point.
It might be worth remembering that there can be meaning to periods of unhappiness--that we might grow in unexpected ways if we are called to "climb a great mountain" of difficulty.

Phone Support Groups

**SA Conference Call Groups**
*Only for individuals diagnosed*
- Sundays - 7 pm Eastern Time
- Mondays - 4 pm Eastern Time
- Thursdays - 7 pm Eastern Time
- Fridays - 7 pm Eastern Time
- Saturdays - 4 pm Eastern Time

**Spirit of SA Conference Call**
*For SA Leaders and Potential Leaders*
- First Wednesday of Each Month - 7 pm Eastern Time

**Family and Friends Support Group**
*Not for individuals diagnosed*
- Every Tuesday - 7 pm Eastern Time

**Toll-free Calls**
- Call-in information (855) 640-8271
- Entry Code 88286491#
- International Number (720) 362-6499

**Facebook Support Group**
*Only for individuals diagnosed*
- **JOIN The Facebook Group Here**
- *This is a Closed group, ask to be added.*

*** HOW TO START AND GROW AN SA GROUP ***
*By Margery Wakefield*

Welcome to SA (Schizophrenics Alliance)! I understand that you want to start an SA group, and that is great!  

Help for people with Schizophrenia and Related Disorders.

Now it is easy to record details and specifics about symptoms, medication, moods, and more. Choose what you want to track, and see all the information you need to help you or your loved one who is living with schizophrenia and related disorders.
Get the Schizophrenia Health Storylines™ Mobile App Today! The mobile app is FREE for all users on iOS and Android devices. There is also a web version available, accessible through the browser of any desktop computer or mobile device.

SARDA and Self Care Catalysts had the opportunity to work with Kristy Speaks, an individual, like you, living with schizophrenia. Kristy is a mother of 3, who after graduating from nursing school was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

She said that out of all the apps in the market, Schizophrenia Health Storylines self - care app was the most supportive as it allows her to track her symptoms, moods, and journal her thoughts.

To show your support for Kristy, we are reaching out to you to download the app today! We hope that you benefit the same way she does!

Download Schizophrenia Health Storylines today!

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ENLIGHTEN2

Laura Llewellyn, Premier Research
(866) 921-3155
A call to action from a CEO on the front lines of the opioid crisis
By RICHARD F. POOPS
December 7, 2017
My company, Alkermes, has been at work since the late 1990s developing and bringing to patients a medicine that helps them fight addiction to opioids. As we set out on that path, CEOs of larger companies urged me to reconsider that decision. They pointed out that addiction is a difficult disease with challenging patients, a fragmented treatment system, and plenty of stigma. We went ahead anyway, convinced in the power of our science and the compelling medical need.

Aripiprazole May Reduce Cocaine Cravings in People With Schizophrenia
November 2, 2017
cravings better than the dopamine blocker perphenazine after an acclimation period, according to a small, double-blind a randomized trial.

Changing attitudes about schizophrenia turns The Bloc into award winner
November 4, 2017
The hits keep coming for New York City-based ad agency The Bloc, which was awarded the Best in Show in this year's Healthcare Marketing IMPACT Awards. The prize comes a year after being named Agency of the Year.

Humanitarian Awards Nominee
November 2017
Driven by its mission to "Be Great to Do Good," The Bloc is committed to promoting positive change in our society.

Medication Adherence and Hospitalization Costs in Schizophrenia
Medication adherence is essential to manage acute symptoms and reduce risk of relapse in adults with schizophrenia.

The PM360 Trailblazer Award Winners
Acute and chronic pain are a reality for millions of Americans. READ MORE

Schizophrenia Originates Early in Pregnancy  
November 20, 2017  
Summary: Using mini-brains grown in the lab, researchers have discovered schizophrenia likely begins toward the end of the first trimester of fetal development. Researchers believe, based on their findings, schizophrenia could potentially be treated in utero. READ MORE

Research findings will help identify genetic causes of brain disorders  
November 27, 2017  
New findings will help to identify the genetic causes of brain disorders: researchers at the Universities of Basel, Bonn and Cologne have presented a systematic catalog of specific variable locations in the genome that influence gene activity in the human hippocampus, as they report in the journal Nature Communications. READ MORE

Genome-Wide Studies Aid Investigation of Dual Diagnosis of Schizophrenia and Substance Use Disorder  
November 28, 2017  
Several new genome-wide investigations of schizophrenia and substance-use disorders are helping researchers understand how these two conditions may be related, according to a paper published in Genome Medicine. READ MORE
Brain Campaign:

Take the Pledge

I will change my language from Behavioral or Mental disorder to Brain disorder.

I will educate others to change their language from mental illnesses to brain illness.

I will not use stigmatizing, discriminatory or derogatory language related to brain disorders.

I will encourage my peers, family members, and colleagues to advocate when they see discriminatory language or practices in the media or in public.

I will advocate that people with brain disorders have equal and comprehensive health care.

I will treat all people with brain disorders with respect and compassion.

Help Support Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America

Amazon donates to Schizophrenia & Related Disorders Alliance. Shop for great deals at smile.amazon.com/ch/33-1213657

Easy steps to support Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America through Amazon Smile:

Sign in to your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com.

Select Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America Search for and select Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America as your charity. Once selected, you will receive a confirmation email.

Shop and checkout as you would on Amazon. No extra cost is passed on to you, but Amazon will automatically donate 0.5% of your purchases to Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America.

Please share with your friends and family to join you to support Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America!

By choosing Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America as your charity on smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to Schizophrenia and Related
Disorders Alliance of America.

Please take a moment to find out how you can help support SARDAA, not only today but every day - at no extra cost to you!!

**IT'S SO SIMPLE: just bookmark this link** [http://smile.amazon.com/ch/33-1213657, start shopping and support us every time you shop.](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/33-1213657)

Shop with PayPal and choose SARDAA to Donate with PayPal Giving Fund to help support SARDAA.

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**Texas and Louisiana Friends:**
**Re-Enroll Your Kroger Plus Cards**

You can support SARDAA without spending a penny! Register Schizophrenia and Related Disorders on your Kroger Plus Card and they will donate a percentage to SARDAA each time you use your card.

Please register online at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com)
Link to: Schizophrenia and Related Disorders–Kroger Plus Card 90425

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**Help Change Lives -- Donate Now**

Thank you to those who already made a donation
Every contribution makes a difference.

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**Sincerely,**
Angel White, Editor
Jordan Helwig, Creative Designer