Message from SARDAA, CEO
Dear Friends,

SARDAA continues to strive to represent individuals affected by psychosis – the most seriously ill, their families and the community. We’ve met with people from the East Coast to the West Coast and places in between. We listen as people express their most pressing concerns and what they want us to help them accomplish.

People are excited about the work to reclassify schizophrenia spectrum disorders as neuropsychiatric brain illnesses so that people will be treated without discrimination and receive appropriate care not disdain, abuse and punishment for an illness they didn’t elect to experience.
People are pleading to revisit the HIPAA “compassionate communication exception”. Caregivers are exasperated as they watch their loved one decompensate and yet they feel impotent in the struggle as they feel barred from vitally important communication that could save their loved one’s life.

We hear you and we won’t give up. We are broadening our efforts as Local SARDAA Chapters are beginning to form to create a wider and greater impact on each community.

Thank you all for the incredible work you do! Thank you for your strength and courage!

Very best,

Linda Stalters, MSN, APRN (ret)
Chief Executive Officer
Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance of America

Nominations for SARDAA Annual AWARDS

Dr. Frederick Frese Award
Joanne Verbanic Award
Valiant Researcher
Exceptional Media Award
Clinician Extraordinaire Award

Please submit your nomination no later than April 15, 2019
Award Criteria and Form

Message from FFC, Families for Care, Coordinator

As a family member I looked to the community for support related to my daughter's diagnosis. Fortunately I found SARDAA, which has recently merged with Families for Care, given their mutual goals and vision. Relying upon the support arm of SARDAA, which serves families and friends of those diagnosed with Schizophrenia and the psychoses, I connected with my 'peers' and soon recognized one of our primary needs being self care. Concerning this my latest quest is learning the benefits of meditation and mindfulness, which can be developed with practice. Through this I believe I gained insight into why the symptom of hearing voices, by one diagnosed, is mostly negative and condescending, i.e. why not positive and supportive *at least some of the time*? In reading about meditation, I came across a quote in a
Book by author Dan Harris which references “the brain's negativity bias”, as opined by some contemplative neuroscientists. It appears we may be hard wired toward negativity in our thinking. What gives me hope is that the practice of meditation gives promise of the ability, through awareness of this tendency, to overcome or at least improve it. The book conveys the idea that most people are subject to a barrage of less than positive self messages on a daily basis. I can personally attest to this, and likely my situation is ramped up due to concerns for my family member. I have dabbled in meditation over time, and through the help of author and guide, Dan Harris, in his books '10% Happier' and 'Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics' I believe I have found a significant coping resource, and gladly share it with those who are also searching.

With Heart,
Mary Ross

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**Message from SA Staff Supporter**

What SA Means to Me?

By Sandy Dimiterchik

I have been a member of SA since 2013. SA, or Schizophrenia Alliance: Psychosis Support and Acceptance, has helped me come to terms with my illness, which is schizoaffective disorder. The program has provided me with a way to start and continue my journey of recovery. Meeting people with similar disorders has helped me to make friends where I don’t worry about being judged. I know I am not alone in feeling that SA has changed my life. After all, according to the Blue Book, thousands have been helped in the US and internationally since the 1980s.

What does SA mean to you? You can share your story with the office at info@sardaa.org or me at sandy.dimiterchik@sardaa.org or call me at 832-439-1586. Your story may appear in the SARDAA monthly newsletter.

Join a conference call or start a SA group. For more information about the conference calls go to our website at [www.sardaa.org](http://www.sardaa.org). To start an in-person group contact me.

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Book Review: Meaningful Recovery from Schizophrenia and Serious Mental Illness with Clozapine, Edition IV

By Sandy Dimiterchik
The book Meaningful Recovery from Schizophrenia and Serious Mental Illness with Clozapine, Edition IV by Lewis A. Opler, M.D., Ph.D., Robert S. Laitman, M.D., Ann Mandel Laitman, M.D., and Daniel Laitman, B.A., is a good resource for people with schizophrenia and/or serious mental illness. By showing multiple perspectives of a person’s experience with schizophrenia and the use of clozapine, the book offers hope and information. These views are both clinical and personal. There is a lot of material to learn.

In the first section, Dr. Ann Laitman describes her experience as both mother and doctor to a son with schizophrenia. Her journey describes a person’s efforts to provide her son the best quality of life possible. Then, Daniel Laitman, who has schizophrenia, describes his experience with the illness and taking medication. His story is encouraging as he completes both high school and college. He explains how he found his niche as a comedian. Next, we hear from Dr. Lewis Opler, a proponent of bringing clozapine back to the United States. Most of this section is clinical, with descriptions of different antipsychotics and atypical antipsychotics. The last section is by Dr. Robert Laitman, and is both clinical and personal, as a doctor and a dad. He provides the reader with information about his own experience treating patients with clozapine.

Since I am a client who takes clozapine, I enjoyed learning about the history of clozapine and the struggle to bring it back to market. I never realized how fortunate I am to be able to take the medication. I also discovered new things, like medication for controlling my diet, and staying away from sugar, especially soda drinks. Sharing his dream for a facility with specific clinical staff by Dr. Robert Laitman was encouraging, along with learning how successful his son is and how he is ability to pursue dreams and goals.
Personal Story of SA Members

Paula
As a young child, I was sexually abused. By the age of 6, I had been in court twice to testify. I was very withdrawn and very afraid of men. I was assigned a visiting teacher to try to help me with the emotional problems that had developed. She was my counselor until I graduated from high school.

As a teenager, I became very suicidal and attempted to kill myself numerous times over the next 25 years. I was diagnosed as schizophrenic, given shock treatments and very strong medications, but these did not help. My mother was told I would never leave the hospital and that I would most likely kill myself, but they would continue to work with me. I was self-destructive and I very deeply believed I was a bad person.

When I was in my early twenties, I fell in love and married. My husband knew nothing of my problems, but I loved him and knew we
would conquer anything. I believe this was the worst experience of my life. He did ungodly sexual things that I had never heard of or thought possible; thus, I could not respond correctly to him, and after a few weeks we separated and eventually ended our marriage. This added to the self-hatred, and again I tried to kill myself. It seemed the answer to every problem was to end my life. I could not find anything good in myself. I honestly believed that I was bad and I had no right to be happy or even live.

For years I was in the state mental hospital more than I was home, until about two years ago. At that time, I was in a medical hospital with IVs and unable to keep anything in my stomach. I decided if I was ever going to be helped, I had to want to be well because all the doctors and therapists could not help me unless I helped myself and really wanted to live.

I know I have a long way to go but I am now working with my doctors and therapists and helping other schizophrenic people. I am a member of the Clinton Valley Center Citizens Advisory Council; I lead a chapter of Schizophrenia Alliance at Clinton Valley Center. I have helped take care of an 87-year-old Alzheimer’s patient; and tried to help educate the public about mental illness. I know I will make it because I want to and I have the best support anyone could ask for.
Artwork submitted by W. Warsky

Are you or someone you know a Social Media expert? SARDAA needs volunteers!
Please contact: Angel 240-423-9432 or angel.white@sardaa.org
View Requirements HERE

Denied coverage for mental health or addiction treatment?
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 - 1 pm Eastern Time

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

Families For Care Conference Call
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 Groups
Only for individuals diagnosed
SARDAA Support
JOIN The Facebook Group Here

Only for Caregivers
SARDAA Families for Care
JOIN The Facebook Group Here

Diagnosed, Caregivers, Professionals
LOBBY CCAC - Circle of Comfort and Assistance Community
JOIN The Facebook Group Here
These are Closed groups, ask to be added.

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Upcoming L.E.A.P. Training
March 30, 2019
Bill Weech
Are you interested in learning more about the LEAP tools in the book, I'm Not Sick, I Don't Need Help: How To Help Someone With Mental Illness Accept Treatment by Dr. Xavier Amador? A LEAP workshop will be offered in Vienna, Virginia on Saturday, March 30, 2019. Interested parties can click here for more information or to register. Space is limited, register now! (Note: A recording the training for
assessment purposes. The recording will be shared with Dr. Amador and his staff but will not be posted in any public location.)

**Keep Medicare Part D's Six Protected Classes Protected**  
**February 28, 2019**  
**Linda Stalters**

Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed an extremely troubling regulation that would weaken Medicare Part D, the federal health insurance program that helps 45 million American seniors and people with disabilities afford prescription drugs.

Part D is somewhat unique among government programs. The federal government doesn't provide coverage directly. Instead, it allows people to purchase coverage from private insurers, who offer a range of different plans. The government subsidizes these plans but otherwise lets Medicare beneficiaries choose the coverage that's best for them.

**A systematic review and meta-analysis of exercise interventions in schizophrenia patients**  
**February 4, 2015**  
**Cambridge University Press**

The typically poor outcomes of schizophrenia could be improved through interventions that reduce cardiometabolic risk, negative symptoms and cognitive deficits; aspects of the illness which often go untreated. The present review and meta-analysis aimed to establish the effectiveness of exercise for improving both physical and mental health outcomes in schizophrenia patients.

**Exercise for Mental Health**  
**Physicians Postgraduate Press**

In this era of exponential growth of the “metabolic syndrome” and obesity, lifestyle modifications could be a cost-effective way to improve health and quality of life. Lifestyle modifications can assume especially great importance in individuals with serious mental illness. Many of these individuals are at a high risk of chronic diseases associated with sedentary behavior and medication side effects, including diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and cardiovascular disease. An essential component of lifestyle modification is exercise. The importance of exercise is not adequately understood or appreciated by patients and mental health professionals alike. Evidence has suggested that exercise may be an often-neglected intervention in mental health care.
**Associations of Age and Gender with Negative Symptoms in Schizophrenia**

January 31, 2019
Cindy Lampner, MSLIS

Sex differences in schizophrenia have been observed since the beginning of the 20th century, when the pioneering German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin noted that “dementia praecox” (the diagnostic precursor of schizophrenia) was more prevalent and severe in men. The most consistently noted sex difference in schizophrenia pertains to age of onset: In men, age of onset peaks between ages 15 and 25 years, whereas in women, peak onset is between 20 and 35 years of age, with a subsequent smaller peak between the ages of 45 to 49 years, a period that coincides with a significant drop in estrogen levels. Differences in clinical presentations have also been noted between the sexes. Men display more negative symptoms such as poor social functioning, flat affect, amotivation, and poverty of speech, whereas women are prone to more positive symptoms, such as auditory hallucinations and persecutory delusions. Some studies also suggest that men have more cognitive impairment and a more severe course of illness. The reasons for the sex differences in schizophrenia have not been fully elucidated, but a widely held hypothesis is that endogenous estrogen may function as a protective agent, thus modifying symptom severity.

**READ MORE**

**Long-term Study Reveals How Bipolar Disorder Emerges in High-Risk Youth**

Brain & Behavior Research Foundation

A multi-decade study focusing on children of parents diagnosed with bipolar disorder quantifies the risk—24.5%—that they themselves will develop bipolar illness, and suggests a “progressive sequence” in which the illness typically unfolds between the ages of 12 and 30.

The “trajectory” proposed in the study is expected to help doctors to diagnose bipolar disorder in young people, which is challenging in part because acute symptoms are often not specific to bipolar disorder and often overlap with those of other disorders.

**READ MORE**

**Higher scores on wisdom assessments linked with fewer psychotic symptoms and better cognitive performance in individuals with schizophrenia**

February 2019
Treatment Advocacy Center

Wisdom, or the ability to make decisions based on experience and qualities such as insight and good judgement, can provide a window...
into a person's sense of satisfaction with life and general well-being. In measuring three different types of wisdom-cognitive, reflective, and emotional-among individuals with schizophrenia and those without, researchers found people who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia obtained lower scores compared to counterparts without the disease. However, nearly one-third of participants with schizophrenia had wisdom scores within the "normal" range. This group also displayed fewer psychotic symptoms and better performance on cognitive and functional tests compared to individuals with schizophrenia who had lower wisdom scores.

Neuromelanin-sensitive MRI Identified as a Potential Biomarker for Psychosis
February 20, 2019
NIH
Researchers funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), part of the NIH, have shown that a type of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) — called neuromelanin-sensitive MRI (NM-MRI) — is a potential biomarker for psychosis. NM-MRI signal was found to be a marker of dopamine function in people with schizophrenia and an indicator of the severity of psychotic symptoms in people with this mental illness.

New SPRC Video Series on Strategic Communication Planning
SAMHSA
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Suicide Prevention Resource Center has released a new video series on strategic communication planning for suicide prevention. Each video also has a free, downloadable worksheet to help users put the communications planning tips into practice.

Why Rock Bottom in Serious Mental Illness is Death
February 14, 2019
Julie A. Fast
The idea that someone needs to hit rock bottom before getting help for a serious mental illness is a myth. I often hear loving parents say, "He will get help when he's ready!" or, "Maybe a few days on the street will be good for him!" or "She will finally say yes to meds when she realizes the damage bipolar is doing to her life!"

Find Clinical Trial Participation by State:  HERE
Schizophrenia Health Storylines™ Mobile App
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. Download the app today!

Donate to SARDAA

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 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](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/33-1213657), **start shopping and support us every time you shop.**

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 **XA142**

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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,