Parity

According to Merriam-Webster, Parity is - the quality or state of being equal or equivalent. So how is that applied to healthcare? Healthcare policies, including insurance coverage and treatment must treat people with all illnesses equitably.

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) was to be implemented on January 1, 2010. So how many agree that there is equity in the way you or a loved one is treated medically? According to our calls and conversations, there are many who would disagree that people living with neuropsychiatric brain illnesses are treated equitably.

What can we do about it? We at SARDAA believe there is movement to make changes, but we want to accelerate the changes by classifying schizophrenia spectrum disorder as neurological brain illnesses so that it is recognized as a physiological illness like any other illness treated medically. We believe this is just a beginning but we are moving quickly to realize that change.

People with brain illnesses require early diagnosis and treatment to provide them with the opportunity for a fulfilling and meaningful life.
Personally, I have been working to gain equitable treatment for people living with neuropsychiatric illnesses since the 1990’s. This very poor picture is of me in 2007 on the front lawn of the Capitol at a Rally Championed by Reps. Paul Wellstone, Pete Domenici and Patrick Kennedy and many peers and advocates were in the very hot summer sun. The one below is of me with Roslyn Carter as we all celebrated the passage of the Act in 2008.

Patrick Kennedy and The Kennedy Forum continue the struggle for Parity and want to take your voice to the authorities when you believe you or your loved one are not being treated equitably.

Visit [HERE](#) for more information about what Parity is and what you should expect.

Read Timeline of Federal Parity Policies [HERE](#)

Be sure to [DONATE](#) to SARDAA so we can continue to advocate for you, provide support groups and educate!
Very best,
Linda Stalters, MSN, APRN (ret)
Chief Executive Officer
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America

2:30 - 5:30 pm
COMPLIMENTARY SYMPOSIUM - Reservations required
Translation to Transformation
How We Can Help the Most Seriously Ill
Reclassification of Schizophrenia Spectrum As a Neurological Brain Illness
   Panel Discussion and Speakers featuring world-renowned experts including:
   Former Congressman Dr. Tim Murphy
   Dr. Henry Nasrallah
   Elizabeth Ford, MD
   Elyn Saks, JD, PhD
   Raymond Cho, MD, MSc
   Clayton Chau, MD, PhD
   Mythender Keshavan, MD
   Deborah Levy, PhD
   Robert Laitman, MD

5:30 - 6:30 pm
VIP RECEPTION

6:30 – 8:30 pm
JOIN US FOR A STAR-STUDED Benefit and Award RECEPTION
Featuring international recording artist Paul Taylor
Assistant Secretary Dr. McCance-Katz

$300 - Off Broadway Rate (until September 1st with discount code: EARLY)
$350 - Orchestra Rate (until November 4th)
$400 - At the Door
Please inquire at gordon.lavigne@sardaa.org about sponsorship opportunities and angel.white@sardaa.org for information and auction item donations.

**Purchase Your Brains on Broadway Tickets Now!**

**Limited Space Available**

**Early Registration Discount with Code: EARLY**

---

**Purchase Tickets**

---

Shout out to folks living in and around New York City.

Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America (SARDAA) is in need of volunteers for our upcoming, Brains on Broadway event coming November 4, 2019 at The Westin New York at Times Square. This spectacular event begins with a symposium from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. followed by a star-studded reception from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Hot topics include the reclassification of schizophrenia for future research and treatment and how we can help improve lives affected by psychosis.

Can we count on your support for this exciting event? A fantastic opportunity for you to learn more about brain illnesses while meeting some amazing people.

If you are interested in volunteering for this special event please contact Mary mary.troy@sardaa.org or Angel angel.white@sardaa.org or 240-423-9432.

---

**Message from FFC, Families for Care, Coordinator**

Peer support, a sharing with others of similar circumstances, which validates and lends strength for the challenges of one's journey. Here
we find understanding, acceptance and a benefit in others who've 'been there' and their wisdom. Peer support has proven itself over time in communities like AA, NA, veterans of war trauma, various disabilities, 'many' other challenges in life, as it has proven invaluable in our community of those diagnosed with SMI and their families and friends. WE, families and friends, are peers to one another. I've always believed in an inherent trust in those who've been 'in the trenches', who have lived experience. I feel a deep gratitude for the gift in life, that being peers.

With Heart,
Mary Ross

Message from SA Staff Supporter

Information in the Blue Book
By Sandy Dimiterchik
There is a lot of good information in the Blue Book. In the back of the book, there are over 50 personal recovery stories, including at least 10 from international SA members in the new version we are printing. These stories are inspirational and provide hope for SA members that they can have a high quality of life, regardless of where they live. There are also articles on discrimination, setbacks, and recovery. These articles address the issues people with schizophrenia or related disorders face, including people with bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, depression with psychosis, or experience with psychosis. Family and friends can relate also.

Finally, there are the Six Steps of Recovery. The steps are based on the 12 Step program with permission from AA. As guides for members, they provide a way to address issues that come from everyday living.

At SARDAA, we try to provide face-to-face SA meetings, conference calls, and a Facebook page, SARDAA Support, but not everyone has access to them. However, the Blue Book is available at our store on the website SARDAA.org, or by ordering by calling our main office number, 240- 423-9432. For more information you can also contact us at info@sardaa.org.

Personal Story of SA Members
Zach E.
SA has been an essential part of my accepting and admitting that I have the illness Schizophrenia. It has been influential in my recovery and success living with a challenging illness.

Stigma was a barrier to me accepting my illness and admitting my illness to others. In SA, there is no prejudice or judgment associated with having Schizophrenia. Everyone is equal and no one is segregated. In SA, accepting and admitting led to support, understanding, and empathy.

Another barrier to me accepting and admitting my illness was I felt as though there was no one to talk to. I wanted to be heard. I wanted to be acknowledged. In SA, I could talk about my discouragement and despair among a listening and compassionate audience. In SA, I was among people who genuinely cared.

READ MORE

An Ode to Coffee
Slurp, drink, thud, thud, thud,
I am a vampire
Coffee is my blood
I welcome the caffeine
As it enters my veins
Sharper, wittier, become my brain
Coffee, ambrosia of my soul
I run on you like a train on coal.
You empower me, a supercharge to this night denizen
You are my mighty man medicine
As I slip off to sleep
And its of you I dream
Coffee the fuel for my machine.
- Dylan Kurtz

A Book Review of Dear God Amen: My Art, My Life, My Schizophrenia by Craig Geiser

By Sandy Dimiterchik

Craig Geiser has written an excellent autobiography of his life, artwork, and history of struggling with schizophrenia. This book contains excellent descriptions of what a person goes through who is experiencing psychosis from schizophrenia. It also describes a person’s journey
from insanity to reality and his ability to play different roles in life – as an artist, an employee, a husband, and a father.

His artwork portrays his thoughts, feelings, and imagination. One begins to see how inspired the author is, and how each work is different in style and unique. The often used quote by William Shakespeare, “the eyes are the window to the soul” seem to be true in the eyes he drew, and yet one can sense his optimism by his drawing upbeat, full of life people, staying in the positive instead of the negative regardless of what was happening in his life. As he said in the story, he “prayed to God for help to make (his) paintings beautiful for everyone to enjoy.” The use of art also reminds one of the benefits of art therapy.

I really liked how the author included his audience’s perspective on his talk with them and their view of his life and artwork. Reading their feedback gives the reader an opportunity to consider one’s own stereotypes of people with severe brain disorders. I think this would be an excellent book for discussion in an SA group, and the members would benefit from discussing their own answers to the questions he was asked. You can find his book on the SARDAA website, at this link: https://sardaa.org/resources/media/.

The author has written a book previously, called Living with Schizophrenia, which is available at Amazon. It is written by him, Stuart Emmons, Kalman J. Kaplan, Ph.D, and Martin Harrow, Ph.D.

---

**Craig Geiser: Art Heals**

My ability to draw abstract pictures, I believe, came to me after my first hospital stay in 1978. A great majority of my art work started in 1984, while I was working the night shift at a nursing home. It was a relaxing escape to relieve my tension in my new job. At first, my art work was mostly of black and white abstract faces. I convey many different thoughts through facial expressions. I never know how my drawings are going to turn out. I just pick up my pen and guide it on the paper and when I set it down, my drawing is finished. Art work gives me a wonderful feeling of self-worth. I escape into a peaceful world of creativity, in order to relax from the tasks of daily living. A lady once told me she found the faces I drew interesting, because the focal point was often the eyes. She recalled the expression, “eyes are the window to the soul.” I’ve always looked at art as a way to express my inner-most ideas and feelings.

[READ MORE](#)
We are actively recruiting State Chapter Leads, State Chapter Members, and Families for Care Group Leaders

SARDAA is the only advocacy organization focused on psychosis, the most debilitating symptom of brain illness.

Are you interested in starting a SARDAA State chapter, being a chapter lead, or member? Running a local Families For Care support group? Helping other families in their journey through brain illness? Contact Laura Pogliano, laura.pogliano@sardaa.org or call 240-423-9432.

We will send you all the info you need to get help for your family & find resources on brain illness, and also information on starting a state chapter, becoming a member and forming a local support group.

We need you! Join us in making a difference.

Our mission: improving the lives of people living with psychosis! Thank you, Laura Pogliano
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

Spirit of 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.

Become a SARDAA Pen Pal
Have you ever wanted to be a pen pal? By pen pal, we at SARDAA
mean someone who corresponds with a person who has schizophrenia or related disorders, including bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, depression with psychosis or experience with psychosis. The person you are writing to could possibly in prison, a hospital, or neither, just someone with the diagnosis looking for a friend to correspond with. You can specify. Also, you can be anonymous, receiving an anonymous SARDAA email address or sending your letters anonymously to our office staff, who will then send the letters to the person.

If you are interested, please contact the office at 1-240-423-9432, 1-800-493-2094 or info@sardaa.org
-Sandy Dimiterchik

SARDAAs NEW MAILING ADDRESS:
SCHIZOPHRENIA AND RELATED DISORDERS ALLIANCE OF AMERICA (SARDAA)
2308 MOUNT VERNON AVE., SUITE 207
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301-1328

San Francisco to Consider Forced Treatment for Mentally ill Addicts
Associated Press
June 4, 2019
State Sen. Scott Wiener coauthored the legislation allowing the pilot programs. (Rich Pedroncelli / Associated Press) San Francisco supervisors were expected to consider a proposal Tuesday that could force drug addicts with serious mental illnesses into treatment.

Mayor London Breed and other supporters of the proposal say the move — known as conservatorship — is necessary to help addicts who are often homeless and suffering from a mental illness, making them a danger to themselves.

READ MORE

Research on Antioxidant Role in Schizophrenia and Psychosis Points to Possible Therapeutic Value of Compound Found in Broccoli
Researchers at Johns Hopkins University co-led by Akira Sawa, M.D.,
PhD., a BBRF Scientific Council member, and including seven other current and past BBRF gran recipients, have published a trio of papers which report new developments pertaining to the diagnosis and treatment of first-episode psychosis and

**READ MORE**

**A Mother's Prayer for Mental Illness**
As I stumble from my bed this morning, help me to remember to be gentle and kind. 
My child's mind is shredding into a million pieces. He lives in a constant state of atrocious fear. I can see it in his eyes. Give him peace.

Guide me as I hold him in my arms. Help me to know what to say. What to do. Fill my heart with healing love, understanding, and empathy.

**READ MORE**

**Bringing Awareness to the Mental Health of Older Adults**
SAMHSA
In this blog post for National Older Adults Mental Health Awareness Day on May 20, SAMHSA Center for Mental Health Services director Dr. Anita Everett discusses the prevalence and impact of mental disorders in older adults, and SAMHSA resources on prevention and treatment approaches for older adults with mental and substance use disorders.

**READ HERE**

**Older Adults Living with Serious Mental Illness: The State of the Behavioral Health Workforce**
SAMHSA
This new publication from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides an overview of workforce issues to consider when addressing the needs of older adults living with serious mental illness.

**READ HERE**

**Statistical Brief: Inpatient Stays Involving Mental and Substance Use Disorders, 2016**
AHRQ
This AHRQ Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project Statistical Brief presents statistics from the 2016 National Inpatient Sample on inpatient stays involving mental and substance use disorders (MSUDs) at community hospitals among patients aged 5 years or older. The brief includes data on MSUD-related inpatient stay characteristics, including costs, length of stay, discharge status, patient demographics, primary expected payer, and hospital location.
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:

1. Sign in to your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com.
2. Select Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America as your charity. Once selected, you will receive a confirmation email.
3. 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.
4. 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.

---

**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**

---

**Help Change Lives -- Donate Now**

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

---

**Sincerely,**
Angel White, Editor