Message from SARDA, CEO

Dear Friends,

We are saddened by the many personal, devastating losses. This is a painful time for thousands and we send our love to you who are suffering.
We honor and celebrate all nurses. The “frontline” nurses are not only the hospital nurses so frequently recognized but the truly compassionate and courageous nurses serving in locations caring for individuals living with a psychosis brain illness. The nurses compassionately caring in psychiatric facilities, jails/prisons, homeless outreach and Mobile crisis units, from their offices, virtually and other locations did not receive the personal protection equipment as quickly as others; even slower to receive the PPE’s were their patients. They are working under severe restrictive circumstances to help the most at risk and suffering patients with a severe shortage of staff. Nurse clinicians are working to help their patients to secure and maintain stability in a very stressful atmosphere that predisposes even people without a severe brain illness to instability.

Our loved ones and the people we serve are struggling - we must keep in touch and provide positive activities.

Helpful suggestions include:

- Limit news watching
- Watch fun, travel, virtual concerts or other uplifting programs
- FaceTime, Skype, Zoom with family & friends
- Participate in the virtual SA & FFC groups - find out what others are doing to fill their time
- Practice singing, music
- Write poetry, journal
- Create artwork

Remember, “this too shall pass”! And we will have hopefully learned and made some lasting improvements from this time in history.

Be safe, be well, be kind to yourself as well as to others,
Linda Stalters, MSN, APRN (ret)
Chief Executive Officer
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America
Message from SARDAA, BOD Chair

SARDAA is accepting applications for $500 maximum grants for caregivers of individuals living with a neuropsychiatric brain illness.

If you are interested in receiving an application, please contact:

Susan Sheena
Susan.S@SARDAA.org
Phone: 240-423-9432

Thank you,
Susan Sheena
SARDAA Chapter Coordinator
Message from FFC, Families for Care, Coordinator

Optimal health care for our loved ones is uppermost in the minds of many family members and friends.

The COVID-19 is proving a tremendous challenge. Believing that there is 'always' some good in every crisis I trust the same will be true for this. One of those things is improvements in our health care, given that a lack of this is shown in our current system. Our loved ones 'deserve' the best care and may that extend to us for our own important self care as partners on this path. The White House Mental Health Summit held at the White House on December 19, 2019 showed promise for improved mental health care.

With Heart,
Mary Ross
Message from SA Staff Supporter

SARDAA Adds New SA Groups Using Zoom
By Sandy Dimiterchik

Have you ever heard of Zoom? It provides a place for video meetings. We currently have three SA groups - two are closed for former SA group members and one is open to all SA members, held on Saturdays at 12:00 PM Eastern Time. Would you like to learn more about Zoom? You can contact me at 832-439-1586 or sandy.dimiterchik@sardaa.org and I can help you register for Zoom so that you can join the meetings.

To start a group, you can be a current or potential SA group leader. We have a wonderful support staff to help us walk through problems. You can use your mobile phone or computer. For the mobile phone, you need to download the free Zoom app and register. You should be familiar with your payment plan to make sure your time on Zoom is covered. For the computer you also need to register.

I am happy to serve as a resource and attend your meetings if you are a new SA group leader, helping you to transition from a SA co-leader to a SA leader. Zoom offers free 40 minute sessions for groups of 3 or more. As mentioned, all group members need to register and once logging in, the group members will be put in a “waiting room” until the host or SA group leader lets them in to the meeting.

Contact addendum for Blue Book: Schizophrenia Alliance, Psychosis Support and Acceptance

Effective immediately, we have modified two protocols to better serve our community, including:

1. How to handle people who are suicidal and/or homicidal on conference calls, and

2. Protecting private information on conference calls.

The most recent Blue Book, on pages 9, and 12-13, encourages conference call group leaders to get personal information from people who were in crisis, either suicidal or homicidal, in addition to providing callers the Suicide HotLine, the Crisis Text HotLine and encouraging the callers to call 911. Now, we will only provide the Suicide HotLine, 1-800-273-8255, the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741, or 911. Any additional contact numbers like these will be added in the future, like 988 when it has become official.

Additionally, to protect confidentiality, people will no longer share private information with other members on the
conference calls, such as phone numbers. Instead, if they would like for their number to be available to specific people, they can tell others they will make their number available to the office, and then call the office during office hours at 1-240-423-9432.

The next version of the Blue Book will be updated to reflect this information. If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Dimiterchik, the SA Staff Supporter, at 832-439-1586 or sandy.dimiterchik@sardaa.org.

Coronavirus Guidelines for SA Groups
By Sandy Dimiterchik

After weeks of mandatory stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus pandemic, some communities are beginning to reopen. The reopening is at different stages throughout the U.S., depending on where you live.

SA groups should continue to conduct virtual meetings until notified otherwise by SARDAA. As we plan to start SA face-to-face groups again, here are some things to consider:

- SA group leaders should contact the facilities where meetings are held to find out if any changes need to be made so that the groups can meet.
- Check out how the facility is disinfecting areas.
- Find out if the group size needs to be smaller.
- Keep in mind the requirements for masks and social distancing will be required.
- Continue frequent hand washing.

I would be happy to set up a Zoom meeting to discuss any changes that need to be made. Also, you should be in contact with your SA group members so that when it is time to start the meetings again, everybody is ready.

Please feel free to contact me at 832-439-1586 or sandy.dimiterchik@sardaa.org.

Click here for CDC and here for Red Cross for additional information about Coronavirus guidelines.
We’re working to change that. We’ve collected resources specific to your needs. And we’re inviting you to stay active indeed by taking the **SARDAA Fitness Challenge**.

**Join the SARDAA Fitness Challenge**  
[www.activeindeed.org](http://www.activeindeed.org)

**Join HERE**

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**SARDAA Maryland/Virginia Families For Care** support group is meeting weekly during the quarantine via Zoom, every Sunday at 2 pm EST.

All caregivers local to MD/VA area are welcome to join but need to pre-register to get the Zoom meeting link.

Register with laura.pogliano@sardaa.org. By Saturday to be invited to the Sunday meeting.

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**Brains on the Beach Virtual Event**  
**Replay Now Available for Viewing!**

Not able to join us virtually on March 21st for Brains on the Beach? You are invited to learn about solutions to neurological brain disorders that affect over 25 million Americans and over 1 billion people worldwide via virtual replay.

Register [here](#) for the Replay

11 million Americans suffer from schizophrenia or bipolar brain illness with psychosis. These are the most devastating diseases and yet 50% are not treated but left homeless, incarcerated or worse. Still a taboo subject for many – let’s break the silence and talk about what can be done.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Judge Steven Leifman - Keynote  
Robert Laitman, MD – Keynote  
Research & Treatment Panel: Deborah Levy, PhD; Mark Namchuk, PhD; Carlos A. Larrauri, APRN, NP  
Policy Panel: Tim Murphy, PhD; Mary Palafox, RN; Linda Mimms, MA  
Criminal Justice Panel: William Lawson, MD, PhD; Janet Hays; David Geiger, MEE
Families For Care Grant Program Launched

SARDA is accepting applications for $500 maximum grants for caregivers of individuals living with a neuropsychiatric brain illness. Our grant program aims to support caregivers during an exceptionally challenging time through small grants of up to $500 according to their need.

Laura’s story:
Less than 3 years after my son was stricken with schizophrenia, my life’s savings were gone and we were broke. The majority of the money went to self-paid intake and therapy appointments at first, then transportation for him to therapist, labs, doctor appointments, hospital deposits and medical payments. It went to hire “sitters” who checked in on him, or stayed with him, so I could work. It
went to medications--upwards of $1,300 for a single monthly injection over 6 months. It went to court and legal fees, parking, cabs, hotels, flights, a supervised housing group home at $5,500-6K per month for nearly a year.

Please donate now to support programs like the Families for Care grant program and all of SARDAA’s life-saving work so that you can help a family like Laura’s. Donate HERE: https://sardaa.org/donate2/

Donate Here>>

Social Media Team
Are you or someone you know a Social Media expert?
Join the SARDAA Social Media Team!
View Requirements HERE

Call Center Team
We are seeking volunteers experienced in working with individuals and their loved ones affected by psychosis brain illnesses to answer phone inquiries.

Communications Team
We are seeking volunteers to assist the Communications Team making calls to build database for resources.

Please contact: Angel 240-423-9432 or angel.white@sardaa.org

We welcome all forms of art to be considered for inclusion in our newsletters and Instagram. To submit your art please email angel.white@sardaa.org or mail to 2308 Mount Vernon Ave., Suite 207, Alexandria, VA 22301-1328.

Personal Story of SA member

Zach E.
Mental Illness and the COVID-19 Virus Complete
There is a commonly known quote: “Take lemons and make lemonade.” I have found that adversity can be therapeutic. Adversity makes us yearn for ways to alleviate its side effects. Adversity urges us to dig our way through the dark tunnel, in effort to find the light.

This has been my experience with schizophrenia, and it has been my experience with the COVID-19 virus. In many ways, the experiences, challenges, and frustrations associated with my mental illness has prepared me for the disappointments and inconveniences of the COVID-19 virus.

COVID-19 has undoubtedly been an adversity. A breach of our freedom. The struggle of isolation. An invasion of our routine. It has resulted in a test in our hopes and aspirations for a productive, fulfilling day. As a result, motivation is difficult to cultivate. Boredom, frustration, and discouragement is inevitable. The catastrophic worries of catching the virus are rampant. For me, the pandemic has given me an invitation to dwell on past mistakes. Regrets. It has been tempting to become immersed in symptoms.

Those of us with schizophrenia or any mental illness have credentials in experiencing and enduring adversity. We are not free from stigma or from limitations that the illness imposes. Mental illness can abruptly interfere and change our routine, or how we are accustomed to conducting our life. It has the potential to terminate our positive outlook and it interferes with our incentive or ambition. Stress can overwhelm us, and we can become pessimistic. However, it doesn’t have to.

In many ways, the pandemic served as a reminder of the boost or advantage that I, and others with mental illness, are offered in preparation for adversity. While many are frantic and panicking amidst the chaos of the pandemic, those of us with mental illness are applying the skills and inner resources that we have been trained and conditioned to use: such as courage, fortitude, hope in a seemingly hopeless situation, discipline, perseverance, and resiliency.

As sufferers of mental illness, we are taking the lemons of a potentially debilitating situation like schizophrenia and creating the lemonade of inner resources that help us to be stronger and more confident amidst other adversities and challenges. And adversity gives us the incentive to apply and use these inner resources.

Just as we find ways to make lemonade out of our illness, we can also do so with the pandemic. We can incorporate courage amidst the health concerns. We can also incorporate courage by enduring the isolation and the restraints imposed by a lack of freedom. We can choose to be hopeful and optimistic despite the turbulent storm of negativity. We can acquire discipline to combat the lack of motivation. We can exercise perseverance by creating a different routine for ourselves; for example, instead of working at my local library, I chose to participate on more SA teleconferences.

Our strengths and inner resources cannot be found in the absence of being tested or challenged. I know that the personal assets that I have developed through time have been cultivated and developed by my struggles with both schizophrenia and the COVID-19 virus.

My struggles and challenges in dealing with schizophrenia has prepared me for the COVID-19 virus.

Adversity can be therapeutic.

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**Become a SARDAA State Chapter Lead, State Chapter Member, or Families for Care Group Leader**

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? Leading a local Families For Care support group? Helping other families in their journey through brain illness?

Please 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

Temporary Additional SA Conference Call Groups
during COVID-19 emergency
Only for individuals diagnosed
Tuesday - 1 pm Eastern Time
Wednesday - 1 pm Eastern Time
Thursday - 1 pm Eastern Time
Friday - 11 am Eastern Time

SA: Psychosis Support & Acceptance
Only for those diagnosed
Skype Video Calls
Sat 12 PM ET
Registration required for Skype Video:
To Register: email sandy.dimiterchik@sardaa.org
or call 240-423-9432

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

SARDAA MD/VA Families For Care Zoom Meeting
Not for individuals diagnosed
Every Sunday 2pm Eastern Time
All caregivers local to MD/VA area are welcome to join but need to pre-register to get the Zoom meeting link.
Register with laura.pogliano@sardaa.org
Register by Saturday to be invited to the Sunday meeting

**Facebook Support Groups**

Only for individuals diagnosed
SARDAA SA Support
JOIN The Facebook Group Here

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

For Caregivers and Diagnosed individuals
SARDAA Support
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

SARDAA has chosen eBay for Charity so you can directly support SARDAA when you sell and buy items on eBay
For more information visit: eBay for Charity
Tardive dyskinesia (TD) is an involuntary movement disorder that may also affect those living with a mental illness. To help raise awareness of the condition states across the U.S. have declared next week, May 3-9, 2020, as #TDAwarenessWeek. Learn more: TalkAboutTD.com.

In 'Hidden Valley Road,' A Family's Journey Helps Shift The Science of Mental Illness
By Robert Koker
Author Interview
NPR
Lulu Garcia-Navarro
The Galvins seemed like a model for baby-boomer America, 12 children with a military dad and a strict but religious mother growing up in Colorado in the 1960s. But over the years, six of the boys in the family were diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Read More

Mandated Community Treatment Benefits for Justice-Involved Individuals with Serious Mental Illness
Treatment Advocacy Center
Kelli South, Research Assistant
Court oversight may be the key for criminal justice-involved people with serious mental illness to stay in community treatment and avoid criminal justice recidivism, according to new research.

Read More

Marijuana Needs Warning Labels Like Tobacco for Associated Mental, Physical Health Risks
USA Today
DJ Jaffe
January 8, 2019
The situation is similar to when cigarettes first became extensively marketed; health risks were known but not disclosed, driving disease and deaths.

Read More

Brain Activity While Anticipating a Working-Memory Task Could help Distinguish Depression in Bipolar Disorder from Major Depression
Brain & Behavior Research Foundation
Diagnosing bipolar disorder can be difficult. While it is not hard to distinguish between its two characteristic phases—the high spirits of mania and the low spirits of depression—it is challenging to tell if someone who reports low mood is suffering from depressive disorder or is in the depressive phase of bipolar disorder. Indeed, a bipolar diagnosis is only confirmed, clinically, once a depressed patient has experienced at least one episode of mania.

Read More

Genome Engineering Combined with Stem Cell Technology Provide Insights on Disruptions in Brain Development
Brain & Behavior Research Foundation
Twenty years ago, scientists first "spelled out" the full sequence of 3 billion pairs of DNA "letters" that make up the
human genome. In the years since, they have discovered and validated many hundreds of commonly occurring variations in the genome that correlate with increased risk for psychiatric illness.

Personally Speaking: Our mental health care system and criminal justice system are broken. We need reform NOW.

Treatment Advocacy Center

For the past fourteen years, I’ve watched my best friend and brother fall victim to the symptoms, prejudices and social injustices that come with the territory of living with a severe mental illness. The illness, a delusion disorder, slowly robbed him of his life and his future. In a lot of ways I found myself grieving a person who was very much still alive. There were so many parts of him I knew wouldn’t be the same again. However, there was so much more about him to learn, love, and support; if, only, we were given an opportunity to do so.

Readout of the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice Teleconferences

World News, National News & States Top Leading News
April 27, 2020

This week, the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice held hearings on social problems impacting public safety, specifically mental illness. The hearings were held over three days via teleconference. Each teleconference featured a panel of expert witnesses who provided testimony and, subsequently, answered questions from the Commissioners. Next week, the Commission will continue its analysis of social problems impacting public safety, hearing testimony from experts on homelessness and substance abuse.

SAMHSA: Creating a System of Care That Meets the Needs of People With Mental and Substance Use Disorders

Elinore F. McCance-Katz, M.D., Ph.D.

It has been nearly 2 years since I first wrote in this journal about reform efforts at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). At that time, I described SAMHSA’s plans to better serve Americans living with mental and substance use disorders. Since then, much has been accomplished, but many challenges remain.

What is Anosognosia?

Healthline.com

People don’t always feel comfortable admitting to themselves or others that they have a condition they’ve been newly diagnosed with. This isn’t unusual, and most people eventually accept the diagnosis.

But sometimes, the rejection is long-lasting, and it’s not simply denial that’s causing a person to reject the facts. It’s a condition called anosognosia. This loosely means “lack of awareness or insight” in Greek.

Anosognosia is a lack of ability to perceive the realities of one’s own condition. It’s a person’s inability to accept that they have a condition that matches up with their symptoms or a formal diagnosis.

Help Support Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America

Amazon donates to Schizophrenia & Related Disorders Alliance. Shop for great deals at smile.amazon.com

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

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

2. 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.

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 SARDA, not only today but every day - at no extra cost to you!!
Shop with PayPal and choose SARDA to Donate with PayPal Giving Fund to help support SARDA.

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

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

Please register online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com
Link to: Schizophrenia and Related Disorders-Kroger Plus Card XA142

I'm a new Text block ready for your content.

Help Change Lives -- Donate Now

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

Donate to SARDA>>>