

September 2021

NEWSLETTER

Why I'm not ashamed anymore (and why I encourage you not to be either.)

by Colby Gochanour,
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Committee Member

You are more than the sum total of things you do and know.

Ever since I was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, I closely guarded that information. Unless you had a specific reason to know, you didn't get to know because I was afraid of being called crazy; I was afraid of being called violent. Sure, my outward behavior to someone who didn't know may have looked as if I were lazy. Some comments may have been "why can't he just get a full time job?", but I bought into the notion that being thought of as lazy was better than people knowing the truth about me and what they may think because of that.

In reality, the only person calling me crazy was myself. I was self-stigmatizing and in my head, having schizoaffective disorder defined me. It doesn't though. It's just one of the many things about me. I have so many qualities about myself I could tell you without ever getting to my diagnosis. It will always be a part of me, but it doesn't define me.

I tell my story in hopes of helping you. Yes, you reading this. Whatever you're struggling with-- whatever stressful event, past trauma, or mental health condition you may struggle

with, it doesn't define you. You're more than the sum total of things you do and know. You're more than a breakup; more than past traumas; more than your diagnosis.

If you aren't ready to tell the world, that's completely fine. Just know, we're all here for you and will support you in whatever ways we can when you are ready.

You are loved by people who know you and people who don't. People are proud of you and your accomplishments you've achieved in your life, no matter how insignificant you may think they are.

You are loved. You are valued. You deserve to not feel ashamed.

September's Calendar

[Interested in getting involved with us this month? Click here!](#)

Help us help you!

The OCA was created to provide a voice within state government for people with serious mental illness and parents of children with serious emotional disorders. It is a contact for people primarily by phone, email and social media regarding issues and challenges around serious mental illness and serious emotional disorders. The OCA provides education, awareness and training opportunities through the website, social media and in-person.

Please complete [this survey](#) to gather data from across the state about what community based mental health services are being accessed, the barriers to access services, and what services are needed.

<https://forms.office.com/r/atEDaRM68n>

Lunch and Learn!

The OCA is hosting a free Lunch and Learn event called "Helping parents and Caregivers Successfully Transition Their Child Back to School During the COVID-19 Pandemic." This event is [virtual](#) and presented by Sue Gehling, ARNP, MSN. 1 CEU from the IBC for special populations.

When: October 1 from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Where: [Zoom](#) - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88473594492?pwd=d05oemsreHRpanZieGQwaHpOOXlrdz09>

Feeling down and need someone to talk to?

Iowa Warm Line is here for you.

Open: 24/7 | 1-844-775-WARM (9276)

The Warm Line is a peer-run, telephone based, non-crisis, confidential listening line for anyone struggling with mental health or substance use issues. The line is staffed by people who have been through a similar journey and are in recovery themselves.

The Warm Line can...

- Give support for individuals not requiring crisis management. Those in crisis are transferred to the Crisis Line for critical services.
- Provide an empathetic, non-judgmental listener.
- Provide community resources and assistance in accessing services.
- Help empower individuals pursuing their own directives.

Any questions? Contact emily@namiiowa.org