

## Seeking an Educated Approach to Mental Health

AARP Chapter Meeting, Aug. 4, 2015 by Karen Kallay

### Main Points and Topics

Mental health means being able to handle your environment to live happily, productively.

Mental illness is not a character flaw nor an elective illness. It's painful. Who would choose that?

Main types, causes, and treatments for illness in this 3.5-pound pink-gray mass of tissue, fluid

*Diagnostic Statistics Manua-5* has thousands of categories, mostly for U.S. billing

Signs: depression, anxiety, big mood swings, substance abuse, visions, focus fog.

Causes: genes, injuries, environmental toxins, emotional trauma, sustained abuse

Strategies: retrained mental habits, medications, "whole health" living, electromagnetic

Safety issues: Much greater risk to self; detailed guidelines; taken to hospital or jail?

The brain is highly interconnected with the rest of the body

An unhealthy gut "leaks" toxins to the brain; beware sugar and gluten

Many health problems and medications can secondarily impact brain function

Support your struggling friends and loved ones and lobby for resources!

Social support can be invaluable; read up, offer activities, be honest and non-judging

Insurance companies now prohibited from giving less coverage for mental health needs

Virginia 7<sup>th</sup> wealthiest state but about 46<sup>th</sup> for level of tax support for mental health

### Handouts and Websites

Blurb on WETA "Brain Maker" show featuring David Perlmutter, MD on good gut bacteria

Reprint from Free Lance-Star columnist Neustatter, "Let Medicare negotiate prices"

List of major local mental health organizations and resources including for crises

Lists of local free support groups, for mental health and for handling loss of loved ones

Information cards and activity calendar for Recovery in Motion, free support activities

Websites: [www.mentalhealth.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.gov); [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org); [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org); [www.dbsalliance.org](http://www.dbsalliance.org);

Google "Mary Washington bereavement groups" for free groups for many kinds of losses

Speaker, Karen Kallay, at [kakallay@gmail.com](mailto:kakallay@gmail.com), (540) 373-1744. After marriage and raising a family and working as a grants officer for a foundation, Karen's struggles with depression caused her to lose her job, leave her marriage and focus more on her health. Today she has a full and productive life as an advocate for increased mental health resources. She is a member of (and not speaking for) the following: Governing Board of Rappahannock Area Community Services Board; Western State Hospital Citizen Advisory Council; Mary Washington Healthcare Citizen Advisory Council, Behavioral Health Group; Recovery in Motion, President; Virginia Organizing; Mental Health America; National Alliance on Mental Illness-Rappahannock Affiliate, VP Presentations