

Nashua NAMI NH Affiliate

August 11, 2009-*Consumer Panel*

Topic: A panel discussion with individuals who are living with a mental illness. The purpose of the panel was to allow family members the opportunity to hear first hand from people dealing with a mental illness. The panelists discussed their experiences dealing with their mental illness throughout their lives.

One panelist discussed the severe depression that she has battled throughout her life. She discussed the myriad medications, therapies, hospitalizations that she has been involved with throughout the years. She discussed how some of these interventions have helped but others did not. She discussed the importance of her children in her life and the role they play in helping her wage her continued fight against depression. She discussed her continued battle to find happiness and how every day is a struggle towards that end. She continues to express her hope for the future.

Another panelist discussed her life with bipolar. She discussed the first time she encountered a bipolar episode and the numerous issues it raised. She detailed the many episodes that she has encountered, her difficulty dealing with her diagnosis, the attempts to self medicate with alcohol and the various types of therapies and help she received during her life. She discussed realizing one day that she needed to take control of her life and her illness. She discussed the importance of taking her medications regularly, healthy eating, attending support groups, establishing goals, and surrounding herself with supportive family and friends. She spoke of her current success which includes attending college and having a successful family life.

The discussion ended with questions from the audience. Questions ranged from college supports to family and professional supports and intervention. The attendees expressed their appreciation of the guest panelists for their honesty & willingness to share their life experiences.