

Topic: Communication Skills Workshop
(As presented in the NAMI Family to Family Course)

The December educational meeting was devoted to improving our understanding of, and communication with, our loved ones. Mental illness subjects our loved ones to agonizing assaults on their self esteem, the effect of which is painfully obvious at holiday times as families gather to relive happy times and share news of achievements of the past year. Attendees were asked to put themselves in another's shoes - and recognize the feelings behind the *maladaptive* coping strategies (misunderstood 'behaviors'). The purpose was so that we might respond in a more helpful, beneficial way for all. We practiced some communication skills to use during those anxious times when everything seems to be going wrong.