



March 12, 2007 — For Immediate Release

**Editor's Note:** First-person interviews with people suffering from a mental illness can be arranged for an advance story. Also, see attached story by a parent of a child with mental illness. In addition, please print this item in the newspaper's calendar. Thank you.

## **Community Mental Health Conference How to Get Help When Someone You Love Has a Mental Illness**

Evanston, IL – March 12, 2007 — “Someone You Love Has Mental Illness — Your Child, Your Parent, Your Friend — Support and Solutions,” is the topic of the Sixth Annual Community Mental Health Conference on Sunday, June 3rd, 12:45–5:30 p.m., at Beth Emet The Free Synagogue, 1224 Dempster St., Evanston. The Conference is sponsored by more than 100 religious, academic, mental health and other organizations from throughout the North Shore and Chicago areas.

The conference is open to the public and is expected to draw more than 300 attendees, including medical and health care professionals, community leaders, affected family members and consumers.

“Coping with the mental illness of a family member or friend and helping them to get the care they need can be frustrating, confusing and emotionally taxing,” said Lawrence Cohen, the president of the Naomi Ruth Cohen Foundation, a non-profit organization that promotes mental health educational programs including the Conference.

“Mental illness and its stigma can have a devastating impact on the family,” he said. “We want to help people identify when a loved one is struggling and know how to seek assistance for that person as well as how to access respite care for the caretaker. Being able to get timely help can save lives.”

A panel of three outstanding speakers will address this issue. Dr. William R. Beardslee, M.D., is Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Boston's Children's Hospital and Gardner Monks Professor of Child Psychiatry at Harvard University. He is the author of the acclaimed *Out of the Darkened Room: Protecting the Children and Strengthening the Family When a Parent Is Depressed*. His primary interests are in the prevention of depression in families and how to enhance resilience in families undergoing adverse circumstances.



## NAOMI RUTH COHEN CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Dr. Froma Walsh, Ph.D., is the Mose and Sylvia Firestone Professor in the School of Social Service Administration and Department of Psychiatry, University of Chicago, and co-director of the Chicago Center for Family Health. She is the leading authority on resilience-oriented practice with families in crisis. She is the author of numerous books including, *Strengthening Family Resilience*; *Living Beyond Loss: Death in the Family*; and *Women in Families*. Dr. Walsh is a past president of the American Family Therapy Academy and past editor of the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*.

Ruth E. Field, MSW, LCSW, is the co-founder of the Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation, and its founding president. She has served on the Josselyn Center's (Northfield, IL) Bipolar Education Support and Training Team, and co-authored *Understanding and Educating Children and Adolescents with Bipolar Disorder: A Guide for Educators*. Ms. Field is a psychotherapist in private practice and the mother of a child with bipolar disorder.

The program will also include 11 discussion group sessions led by professionals and experts in the field of mental health:

- Finding help when a friend or family member has mental illness
- Unique challenges — parenting teens with mental illness
- Ambiguous Loss (grief due to radical changes in loved ones with mental illness)
- Family stories: three panelists discuss their own experiences with mental illness
- Mental illness and the spiritual journey
- How to cope with divorce, death and other trauma
- Relationship challenges — maintaining connections in the face of mental illness
- Mental illness and the schools — what's a parent to do?
- Mental illness in the African-American community — family issues
- Substance abuse with mental illness
- Learning about Borderline Personality Disorder — family involvement

Closing remarks will be made by the Rev. Charles T. Rubey, LCSW, Associate Director of Programs of the Catholic Charities of Chicago and founder of the Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS). Father Rubey has appeared on radio and TV programs and has been interviewed for numerous newspaper and magazine publications.

Cost of the program is \$25. Scholarships are available. To register or for more information about the conference call 847-869-4230 x335, or visit the Cohen Foundation website at [www.naomicohenfoundation.org](http://www.naomicohenfoundation.org).