

Christopher and Elizabeth C. (Buff) Hungerland

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To whom it may concern:

In the spring of 2004, my husband and I took the NAMI Family-to-Family class, facilitated by Jane Cartmell. We, like many parents of adult children with mental illness, were struggling with how best to parent our daughter, now almost thirty years old, a divorced mother of a five-year-old. Her behavior was confusing, our reactions uncomfortable, and the challenge of a continuing relationship with her daunting.

Even though we had read every book available, visited every website we could access, and attended monthly NAMI meetings, we were still at sea as to how to proceed with our daughter. As many capable professionals, we were in search of a way to “fix” the situation, and “fix” our daughter so she’d return to the talented, intelligent, amusing young woman she’d once been.

The setting for the class was like a seminar. Information on a various aspects of mental illness was provided each week – some of it familiar territory, some of it new research. Family members then discussed their individual situations and how the week’s topics related to their own experience. We all gained insight from each others’ experiences. Heads nodded when family members related their own anguish about the ravages of mental illness on loved ones.

Jane Cartmell is a perfect prototype of facilitation. She has a wonderful gentle way of being firm about participation, about terms to be used, and about respect for both the client and the family member. She listens thoroughly, carefully. Her guidance was critical in our understanding what had happened to our family, how to reset our expectations, and how to guide our own behavior to engage in a more fruitful relationship with our daughter.

We consulted with Jane thereafter through her firm *Advocacy Works* and used her workbook to develop a plan to work with various professionals in our daughter’s community to try to provide some sort of safety net for our daughter and granddaughter. With the plan developed with Jane, we met with the school counselor, with an acute care provider, with medical staff, with neighbors, and finally in a mini-intervention with our daughter. We would not have understood the steps we could take without Jane’s work through *Advocacy Works*, nor would we have met with such an understanding group of people. Jane helped us develop a plan, and beyond that, helped us achieve some peace of mind about our daughter’s illness and its impact on our family. We refer to the *Advocacy Works* workbook often to help us with the challenges our daughter’s mental illness has brought.

We both have benefited so much from Jane’s guidance. We couldn’t be more grateful for the beneficial changes in our relationship with our daughter.

E. C. Hungerland

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