

# PIECE of MIND

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2015

4 PM | LITTLE THEATRE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

**PIECE OF MIND** | Performances addressing mental illness and its stigma

First inspired in 2013 by 32nd District of California Congresswoman Grace Napolitano's dedication to increasing awareness of mental health issues, Piece of Mind is a project where drama students interview and depict stories of UCI community members affected by mental illness.

The project is designed to help the drama students think creatively and critically about their identities as individuals and artists, and how they fit into the larger picture of American society. For the volunteers, we hope the opportunity to tell their story allows them to feel heard and drop the veil of silence and shame that can often accompany mental health issues.

Through viewing the performances, audience members are invited to explore issues around stigma and "invisible" mental health challenges affecting people within their communities. The intention is to use the medium of theater to reflect the diverse experiences of mental illness, as well as pathways to hope.

## A NOTE FROM CO-DIRECTORS & EDITORS CYNTHIA BASSHAM and JANE PAGE



Theatre is a powerful art form; it not only serves to entertain, but also often provokes emotions and sparks conversations and debates, and occasionally it asks the audience to consider under-represented individuals or issues. *Piece of Mind* falls into the last category. This project has been developed over six weeks with 18 curious, open-minded undergraduate and graduate students who have taken the time to interview a wide variety of individuals whose lives have been affected by mental health issues—their own or those they love.

Some of these pieces are close to verbatim from the original interview. Other pieces are inspired by that meeting, or by issues that arose while

working in class. This has been a powerful experience for us all. We are deeply indebted to the volunteers who were so open and generous in sharing their personal stories.

We hope that you will listen to the voices of these individuals and that their "truths" will help all of us rethink, reconsider and renew our own beliefs and practices that all people deserve respect and consideration.

## 5PM DISCUSSION PANEL moderated by Dr. Marcelle Holmes

Beth Krom	Irvine City Councilmember
Virginia Mann, Ph.D.	Professor, Department of Cognitive Sciences   School of Social Sciences, UC Irvine
Robert Moeller, Ph.D.	Professor, Department of History   School of Humanities, UC Irvine
Steve Pitman	President, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Orange County Chapter

**5:30PM RECEPTION** | Following the panel, please join us outside the Little Theatre for a light reception.

**A SPECIAL THANKS** to our volunteers for generously giving their time, sharing their stories and helping to continue this important conversation begun last May.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the following people and offices for their support: **Beth Krom** • **Steve Pitman** • **Virginia Mann** • **Bob Moeller** • **Darrin Wade** • **Claire Trevor School of the Arts Production Staff** • **Tracy La** • **Office of the Vice Chancellor Student Affairs** • **Office of Community & Government Relations** • **Counseling Center** • **Health Education Center** • **Veteran Services** • **Office of Campus Counsel** • **Student Center & Event Services** • **Teaching, Learning & Technology Center** • **Hospitality & Dining Services** • **Guest & Event Services**

## PERFORMANCES & CAST

Hope ..... Ashley Slack

Every year, about 42.5 million American adults (or 18.2% of the total adult population in the United States) suffer from some mental illness, living with conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.<sup>1</sup>

That's Not All ..... Julianna Stephanie Ojeda      Fireworks ..... Vinny Tangherlini  
I Didn't Decide ..... Madison Scott

Suicide is the third leading cause of death in people ages 15 to 24. More youth die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease combined. Over 90% of children and adolescents who commit suicide have a mental disorder.<sup>2</sup>

PLEASE <3 ..... Jennifer Jones      Effective Art ..... Travis Kendrick  
The Senses ..... Sam Arnold      Connections ..... Alex Raby  
Others over Myself ..... Kristina Kahveciyan

In 2012, the National Health Interview Survey found that 8% of U.S. adults (18 million) used meditation. 40% or more of Americans self-treat themselves with complementary and alternative medicine.<sup>3</sup>

The Squeaky Wheel Gets the Least .. Christopher Bearden      Better ..... Aryan Arnold  
Just Safe Enough ..... Madison Scott      Freeze ..... Kelsey Miller  
I Don't Get It ..... Thomas Varga

Approximately 73% of individuals exposed to a traumatic incident will experience dissociative states during the incident or in the days and weeks that follow.<sup>4</sup>

He Tried ..... Tyler Griffith      Filling Up the Fridge ..... Thomas Varga  
August 11, 2014 ..... Paul Cook      All we have is today, right? ... Sarah Butts perf. by Nicholas Manfredi

Suicidal behavior is a critical problem in war veterans. Combat veterans are not only more likely to have suicidal ideation, often associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, but they are more likely to act on a suicidal plan. Veterans may be less likely to seek help from a mental health professional.<sup>5</sup>

Birthday Party ..... Amy Bolton      Real ..... Julianna Stephanie Ojeda  
The Glorious Narrative of Me ..... Nicholas Manfredi      Misfires ..... Ashley Slack

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> Newsweek <http://www.newsweek.com/nearly-1-5-americans-suffer-mental-illness-each-year-230608>

<sup>2</sup> NAMI [http://www2.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=federal\\_and\\_state\\_policy\\_legislation&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=43804](http://www2.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=federal_and_state_policy_legislation&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=43804)

<sup>3</sup> Mental Health America <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mentalhealthandcam>

<sup>4</sup> International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation

<sup>5</sup> Stop Soldier Suicide <http://stopsoldiersuicide.org/>