



# High Country

## What Can Vulnerability Do For Me?

Be vulnerable. I grew up in an environment where this phrase would have elicited feelings of fear, with a mixture of pure amusement. The thought of being vulnerable, what does that even mean? The day someone told me to try and be vulnerable I looked back on my life up into that point and thought I've been taught since birth to be the complete opposite, what in the world could vulnerability do for me? And I decided I needed to answer this question in my life the first time that I watched Dr. Brene Brown's popular TED talk on vulnerability.

Ever since I was old enough to remember, my family guided throughout life. Decisions of religion, political preference, path of education, and even the profession I would choose were slightly skewed by the reliance on my family. They were my largest source of socialization. There was no stepping out of the box for me; I was happy and comfortable in the parameters that enclosed my decisions and me. I lived by the thought that if life got messy, clean it up quick before anyone else could see. And don't most of us? Of course, because it's comfortable, and doesn't skew other people's view of us. There is assurance in the ability to control every move in life.

Today, however I can say I believe in the power of vulnerability. I believe in the power of being free of control. It has changed my life,

and opened my eyes to the world around me. The thought of being vulnerable every day of my life two years ago would have produced pure anxiety in me. Now I try to live vulnerably every day, which is no simple task, but has been the most influential turning point in my life to date.

I try and do things without the guarantee of success. I try to make decisions that are based on my beliefs, despite what other people may think. I try to love and give without the fear of rejection holding me back. I try to let people in, and break down all of the walls I had surrounding, and protecting me before. I go for things, and give it my all. I found that whether or not I succeed in any of these things, in the end it has caused me to grow as a person.

The key to all of these things is that I simply try. I don't have vulnerability down to a science, I haven't perfected it in my daily life; and chances are I never will. This is all a part of accepting vulnerability. To be vulnerable is to relinquish the comfort of guarantee. While I love my family, and have lived a very good life no matter what, I like to say that I truly learned to live when I learned to be vulnerable.



-Jenn Matthews, NAMI HC Intern  
Jenn is a Senior Psychology major and Music minor at Appalachian State University. She is interning with NAMI for the Spring Semester.

# FREE WRAP TRAINING IN WATAUGA COUNTY!

What is WRAP? WRAP stands for Wellness Recovery Action Plan, and is an evidence-based, self-management recovery system developed by individuals that have faced mental health difficulties.

Smoky Mountain Center is offering a free WRAP training class. This class is open to anyone who is looking for a positive change in their life, individuals living with mental health, substance, or developmental disability issues and their loved ones, or anyone that wants to increase their understanding of mental health recovery concepts.

There is no cost for the training, but you must register. You can do so by calling Vanessa Brumfield at 1-800-893-6246 (ext. 4401) or sending an email to [vanessa.brumfield@smokymountaincenter.com](mailto:vanessa.brumfield@smokymountaincenter.com).

The training will be held March 3rd and 4th from 9:30 am-4:30 pm at the Watauga County Library meeting room. The training will offer information on five key recovery concepts, making an individual Wellness Recovery Action Plan, and ways to use and share your plan. Don't miss this wonderful training and thank you to Smoky Mountain Center for the opportunity.

## Upcoming Meetings

**Monday, March 3, 2014**  
**Screening of "Call Me Crazy."**

In April, Lifetime Television premiered *Call Me Crazy*, a series of interconnected short films that deal with the subject of mental illness. Through five short stories named after each title character—Lucy, Eddie, Allison, Grace and Maggie—powerful relationships built on hope and triumph give viewers a new understanding of what happens when a loved one struggles with mental illness. This TV movie was co-produced with NAMI. *\*This meeting will run from 7pm-9pm*

**Our meetings are in the Watauga County Public Library conference room. Watauga County Public Library in downtown Boone is located at 140 Queen Street, behind Mast General Store. If you get there before 7pm you will be able to go in the main door. After that we will enter and exit through the side door.**



## FUNDRAISER AT COME BACK SHACK

Go to Come Back Shack in Boone to eat anytime on Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, tell them you're there for NAMI and a portion of the proceeds will go to NAMI High Country.

Welcome to NAMI High Country. NAMI, which stands for National Alliance on Mental Illness, is a National Organization. We are a local chapter that serves Watauga, NC and surrounding counties. If you are a person living with a mental illness, a friend or family member of someone living with a mental illness, a student interested in mental health issues, or a professional working in the mental health field – we hope you'll be involved!

If you would like to receive this newsletter by mail or be added to our email list please call or email us. Our contact info is below. Professionals, feel free to make copies of our newsletter and give to clients or place in your office.

If Watauga County Schools are out the day of a monthly meeting we will not meet.