

Opening [read at the beginning of every No Shande meeting]

We are calling the effort *Shande; There is none. Shande means shame and we are lifting the shame curtain over one of the last of our hidden vulnerabilities: mental health and mental illness.

We feel an extra urgency now to bring the message to our community, to teach resources for living, for being a nudge in an effort to teach mental health strategies to use in our personal and communal toolbox.

We know that mental health, substance use disorders, incarceration all intersect in a nether world we are not accustomed to speaking about. We intend to be out loud while still respecting confidentiality. Confidentiality does not mean secrecy. Secrecy is part of the problem.

By telling the stories of our successes and our losses, we intend to reduce the shande-shame factor. It begins with talk; talk about difficult subjects we may not be accustomed to airing out in community. We are creating a safe space for such conversations.

We also feel it's important to make connections with others in our community doing the good work so to speak so our efforts are not isolated. We are struggling against isolation in all quarters: personal and communal. The point is not to practice aloneness.

One of our mottos: let no one go dark on our watch.

We are presently meeting the every Sunday of the month at 1:00 PM.

We bring the message to the larger community several times a year when we demonstrate what we are doing.

Everyone is welcome. Our stories are often demanding; let's remember to make room for the other participants and to keep our comments a reasonable length. In all things, we lead with respect.

Thanks for being here.

jsg and st