

From: **NAMI Ohio** <namiohio@namiohio.org>
Date: Thu, Oct 7, 2010 at 4:56 PM
Subject: {Disarmed} An Open Letter to Cedar Point
To: ([cedar point](#))

Dear Cedar Point Administrators,

We are writing on behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio (NAMI Ohio) in regards to two Halloween attractions that are part of this year's Halloweekends at Cedar Point ... Dr. D Mented's Asylum for the Criminally Insane and The Edge of Madness: Still Crazy. Both of these displays suggest that people with mental illness are dangerous and deranged and that the general public should be frightened of such people. Mental illnesses are biological brain disorders ... they are diseases ... no different from other physiological ailments.

Would Cedar Point ever even consider developing a display or attraction that used cancer patients as a means of instilling fear in their guests? We think not. And why is this? Because cancer is a serious disease ... we would never want to paint individuals with this terrible disease in an unfavorable light. Why then do you feel that it is acceptable to paint individuals suffering from biological brain disorders in an unfavorable light?

We are well aware of the unfortunate truth that much of society continues to stigmatize people with mental illness. We trust that this is simply due to ignorance ... because if it is ignorance, we can do something to change that.

Perhaps you are not aware that mental illnesses are serious medical conditions. Maybe you do not know that they cannot be overcome through "will power". Perhaps you were never told that these illnesses are not related to a person's character or intelligence. And maybe you are unaware of the fact that with appropriate medication and a range of services, most people with mental illness can significantly reduce the impact of their illness.

With this new knowledge, we hope that you will be able to see how displays such as Dr. D's Asylum and The Edge of Madness only contribute to the stigma by encouraging false stereotypes and barricading the path towards an educated society.

This is Mental Illness Awareness Week. Now that you are aware, we hope that you will remove these displays immediately.

Sincerely,

Your friends at NAMI Ohio