

If you or a loved one believes you have a mental illness or received a diagnosis of a mental illness and you need to find out more information: **we can help.**

If you want to know how to use the mental health services and benefits system to get help for yourself or your loved one: **we can help.**

Here's how we can help:

- Toll-free phone number to call for information on how to navigate the mental healthcare system – this helpline assists thousands of people access the services they need.
- Education programs
- Support groups
- Individual, community, and state level advocacy
- Information helpline
- User-friendly website
- Printed resource materials

What is Mental Illness?

Mental illness refers to a group of disorders which cause severe disturbances in a person's ability to think, feel, and relate. Untreated, they can result in a greatly lowered ability to cope with the ordinary demands of life.

Half of the people who develop a mental illness show symptoms before the age of 14.

Studies indicate that one in five children and adolescents (20 percent) may have a diagnosable disorder. Adolescents who may be experiencing a mental illness often turn to

drugs and alcohol to self-medicate, finding it more socially acceptable than going for treatment.



Mental illness is second only to heart disease as the leading cause of disability in this country and worldwide, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and Harvard University.



Mental illnesses can affect individuals of any age, race, religion, and/or socioeconomic demographic. They can occur in any family. Mental illnesses affect the brain, just as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer affect other organs in the body. While we do not have a cure for these brain disorders, we do know that people can recover. With early

intervention, treatment, and support, people with mental illness can live full, productive lives.

NAMI Massachusetts strives to educate the public; to fight stigma, discrimination, and stereotypes; and to promote recovery.

Improving Lives through Education

Family-to-Family is a *free* 12-week course for families, partners, and friends of individuals with serious mental illness – taught by NAMI-trained family member volunteers – focusing on the emotional responses families have to the trauma of mental illness; many family members describe the experience in the program as life-changing.

NAMI Basics is a *free* six-week, peer-taught education program developed specifically for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents showing signs of behavioral or emotional problems.

In Our Own Voice is a *free* one-hour presentation that both offers insight into the hope and recovery possible for people living with mental illness and delivers a strong anti-stigma message. Trained individuals living with mental illness present a brief, yet comprehensive, powerful, and interactive program, accompanied by a video, about their own illness, recovery, and hopes. *In Our Own Voice* is appropriate for lay people, mental health professionals, police officers, teachers, students, and any other groups which want to learn about mental illness first-hand.

Improving Lives through Support

NAMI Family Support Groups are free meetings of caregivers of individuals with a mental illness in which family members can talk frankly about their challenges and help one another through their learned wisdom.

NAMI Connection is a free 90-minute recovery support group facilitated by a trained peer for people living with mental illness in which people learn from one another's experiences, share coping strategies, and offer mutual encouragement and understanding.

Improving Lives through Advocacy

Our advocacy activities seek to ensure quality care and community-based services for individuals with mental illness. We advocate for better choices in employment, housing, education, medical treatment, access to medications, rehabilitation, and hospitalization services. NAMI Massachusetts is dedicated to raising awareness of the needs of individuals with mental illness in both the private and public mental health care sectors. NAMI Massachusetts is in the vanguard in advocating for adequate budgets for the Department of Mental Health and in promoting our legislative priorities to policymakers.

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Join NAMI Massachusetts Today!

Join NAMI Massachusetts by going to <http://www.namimass.org/join/become-a-member> or by calling our office and speaking with membership. Membership is \$35.00 or open door which is \$3.00 for those with limited income.

Benefits of Membership:

- become part of NAMI at the national, state, and local levels
- receive NAMI Massachusetts newsletter, regular email-updates, and member discounts
- join your voice with others on behalf of persons affected by mental illness and our voice becomes stronger

Mission

NAMI Massachusetts works with our 20 local chapters (Affiliates) to improve the quality of life both for people with mental illnesses and for their families.

Values

Central to NAMI Massachusetts is a commitment to programs that are both peer/consumer-driven and family-driven; to the key concepts of recovery, resiliency, and support that are essential to wellness and quality of life; and to full and meaningful lives for all persons.

NAMI Massachusetts
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Do you know someone with a mental illness? You are not alone. We can help!



With one in five adults in the U.S. having a diagnosable mental illness each year, it could be a family member, a friend, a work colleague - or you.



Mental Health is Essential to Good Health

info@namimass.org

800-370-9085

www.namimass.org

