

## **Mandatory Guidance for Conducting In-Person NAMI Programs During COVID-19**

(Based on Massachusetts Mask Advisory and CDC guidelines)

NAMI Massachusetts recognizes that COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on people diagnosed with mental health conditions and their caregivers. NAMI Mass strongly recommends that all NAMI programs and events are conducted virtually until the Massachusetts Mask Advisory requirements are lifted. In order to maximize participant and program leader wellness, especially while the state of Massachusetts remains an area of substantial or high transmission, NAMI Mass has outlined the following mandatory guidelines for any in-person NAMI program activities. This guidance applies to all program leaders, including support group leaders, class facilitators, and presenters.

- **Program leaders must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 in order to conduct in-person programming.** Their vaccination status must be confirmed with the NAMI Mass state office. Health reason exceptions will be reviewed.
- **Program leaders must meet with their respective NAMI Mass Program Director prior to planning an in-person program or event.**
- **All people present at the program or event must be asymptomatic.** Anyone feeling ill should stay home.
- **All people present at the program or event, regardless of their vaccination status, must wear a mask while at the program venue, including the time before, during, and after the event.** Masks must be well-fitting and completely cover the nose and mouth. Program leaders should have a supply of masks available for participants. If the venue does not provide masks please contact the local NAMI affiliate or the NAMI Mass state office for assistance.
- **No eating is permitted while at the program venue, including the time before, during, and after the event. Drinking is permitted using a straw under the mask.**
- **All people present should maintain no less than three feet of social distance while at the program venue.** For programs or events where some participants are unvaccinated or the vaccination status of participants is unknown, people present should maintain six feet of social distance as much as possible.
- **Program leaders must agree to clean all high-touch areas before and after the program or event with EPA-recommended disinfectants** (<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/about-list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19-0>). If the venue does not provide disinfecting cleaning supplies, please contact the local NAMI affiliate or the NAMI Mass state office for assistance. In the case of presentations, the venue will be responsible for cleaning, not program leaders.
- **Any attendee who is unwilling or unable to adhere to the above guidelines should be promptly removed from the venue.**
- **Indoor spaces that do not allow fresh air from the outdoors should be avoided as much as possible.**
- **Program leaders and participants must agree to notify NAMI Mass if they are quarantined due to a COVID-19 exposure that occurred less than one week prior to the group meeting, if they seek COVID-19 testing other than for routine surveillance testing, or if they test positive for COVID-19.** This information will be shared with other group participants anonymously. This means that participants will be notified that someone in the group sought COVID-19 testing or tested positive. The person's name will not be shared with participants or program leaders without permission. NAMI Mass will notify the local Board of Health.

It is the responsibility of program event organizers to ensure the strict adherence to the above guidelines. Any NAMI program events held in-person that cannot comply with the above mandatory guidelines should not be presented as NAMI events before, during or after such event.

**Please contact Eliza Williamson ([ewilliamson@namimass.org](mailto:ewilliamson@namimass.org)), Deputy Director of Programs at NAMI Massachusetts, if you have questions about these requirements, have quarantined due to a COVID-19 exposure that occurred less than one week prior to the group meeting, sought COVID-19 testing, or have tested positive for COVID-19.**

*Please note that this guidance is subject to change, based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and local Boards of Health.*