



About COMPASS

COMPASS is the information and referral helpline at NAMI Massachusetts. We provide resources and support to help people navigate the complex mental health system, and help problem solve in difficult circumstances.

Helping people with resources, ideas, and next steps is our #1 priority, often from a first-hand user perspective. Although COMPASS is not a warmline, we try to provide support, empathy, validation, and compassion to all people who contact us.

The COMPASS helpline is manned by people with experience navigating the mental health system for themselves or a loved one, including volunteer and staff Navigators. Our trained Navigators are available to answer a wide range of questions and refer to community resources.

Who Can Contact COMPASS

We welcome inquiries from:

- people diagnosed with mental health conditions
- family members, friends, and other supporters
- clinicians, case managers, and health care providers
- NAMI affiliate and program leaders
- other information & referral services
- educators, law enforcement, legislators and aides, etc.
- anyone!

What to Contact COMPASS About

People can contact COMPASS about:

- finding peer and family support
- accessing mental health treatment or providers
- services and supports for children and teens
- insurance, housing, benefits, employment, transportation, education, the legal system, and more
- talking to someone who has “been there”

What to Expect

When someone contacts COMPASS, they'll get:

- to talk with a real person who's been there
- empathy, validation, compassion, and support
- resources and next steps to fit their needs
- continued connection to a network of support, through NAMI education and support programs
- confidence that the details of their situation will be kept private

Our Workflow

When someone calls or emails COMPASS, we:

- ask basic intake questions to get context on the situation (all questions are voluntary)
- help the person identify concrete needs
- ask what they've already tried
- brainstorm with the COMPASS team, if needed
- offer immediate information, resources, ideas, and concrete next steps when possible
- offer to follow up by phone, email, or postal mail
- research and follow up as needed

What We Cannot Do

We cannot provide:

- **direct mental health care** - we can help people find mental health care
- **provider recommendations** - we can provide tools and support to help someone find a provider
- **legal advice** - but we can refer to legal assistance in many areas
- **direct housing, employment, transportation, or financial assistance** - we can help people find programs for these and other needs
- **individual casework or advocacy** - we can offer strategies for self advocacy and help people identify opportunities for care management and similar supports
- **resources that are not available or do not exist** - we do our best to help find alternatives
- **a guarantee that we will always be available** - COMPASS is not a crisis line, but we do our best to respond as soon as possible

How to Contact COMPASS

We are available Monday - Friday, 9 am - 5 pm:

- **call** 617-704-6264 or 1-800-370-9085
- **email** compass@namimass.org
- **more information** <https://namimass.org/nami-mass-compass-helpline/>