

## Who We Are

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Massachusetts is a nonprofit grassroots organization. Founded in 1982, we are the state's family voice on mental illness. At the NAMI Massachusetts, we work to improve the quality of life for people diagnosed with mental health conditions and their families through education, advocacy, and support.

Learn more about NAMI Massachusetts on our website: [www.namimass.org](http://www.namimass.org).

## What We Do

We offer education and support programs around the state, in cooperation with our local affiliates. Our programs are free to participants, and the majority are led by people with personal experience navigating the mental health system for themselves or a family member.

### our programs for people dealing with mental health symptoms or diagnoses

**NAMI Connection** is a free peer-led support group for people who are concerned about their mental health. NAMI Connection groups offer a safe and confidential setting to talk about your experiences. The groups encourage empathy, productive discussion, and a sense of community.

**NAMI Peer-to-Peer** is a free 8-session program for people who wish to establish and maintain their wellness. Classes are taught by NAMI-trained leaders with lived experience, and great value is placed on the individual experiences of each person in the class.

For more information contact, Judi Maguire at [jmaguire@namimass.org](mailto:jmaguire@namimass.org).

### our programs for family members and other caregivers

**NAMI Family Support Groups** are free groups for family members and other caregivers of people diagnosed with mental health conditions. Led by NAMI-trained facilitators who are also family members, they provide understanding, comfort, and hope.

**NAMI Family-to-Family** is a free 12-week program for family members and other caregivers of adults diagnosed with mental health conditions. The program is designed to help participants understand and support their loved one, while maintaining their own well-being.

**NAMI Basics** is a free 6-week class for parents and other family caregivers of children and adolescents with emotional or behavioral issues. Participants learn communication tips, how to problem solve, and the skills to help them cope with the emotional impact of caring for their child.

For more information, contact Ilya Cherkasov at [icherkasov@namimass.org](mailto:icherkasov@namimass.org).

### our information & referral line

**The COMPASS Helpline** provides resources and support to help people navigate the complex mental health system and problem solve in difficult circumstances. Trained COMPASS Navigators are available to answer questions on a wide range of topics and refer to community resources. The COMPASS helpline is available Monday through Friday, 9 am - 5 pm excluding holidays. Call us at 1-800-370-9085 or 617-704-6264 or, or email us at [compass@namimass.org](mailto:compass@namimass.org).

For more information, contact Jill Gichuhi at [jgichuhi@namimass.org](mailto:jgichuhi@namimass.org).

## our community education programs

**NAMI In Our Own Voice** is a powerful presentation delivered by two trained presenters about their lived experience with a mental health condition, substance use, or trauma. This free presentation aims to change attitudes, assumptions, and stereotypes about living with a mental health condition.

**NAMI Ending the Silence** is a mental health awareness program for middle and high school age youth, offering a message of hope and encouraging students to reduce stigma surrounding mental health conditions. This free presentation is delivered by two trained speakers, including a young adult who shares their experience of living with a mental health condition.

**NAMI Mass Allies for Student Mental Health** is a professional development program that provides educators with information and resources to support their students' mental health needs. By hearing from a panel of four perspectives - clinical, educator, parent, and young adult - participants learn how to work as allies to identify and understand the effects of mental health conditions and trauma on students' academic success and overall well-being. There is a modest fee for this program.

**NAMI Sharing Your Story with Law Enforcement** is a presentation by two trained speakers offered as part of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. Speakers with lived experience navigating the mental health system for themselves or a family member share their stories to help police officers respond effectively and compassionately to people in crisis.

**Mental Health First Aid** is a national program that teaches participants the skills to respond to the signs of mental health conditions and substance use. Certified trainers from NAMI Massachusetts can provide this training for a fee, for a variety of adult audiences. The Community Education & Training team can also provide training and presentations on other topics. Contact us for details.

**NAMI Mass Criminal Justice Diversion Project** aims to prevent the unnecessary arrest and detention of people diagnosed with mental health conditions. The CJDP supports local police departments in engaging with people experiencing a mental health crisis, and fosters connections between law enforcement, behavioral health providers, and other community stakeholders.

**For more information, contact Michelle Ward at [mward@namimass.org](mailto:mward@namimass.org) or Eliza Williamson at [ewilliamson@namimass.org](mailto:ewilliamson@namimass.org).**

## How We Advocate

NAMI Massachusetts sets an advocacy platform each year that directly reflect our members' experiences and the real-world issues they are facing. Our current advocacy priorities include housing, mental health parity, criminal justice reform, children's mental health care, and Department of Mental Health funding. We coordinate advocacy efforts at the local level, and regularly update members on advocacy opportunities.

## Our Events

We host three signature events each year, open to all NAMI Mass members and allies:

**Advocacy Day**, held each year in April, gathers mental health advocates from across the State to inform lawmakers about our legislative priorities.

**NAMIWalks Massachusetts** our largest event and biggest fundraiser, brings together 5000+ people of all ages every May to combat discrimination, raise funds, and promote awareness.

**The NAMI Mass Convention** brings together 350+ people each October for a day of learning and networking, with workshop sessions, an exhibit hall, and our annual Board of Directors election.