NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation’s largest and most active grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. There are over 1,200 active chapters nationwide with over 70 in California alone. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, support, research and “Stomping Out” the stigma of mental illness. All NAMI Ventura County’s programs are offered to the public at no charge.

**Family to Family Education Program**

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a 12-week (30 hour) course for family members and caregivers of individuals living with a mental disorder.

- The course is taught by trained family members
- All instruction and course materials are free to class participants
- Over 300,000 family members have graduated from this national program

This course includes:

- Current information about schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder (manic depression), panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, co-occurring brain disorders and addictive disorders
- Up-to-date information about medications, side effects, and strategies for medication adherence
- Current research related to the biology of brain disorders and the evidence-based, most effective treatments to promote recovery
- Gaining empathy by understanding the subjective, real-life experiences of a person living with a mental illness
- Learning in special workshops for problem solving, listening, and communication techniques
- Acquiring strategies for handling crises and relapse
- Focusing on care for the caregiver: coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload
- Guidance on locating appropriate supports and services within the community
- Information on advocacy initiatives designed to improve and expand services

**In Our Own Voice (IOOV)**

In Our Own Voice (IOOV) is a unique public education program developed by NAMI, in which two trained consumer speakers share compelling personal stories about living with mental illness and achieving recovery. Presenters cover issues they frequently face while living with mental illness as they delve into the following 5 topics: dark days; acceptance; treatment; coping strategies; successes; hopes and dreams.

IOOV is also opportunity for those who have struggled with mental illness to gain confidence and to share their individual experiences of recovery and transformation.

Throughout the IOOV presentation, audience members are encouraged to offer feedback and ask questions. Audience participation is an important aspect of IOOV because the more audience engagement, the better.

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NAMI Ventura County is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Federal Tax ID #77-0037450

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members become involved, the closer they come to understanding what it is like to live with a mental illness and stay in recovery.

IOOYV presentations are made in a variety of venues and are given to such groups as consumer groups, students, law enforcement officials, educators, health providers, faith community members, politicians, professionals, inmates, and interested civic groups.

**Ending the Silence**

*Ending the Silence* is an educational program to lessen stigma and raise awareness about mental illness among teenagers. It is designed to be presented to high school health classes. Students learn:
- The elements of a stigma-reducing program for high school students through personal stories,
- Proven techniques to reach out to young audiences in your community to promote earlier intervention, and
- About the effects of mental illness on adolescents.

**Parents and Teachers as Allies**

*Parents and Teachers as Allies* is a one-hour in-service mental health education program that focuses on helping school professionals and families within the school community better understand the early warning signs of early-onset mental illnesses in children and adolescents and how best to intervene so that youth with mental health treatment needs are linked with services. It also covers the lived experience of mental illnesses and how schools can best communicate with families about mental health related concerns.

This program is designed for teachers, administrators, school health professionals, parents and others in the school community.

**Family Support Groups**

*Family Support Groups* for caregivers of individuals living with a mental illness, including parents, siblings, spouses, partners, family members or friends.

**NAMI Connection Support Group**

*NAMI Connection* is a recovery support group for people living with mental illness in which people learn from each other’s experiences, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding.

**Guest Speaker Series**

These monthly education and advocacy meetings are *free and open to anyone* interested in learning about mental illness. Guest speakers address a wide range of topics such as: schizophrenia research, new medications, proven rehabilitation approaches, financial planning for families with a disabled member, early diagnosis and intervention, public and other community mental health services, disability benefits, and the role of the arts in the recovery process.

Past guest speakers have included psychiatrists, therapists, pharmacologists, state and local mental health leaders, etc.
Provider Education Program

The Provider Education Program is a 5-week course that presents a penetrating, subjective view of family and consumer experiences with serious mental illness to line staff at organizations that work directly with people experiencing severe and persistent mental illnesses.

The Provider Education Program emphasizes the involvement of consumers and family members as faculty in provider-staff training. The teaching team consists of five people:

- Two family members trained as Family-to-Family Education Program teachers,
- Two consumers who are knowledgeable about their own mental illness, have a supportive relationship with their families, and are dedicated to the process of recovery, and
- A mental health professional who is also a family member or consumer.

Peer to Peer

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a 10-session educational program for adults with mental illness who are looking to better understand their condition and journey toward recovery. Taught by a trained team of people who've been there, the program includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises. NAMI Peer-to-Peer helps people create a personalized relapse prevention plan, learn how to interact with health care providers, develop confidence for making decisions and reducing stress, and more.

Friends In The Lobby

NAMI volunteers are now present at a resource table just inside the front door at local psychiatric hospitals during visiting hours providing assistance, support, and resources to family members during their time of crisis.

Friends In The Lobby volunteers are people who have been personally affected by mental illness in their families and are trained in issues surrounding mental illness. Many of the dedicated volunteers have personal experiences with psychiatric hospitals; in some cases to seek treatment for themselves.

Annual Community Christmas Party

A wonderful tradition where all those in the community involved in mental health issues come together and share in the festivities of the holiday season. Special efforts are made to include everyone who wishes to participate by providing transportation services. A delicious meal and gifts are shared by all.

Helpline

Provides support, information on resources and general information.

Call 805-500-NAMI

NAMIWalks Ventura County

Every journey begins with that first step! We are proud to be the largest and most successful mental illness awareness event in America! Through NAMIWalks’ public, active display of support for people affected by mental illness, we are changing our American communities and ensuring that help and hope are available for those in need.
NAMI Ventura County

Description: NAMI Ventura County (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is an organization of family members and concerned individuals whose lives are affected by neurobiological diseases or disorders. NAMI has served the population of Ventura County as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) since August 1983.

Mission Statement: The mission of NAMI Ventura County is to provide emotional support, education and resources for families affected by mental illness. Through community collaboration and education, we advocate for a life of quality and dignity—one without discrimination—for all people affected by this illness.

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