Spring 2024 Newsletter



Spring is here! We look forward to a vibrant season ahead and welcome all to join our activities.

- Register today for our Annual Conference which will take place on April 20. This full-day conference will feature speakers, panel discussions, workshops that provide practical tools and information on self-care that pertain to individuals and families affected by mental health conditions.
- We also need your voice - please take 10 minutes to complete our Advocacy Survey to help shape our policy priorities.
- Finally, don't miss the upcoming signature program leader training.

Read on for more details about these and other important updates!

Volunteer of the Month



The Wiegand Family have shown wholehearted commitment to the NAMI New Jersey mission. They show up and show out every year at our annual walk for mental health, bringing energy, passion and friends to support the cause. The Wiegand Family also has been a devoted contributor at the annual Invisible Pain Day events sponsored by The Darren Clark Jr Memorial Foundation and NAMI NJ, and they are also members of Survivors of Suicide Loss group, Madison chapter. Their tenacious devotion to bringing awareness to mental illness, advocating for help for those with lived experience and steadfast dedication to supporting NAMI NJ, the community and the importance of understanding that you are not alone, makes them not only valued volunteers but front runners leading the way.

The important work that NAMI does on national, state and local levels is made possible by teams of volunteers aspiring to make an impact in their communities. NAMI NJ acknowledges the creative work and tireless efforts of dedicated volunteers across the state. "*Volunteer of the Month*" can be

nominated by affiliates and statewide programs.

NAMI NJ Upcoming Events



NAMI NJ 2024 Annual Conference
Saturday, April 20, 2024
Middlesex County Fire Academy, Sayreville, NJ

We look forward to a dynamic, in-person statewide conference this Spring to educate and inspire! This year's theme is "Self Care for All" – focusing on the importance of self-care for everyone in our community. The conference will feature workshops, panels, and speakers on self-care related topics and resources. Whether you are an individual living with mental illness, a caregiver or loved one, a clinician or provider, or a mental health advocate, this conference has something for you. Come recharge, destress, and learn new tools and resources to take better care of yourself. See announcement

Sponsorship, Advertising & Exhibit Opportunities

Register Here

*Early bird registration has been extended to **April 5th**.*

Intern Spotlight

Janine Ang, NAMI NJ Intern



Hi I'm Janine Ang. I am currently NAMI NJ's Signature Programs Intern and a Master of Social Work Student at Montclair State University. I am also a mom of 2, a wife, a social science researcher, and an avid listener of suspense/thriller audiobooks.

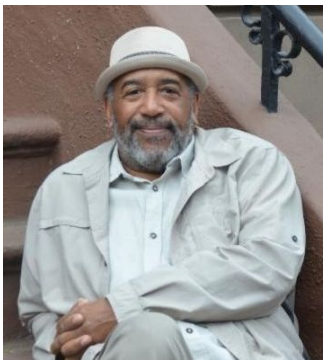
I was motivated to pursue a graduate degree by my experiences teaching students online in China. My goal was to utilize my training to create a culturally and spiritually competent curriculum that integrates evidence-based mental health interventions while also engaging students' faith and cultural traditions in managing their routine stressors and other

mental health complexities.

So imagine my surprise when I started interning at NAMI NJ and discovered that many of the program ideas that I had already existed or are being developed through NAMI NJ programs – Educating the Educator, Ending the Silence, and Faithnet. It has been a rewarding and enriching experience contributing to these programs. I love that I have been able to work on projects with NAMI NJ that align with my personal mission and research interests.

I am hopeful that the next phase of my training and career will be filled with research and program evaluation projects as well as opportunities to advocate for mental health equity, particularly on behalf of people from historically marginalized communities.

President's Corner



The Intersection of Social Hierarchy/ Caste and Mental Illness: … Dehumanization, the 6th Pillar of the Caste System

Rossler writes, "There is no country, society or culture where people with mental illness have the same societal value as people without a mental illness." When I first came across this quote I was surprised at how narrowly I perceived the presence of stigma, when viewed through my subjective societal and cultural lens.

I thought to myself, out loud, of course people have varying views of mental illness, formed primarily by their individual and group membership experiences. And those views form the basis for false narratives that assign groups and individuals to a hierarchical status in our human social structure.

It had just never occurred to me how universally the concept of stigma was utilized to place people in a social hierarchy in order to differentiate "them from us."

Read more

Mark T. Williams, NAMI Board President

Program Updates

Advocacy Update



Survey: Help Us Build a Strong Mental Health System
NAMI New Jersey wants to hear from you about your experiences with the mental health system. This survey will provide us with crucial information about the gaps in our system and help us develop and refine our public policy goals moving forward. It's a chance to share your story – what's working and what needs fixing. Please share with your networks and anyone whose experiences would inform our advocacy toward a better system. Take the survey here.

FY25 Budget
Governor Murphy released his Budget in Brief for a $55.9 billion budget. The Governor's priorities included fully funding the school formula for the first time, the 4th straight full pension payment, property tax relief programs, and a corporate transit fee to fund NJ Transit. Mentioned items relevant to mental health included:

- Nearly doubling of funding for ARRIVE Together from $10 to $19 million

- $43 million for NJ Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) (same as FY24)
- Increase for Behavioral Healthcare Loan Redemption Program from $5 to $7 million.

Many items, including 988, were not mentioned specifically but likely remain in the full budget proposal. Advocacy & Public Policy Director Matt Camarda testified on March 20th about the importance of bolstering 988 and community mental health providers.

Recovery Programs

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups

The Recovery Programs team conducts 13-17 statewide NAMI Connection support groups monthly:

- Weekly on Tuesday at 6 pm
- Weekly on Wednesday at 7 pm
- Monthly LGBTQ+ support group on the last Sunday
- Weekly on Friday at 4 pm-Refugee/Asylee support group

The next state training is scheduled for April 6th and 13th. Apply to become a facilitator here: NAMI Connection Facilitator Application

Currently, 7 of our affiliates and 3 of our multicultural programs offer Connection Recovery Support groups monthly or more often. Find these groups on our calendar, and register for statewide meetings here.

NAMI Connection expands. We are proud that we have been working with both NAMI Union, which will relaunch its monthly Connection group in Scotch Plains on Tuesday, March 26, then run on the 4th Tuesday of every month, and NAMI Camden, which will relaunch its monthly Connection group via Zoom on Tuesday, May 7, then run on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Through our training and technical assistance efforts, we are working with several other affiliates around Connection relaunch/expansion.

NAMI In Our Own Voice

IOOV presents regularly in a wide variety of settings. Presentations are free, and generally take about one hour (we can present in 40 minutes for high school classes). To schedule a presentation for your school, agency, company, clients, etc. please contact Jill Zwick at ioov@naminj.org. Hint: If you are doing an anti-stigma event for Ma*y is Mental Health Month*, please schedule now.

The next state training is in Fall 2024. Apply to become a presenter via the: NAMI IOOV Presenter Application

Family Programs

NAMI Family Support Group

NAMI NJ offers statewide NAMI Family Support Group on a bi-weekly basis. We have a Family Support Group for Spouses/Partners on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, and a Family Support Group for Siblings on the fourth Thursday of every month. Also, there's a Family Support Group for families with a loved one who is or has been in a State Hospital; the next group will be held on June 13, 2024.

Additionally, 12 of our affiliates offer Family Support groups monthly. Find Local Groups Here. Remember that **You are not alone**, and we are here to support you.

State Training Opportunity for NAMI Family Support Group

NAMI NJ will be offering multiple NAMI Family Support Group State Trainings. The next training is scheduled for June 11, 13 & 18, 2024. This training will be hosted in Spanish during the evening via Zoom. Another training hosted in English will take place on September 14 - 15, 2024 during the weekend all day via Zoom.

If you are interested in becoming a Family Support Group Facilitator, please contact your local affiliate to apply and be recommended to become a Facilitator for this program.

NAMI Family-to-Family

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 8-session educational program for families, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions. Classes will be in session during the Summer of and Fall 2024 across the state. Please visit our website for more information and to stay tuned when classes begin.

State Training Opportunity for NAMI Family-to-Family

NAMI NJ will be offering multiple NAMI Family-to-Family State Trainings. The next training is scheduled for July 20 - 21, 2024. This training will take place during the weekend full days on both days via Zoom.

If you are interested in becoming a NAMII Family to Family program facilitator, please contact your local affiliate to apply and be recommended to become a Facilitator for this program.

NAMI Basics

NAMI Basics is an evidence-based, 6-session education program designed to equip parents, caregivers, and family members with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide the best possible care to their youth (ages 22 and younger) experiencing behavioral challenges or mental health symptoms. With the option to access the program through NAMI Basics OnDemand, families can conveniently participate and learn valuable insights into caring for their loved ones. Register here

Join a NAMI Basics class now and help your loved one achieve mental wellness. Please visit our website to find more information and to stay tuned when classes begin.

State Training Opportunity for NAMI Basics

NAMI NJ is hosting the next NAMI Basics State Training on April 13-14, 2024 (Saturday and Sunday) during the day, from 9 am to 5 pm via Zoom.

If you have attended this class and are interested in becoming a NAMI Basics teacher, please contact your local affiliate to apply and be recommended to become a teacher for this program.

NAMI Family and Friends

NAMI NJ Family and Friends is a free 90-minute seminar that informs people who have loved ones with mental health conditions on how to support them best. Visit our website for more information. If you would like to request this presentation, please email Viviana De Los Angeles at vdelosangeles@naminj.org.

NAMI NJ will host a statewide Family and Friends presentation on April 23, 2024, at 6 pm. Stay tuned for registration information!

Volunteer Opportunity:

We are looking for Leaders to be involved in this program to share the informative presentation about NAMI and to discuss some of the warning signs, facts, and statistics about mental health.

If you want to become a Family and Friends presenter, please email Viviana De Los Angeles at vdelosangeles@naminj.org and fill out this application to become a presenter for the NAMI Family & Friends Presenter Application. You will be coded in to take an online, self-paced training module, followed by an online coaching session.

NAMI NJ Signature Program STATE TRAININGS
NAMI NJ Signature Program State Trainings Schedule for 2023-2024

As a NAMI member, you have the opportunity to become a leader and make a difference in

your community. By volunteering at your local affiliate and supporting NAMI's Mission, you can inspire and bring hope to those around you.

Our signature program trainings are designed to equip you with the necessary skills to lead programs within one of our statewide multicultural programs or at a local affiliate. To take the first step towards becoming a leader and making a positive change, reach out to your local county NAMI affiliate for a recommendation. For more information, please contact info@naminj.org.

School Education Programs

NAMI Ending the Silence for Students and Families

Ending the Silence is a free, evidence-based, 50-minute in-person presentation designed for middle and high school students. Students will learn about mental health conditions through a brief presentation, short videos, and personal testimony from a young adult who describes their journey to recovery. We have had a few successful presentations all over the state, from Jersey City to East Brunswick, all the way to Long Branch. Here's what people are saying:

"I like that it was informative but also someone expressed a true story which made it real and more relatable."

"I enjoyed the presenters' courage to tell their story and use it to support their position and the reduction of mental health stigma by increasing awareness."

"Their personal stories are inspiring and helpful."

"The youth seemed to feel comfortable and all learned something new."

NAMI Ending the Silence for Families is a 1-hour presentation for adults with middle or high school-aged youth that includes warning signs, facts, and statistics, how to talk with your child, and how to work with school staff.

We have been working hard to have in-person presentations, however, we now can provide you with a pre-recorded version of the presentation! If you would like to bring Ending the Silence to your school or gain access to the online version, please reach out to John Gesumaria at jgesumaria@naminj.org, or please click here: https://ets.nami.org

Volunteer Opportunity:

We are looking for young presenters (18-35) to become involved by sharing their journey through mental illness. We are also looking for presenters to share the informative portion of the presentation to discuss some of the warning signs, facts, and statistics about mental health.

If you are interested in becoming involved, please fill out this application: NAMI ETS Presenter Application. Then, you will be accepted to take an online, self-paced training module, followed by an online coaching session to help you perfect your script.

NAMI NJ Educating The Educator and Every Mind Matters

NAMI NJ is launching the updated Educating the Educators and Every Mind Matters programs. We are looking for volunteers to present for this program. If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out this application, then one of our team members will contact you with the next steps. For more detailed information, please contact John Gesumaria at jgesumaria@naminj.org or Viviana De Los Angeles at vdelosangeles@naminj.org

If interested in bringing this program to your school district, please email John Gesumaria at jgesumaria@naminj.org or Viviana De Los Angeles at vdelosangeles@naminj.org

Multicultural Programs

NAMI NJ's four multicultural programs offers NAMI Family Support Group and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group online, in a culturally sensitive way. In addition, each program continues to offer mental health education programs and events virtually. Visit multicultural programs for upcoming events and support groups.

NAMI NJ en Español

- Spring Family to Family Classes 2024 - Download Flyer
- NAMI en Español held two virtual Recovery Connection Support Groups
- NAMI en Español held two Virtual Family Support Groups
- NAMI NJ en Español March e-Newsletter
- Outreach:
    1. Community Health Fair: Health screenings, resources, and information, on March 7th.
    2. Self-Care Fair: Learning Techniques to Improve Your Mental Health, Physical Health, Overall Wellbeing, on March 10th.
    3. Hispanic Culture Club: Cultural Festival March 21st
    4. Getting to know Dover on March 27th
    5. Inclusive Field Day plus Parent Resource Fair on April 13

AACT-NOW

- AACT-NOW will participate in the Mt. Zion's Women's Ministry Wellness Breakfast on April 13th.
- AACT-NOW is having a table and speaking on NAMI and the AACT-NOW program at the Comedy is Therapy Event hosted by Zeta Phi Beta, which will be held on April 20th.
- Save the date for the AACT-NOW Conference - Embracing Black Mental Health, on May 18th!
- Mark your calendars for 2 Juneteenth events:
    - 6/22 - Social Justice Matters Juneteenth Celebration, at Shady Rest Golf and Country Club, 820 Jerusalem Road, Scotch Plains, NJ - Download flyer
    - 6/18 - Palmyra-Riverton-Cinnaminson Juneteenth Event, in Riverton NJ

SAMHAJ

- SAMHAJ provided 2 virtual Recovery Connection Support Groups, 2 Virtual Family Support Groups, 1 in person Share & Care group and 1 in-person Social Gathering between March and April 2024.
- SAMHAJ held outreaches/presentations at East Brunswick Public Library, Legacy on Broad SA dance comps in February. SAMHAJ is holding outreach and presentations at Novo Nordisk, Plainsboro, NJ in collaboration with NASPAC Employee Resource group and at East Brunswick Library in April.
- SAMHAJ members participated in CIT panels and new members are joining SAMHAJ every month. We are actively providing phone support.
- SAMHAJ March e-Newsletter

CAMHOP

- CAMHOP provided 6 virtual Peer Support Groups, 3 Family Support Groups and 2 Social Groups in January - February 2024. CAMHOP served 75 members through support and social groups in January - February 2024.
- CAMHOP participated in the Lunar New Year Celebration at the East Brunswick Public Library on Saturday, February 3, 2024 and an outreach table at the East Brunswick Public Library on Thursday, February 22, 2024.
- CAMHOP organized a Lunar New Year Celebration for members and the community on Sunday, February 25, 2024 and over 45 old and new CAMHOP members participated.
- CAMHOP has recruited 4 new volunteers in January - February 2024.
- CAMHOP translated 4 NAMI blog articles in Chinese in January - February 2024.
- CAMHOP March e-Newsletter

Affiliate Roundup

Around the state, NAMI NJ affiliates continue to be a free resource of support, education and advocacy for individuals and families. Find your local affiliate here.

View our online calendar to see when NAMI Family Support Group and NAMI



Connection meetings are taking place.

Affiliates Offering NAMI Family-to-Family

Visit the NAMI Family to Family webpage for more information on which affiliates are offering this course. NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 8-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions.

Recommended Community Events & Resources



The New Jersey State Bar Foundation is having a Law & Disability Conference on Thursday, May 2nd. It is both in-person and on Zoom. This free, open to the public and informative event addresses issues related to the disabled community and their caregivers. Sign up here

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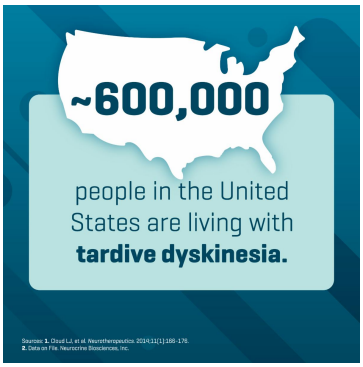
Mercy University's innovative new program, Collegium Optimum, is designed to help students with behavioral health conditions continue to recover while working towards a college degree. Collegium Optimum is the first and only US Therapeutic Day College™. It was designed to address a critical educational gap for thousands of college students nationwide. For more information, click here.



As part of the County Behavioral Health Initiative, Middlesex County has partnered with Pyx Health to connect teens to supports for loneliness, anxiety, and depression. This program, launched in mid-February, is being offered at no cost to the teens 13-18. Enroll for free by using the code "mccommunity". Learn more

Tardive Dyskinesia Resources



Tardive dyskinesia (TD) is a persistent, involuntary movement disorder that is characterized by uncontrollable, abnormal and repetitive movements of the face, torso, limbs, and fingers or toes. The condition is associated with prolonged use of antipsychotic medication that may be necessary to treat individuals living with mental illness, such as bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder. There are approximately 600,000 people in the United States living with TD, and approximately 65 percent have not yet been diagnosed.

Download the fact sheet, which provides an overview of TD, including risk factors and the importance of routine screenings.

Download this fact sheet to learn about disparities in care among adults diagnosed with serious mental illness and the risk of drug-induced movement disorders, including TD.

More information about TD is available at Neurocrine.com/TD-awareness, and resources can be accessed at TalkAboutTD.com

Help Advance Research!

For a full list of research projects and clinical trials, visit our website.
Visit NAMI's Research News website for the latest updates.

The Genomic Psychiatry Cohort (GPC) study is actively recruiting and enrolling participants from Latino and African ancestry. Research has shown that genes can make some people more likely than others to develop Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder. The goal of this study is to identify these genes. Learn more

New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury Needs Assessment Study

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey is conducting a statewide needs assessment on Traumatic Brain Injury and quality of life and access to services amongst survivors, caregivers, and service providers. The first part of the study will consist of individual surveys conducted online, over the phone, and on paper. After this, they will be conducting focus groups in South, Central, and North Jersey. Learn more

The Bolster Project: An mHealth app to support caregivers to young adults with psychosis

The team at the University of Washington has developed Bolster – a mobile app designed to support caregivers to young adults with early psychosis. This study aims to measure the effectiveness of the Bolster app in helping caregivers improve their communication and coping skills, facilitate treatment-seeking, and expand knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments. Learn more

Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey (CSPNJ) & the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) are testing a new program that helps people learn about improving their immunity. People eligible for the study must be 18 years or older; English speakers; have access to a Zoom-compatible computer, smartphone, or tablet; be willing to complete 5 sessions and 3 check in calls on Zoom over a 6-month period; and have a diagnosed mental health condition. Learn more

NAMI National News & Resources

NAMI's New Campaign: Overlooked



Overlooked is NAMI's latest effort to highlight the impact of the criminal justice system on people with mental illness through personal stories from the people who lived this experience. By prominently featuring first-person stories from advocates across the county, this campaign will help people understand the experiences people with mental illness face, while raising awareness and advocating for equitable treatment and support rather than discrimination and criminalization. Learn more

Vote4MentalHealth Campaign

NAMI relaunched its non-partisan campaign for the 2024 elections to encourage voters to understand how policies on the ballot impact people living with mental health conditions. Take the pledge and learn more at vote4mentalhealth.org.

NAMI Ask the Expert: "How Employment Supports Mental Health Recovery"



Employment provides many benefits to support recovery journeys, such as adding purpose and structure to one's day. Please join us on Thursday, April 18, from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. ET, for a conversation about how long-term employment can support mental health recovery. Register here

NAMI First Person Video: Mental Wellness in the Black Church



Monique shares her experience with NAMI Family to Family class and Family Support Groups and is featured in NAMI's book "You Are Not Alone, The NAMI Guide to Navigating Mental Health." This story transcends the silence and breaks through the stigma associated with mental health often found in the Black/African ancestry faith community. Watch here

Listen to the Latest Episode of "Hope Starts With Us"



Guest host and manager of HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) engagement Juno Pitchford speaks with award-winning author Antonia Hylton about her newly released book, "Madness: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum." Tune in to hear more about the legacy of slavery and segregation in mental health care, and what possibilities for change and healing can look like. Listen now

Article: NAMI's New Survey about Workplace Mental Health



TIME recently reported on NAMI's new Workplace Mental Health poll, quoting Barb Solish, Office of Innovation National Director. "Investing in employee mental health is not just the right thing to do, it's also an investment in the economic health of an organization," said Solish. "Mental health has a direct impact on a company's success or failure." Read more

NAMI Blog's New Articles



[Celebrating My Daughter's Life and Schizophrenia Recovery]



[Transcending the Self-Stigma From my Youth]



[Navigating Early Recovery from Schizophrenia]

Read More from the NAMI Blog



NAMI is here for you.

If you would like mental health resources or to speak with someone, call the NAMI HelpLine at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), text "HelpLine" to 62640 or email us at helpline@nami.org. You can also chat with a HelpLine specialist at nami.org/help. If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, please chat, call or text 988. Learn more at 988lifeline.org.

Stay Connected:

Editor's Note:
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