SUMMER ISSUE • AUGUST 2021

SUPPORT

EDUCATION

NAMI SMARTS for ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY

AWARENESS

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS • NEW YORK STATE
MESSAGE FROM NAMI-NYS ED & PRESIDENT

While we’ve weathered a rough year and a half, it’s gratifying to see how resilient NAMI-NYS members and supporters have been. Not only have you taken care of your own mental health and wellness, but you have reached out to others and served as support to both loved ones and strangers. Our hats are off to you, and to the local NAMI affiliates across New York, who have stepped up to serve their communities.

NAMI-NYS has been very busy over the past few months. One primary focus has been participating in the implementation of the 988 crisis line, which is set to go live in July of 2022. This line, like 911, will serve as a national number that will connect callers to local resources. When a mental health crisis occurs, rather than calling 911, calling the 988 number will enable people with a mental health crisis to access a mental health crisis response.

As you can imagine, a great deal of planning and coordination is required to ensure that crisis response services are in place to ensure adequate resources are available to meet the need and be effective. The NAMI-NYS Board and staff are excited about this advancement, but we know it can only work if the right services and resources are in place to respond.

As with many of the local NAMI affiliates, NAMI-NYS has continued to present virtual and online programs and activities. We have been able to train program leaders for NAMI signature programs virtually, and several presentations such as the Mental Health Awareness Month Series and Black and Indigenous People of Color Mental Health Series which took place via virtual platforms. We have decided to also present this year’s Education Conference Recovering Together virtually as well, but we hope to be back in person in 2022!

Registration is open for this year’s conference, and you can find more details in this issue of the newsletter.

Mental health and mental health conditions have received more attention from the community over the past year, and NAMI-NYS, along with the local NAMI affiliates, have received an increase in requests from media, businesses, schools and other organizations for presentations and programs addressing mental health concerns. We are always pleased to be able to talk about mental wellness, recovery and share resources and support for people who are struggling. We will always advocate for needed services and supports until the time when our advocacy is no longer needed.

We hope to see you at our fall events, including the Education Conference and Off the Mask Fashion and Art Show Fundraiser and Awareness event. In the meantime, please practice self-care and remember—Hope Starts With You!
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NAMI-NYS welcomes its newest staff member, Deidra Curtis!

Deidra joined NAMI-NYS in March as the new Finance and Office Administrator. Within a very short time, Deidra has become a valued member of the NAMI-NYS team! Deidra shared that she pursued employment in an organization where she could not only use her years of experience in the financial field, but also where she could help people. “After losing my brother to suicide and dealing with other family mental health struggles, I knew I wanted to be a support to those in crisis in any way I could. I am so happy to be a part of NAMI NYS and be the voice on the other end of the phone to make someone know that they aren’t alone. I look forward to training to be a support group facilitator in the future.” Contact Deidra Curtis, Finance and Office Administrator, at Deidra@naminys.org
# NAMI-NYS 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

## Educate & Support

### Goal: People Get Help Early
- **Objectives**
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will reach more families, caregivers, and youth serving professionals with peer-informed education and support aimed at children and adolescents.
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will reach more adolescents and young adults with information and support.

### Goal: People Get the Best Possible Care
- **Objectives**
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will accelerate research and early treatment and supports for young people with mental health conditions.
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will expand adoption of mental health education in schools.

### Goal: People Get Diverted From Justice System Involvement
- **Objectives**
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will influence public perceptions of the value of peer-informed mental health education support, care and recovery.
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will increase awareness of the spectrum and severity of mental health conditions.
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will influence public perceptions on mental health and the criminal justice system.

## Advocate

### Goal: Listen & Build Our Community
- **Objectives**
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will expand education of first responders and justice system professionals.

### Goal: Strengthen the Organization
- **Objectives**
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will facilitate systems, tools and best practices that enable and empower NAMI Affiliates to deliver on our shared vision, mission and values.
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will work with affiliates on fund development, volunteer and member recruitment and the development of strong Boards and committees.

## Lead the Conversation

### Objectives
- **By 2025,** NAMI-NYS will reach more families, caregivers, and youth serving professionals with peer-informed education and support aimed at children and adolescents.
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  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will influence public perceptions on mental health and the criminal justice system.

- **Objectives**
  - By 2025, NAMI-NYS will infuse cultural competency and equity throughout our work and seek opportunities to better serve diverse communities.
NAMI-NYS Committee Work

The NAMI-NYS committees have been busier than ever following a revamping of the way the committees operate. Below is a snapshot of some of the work performed by committees over the past eight months.

The Multicultural Committee is focusing on outreach to communities that often lack mental health support and the unique circumstances that prevent both access and the willingness to seek support. As detailed in the newsletter, one of NAMI-NYS’s Wellness Wednesdays highlighted multicultural mental health, while the committee also coordinated a series of online events and a social media campaign in support of BIPOC mental health awareness and PRIDE month. Moving forward, the committee will be implementing the Sharing Hope/Compartiendo Esperanza program into African American and Spanish-speaking communities, as well as other initiatives.

Over the past several months, the Programs Committee has developed a Program Coordinator Guide for local affiliate program coordinators. In conjunction with periodic program coordinator meetings and an online drive to share information, these resources are designed to supplement the guidelines provided by NAMI at the national level in order to assist program coordinators to oversee their affiliates’ programs.

The Zero Suicide Committee recently coordinated a presentation for local affiliates to answer calls to their helpline. Two of the committee’s members, NAMI NYC Metro Helpline Manager Sam Langstein and NAMI-NYS Helpline Coordinator Christine Rickeman, presented to the affiliates in June based on the training they provide to helpline responders within their own organizations. The committee is also working on an initiative to create Remembrance Gardens around the state in memory of loved ones who have died by suicide.

The newly created Peer and Caregiver Committee has been busy identifying community resources as well as gaps in mental health services around the state. The compilation of resources will serve as a helpful guide to communities, while the needs identified will assist in driving NAMI-NYS advocacy. The committee is also working on promoting peer support, and exploring funding sources to improve and expand peer support services for mental health.

NAMI-NYS’s Reintegration Committee has compiled a database of research data to be used in advocacy efforts. The data relates to mental health and areas affecting mental health reintegration, including housing, employment, discharge planning, criminal justice, homelessness, recidivism, co-occurring disorders and suicide follow-up. The committee is actively searching for information to add to the database.

The Criminal Justice Committee meets regularly to discuss the mental illness-criminal justice interface, particularly topics regarding diversion programs, reform of the insanity plea, support to families of those currently incarcerated and decriminalizing mental health conditions. The committee is also working on advocacy around the implementation of the recently passed HALT legislation that limits the use of solitary confinement; the committee members have been active for several years advocating for this landmark legislation.

The Veterans Committee is focused on introducing NAMI programs to the veteran community. The committee is actively recruiting for participants and program leaders, particularly for NAMI Homefront, NAMI Peer to Peer and support groups.

This issue of the newsletter expands further on the work of the Education Conference Committee around this year’s conference planning and the advocacy work done by the Government Affairs Committee as part of the legislative update. In addition, the focus of the Development, Membership and Outreach Committee has been NAMI-NYS’s upcoming fundraising and awareness event, Off the Mask.

With all of the projects that our various committees are involved in, committee members have still made time for the Crisis Transformation Working Group. Each committee has a representative within this group so that we can align around implementing the new 988 mental health crisis line and effective crisis response.

With limited staff and resources, committee work helps to drive the organization forward in a way that allows NAMI-NYS to focus on several areas at once. Committees are vital to the growth of the organization, and the Board and staff are grateful to the committee members working so hard in support of the mission.
Michigan. NAMI-NYS thanks our new graduates and trainers for their commitment to mental health and wellness!

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group is a free, peer-led support group for any adult who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. You will gain insight from hearing the challenges and successes of others, and the groups are led by trained leaders who've been there.

NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI Family Support Group is a peer-led support group for any adult with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. Gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar experiences.

Family Support Group State Training Graduates

NAMI-NYS offers a warm congratulations to another wonderful group of Family Support Group Facilitator graduates!
The statewide trainings were held on February 27th and 28th by Mary Beth Honsinger, Christine Rickeman and Pat Sine. The trainees were from Syracuse, Finger Lakes, Mid-Hudson, Queens/Nassau, Columbia County and even Michigan. NAMI-NYS thanks our new graduates and trainers for their commitment to mental health and wellness!

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NAMI-NYS Connections Facilitator Graduates

On April 10th and April 11th, NAMI-NYS held a NAMI Connections Facilitator Training led by Christine Rickeman, NAMI-NYS Information and Resource Helpline Coordinator, and Mary Beth Honsinger, NAMI Capital Region Board President.

NAMI-NYS would like to offer warm congratulations to the graduating facilitators for their commitment to providing peer support to their community members. The graduates include members of NAMI Capital Region, NAMI NYC-Metro, NAMI Rockland and NAMI Westchester.
NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free, eight-session educational program for adults with mental health conditions who are looking to better understand themselves and their recovery.

NAMI-NYS congratulates New York’s newest Peer to Peer teachers, who trained On July 31st and August 1st. State trainers Cynthia Scott of NAMI NYC-Metro and NAMI Georgia’s Kenya Phillips served as the instructors, and both state trainers were outstanding. NAMI-NYS is so grateful to the state trainers and our new Peer to Peer teachers Edith Famularo (NAMI Orange), Cara Glowacki (NAMI Capital Region), Christina Weber (NAMI Queens/Nassau) and Poopeh Banky Paksima (NAMI NYC-Metro). Thank you all for being willing to volunteer your time in helping others!

Join the NAMI-NYS Ribbon Campaign!
Together we can encourage our community members to engage in critical conversations about mental health.

You can show your support and raise mental health awareness by posting the NAMI Ribbon graphic on your social media and encouraging your followers to do the same! Remember to tag us and use hashtags:
#NAMIRibbon #NAMINYS

You can also participate by displaying a NAMI Ribbon at your home and volunteering to make and distribute NAMI Ribbons to others willing to display it in support of NAMI-NYS’s mission. Contact info@naminys.org and/or your local affiliate to learn how to get involved.

NAMI-NYS would like to thank all those who supported Mental Health Awareness Month and NAMI-NYS’s mission by posting a NAMI Ribbon, including NAMI Affiliates, schools, businesses, and municipalities like Honest Weight-Co op, Lauren Elizabeth Salon, Wash Boss Car Wash, Albany Medical Center, CAPTAIN Community Services, YWCA of the Greater Capital Region, Unity House, Rensselaer City School District and Columbia High School.
NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI Buffalo & Erie County raises Mental Health Awareness

NAMI Buffalo & Erie County marked May as National Mental Health Awareness Month with a NAMI Ribbon installation at partner Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center’s entrance. The affiliate would like to thank NFMMC, for their commitment to community and family outreach, and for their support of NAMI programs in Niagara County and beyond!

The NAMI ribbon also appeared at Zion Lutheran Church for May, where board members Jackie Thompson and Patsy Foster presented to the church’s Nurturing Committee and held a faith-based community presentation there.

NAMI-NYS and NAMI Capital Region NY Partner with USCRI

NAMI-NYS and NAMI Capital Region NY have partnered with the United States Commission of Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) Albany to provide workshops on mental health education and to promote peer support. The first workshop was on June 23rd with immigrants from the Ukraine, where USCRI provided their outstanding interpreter, Lesia. Immigrants from Myanmar (Burma) and Afghanistan joined the workshop on June 30th with superb interpretation from Nantvitiria Chit and Vala Mosavi.

The NAMI speakers offered a brief explanation of mental health and told personal stories both as an individual living with a mental health condition and as a family member with a loved one with a mental health condition. NAMI-NYS Executive Director Wendy Burch and Information and Resource Helpline Coordinator Christine Rickeman, NAMI Capital Region, NY President Mary Beth Honsinger and Vice President Paul McGreevy all participated, with USCRI Case Manager Margaret Slotnick facilitating the discussions. NAMI is planning to hold more workshops in the future with a goal to offer support groups using interpreters for the folks accessing USCRI’s services.
NAMI Ending the Silence is an engaging presentation that helps audience members learn about the warning signs of mental health conditions and what steps to take if you or a loved one are showing symptoms of a mental health condition. NAMI Ending the Silence presentations include two leaders: one who shares an informative presentation and a young adult with a mental health condition who shares their journey of recovery. Audience members can ask questions and gain understanding of an often-misunderstood topic. Through dialogue, we can help grow the movement to end stigma.

On May 25th NAMI Capital Region NY offered ETS for Families on Zoom, Presenters Cara Glowacki and Emma Oliver.

NAMI In Our Own Voice presentations change attitudes, assumptions and ideas about people with mental health conditions. These free, 40-, 60- or 90-minute presentations provide a personal perspective of mental health conditions, as leaders with lived experience talk openly about what it's like to have a mental health condition. This presentation provides:

- An opportunity to hear open and honest perspectives on a highly misunderstood topic
- A chance to ask leaders questions, allowing for a deeper understanding of mental health conditions and dispelling of stereotypes and misconceptions
- The understanding that people with mental health conditions have lives enriched by hopes, dreams and goals
- Information on how to learn more about mental health and get involved with the mental health community

On Friday, May 21st at 6 pm on Zoom, NAMI Capital Region offered an In Our Own Voice presentation. Presenters: Mary Beth Honsinger and Christine Rickeman.
**NAMI Capital Region NY Raises Mental Health Awareness**
On May 20th and May 21st Mary Beth Honsinger and Carmela Bradley of NAMI Capital Region NY visited Howard L. Goff Middle School to raise Mental Health Awareness with students and to post NAMI Ribbons.

**NAMI Cayuga Donates to Nick’s Ride 4 Friends**
Nick’s Ride 4 Friends, an organization whose mission is to help those battling addiction, received a donation of $500 from NAMI of Cayuga County. Donations are earmarked for agencies within Cayuga County in an attempt to increase NAMI’s presence and awareness of mental illness in our community.

**NAMI Cayuga Expands Mental Health Resources at Seymour Library in Auburn**
On March 31, several board members of NAMI Cayuga presented a $600 check to the Seymour Library in Auburn for the purchase of mental health related materials.
Within the collection are E-books and audio versions, as well as hard copy books for children and adults. These materials will also be part of the Finger Lakes System so that all participating libraries in Cayuga county will have access to these resources free of charge.
NAMI Cayuga is still looking to purchase the Discover Backpacks collection. There are 3 collections, each dealing with developing good mental health practices. Anxiety, mindfulness and understanding feelings are topics covered in these books and activities that families can do together.
This year with COVID-19 the affiliate was not planning a Ribbon Campaign. Members of NAMI Mid-Hudson from both Dutchess and Ulster County, as well as agencies and community residents, reached out and the affiliate ended up having an “Unofficial” Ribbon Campaign. A Volunteer made beautiful ribbons which were displayed along with messaged signs on Market Street in Poughkeepsie, and Millerton, NY. Board Director Renee Tancin and family hung ribbons in Fishkill and Wappingers Falls and another Board Member Pat Shaw hung them in Ellenville. The usual huge sign “May is Mental Health Awareness Month” was hung in Wingdale by Bob of Bob’s Auto Repairs and a smaller sign at his Repair Shop. Chris Babb, who heads Friends of Rachel Club at Arlington High School, collaborated with NAMI Mid-Hudson and a display table was set up in the lobby of the high school with information regarding NAMI Mid-Hudson and mental health. Poughkeepsie Town Supervisor Jay Baisley requested ribbons be hung along the Wilbur Blvd walking path in the Town of Poughkeepsie.

An informational poster was also created about NAMI Mid-Hudson’s classes, groups, and presentations and is being displayed in many local restaurants, post offices and libraries. NAMI Mid-Hudson looks forward to next year when the affiliate can again fully participate in an “Official” Ribbon Campaign.

During the month of May, Non-Profit I AM Beacon featured the theme of Join the Conversation on their podcast “This is Beacon.” They featured topics that would make the conversation regarding Mental Health more comfortable. During their May 12th Episode they invited Heather Ann Pitcher, a staff member of NAMI Mid-Hudson, to discuss NAMI Mid-Hudson and the resources it offers. At the end of May they included Heather Ann’s personal story to close out the month. The link to both podcasts is available on the affiliate’s website www.namimidhudson.org on the Main Media page. Heather dedicated her podcasts to Mark Brown. We look forward to further collaboration with “I am Beacon” and thank them for their support.
NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI MID-HUDSON “WALK IN NATURE” DURING MAY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Senator Sue Serino kicked off Mental Health Awareness Month with a Video supporting NAMI Mid-Hudson which was posted on social media and the affiliate website. Local businesses that sponsored this event were Bob’s Auto Repairs in Wingdale NY, Emiliano’s Pizza in Poughkeepsie NY, Sylvia’s Jamaican Restaurant in Poughkeepsie NY, and Adams Fairacre Farms in Poughkeepsie NY.

NAMI Mid-Hudson did not let this year go by without walking in Mental Health Awareness Month!! The affiliate encouraged participation from community residents in its ‘Walk in Nature” for May 2021 to walk outside in a favorite park, walk alone or join a team and to “Walk Once” or “All Week Long.” Walking for 120 minutes over a week is proven beneficial for mental well-being, and the affiliate encouraged the participants of “A Walk in Nature” to contribute via donations to NAMI Mid-Hudson to build a community in which every individual with a mental health condition is treated with dignity and respect.

One of the affiliate’s Board Directors, Dr. Nadine Revheim, PhD, made weekly videos of her “Walk in Nature,” encouraging and emphasizing the positive mental health benefits derived from nature walks. Everyone was encouraged to get out and walk during Mental Health Awareness week from Saturday, May 15th to Saturday, May 22nd. This served as a virtual substitute for the traditional yearly walk activity which usually took place as a group event every May (Mental Health Awareness Month). Due to the pandemic with restrictions still in place for large group gatherings this alternative struck a balance between getting the word out about the availability of mental health services to encourage individuals to take the initiative for improving one’s own mental health, and to raise awareness about NAMI Mid-Hudson programs as well as encourage donations to the organization. Nadine also published a blog in “Bits of Beacon” which can be accessed on our website www.namimidhudson.org on the Main Media page. Donations came in well over $6000.00.
NAMI-NYS Supports

CRUNCH FITNESS AND NAMI MID-HUDSON TEAM UP!

Crunch Fitness of Poughkeepsie and NAMI Mid-Hudson successfully teamed up to promote mental health awareness during the month of May. Judy (a Family-to-Family Teacher and Support Group Facilitator) and her husband, Kevin Walker (a Family-to-Family Teacher), spearheaded the month-long event at Crunch Fitness of Poughkeepsie where they are both gym members. For the entire month of May, a table with mental health literature, hotline numbers and information about the classes and support groups that NAMI Mid-Hudson offers was displayed. A message on Crunch Fitness door read in big green letters, “Your Mental Health Matters!”

Throughout the month, Judy recorded videos, along with Crunch team members, on social media. The videos were used to educate gym members on such topics as anxiety, depression, empathy and self-care. They also promoted a Zumba fundraising event that would take place at Crunch to raise money for NAMI Mid-Hudson as a culminating activity at the end of the month. Additionally, Judy designed an original t-shirt for the event with all proceeds from the sales going to NAMI Mid-Hudson. The T-shirt design was created intentionally and thoughtfully. It featured an individual on top of a mountain, with arms extended in a victory pose, to signify the accomplishments that people living with a mental health condition are capable of achieving. It also had a sunrise beside the person which marked the idea that each day is a new beginning full of hope and promise. On the back of the shirt was one of Judy’s favorite quotes (Judy is famous for ending the Family Support Group and Family-to-Family class with a quote) which read "Difficult Roads often lead to Beautiful Destinations." The T-shirt also had a green mental health awareness ribbon on it.

At the end of the month, an hour and a half Zumba fundraiser event was held following the CDC regulations. Crunch members (and non-members) were able to dance with a variety of Zumba instructors. Judy, being an avid and dedicated Zumba student herself, danced alongside the instructors throughout the event. There were over fifty people in attendance. Both NAMI Mid-Hudson and Crunch Fitness of Poughkeepsie broadcasted live during the event and educational pamphlets were distributed. The T-shirt Judy designed for the event was sold to participants and worn with pride by the instructors leading the event.

The Zumba event and sale of the T-shirts victoriously raised well over $2500 for NAMI Mid-Hudson. Thank you, Judy and Kevin Walker, for your enthusiasm and dedication to helping others in the Community!
NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI NYC-Metro Calls on the Mayor and City Council to Center Peers in Its City-Wide Mental Health Crisis Response System

On June 17, Correct Crisis Intervention Today-NYC (“CCIT-NYC”) – of which NAMI NYC-Metro is a member – rallied at One Police Plaza on June 17 to demand reforms to the proposed budget for a Mental Health Crisis Response system. CCIT-NYC is a collaborative coalition of activists, community, and non-profit members devoted to transforming how New York City responds to the 200,000+ mental health crisis calls now responded to by the NYPD. CCIT-NYC seeks a peer-led health team response to these crisis calls, because we know that a peer-response model is the best and most reasonable response to mental health crisis calls. Speakers unanimously pointed to the trauma peers feel at the hands of police and the need to remove police from the equation entirely. All called for substituting trained peers who “have been there” and who “get it” as first responders in order to avoid further harm to our communities.

Also joining in this fight were Community Access, Concern for Independent Living, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, and the Urban Justice Center’s Mental Health Project and Freedom Agenda groups. Peers and family members of peers with mental health conditions also spoke, including Dr. Victoria A. Phillips (Mental Health Project, Urban Justice Center), Evelyn Graham-Nyaasi (Community Access), Peggy Herrera, (CCIT-NYC and Freedom Agenda), Felix Guzman (VOCAL-NY) and Kimberly Blair (NAMI-NYC).

NAMI-NYS Congratulates NAMI Orange County NY Recent Family-To-Family Graduates

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 8-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program. This means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition.

NAMI-NYS would like to offer a special congratulations to the graduating NAMI Orange County NY Family-to-Family class, as well as all the other classes completing NAMI programs.

The class was held from January 2 to February 20th and was taught by Dhanu Sannesy and Thomas Fitzgerald.
NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI NYC-METRO LAUNCHES NEW SUPPORT GROUPS

As we continue to seek ways to support the diversity of our community in the most diverse city in the world, NAMI NYC-Metro is thrilled to announce that they have launched new peer support groups for – and led by – not only peers in their lived experience with mental health challenges, but also members of those specific communities.

In May the affiliate started a group for people who identify as Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and are living with a mental illness or any mental health condition. (Meets every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 6 to 7:30pm ET via video or phone.)

Following the tremendous success of their LGBT+ Peer-to-Peer session, launched in the summer of 2020, the affiliate started a support group for people who identify as LGBTQ+ and are living with mental health challenges. (Meets every 3rd Thursday of the month, 6 to 7:30pm ET via video or phone.)

The affiliate has also restarted their Spanish-language support group for family members, Apoyo Para Familiares. (Meets every 4th Thursday of the month, 6 to 7:30pm ET via video or phone.) Please note: NAMI NYC-Metro would appreciate support from other affiliates getting the word out to your Spanish-speaking community members! Please email jromanoff@naminyc.org for language you can use.

The affiliate also recognized the need to provide support specifically for people Living with Anxiety + Depression as they have experienced increased calls to the Helpline from people experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression. (Meets every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month, 6 to 7:30pm ET via video or phone.)

Go to namync.org/calendar for information on how to connect with these groups, and any other of our nearly 30 monthly support groups.

NAMI NYC-METRO AND “IN TREATMENT”

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI NYC-Metro’s executive director Matt Kudish moderated a panel discussion with Emmy Award winner Uzo Aduba (Orange is the New Black), star of HBO’s drama series “In Treatment.” They touched on navigating through various resources, reducing stigma within the Black community, and the importance of representation within the series. Joining Uzo for the panel were co-showrunners, executive producers, and writers, Jennifer Schuur and Joshua Allen, and series co-star Quintessa Swindell. We are thrilled that the panel has been added to the HBO Max channel! It is also available on the HBO Max YouTube.
The Arnold Gould Founders Award was established to honor the memory of legendary NAMI Queens/ Nassau Co-Founder Arnold Gould. Arnold Gould was a pioneering and relentless advocate for people struggling with mental health issues. Under Arnold’s leadership, what started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979, would one day become a national movement known as the National Alliance on Mental Illness- NAMI, the nation’s leading voice on mental health. This annual award is presented to an individual who embodies the spirit and carries on the legacy of beloved NAMI Queens/Nassau Co-Founder Arnold R. Gould.

We are proud to announce that this year’s award recipient, Janet Susin, is a woman who has dedicated her life to improving the lives of people and families affected by mental health issues. During her 12 years as president of NAMI Queens/Nassau she served as the face of our organization. Her passionate commitment included organizing 13 NAMIWALKS and raising well over 2 million dollars while increasing awareness about mental health and NAMI Queens/Nassau in the community. Another passionate commitment has been educating people in school about mental health. This passion led her in helping to develop the “Breaking the Silence” program still used today in schools. She has also worked tirelessly as an advocate for mental health by writing and talking to legislatures and city councils about improving lives affected by mental illness. Janet has used her boundless energy, passionate commitment and lived experience to shape the way we help those with mental health issues.

On June 12th, members of NAMI Q/N hosted a neighborhood tag sale at Janice and Ed Garfinkel’s house. All proceeds from the sale will go to raising awareness of mental health, ending the stigma and providing support and education to those in need.

The affiliate is grateful for all the volunteers and neighbors who generously donated their time and merchandise. They were able to pass out information about NAMI and signed up new members. The sale raised $1500. It was a fun day of meeting and talking to new and old friends and of course, shopping!
NAMI Rockland was honored to accept proclamations declaring May Mental Health Awareness Month by both Rockland County Executive Ed Day and the Town of Orangetown.

NAMI Rockland celebrated the support of the community and Mental Health Awareness Month by hosting a series of events to raise awareness and promote self-care along with hanging up ribbons and signs.

On May 10th, NAMI Rockland hosted a NAMI Family & Friends Seminar to educate and empower family and friends to better understand, support and advocate for their loved ones living with a mental health concern.

Through a collaboration with Dominican College, located in Blauvelt, NY, two dynamic virtual presentations were offered to the community. On May 16th the affiliate hosted a discussion with Dr. Michael Pizzi and Doug Fabrizio, MS, ORT/L, co-founders of Clear Function Rehab, exploring how one’s mental health impacts and relates to everyday living. Participants learned holistic strategies to address challenges and maintain a better quality of life. Then on

May 24th members of the community came together for Finding Joy in Chaos: How to handle Anxiety during COVID 19, presented by the honor students of Dominican College’s Occupations Therapy Program.

NAMI Rockland welcomed representatives from NY Project Hope for a virtual presentation on May 19th educating participants about NY Project Hope and the services and supports they offer to the community.

To further promote self-care as a vital practice in maintaining mental health, NAMI Rockland was delighted to join with Leslie Adler, from Satya Meditation, for a guided meditation to promote healing and peace through exploring the 5 senses. This workshop took place on the evening of May 23rd and was a wonderful way to end the weekend and rejuvenate and prepare for the week ahead.

Though the events were virtual, the affiliate definitely felt the support and connection from all who attended. NAMI Rockland sincerely thanks its wonderful volunteers, supporters and collaborators who helped make Mental Health Awareness Month such a success.
NAMI Rockland was thrilled to partner with the amazing girls who make up Girl Scout Troop 40411 of Pearl River, NY.

The Troop wanted to do a project to benefit those who live with mental health concerns. They contacted NAMI Rockland, and the affiliate was able to connect them with Rockland Psychiatric Center to host a donation drive to collect art supplies and personal toiletry items for the residents of Rockland Psychiatric Center.

The girls did an amazing job and delivered 7 huge totes of donations to the hospital along with a monetary donation to NAMI Rockland of $233!

NAMI Rockland is so grateful to these community-minded young women who will no doubt go on to be some of the great problem solvers and change makers in this world!

NAMI Schenectady members Amy Kahn, Anne Marie Heim and Cynthia Seacord met in the city's Central Park in April to create bows for their first year participating in the NAMI Ribbon Campaign in support of Mental Health Awareness Month.

Thanks to the NAMI Schenectady team, NAMI Ribbons were posted at the Co-op Market in Niskayuna, Niskayuna Specialty Wines and Liquors, Trustco Bank, Parcel Post Plus, St Kateri Tekakwitha Parish, C.R.E.A.T.E., the main and satellite branches of the Schenectady County Public Library, Hannaford Supermarket, New Choices, St Joseph’s Place, and Schenectady Community Support Center CDPC.
NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI SYRACUSE - THINKING AHEAD AND SUPPORTING NAMI NYS AFFILIATES, TOO

The pre-order campaign of John Kucko Digital's 2022 New York Scenes Calendar has launched! The classic “barn in the snow” shot (Italy, NY) is next year’s calendar cover. The calendar will showcase the endless beauty not only in the Finger Lakes Region, but across New York State—John will personally sign the first 8000 calendars. Available for $12.25 (plus shipping and handling), this is the most affordable price the calendar can be purchased at, ONLY available at that price through the pre-order campaign.

Kucko Digital is very excited to partner with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) New York State: "Mental illness is something that affects so many individuals and families, and these unprecedented times have certainly added to the challenges relating to mental health." Over 30% of the proceeds of pre-order calendar sales will go to participating NAMI New York State affiliates. Last year’s calendar project raised over $20,000 to help build the Autism Nature Trail at Letchworth State Park. The year before, the calendar proceeds raised $10,000 for the United Way of Greater Rochester. Kucko notes, "We have lofty goals for the 2022 calendar and want to do our part to help out an important cause."

To preorder your 2022 calendar and support participating NAMI NYS affiliates, go to https://bit.ly/3w2C95U.

NAMI SYRACUSE SPEAKS AT COLGATE UNIVERSITY

On March 3rd, Jim Livi, a NAMI Syracuse board member and NAMI peer advocate, participated in a virtual panel discussion with Colgate University.

The focus was on recovery and talking about mental illness. According to the evaluations, 73% of students not already receiving mental health support reported an increased likelihood to reach out for help, 100% of students said the workshop reduced stigma related to mental health, and 100% of the students felt the event created awareness of mental health issues.

NAMI Syracuse is grateful for the volunteers who have made the time to share their messages of hope.
NAMI-NYS Supports

NAMI-NYS DELIVERS FRONTLINE WELLNESS KITS TO LOCAL HOSPITAL

NAMI-NYS is partnering with NAMI at the national level on the Frontline Wellness Campaign, aimed at supporting frontline workers like health professionals and first responders to manage the stress of their highly demanding jobs. On Tuesday, March 2nd, NAMI-NYS delivered Frontline “Wellness Kits” to nurses and essential workers at Albany Medical Center. Throughout the spring and summer months, NAMI-NYS continued to distribute materials, including the wellness kits and juices donated for that purpose, and provided presentations to frontline workers. The most recent distribution was part of NAMI-NYS’s (and NAMI Capital Region’s) presentation during the local CIT training for law enforcement officers.

NAMI is developing resources aimed at supporting frontline workers and has created a page on its website with support and tips. This initiative has been made possible with the assistance of several sponsors, and with their help, NAMI will continue to seek ways to support the mental health needs of our frontline workers, especially during this particularly stressful time.

NAMI SYRACUSE SUPPORTS FRONTLINE WORKERS

NAMI Syracuse distributed Frontline Wellness kits and juice to the Behavioral Health Department at the Syracuse VA Medical Center. The affiliate was also able to distribute these items to the Manlius Police Department and Rapid Response Syracuse. This is part of the Frontline Wellness initiative created by NAMI and community partner sponsors to support the mental health of first responders and health care workers.

Pictured here are members of the Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Team in Syracuse who have been on the front lines serving our veterans throughout the pandemic.

To learn more about Frontline Wellness, visit NAMI’s website.
NAMI QUEENS/NASSAU CONNECTS WITH COMMUNITY

During the month of May, Ellen Ritz and Carol Ann Viccora of NAMI Queens/Nassau tabled in Hempstead to raise awareness for Mental Health Awareness Month. They made many connections with residents, local school staff members and many other members of the community.

NAMIWALKS YOUR WAY WESTCHESTER – WAS A HUGE SUCCESS.

Join the thousands of concerned citizens in over 85 communities across the nation who walk together to raise money and awareness to ensure vital, free NAMI programs and services are available to provide help and hope to those in need.

Every journey begins with that first step. 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. Contact your local NAMI Affiliate to learn how to get involved.

Holding “Walk Your Way” this year enabled Westchester schools to get involved in a new and engaging way. Several schools hosted awareness and educational events during the week leading up to walk day.

The affiliate changed gears close to the walk date and fashioned a hybrid version of the walk, with a morning program (which can be viewed on the affiliate’s website), then walkers went out and walked, ran, hiked or did an activity of their choice.

In the afternoon, participants were given the opportunity to come together in a safe environment at our outdoor space, enjoying the festivities of the day and connecting with each other. The walk day ended with the Gov. Mario Cuomo Bridge being lit in NAMIWalks colors, bringing further awareness to the community.
During the month of May, NAMI Westchester was supported by the cities and towns throughout the county as they helped bring awareness by displaying banners and ribbons for Mental Health Awareness. NAMI Westchester continued the awareness with an outdoor campaign of kiosks and bus signage featuring Mental Health Awareness and NAMI Westchester.

Ending the Silence - In the 2020-2021 school year, NAMI Westchester provided 92 presentations in middle and high schools, reaching more than 2,500 students and adults. Even with the last year of school restrictions due to Covid-19, Westchester County schools valued the program and wanted it to continue. And with the help of dedicated ETS presenters the affiliate made it happen via Zoom!

In Honor of Pride Month, NAMI Westchester hosted an In Our Own Voice presentation with a special guest, Scott Havelka, from The Loft Community Center focusing on supporting the LGBTQ+ community in June. In addition, The LOFT invited NAMI Westchester to serve as a panelist for a Q&A session related to the new documentary film, “Cured,” which chronicles the historical LGBTQ+ civil rights struggle to remove the designation of homosexuality as a mental illness from the DSM, which is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, a publication by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) for the classification of mental disorders using a common language and standard criteria.

In July, NAMI Westchester presented a Mental Health in Communities of Color In Our Own Voice virtual presentation in partnership with the Ossining Library and Open Door Family Medical Centers, in Honor of National Black, Indigenous, People of Color Mental Health Awareness Month.

Earlier this year, NAMI Westchester hosted two presentations to support our veterans, active service people and their families, “Owning Your Struggle: Accepting PTSD & Living Your Life” with Dr. Seth Kastle and “Once a Warrior, Always a Warrior” with Dr. Charles Hoge. Both events included a panel discussion and slides with several resources. The affiliate is looking forward to continuing this program by hosting an in-person speaker’s forum in November. Look for more details to be shared in September.
NAMI-NYS is excited to announce the initial details of our 2021 NAMI-NYS Education Conference-Recovering Together-Achieving Mental Wellness.

The online event will bring together the NAMI-NYS family to learn, heal and recover together. This year’s agenda aims to address the stressors of the past year and a half and how NAMI-NYS and our affiliates are working to bring about healing. The conference will also present on the latest on research and treatment of psychiatric disorders, strategies to achieve mental wellness, explore the critical advocacy issues impacting the delivery of and access to mental health services in New York State.

Friday will begin with the opening plenary session, Thank You Recovery for Saving My Life featuring Dr. Patrick McElwaine. Dr. McElwaine, a national leader in suicide prevention, will be telling his own personal story of how a traumatic event in his childhood led to years of mental health issues and substance use. Dr. McElwaine will explain how embracing recovery not only saved his life but led to it being happy and fulfilling. He will also detail how embracing recovery can help others who have been impacted trauma and mental health challenges.

For Friday’s second plenary session, Looking Back, Moving Forward, NAMI-NYS is thrilled to welcome back NAMI Associate Medical Director, Dr. Christine Crawford and Dr. Wilfred Farquharson, Co-Chair of the New York State Office of Mental Health’s Multicultural Advisory Committee, to continue the conversation that was a highlight of last year’s conference. Dr. Crawford and Dr. Farquharson will once again explore how the events of the past year have impacted all of us and especially impacted children and communities of color. Friday’s plenary sessions will be followed by two sets of breakout sessions. The first will be Exploring Trauma and Healing in Different Communities and Settings with specific sessions focused on children, medical professionals, frontline workers as well as the general public. The second breakout sessions Education to Action will feature sessions on advancing mental health in the LGBTQ community, addressing mental health in schools, employment issues, addressing mental health in multicultural communities and cutting through the red tape for veterans and military families.
Saturday will be highlighted by the presentation of the 2021 Excellence in Research Award to Anthony O. Ahmed, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Psychology in Clinical Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College. The award recognizes the tremendous impact Dr. Ahmed is making through his landmark work advancing the recovery model and integrating peers on the clinical level, as well as his research addressing some of the under-treated areas in schizophrenia of emotion regulation and negative symptoms. Dr. Ahmed will be giving a presentation titled "The Correlates of Experiential Recovery in Peer Support Specialists."

Saturday will also feature breakout sessions on wellness issues which will include sessions on moving past diet culture, addressing the implications of loneliness, sleep hygiene, exploring different coping mechanisms and journaling.

There will also be major topic sessions on reforming crisis response, zero suicide, integrated care and self-harm vs. suicide. The conference will conclude with breakout sessions that explore Where Are We Going? Shaping Our Future. These sessions will be Optimal Treatment of Psychotic Disorders: Clozapine, Engagement, Community. How To Advance Key Advocacy Issues, Next Wave in Research and Treatment, Making NAMI Programs More Relatable and How to Access Various Services. Saturday will also feature a young adult focus track.

The Conference will also feature an expanded virtual exhibit area displaying poster sessions that will highlight NAMI-NYS initiatives and the latest developments in research and treatment.
NAMI-NYS Educates

NAMI-NYS Wellness Wednesday Series: Part 1

Thanks in part to a generous donation from Hannaford Supermarkets, NAMI-NYS presented a series of Wellness Wednesdays that touched on various topics during Mental Health Awareness Month.

The first Wednesday was devoted to Youth Mental Health. Donna Bradbury, Associate Commissioner for the Division of Integrated Community Services for Children and Families at New York’s State’s Office of Mental Health, spoke on systems of care and meeting the mental health needs of New York’s youth. Nina Rondon, NAMI NYC-Metro member and Ending the Silence presenter, spoke about the program and her own personal experiences. Kai Hill Mann and Phoebs Potter spoke about their work at the Youth Clubhouse at Columbia-Greene Mental Health Association and their Peer Leader program. Kristina Mossgraber, Chief Operating Officer at NAMI Rochester, detailed the affiliate’s new program, Bridging the Gap. Finally, Sheryl Spencer, Alyce Newman and Raquael Rodriguez-Asher represented the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s Counseling Center, discussed their partnership with NAMI Capital Region to train students in NAMI Connection and run support groups for their peers. NAMI-NYS Communication and Youth Engagement Specialist Cassandra Farrugia hosted the event and facilitated the discussion.
NAMI-NYS WELLNESS WEDNESDAY SERIES: PART 2

The second Wellness Wednesday focused on Workplace Mental Health. Tracy Forde, Wellbeing Program Manager with National Grid, shared what her corporation did to address the mental health of their employees. Tracy was joined by Jenni Thornton from Tarakeet, a mid-sized digital marketing company, who described their actions before and during the pandemic to support their employees’ mental health. NAMI-NYS was also fortunate to have Filomena Savoca, who runs the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with the State Comptroller’s office. Filomena described what an EAP program is and how employers can use it to provide resources to their employees, including mental health support. Finally, Rachael Steimnitz, NAMI NYC-Metro’s Workplace Mental Health Director, spoke generally about what employers can do to support their employees and some information about the affiliate’s program to support businesses. Matthew Shapiro, NAMI-NYS Associate Director, Public Affairs, facilitated the panel discussion.
Matthew also hosted the third Wellness Wednesday, which addressed effective crisis response. Friend of the organization and NAMI Ambassador Frank Shamrock kicked off the presentation, emphasizing the importance of effective crisis response and sharing his personal experiences. Senator Samra Brouk, Chair of the New York State Senate Mental Health Committee, echoed Frank’s call for the need for crisis response reform and discussed her work in the Legislature to bring it about. The session also featured some best practices around crisis response, including Crisis Intervention Teams, mental health courts and expanding services all while implementing the new 988 number for people experiencing a mental health crisis. During the discussion we were joined by Albany County Mental Health Commissioner Stephen Giordano, LT Willie Flack from the Albany Police Department, Katie Flanagan, Clinical Director of Emergency/Crisis Services and Training at the Albany County Department of Mental Health, Judge Seth Peacock and District Attorney Matthew Van Houten from Ithaca City Court and Kenny Hogan, the “Chief Resilience Officer” with the Union, NJ Police Department. This session is particularly timely as New York works to implement the 988 number to match a mental health crisis with an appropriate crisis response.
The final Wellness Wednesday focused on Multicultural Mental Health. Following an introduction from NAMI-NYS Multicultural Committee Chair Ceceile McIntosh Green, Cassandra facilitated the discussion with our guest panelists. NAMI Queens/Nassau’s John Johnson discussed his work engaging the Queensbridge Housing Community to become familiar with the mental health support and resources available to the community. Tina Lee, longtime NAMI volunteer and former staff member, discussed culturally appropriate treatment and the social determinants of health. LaShawn Paul, NAMI-NYS Multicultural Committee member and social worker, spoke about her work in closing the gaps in access and awareness, particularly for African American women. Phillip Williams-Cooke, longtime NAMI member and certified peer specialist, discussed his work both in the LGBTQ+ community and communities of color. Finally, Frank Cerny from the Rural Outreach Center brought attention to the overwhelming challenges faced by rural communities towards accessing mental health resources and support.

The Wellness Wednesday presentations were recorded for future viewing and are available to the community. In addition, NAMI-NYS was fortunate enough to partner with professional Graphic Recorder Angela Krieg. Angela designed informative graphic representations of each of the presentations, and these are also available to provide a visual depiction of the material shared by our outstanding presenters. Visit akriegstudio.com to learn more about Angela’s work.
NAMI-NYS YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT INITIATIVES

NAMI on Campus clubs are student-led, student-run mental health organizations on college campuses. NAMI on Campus clubs:

- Raise mental health awareness with fairs, walks and candlelit vigils.
- Educate the campus with presentations, guest speakers and student panels.

- Advocate for improved mental health services and policies on campus.
- Support peers with signature NAMI programs and training from NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates.

To find out how to start a NAMI on Campus Club at your college or university, contact NAMI-NYS at info@naminys.org and/or NAMI Affiliate.

New York State Youth Advisory Council

Why Get Involved?

- Improve and expand mental health resources for you, your loved ones, peers and community
- Gain experience and receive mentoring from the NAMI-NYS Board & staff
- Explore volunteer, internship & other leadership opportunities
- Direct NAMI-NYS Youth Development initiatives and the Youth Track at the NAMI-NYS Education Conference
- Connect with like-minded Peers
- Share NAMI-NYS Social Media & awareness campaigns to promote our mission and messages of hope
- Because Mental Health Matters

With your help, we can expand our mental health systems of support, education, and advocacy as well as create new and sustainable systems to bridge gaps in mental health resources for our New York State community members.
As part of Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI-NYS and SUNY Albany's NAMI on Campus held a Mask Making Party for Off the Mask 2021.

SUNY Albany's NAMI on Campus members spent an afternoon decorating masks that will be worn by our model ambassadors during the Off the Mask 2021 Fashion Show.

The Siena College Psychology Club also joined NAMI-NYS this May by participating in the NAMI Ribbon Campaign by posting ribbons around campus.

NAMI-NYS would like to recognize our former intern Mary Aiello, a senior at Siena studying Psychology, for all her work this semester in community and campus outreach.

If you and/or your campus is interested in joining the NAMI-NYS mission, contact Cassandra Farrugia, NAMI-NYS Communication & Youth Engagement Specialist at Cassandra@naminys.org.

Mercy College student Jillian Riccio recently organized a campus event in support of NAMI. An Exercise Science student, Jillian serves as the President of the Exercise Science Club, and on April 18th the club hosted a 5k/10k race. Alongside Conquer The World Endurance, the club held the race series with the proceeds being donated to NAMI in support of its efforts to raise awareness, break the stigma and provide support and education to those in need.
NAMI-NYS Educates

NAMI-NYS Breakthroughs video series’ produced a collection of insightful episodes featuring special guests, discussing breakthroughs in mental health support, education, advocacy, and stigma.

Breaking Through with Dr. Dixon

Emma Oliver, Breakthrough host and co-producer, and guest Dr. Lisa Dixon, a psychiatrist by trade who works at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and currently serves on the Board of Directors for NAMI, discuss Dr. Dixon’s latest work in clinical mental health service research. They also discuss Dr. Dixon’s involvement with the OnTrackNY program and why it is important to address psychosis early on.

Breaking through with Lisa Wolfe

Emma Oliver, Breakthrough host and co-producer, and guest Lisa Wolfe, a certified Mind & Body Transformation coach, personal trainer and very active member of NAMI-NYS, discuss Lisa’s personal journey with mental health and her loved one’s experience with substance abuse. Lisa also discusses her passion, health and life coaching and their positive impacts on mental and physical health.

NAMI-NYS Winter Yoga Program

As part of our winter programming, NAMI-NYS offered free virtual yoga sessions from January 6th to March 31st.

Last year as we began to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 and social distancing, we partnered with Mandee Guzzo, our wonderful yoga instructor, to share the therapeutic benefit of yoga with our NAMI-NYS members.

We would like to offer a special thank you to Mandee, for her commitment to encouraging mental and physical wellness, and to all our participants!
NAMI-NYS Educates

NAMI-NYS Holds Journaling Workshop for North Salem School’s Warriors Club

NAMI-NYS Communication & Youth Engagement Specialist, Cassandra Farrugia, partnered with North Salem School’s Guidance Counselor, Melissa Smith, to hold a workshop on “The Power of Journaling” for students in the Warriors Club. She was joined by NAMI Westchester Executive Director, Marie Considine, who shared NAMI Westchester resources and participated in the workshop.

The Power of Journaling Workshop highlights the wonderful benefits of journaling, provides journaling participants with prompts, and ends with an open floor discussion for participants to discuss their entries, thoughts and feelings in a safe judgement free space.

North Salem School’s students were very engaged and shared that having different journaling prompts helped them explore and better express their feelings.

We are looking forward to providing more and expanding our youth mental health initiatives. Cassandra will also be presenting on journaling at this fall’s NAMI-NYS Education Conference as part of the Wellness track.

NAMI-NYS Knitting Program

NAMI-NYS began a new therapeutic knitting & crocheting program. The group meets on Mondays at 12 pm on zoom. Beginners learn from our experts and enjoy each other’s company.

Contact Cassandra Farrugia at Cassandra@naminys.org if you would like to learn how to join.
As detailed in this issue’s advocacy article, NAMI-NYS has played a prominent role in implementing a 9-8-8 mental health crisis line in New York State. NAMI-NYS worked with Senate Mental Health Chair Samra Brouk’s staff on amendments to the 9-8-8 bill that would create a sustained funding stream for the line.

NAMI-NYS has been appointed to serve on the New York State Office of Mental Health’s 9-8-8 Planning and Implementation Coalition. NAMI-NYS staff and board members have been assigned to various working groups focused on different elements needed to implement the new 9-8-8 mental health crisis line, which is due to be up and running in July 2022.

Executive Director Wendy Burch serves on the Regional workgroup which is developing recommendations on how New York State call centers need to restructure to ensure 24/7/365 statewide coverage for 9-8-8 calls, chats and texts. The subgroup is also tasked to identify current and projected volume capacity challenges of call centers and develop recommendations on how call centers can increase capacity building to manage the increased volume. President Lynda Regan serves on the 911/988 Interface where they will establish procedures and protocols on how to interface with 911 center during the preparation for this transition, including training and recommending workflows, procedures and protocols for when 9-8-8 is live on how to navigate when a mental health call comes to 911 to ensure a seamless transition.

Associate Director, Public Affairs Matthew Shapiro serves on the Community Education and Marketing workgroup which is developing recommendations for statewide communication, marketing and education campaigns designed around 9-8-8 implementation and usage, where the subgroups will design potential scenarios to ensure consistency in public messaging at the national and state level regarding 9-8-8, highlight major distinctions between 9-1-1 and 9-8-8 in alignment with national messaging and developing marketing suggestions in alignment with national messaging on the range of services 9-8-8 provides.

NAMI-NYS is also working to ensure that the voices of all our board committees are included in our recommendations for 9-8-8 implementation and crisis response reform. In June, NAMI-NYS started a board committee interdisciplinary working group on crisis response. The working group has two purposes.

First, create a mechanism for our valued NAMI-NYS committees to provide feedback and suggestions on what they want to see included in a 9-8-8 mental health crisis line. Wendy, Lynda and Matthew take the information provided by this working group and incorporate it into the ideas they present in their respective NYS OMH 9-8-8 Implementation working groups.

The other objective for this group is to create a document that details all the elements NAMI-NYS wants to see in a fully operational mental health crisis response system. This working group will be authoring a white paper stating NAMI-NYS’s vision for a system that produces a mental health response to a mental health crisis. NAMI-NYS’s finished white paper will be unveiled as part of the session on Crisis Response at the 2021 NAMI-NYS Education Conference. The report will also be submitted to the NYS OMH as they prepare a report on 9-8-8 and crisis response which is due at the end of the year.

NAMI-NYS will continue to update our members on these important developments.
The voice of NAMI-NYS advocates has played a crucial role explaining how New York State cannot recover or move forward without addressing mental health during an unprecedented time of challenges and threats to mental health services. Last summer, the state was facing a $15 billion deficit and began withholding 20% of payments to community mental health providers (including many NAMI-NYS affiliates) and potentially catastrophic permanent cuts loomed on the horizon.

NAMI-NYS’s advocacy voice (as well as a good deal of federal support) helped turn this nightmare scenario into one of the most productive legislative sessions in many years, as we saw not only significant increases in spending (including for initiatives NAMI-NYS has long advocated for like crisis respite services) but momentous legislative victories including the passage of the HALT bill to regulate the use of solitary confinement.

Since January when the NYS Legislative Session began, NAMI-NYS members made more than 75 meetings with their legislators and generated more than 12,000 email letters to elected officials through NAMI-NYS’s Quorum advocacy software. These efforts had direct results; for instance, after NAMI Queens/Nassau met with Senator Todd Kaminsky, Senator Kaminsky introduced the Mental Health Access bill (A.3276/S.5909), and it would go on to pass the Senate. Our voice is making a difference.

This legislative session also provided NAMI-NYS with the opportunity to build a meaningful working relationship with the new Senate Mental Health Chair, Samra Brouk. Senator Brouk has proven to be a great advocacy voice in the legislature on the issues important to NAMI-NYS, especially in our efforts to bring about criminal justice and crisis response reform. Senator Brouk appeared at the NAMI-NYS Wellness Wednesday event on Crisis Response, and we have worked closely with her office on the 9-8-8 mental health crisis number legislation.

A constant theme in the first three months of advocacy meetings was the need to not only avoid cuts to mental health services but to expand funding in order to meet the tremendous increase in demand for mental health supports. After months of delivering this message, it was announced in March that the state would be receiving $13 billion through the American Rescue Plan. This strengthened and intensified our argument that we need to increase investments and not simply prevent austerity.

In the end, the budget agreement was a mixed bag. Despite the fact that the American Rescue Plan and the enactment of several revenue raisers (which increased taxes on the ultra-wealthy) led to not only a budget surplus, but the largest budget in the state’s history, our goal of expanded mental health funding that’s
Currently in most communities in New York there are only two options for first-responders intervening with someone in a mental health crisis, emergency rooms and police stations. Neither of these options is appropriate for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

NAMI-NYS has long advocated for integrating Crisis Stabilization Centers which would provide a proper option and appropriate services for those in a mental health crisis. This year’s budget includes a statute to introduce Crisis Stabilization Centers across the state. This is a very exciting and much needed development.

Shortly after the budget agreement announcement, NAMI-NYS participated in a meeting with the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), where we were informed that New York State will be receiving approximately $100 million through the federal Mental Health Block Grant program, and much of that funding will be earmarked for crisis response and services to be connected with the 9-8-8 mental health crisis line set to be implemented by July 2022.

The stories of our members have continually demonstrated the tremendous need to transform the criminal justice and crisis response systems, and now we have an incredible opportunity to do just that. NAMI-NYS has continued to work with OMH on the formation of Crisis Stabilization Centers and we are serving on the OMH 9-8-8 Implementation Workgroup. (See side article on 9-8-8 implementation).

Criminal Justice issues are an area NAMI-NYS remains particularly active in as we aim to build on the historic passage of the HALT bill. Advancing the HALT bill and reforming the use of solitary confinement has long been a leading priority for NAMI-NYS.
NAMI-NYS Advocates

NAMI SMARST for ADVOCACY

NAMI Smarts for Advocacy is a hands-on advocacy training program that helps people living with mental illness, friends and family transform their passion and lived experience into skillful grassroots advocacy.

NAMI Smarts for Advocacy is designed as a series of three 1-2 hour workshops or modules or as a single full-day training that develop the following skills:

- Telling a compelling story that is inspiring and makes an “ask” in 90 seconds
- Writing an effective email, making an elevator speech and making an impactful phone call
- Orchestrating a successful meeting with an elected official

If you are interested in arranging a NAMI Smarts presentation for your NAMI affiliate or other organization, please contact NAMI-NYS to schedule a training session.

NAMI-NYS CONGRATULATES THE NEW NAMI SMARTS TEACHERS

On Saturday March 20th, NAMI held a nationwide training for NAMI SMARTS Teachers with 19 different states participating, including NAMI-NYS.

New NAMI Smarts instructors include Cassandra Farrugia, NAMI-NYS Communication & Youth Engagement Specialist, Beth McGee, NAMI Finger Lakes Executive Director, and Kimberly Blair, MPH, NAMI NYC-Metro Public Policy & Advocacy Manager. Both Beth and Kimberly serve on NAMI-NYS’s Government Affairs Committee in addition to the advocacy work they do for their own affiliates. Cassandra oversees youth advocacy as part of her work with NAMI-NYS’s Youth Advisory Council. NAMI-NYS is grateful to our new NAMI Smarts instructors for completing the training and for their commitment to helping people living with mental illness, friends and family transform their passion and lived experience into advocacy actions.
If you or someone you know is in distress, please Text “HOME” to 741741 and/or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for 24/7 free and confidential support.

What is Self-injury or Self-harm?
For some people, when depression and anxiety lead to a tornado of emotions, they turn to self-harm looking for a release. Self-harm and self-injury are any forms of hurting oneself on purpose. Usually, when people self-harm, they do not do so as a suicide attempt. Rather, they self-harm as a way to release painful emotions.

Self-harm can manifest differently for everyone. And, the ways people may self-harm extend far beyond the usual references to cutting in media. Simply, self-harm is anything and everything someone can do to purposely hurt their body.

Stigma creates shame and embarrassment, making it hard for people who self-harm to get help. So, look out for yourself and for your loved ones. If you suspect that someone in your life is self-harming, please learn the signs at crisistextline.org.

March was Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM), and the New York Council on Problem Gambling (NYCPG) challenged everyone across New York State – individuals, agencies and communities alike – to come together to face problem gambling. With gambling opportunities expanding at rapid rates in New York State and beyond, it’s imperative that all factions of the community, in all geographic areas of the state, join forces around the issue of problem gambling. Collaboration is key to raising awareness of problem gambling, preventing any additional problems related to gambling, and get those in need to adequate support services in their own community.

PGAM served as a time for everyone to join together to show how much we care about individuals, families and communities struggling with gambling problems. That’s why NYCPG and NAMI-NYS partnered to develop a Family Toolkit. This toolkit of information was designed for family members who are concerned about, or experiencing, problems due to a loved one’s gambling behavior. Inside you’ll find information about problem gambling, and resources for support and self care. Please share this toolkit with anyone that may be experiencing gambling problems so together, families can take steps towards recovery and a healthier well-being.
Off the Mask 2021 will take place in-person on Friday, September 10th from 6:00PM-9:00PM at Sixty State Place, Albany NY. This year’s event will feature:

**Master of Ceremonies** - Benita Zahn, Producer & Host of Health Beat on WNYT and certified health and wellness coach with Capital Cardiology.

**Fashion Show Co-Host** - Taylor Rao, Co-Founder/Personality of Two Buttons Deep and writer of real estate & features of Albany Times Union

**Special Guest Speaker** - Dawn Gallagher, Supermodel, Beauty & Wellness Maven

**Off the Mask** is NAMI-NYS’s largest fundraiser and awareness event to end mental health stigma. We all have mental health, yet many of us choose to mask our feelings and not discuss the importance of our mental wellness. The fashion show features 25 model ambassadors, all of whom have a connection to mental health conditions. The model ambassadors share their stories, walk the runway and will take off their masks to share the true faces of mental health resiliency and recovery. This unique event encourages everyone to take off their symbolic mask to raise awareness and end the stigma around mental health.

In addition to our fashion show, the event also raises awareness with the inclusion of an art exhibit and auction featuring pieces created by people with a connection to mental health.

For more information and to register, please visit: naminys.org/offthemask/
NAMI-NYS Raises Awareness

Off The Mask
ENDING STIGMA: A CELEBRATION OF MENTAL WELLNESS

MODEL AMBASSADORS
NAMI-NYS Raises Awareness

NAMI-NYS HELD MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH KICKOFF PARTY

On Friday, April 30th, NAMI-NYS kicked off Mental Health Awareness Month with a virtual party. The event began with a special message from 2018 NAMI-NYS Leader of Mental Health Awareness honoree Mauro Ranallo. NAMI-NYS gives a big thank you to Mauro for getting the night started with his inspiring message and for discussing the event on an episode of his Maurologue podcast.

Following Mauro was a special musical performance by Joe Mele and Mark Emanation from the popular Capital Region Band Soul Sky. It also featured our Voices of Hope speakers, comprised of NAMI-NYS members sharing their stories of hope and wellness.

NAMI-NYS & NAMI CAPITAL REGION HELD SECOND CAR PARADE

On Saturday, May 22nd, NAMI-NYS held our second Car Parade of Hope through downtown Albany. Along with traveling the streets of Albany, the parade also expressed gratitude to front-line workers by passing by the NYS Office of Mental Health building, Stratton VA, Albany Medical Center and the Capital District Psychiatric Center.

NAMI-NYS would like to express our deep appreciation to the Albany Police Department and the Albany County Department of Mental Health for their partnership that made the parade possible. We also want to thank the Albany Sheriff’s Department, the Town of Colonie Police and the University at Albany Police for participating in the parade.

NAMI CAFE: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS OPEN MIC NIGHT

On Thursday, May 27th to conclude Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI-NYS held NAMI Cafe. NAMI Cafe is an open mic night that showcases our community members’ creative talents.

NAMI-NYS would like to offer a special thank you to all our performers. Thank you Darren McGee, Joe Tucker and Ria Carval for sharing your musical talents, thank you Nadiyah and Cara Glowacki for sharing your powerful and inspiring poetry. And lastly, we would like to thank Angela Krieg for creating this wonderful graphic recording that captures the creative spirit of our members.
During the month of June, we commemorated the events at Compton’s Cafeteria and Stonewall and the LGBTQ+ liberation movement. As we celebrated this June with pride parades and other inspiring in-person and virtual events, we must remember all those we lost to hate crimes, HIV/AIDS and suicide.

While belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community can be a source of strength, it also brings unique challenges. For those who identify as LGBTQIA+, it’s important to recognize how your experience of sexual orientation and gender identity relates to your mental health.

And although the full range of LGBTQIA+ identities are not commonly included in large-scale studies of mental health, there is strong evidence from recent research that members of this community are at a higher risk for experiencing mental health conditions — especially depression and anxiety disorders. LGB adults are more than twice as likely as heterosexual adults to experience a mental health condition. Transgender individuals are nearly four times as likely as cisgender individuals (people whose gender identity corresponds with their assigned birth sex) individuals to experience a mental health condition.

LGB youth also experience greater risk for mental health conditions and suicidality. LGB youth are more than twice as likely to report experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness than their heterosexual peers. Transgender youth face further disparities as they are twice as likely to experience depressive symptoms, seriously consider suicide, and attempt suicide compared to cisgender lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and questioning youth.

For many LGBTQIA+ people, socioeconomic and cultural conditions negatively impact mental health conditions. Many in the LGBTQIA+ community face discrimination, prejudice, denial of civil and human rights, harassment and family rejection, which can lead to new or worsened symptoms, particularly for those with intersecting racial or socioeconomic identities. Please remember NAMI-NYS is here for you! Contact us at info@naminys.org and/or visit naminys.org to learn more.

### Find Help. Find Hope.

| **CenterLink LGBT Community Center Member Directory** |
| CenterLinkLGBTCommunityCenterMemberDirectory.org |
| **The LGBT National Help Center** |
| gblighthelplcenter.org |
| **The Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists** |
| agpla.org |
| **The Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's Provider Directory** |
| gama.org |
| **The National Center for Transgender Equality** |
| ncteq.org |
| **SAGE National LGBT Elder Lifeline** |
| sagelife.org |
| **Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE)** |
| silegecounseling.org |

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<th><strong>Mental Health Resources</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trans Lifeline</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>877-566-8860</td>
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<td><strong>Crisis Text Line</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Text TALK to 741741 to talk to a trained counselor for free</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Suicide Prevention Hotline</strong></td>
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<td>1-800-273-TALK (8255)</td>
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<td><strong>NAMI-NYS Helpline</strong></td>
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<td>1-518-248-7634</td>
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For 2021’s Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in July, NAMI-NYS continued to amplify the message “You Are Not Alone” in support of BIPOC Mental Health Awareness. We will be using the term BIPOC as we move forward to build authentic and lasting solidarity among Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) impacted by mental illness. We will also be using this time to focus on the healing value of connecting in safe ways, prioritizing mental health and acknowledging that it’s okay to not be okay through social media engagements and our 4-part virtual NAMI-NYS BIPOC Mental Health Series. Together, we can realize our shared vision of a state where anyone affected by mental illness can get the appropriate support and quality of care to live healthy, fulfilling lives — a nation where no one feels alone in their struggle.

NAMI Sharing Hope is a three-part video series that explores the journey of mental wellness in Black communities through dialogue, storytelling and a guided discussion on the following topics:

- Youth and Mental Wellness: “How Do You Heal?”
- Community Leaders and Mental Wellness: “The Art of Healing”
- Black Families and Mental Wellness: “Smiling On Our Journey”

BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Ebony’s Mental Health Resources by State: ebony.com/life/black-mental-health-resources/
- Melanin and Mental Health: melaninandmentalhealth.com
- Ourselves Black: ourselvesblack.com/
- POC Online Classroom: poconlineclassroom.com/self-care/
- Sista Afya: bistafaya.com/
- Therapy for Black Girls: therapyforblackgirls.com/
- The SIWE Project: thesiweproject.org/
- The Steve Fund: stevefund.org/
- Unapologetically Us: unapologeticallyus.com/

BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM): beam.community
- Black Men Heal: blackmenheal.org
- Black Mental Health Alliance: (410) 338-2642 blackmentalhealth.com
- Black Mental Wellness: blackmentalwellness.com
- Black Women's Health Imperative: bwhi.org
- Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation: borishensonfoundation.org
- Brother You’re on My Mind: nimhd.nih.gov/programs/edu-training/byomm
- Henry Health: henry-health.com/
On July 14th, at 7pm on Zoom, NAMI-NYS held part 1 of the 4-part series. Part 1 shared an overview of the History of BIPOC Mental Health, Treatment and Research with Cassandra Farrugia, NAMI-NYS Communication Specialist and panelist:

- Dr. Robin Waite, Clinical Psychologist
- Tracyavon Ford, LCSW-R, Clinical Social Worker

On July 21st, at 7pm on Zoom, NAMI-NYS held part 2 focusing on Black Mental Health and Ending the Stigma with moderator La Shawn M. Paul, DSW, LCSW-R, Social Work Diva and panelists:

- Spirit, PhD T2S Enterprises
- Brandon Johnson, MHS, MCHES, AAKOMA Project
- Brianna A. Baker, Doctoral Student at Columbia University

On August 3, at 7pm on Zoom, NAMI-NYS held part 3 discussing Indigenous Mental Health with moderator Cassandra Farrugia, NAMI-NYS Communication & Youth Engagement Specialist and panelists:

- Dr. Joseph Pritchett II, Founder of Medicine Blanket Therapy PLLC
- Lisa Oakes, Senior Analyst, Treasurer and Co-Chair NAIERG
- Pete Hill, All Our Relations Special Initiatives Coordinator, Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc. (NACS)
- Mitch Kelly, Off the Mask Model Ambassador & Peer
- Benjamin Walle, Off the Mask Model Ambassador
NAMI-NYS expresses gratitude

NAMI-NYS thanks our donors

NAMI-NYS is so grateful for all the generous contributions from our donors. Your support helps to fund training and programs, outreach and advocacy, events like the annual Education Conference, support for the Helpline and special events like the Wellness Wednesday series.

NAMI-NYS recognizes that the local NAMI affiliates are on the ground providing peer support to their communities on a daily basis, and we have increased our efforts to support their work, both through direct funding, as well as creating resources to assist them based on the affiliates’ feedback. This includes assistance with handling helpline inquiries, maintaining effective NAMI programs, guidance around advocacy and outreach and facilitating communication between affiliates on best practices.

Thank you to all of our donors—you are not only supporting NAMI-NYS but also the local affiliates around New York who do such outstanding work every day!


- $100 to $199  Michael & Samantha Annunziata, Susan Bloomfield, Community Works of NYS, Samantha Doherty, JoAnne Omar, Jessica Perez, Susan Semple, Cynthia Schwartz, United Way, Ann Venuti, Noah Wagenstein, Claire Wallace, Lynette Whaley

- $200 to $299  Benjamin Moore, Scarsdale Library Board of Trustees, United Way of Central NY

- $300 to $499  David Cohen, Jill Schneiderman

- $500 to $999  Janet Susin

- $1000 to $1999  Lauren Elizabeth Salon, Network for Good, Ziperstein

- Over $10,000  Hannaford
Many businesses and organizations have begun to turn more attention to the mental health of their employees, as well as the communities they serve. Over the past year, employers have requested NAMI-NYS and local NAMI affiliates present to their companies on maintaining mental wellness and where to access mental health support when needed.

Hannaford Supermarkets has taken their commitment to mental health support even further. During Mental Health Awareness Month, Hannaford presented a large donation to NAMI-NYS to provide mental health awareness and support to the communities it serves. NAMI-NYS was able to fund several initiatives and events, including direct funding to the local NAMI affiliates that operate in Hannaford’s catchment area.

On Tuesday, May 11th, NAMI-NYS Executive Director Wendy Burch accepted the check from Hannaford’s Director of Operations Andy Willette at the Latham, New York store. Mary Beth Honsinger, Board President of NAMI Capital Region, represented the local affiliate that serves the area where the Latham Hannaford is located.

NAMI-NYS is grateful to Hannaford for their generous financial support, and for their commitment to supporting the mental health of the community and their employees.

NAMI-NYS & LAUREN ELIZABETH SALON’S RAISE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS & FUND

On Friday, June 4th Lauren Elizabeth Salon hosted their grand opening and ribbon cutting of their second location in Troy, NY. The event featured raffles & prizes, light fare and was attended by many folks including the mayor of Troy, Patrick Madden.

Lauren Elizabeth Salon has been a supporter of NAMI-NYS by donating their time and talents in providing beautiful hair and make up to the Off the Mask model ambassadors. In addition, the salon announced a very generous donation of $1,000 to NAMI-NYS at their grand opening. A very big thank you goes out to Lauren Elizabeth Salon and their continued support!
SAVE THE DATES

SEPTEMBER 2021 SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

SEPT. 10TH, 2021 OFF THE MASK

OCT. 3RD - 9TH 2021 MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

OCTOBER 22-23 NAMI-NYS EDUCATION CONFERENCE

WINTER 2021 WELLNESS SERIES