

Improving lives

What is NAMI?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. NAMI has over 1,100 affiliates in communities across the country who engage in advocacy, research, support and education. Members of NAMI are families, friends and people living with mental illnesses such as major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder.

Many NAMI affiliates offer an array of support and education programs for **individuals** and families. For information about what is available in your community, contact your local affiliate directly or visit www.nami.org.

"I thought my wife and I knew just about everything there is to know about the system and the illness. Boy, were we wrong. Without a doubt, this is best support course I have had the privilege of taking part in, bar none."

Family-to-Family Participant, Wisconsin

Who can attend a NAMI Family-to-Family education course?

Courses are open to **all caregivers** of adults with mental illness. Everyone is a valued participant.

How can I find a NAMI Family-to-Family education course in my community?

For the most up-to-date course locations and information, please visit www.nami.org/familytofamily, phone the NAMI HelpLine at 1 (800) 950-NAMI (6264) or e-mail info@nami.org.

Local Information:

NAMI San Mateo County

1650 Borel Place, Suite 130
San Mateo, CA 94402
Phone: (650) 638 0800
www.namisanmateo.org



www.nami.org

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The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program

A free, 12-week course for family caregivers of individuals with mental illness



Education and Support for Families



You are Not Alone

Despite gains in the treatment and opportunities for recovery, coping with the difficulties that many people encounter in caring for a relative or friend with mental illness can be difficult. The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a 12-week course for families and friends of adults living with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, anxiety disorders and borderline personality disorder. Course participants gain vital information, insight and understanding of their loved one that many describe as **life-changing**.

Family-to-Family provides caregivers with communication and problem-solving techniques, coping mechanisms and the self-care skills needed to deal with their loved one's mental illness as well as its impact on the family.

Why is Family-to-Family unique?

The course provides insights into, and resolution of, the profound concerns experienced by families, close relatives and friends as they strive to cope with the realities of serious mental illness.

Caregivers not only learn a wide range of information about serious mental illness they also learn to understand how living with these conditions affects their loved one.

Each course:

- Meets weekly for 12 weeks
- Is offered free of charge
- Is taught by trained NAMI family members who have relatives with mental illness
- Follows a structured format covering issues frequently faced by families dealing with mental illness

The course teaches the knowledge and skills that family members need to cope more effectively.

- Attend with other family members just like you in a confidential setting.
- Gain insight into how mental illness affects your relative.
- Take an eye-opening look inside some of today's current brain research related to mental illness.
- Learn how families can become advocates for better treatments for their relatives.
- Learn about the medication issues involved in mental illness and the latest treatment options.
- Learn to cope with worry and stress; learn to focus on care for you as well as your loved ones.

The NAMI Family-to-Family education program is taught in 49 states, two provinces in Canada, Mexico and in Italy. It has touched the lives of more than 200,000 participants. The curriculum has been translated into Spanish.

"The course gave me hope that it will be okay, that I am not alone and reduced of a lot of shame, guilt and hopelessness. I see my wife now as someone who is ill and not as someone having a character flaw. The course helped me educate my children about their mother's illness and increased my compassion for my wife and others who have mental illness."

Family-to-Family Participant, California