



Dear NAMI Friends,

Here we are at the start of another New Year.

I'm sure we're all familiar with the old age sayings like "Out with the old, in with the new" and "Cheers to new beginnings. We can also share in our hopes for what lies ahead for us in 2023.

There's been so much change and growth over the last year and this one is promising to be just as exciting. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to moving forward in the heart work of reducing stigmas and helping others see "You're not alone."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

1st NEW YEARS DAY – Office Closed

16th – MLK DAY – Office Closed

23rd, 30th – Peer to Peer

24th, 31st – Family to Family

28th – Connections Facilitator Training

In This Issue

2022 Review

Support Group Schedule

Winter Course Offerings

NAMI Blog: Lessons

Learned: Embracing

Treatment and Finding

Acceptance

Wishing you a joyous & prosperous
New Year from all of us at
NAMI York-Adams Counties PA!



2022

IN REVIEW BY THE NUMBERS

201

Program Offerings

363

Total Program Hours

770

Volunteer Hours

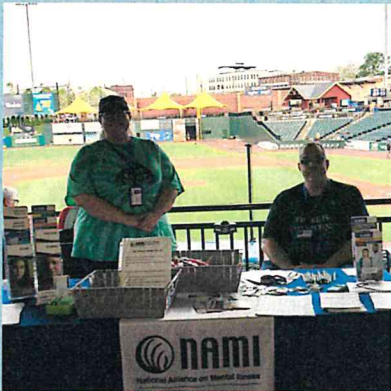
2380

Participants

5000+

Community Members Reached

2022 IN REVIEW



Beyond Grateful!



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI

**York-Adams
Counties PA**

To register please visit:

<https://bit.ly/NAMIYAsupport>

Virtual Programming Calendar

January

Connection Support Groups

Wednesday, January 4, 6-7 pm
Thursday, January 5, 10-11 am
Wednesday, January 11, 6-7 pm
Thursday, January 12, 10-11 am
Wednesday, January 18, 6-7 pm
Thursday, January 19, 10-11 am
Wednesday, January 25, 6-7 pm
Thursday, January 26, 10-11 am

Family Support Groups

Wednesday, January 4, 7-8 pm
Tuesday, January 10,
11:30 am – 12:30 pm

February

Connection Support Groups

Wednesday, February 8, 6-7 pm
Thursday, February 9, 10-11 am
Wednesday, February 15, 6-7 pm
Thursday, February 16, 10-11 am
Wednesday, February 22, 6-7 pm
Thursday, February 23, 10-11 am

Family Support Groups

Wednesday, February 8, 7-8 pm
Tuesday, February 14,
11:30 am – 12:30 pm

In-Person Programming Calendar

Connection Support Groups

1st and 3rd Monday of each month
from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Location: Providence Church -
6146 York Road, Spring Grove, PA
17362



NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 8-session education program for family, friends and significant others of adults with mental health conditions. NAMI Family-to-Family provides information about anxiety, depressive disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other mental health conditions. Other topics covered include communication, problem solving, treatment and recovery.

The course is designed to increase understanding and advocacy skills while helping participants maintain their own well-being. The program is taught by trained family members who have a loved one with a mental health condition. NAMI Family-to-Family is an evidence-based program (EB). For information on the research base for the program, visit nami.org/research.

NAMI offers the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program free of charge to participants, beginning January 24th, 2023, from 6:30-9:00 p.m. The course will be held at St. Patrick's Church which is located at 219 S Beaver St, York PA, 17401. For more information and how to register, please contact NAMI York-Adams Counties PA at 717.848.3784 or alisha.shockley@namiyorkadams.org



Participant Perspectives

"This course overall was the single most, without a doubt, helpful and informative thing ever offered in all my years searching for answers...it has helped me to understand better and communicate more effectively with my brother."

"The course has helped me to realize that my son is still inside the body that is often times hidden by the mental illness and that I am not alone in this."

Contact us to register for a NAMI Family-to-Family class!

Check Out Our Current Course Offerings & Trainings Register Today !

IN ASSOCIATION WITH WELLSPAN



Mental Health FIRST AID
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults.

You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to those who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

AFTER THE COURSE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.
- Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- Understand how to interact with a person in crisis.
- Know how to connect a person with help.
- Use self-care tools and techniques.

Join the more than

2.6 MILLION
First Aiders who have chosen to be the difference in their community.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH WELLSPAN

Mental Health FIRST AID
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adolescents ages 12-18. You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to young people who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

AFTER THE COURSE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD).
- Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- Understand how to interact with a young person in crisis.
- Know how to connect a young person with help.
- Better understand trauma, substance use, self-care and the impact of social media and bullying.

Join the more than

2.6 MILLION

First Aiders who have chosen to be the difference in their community.

REGISTER TODAY!

Date and Time:
Monday February 28th, 2023 8:00-3:00

Location:
NAMI YORK-ADAMS OFFICE
35 S DUKE ST, YORK PA, 17401

Learn how to respond with the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE):

- A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm.
- L**isten nonjudgmentally.
- G**ive reassurance and information.
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help.
- E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.

What is the NAMI Peer-to-Peer Education Program?

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is an 8-session recovery-focused course for adults with mental health conditions.

- ☑ Free and confidential
- ☑ Held weekly for two hours
- ☑ Led by peers with mental health conditions
- ☑ A great resource for information on mental health and recovery
- ☑ Offers respect, understanding, encouragement and hope
- ☑ Builds on the strength and resilience of participants

NAMI York-Adams Counties PA the local organization of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will offer NAMI Peer-to-Peer beginning Monday January 23rd, 2023. It will be held on Mondays from 1:00-3:00 at our office located at 35 South Duke ST, York Pa, 17401 a will also be available via zoom.

Participant

"NAMI Peer-to-Peer is uplifting, life-saving an eye-opening experience that changed how I see myself."

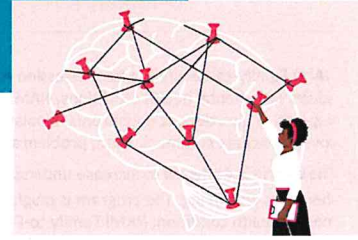
"The biggest thing I gained from this class was to become my own advocate and best friend."

"Seeing my peers' strength and dedication to recovery was personally meaningful."



Contact us to register for NAMI Peer-to-Peer!

Lessons Learned: Embracing Treatment Finding Acceptance



I arrived at the psychiatric hospital in June of 2019. I had struggled for years with major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder, and they both worsened after having my two kids. Leading up to the hospitalization, I had been abusing my anxiety medication (a benzodiazepine) and struggling with compulsive behaviors, like shopping, cutting and binge eating.

That first day, I wore a long, blue and white dress with a sash around my waist, which was dressy for me. I was hopeful. I figured I would be there for just a couple of weeks, and then I would be cured. Maybe that's how hospitalization works for some people, but it did not go that way for me. And for many people living with serious mental illness (SMI), the journey to recovery is not that simple.

Looking back on my history, I hope to share the lessons I learned along the way.

Inpatient Treatment Is A Wake-Up Call

That morning, after kissing my husband goodbye, a member of the hospital staff took the sash from my dress. I was not allowed any item that could be used for self-harm. I was taken to my room, which looked like a dorm room, but there was no shower door, just a curtain (also a safety precaution). During the day, a staff member would come by and check on us every 15 minutes. At night, too. These extreme measures opened my eyes to how dire my situation was.

My work to create an effective and sustainable treatment plan — one that would carry me through my outpatient healing — began immediately. I was given a busy schedule of classes on how to cope with difficult emotions, how to communicate about my illnesses and how to be mindful. When I didn't have class, I met with a team of doctors and staff — social workers, therapists, a psychologist and psychiatrist. They told me I could not be discharged until we finished and approved my treatment plan. I also did a battery of psychiatric tests, growing my list of diagnoses: dysthymia, avoidant personality disorder, along with major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

After doctors determined I had treatment-resistant depression (meaning that some medications would not work for me) we opted to try electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). That also was a big wake-up call: I was very sick. That's when I first understood that I would be walking a tight rope when it came to my recovery. I couldn't be cured, but I could manage my symptoms and find my balance.

After six weeks in treatment, I felt like I'd made significant progress and was ready to head home to see my family. But looking back, I wish I had stayed at the hospital longer, soaking up all the classes and advice I could.

The Real Work Begins After Hospitalization

When I left inpatient treatment, doctors recommended that I continue ECT treatments, go to weekly therapy and refer to my treatment plan, which outlined ways to cope at home.

At first, I relied heavily on ECT to work its "magic." I would take my medication and go to therapy, but any sign of a bad mood left me wanting more ECT. I was going for a treatment every four to six weeks in a city two hours away. Eventually, I learned that even ECT can't fix everything. My therapist once told me that I couldn't get ECT every time I had a bad day. And she was right. I had to do the work, and it was hard. I struggled to sit with uncomfortable emotions.

I still turned to my binge eating and compulsive shopping for comfort, racking up thousands of dollars on my credit card each month. I didn't mean to, but this was a behavior that had served me in the past. I needed to learn how to acknowledge my feelings and tolerate distress in a healthy way.

That's one thing I've learned about recovery: It's all a balancing act. And, as my compulsive behaviors spiraled, I didn't know if my family could take another fall. Or if there would even be a net to catch me this time.

Recovery Is A Lifelong Battle, But It Does Get Easier

I often feel resentful of my own brain; it seems like a betrayal that I have to walk the line so carefully when others don't. And sometimes, I wonder if I'll ever go a day without thinking about my mental health. Even four years after my hospital stay, my recovery is a constant effort. I'm still learning that not all coping mechanisms are healthy and that slip ups and setbacks are common. I'm learning that medication can fail and even if I follow all the "rules," I can still find myself in a depressive episode.

However, I find comfort in knowing I am not alone. In 2020, an estimated 14.2 million adults in the U.S. dealt with a serious mental illness, according to the [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#). And many of us who make up this statistic find the right kind of help and successfully manage our symptoms.

When I get discouraged about my mental health, I like to think about the progress I've made — I'm miles away from where I was that day in my blue and white dress.

Mental Illness Is Not My Fault

For a long time, I blamed myself for my illness, and I shouldered the heavy burden of other people's opinions about me and my mental health. However, through treatment and reflection, I have come to understand that my illness is not my fault.

Reaching this realization has allowed me to find my voice. After I left the hospital, I started blogging about my experience. I told the truth about everything (suicidal thoughts, diagnoses, etc.). I told readers my deepest darkest secrets, and it was so freeing. I no longer feel shame or any stigma associated with having a mental illness. So many people have reached out to me since 2019, saying they feel the same way but can't talk about it with loved ones yet. I get that, and I'm happy to lend my voice to others' struggles if it means they don't feel so alone, like I did years ago.

Even with all this progress, it's still hard — and that's ok. Every day I get a little stronger, and I grow. That's all I can ask of myself.

Heather Loeb is the creator of [Unruly Neurons](#), a blog dedicated to eradicating the stigma of mental illness. Heather has lived with major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, avoidant personality disorder and binge eating disorder for the past 20 years. She also writes a mental health column in the [Corpus Christi Caller-Times](#) and is the Communications Manager for [NAMI Greater Corpus Christi](#).

Article Source: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/October-2022/Lessons-Learned-Embracing-Treatment-and-Finding-Acceptance>

NAMI York Adams Counties PA
35 South Duke Street, Suite 200
York, PA 17401
717-848-3784
[Www.namiyorkadams.org](http://www.namiyorkadams.org)

Staff

Desiree Irvin, Executive Director
Ken Kisselman, PAUSE Program Director
Alisha Shockley-Ware, Program Coordinator
Bonnie Fairchild, PAUSE Facilitator Coordinator

