

National Alliance on Mental Illness-Connecticut

NAMI is the nation's leading grassroots family and consumer organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with serious mental illnesses and their families.

NAMI-CT is a statewide, grassroots, member organization which, along with its local affiliates share a common three-fold mission:

- **Support** to families and consumers who face the ongoing difficulties of mental illnesses;
- **Education** for families, people with mental illnesses and the public about brain disorders and the impact of diseases on the lives of individuals and families;
- **Advocacy** for improved treatment and services for all individuals with mental illnesses, including increased research that will lead to more effective treatment.

Current Roster of Programs

- **Advocacy Training and Education** – NAMI-CT offers members and others important and timely information related to legislative issues of interest to mental health stakeholders in Connecticut. Our Public Policy Director convenes a Public Policy Committee regularly to garner input and strategies to move the organization's legislative agenda forward. Our public policy arm helps to mobilize members to testify on behalf of NAMI legislative priorities and also to participate on the NAMI-CT Public Policy Committee.
- **Family-to-Family** – a nationally recognized **FREE** twelve-week program that provides education on the neurobiological basis of serious mental illnesses, information, resources and support for family members of individuals with serious mental illness *based on the lived experiences of other family members*. Program is delivered by trained volunteer family facilitators and is available throughout the state on a regular basis.
- **NAMI-Basics** – a **FREE** six-week program that allows families to connect to another while learning about mental illness, its impact on children and adolescents, strategies to deal with schools and providers and tool to empower parents/caregivers to overcome new challenges. ***This program is for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness that have diverse complex needs.***
- **In Our Own Voice** – a **FREE** consumer-run program offering personal testimonials from individuals living with mental health who are in recovery. They share their lived journey with mental illness and recovery. The program is a prime vehicle for NAMI-CT's outreach and education to lessen the stigma associated with mental illness. Consumer presenters receive a small stipend for each presentation they deliver. Presentations usually run an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes in length.
- **Learning Together: Changing Minds (Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes)** – a **FREE Spanish Language** six-to eight-week program for parents and caregivers of ***children and adolescents*** who have a mental illness. The Program provides information on the neurobiological basis of mental illnesses, strategies for helping parents and children navigate the children's mental health and school systems, coping strategies and self-care for parents/caregivers. Program is delivered by NAMI-CT staff and trained parent facilitators.

- **Outreach for Community/Police Partnerships** – working in collaboration with the Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement (CABLE) Crisis Intervention Team Training Program (CIT), and with funding from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NAMI-CT is helping CABLE to expand the CIT crisis intervention/jail diversion initiative throughout Connecticut. CABLE’s 40 hour CIT training which focuses on the biological basis of serious mental illness in both children and adults, offers police officers techniques to de-escalate violent or stressful interactions with individuals with mental illness and encourages partnerships with local support and medical intervention resources to divert a person with serious mental illness to a safe environment.
- **Parents and Teachers as Allies** – the program offers mainstream educators and school administrators an in-service training covering the neurobiological basis of mental illness, the signs and symptoms associated with early onset of serious mental illness in children as well as local and state resources to share with parents. The program is delivered by a trained panel consisting of a family member, consumer, and educator.
- **Peer-to-Peer** – a nationally recognized **FREE** nine-week *consumer-run* program for individuals who use mental health services. The program provides education on the neurobiological basis of serious mental illnesses, information, resources, support and coping strategies for various situations that arise *based on the lived experiences of consumers in recovery*. A team of three trained consumer facilitators delivers the course for which they are given a payment stipend.
- **Provider Education** – this **FREE** 10-session course focuses on mental illness education and consumer/provider/family member collaboration skills. The program targets “front-line” mental health provider staff and presents family members as key natural supports to enhance a treatment plan and is aligned with the recovery model supported by DMHAS.
- **Support Groups** – NAMI-CT offers **FREE** training and statewide support to a diverse network of self-help groups that provide education and support for:
 - Families of adults with mental illness
 - Parents and caregivers of children and adolescents (NAMI-CAN)
 - Persons with mental illness (NAMI Connection)
 Currently, there are more than 35 NAMI-CT sponsored support groups in the state.
- **Keep The Promise Coalition** – The Keep the Promise Coalition (KTP), located at the NAMI-CT office, is a statewide grassroots advocacy coalition founded in 1999 during the mental health crisis in Connecticut that followed the closure of two large state hospitals. The administration promised that monies that had funded those hospitals would be transferred to community services and supports; *that promise has not been kept*. Coalition members meet monthly and also participate during the legislative session by testifying, signing up others to testify, getting basic mental health messages into the media, and holding Candidate Forums and legislative breakfasts in their own communities. Annually KTP offers a number of advocacy trainings including Essentials of Legislative Advocacy and the new Supportive Housing training.



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