



NAMI Basics Education Program

The fundamentals of caring for you, your family and your child with mental illness

NAMI Basics is the new signature education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illnesses. Development of this program was based on the success of other NAMI signature education programs for consumers and families available across the country. NAMI drew on course elements which have been extensively tested and found to be highly effective in the field. These elements include:

- recognition of mental illness as a continuing traumatic event for the child and the family;
- sensitivity to the subjective emotional issues faced by family caregivers and well children in the family;
- recognition of the need to help ameliorate the day-to-day objective burdens of care and management;
- gaining confidence and stamina for what can be a life-long role of family understanding and support; and
- empowerment of family caregivers as effective advocates for their children.

The process of emotional learning and practical insight for families occurs most readily, and dependably, on the guided group process which takes place when individual family members are in a class together. This program will also take advantage of advancing technology which allows programs to virtually connect families and provides broader access to vitally important information.

The NAMI Basics Education Program includes the following components:

- 6-2.5 hour classes of instructional material, discussions and interactive exercises which may be delivered as a series of consecutive weekly classes, or on consecutive Saturdays to accommodate the time constraints faced by families of children and adolescents.
- A section of the NAMI web site will be dedicated to disseminating information, including informational videos that can be viewed online, and resources for this program and to connecting family program participants.
- In addition to the core course of 6 classes, additional topic modules will be developed for independent presentations for families interested in specific topics, such as transition issues, and advocacy.

The program includes a rigorous evaluation process to both build an evidence base on the effectiveness of the program and also to help ensure that the program continually delivers best practices to meet the unique needs of families.

NAMI Basics Education Program Curriculum

Class 1: Introduction: It's not your fault; Mental illnesses are brain disorders

Special features of the course; learning about the normative stages of our emotional reactions to the trauma of mental illness; our belief system and principles; recognizing that mental illnesses are biological brain disorders.

Class 2: The biology of Mental Illness; getting an accurate diagnosis

An overview of human development; specifics of brain development; current research on brain mechanisms involved in mental illness in children and adolescents; overview of the diagnostic process; and overview of the types and subtypes of major mental illnesses that can develop in childhood and adolescence (ADHD, ODD, CD, Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Schizophrenia, OCD and Substance Use Disorders).

Class 3: Treatment Works

Telling your stories; overview of treatment options available; explanation of evidence base practice designations; review of various types of mental health professionals in the field; overview of medication as a treatment option for children and adolescents, including the current debate within the field on the subject of treating children and adolescents with medications, including black box warnings.

Class 4: Objective and subjective family burden

Acknowledge the strains of family burden and the impact of mental illness on each family member; learning various skills that can be used to improve day to day communications within the family as well as during episodes of crisis; communication skills, problem solving skills, tips for handling challenging behavior, crisis preparation and response, developing a relapse plan

Class 5: The systems involved with your child and the importance of record keeping

Learning how to keep records on your child; reviewing a sample record keeping system; overview of the systems your child may be involved with including the mental health system, the school system and the juvenile justice system; introduction to issues that will arise as your child reaches adulthood

Class 6: Advocacy, Review, Sharing and Evaluation

Building an advocacy team for your child; meet people who are resources for you in advocating for your child; invitation to join NAMI in the fight to end discrimination and ensure access to appropriate treatment services; reminders about self-care; evaluations and certificates

**For information on this program or when and where it is offered, please contact:
NAMI at (850) 671-4445 or www.namifl.org**