

Who We Are

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Massachusetts is a nonprofit grassroots organization. At NAMI Massachusetts, we work to improve the quality of life for people diagnosed with mental health conditions and their families through education, advocacy, and support.

Learn more about NAMI Massachusetts on our website: www.namimass.org.

What We Do

We offer education and support programs around the state, in cooperation with our local affiliates. Our programs are free to participants, and are led by people with first-hand experience navigating the mental health system for themselves or a family member.

our programs for people who have experiences typically labeled as mental health symptoms

NAMI Connection is a free peer-led support group for people who are concerned about their mental health. NAMI Connection groups offer a safe and confidential setting to talk about your experiences. The groups encourage empathy, productive discussion, and a sense of community.

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free program for people who wish to establish and maintain their wellness. Classes are taught by NAMI-trained leaders with personal experience, and great value is placed on the individual experiences of each person in the class.

For more information contact, Judi Maguire at jmaguire@namimass.org.

our programs for family members and other caregivers

NAMI Family Support Groups are free groups for family members and other caregivers of people diagnosed with mental health conditions. Led by NAMI-trained facilitators who are also family members, they provide empathy, comfort, and hope.

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free program for family members and other caregivers of adults diagnosed with mental health conditions. The program is designed to help participants understand and support their loved one, while maintaining their own well-being.

NAMI Basics is a free program for parents and other family caregivers of children and adolescents with emotional or behavioral issues. Participants learn communication tips, how to problem solve, and the skills to help them cope with the emotional impact of caring for their child.

For more information, contact Ilya Cherkasov at icherkasov@namimass.org.

our information & referral line

The COMPASS Helpline provides information, resources, and support to help people navigate the complex mental health system and related systems of care, and problem solve in difficult circumstances. The COMPASS helpline is available Monday through Friday, 9 am - 5 pm excluding holidays. Call us at 1-800-370-9085 or 617-704-6264, or email us at compass@namimass.org.

For more information, contact Jill Gichuhi at jgichuhi@namimass.org.

our community education and training programs

NAMI In Our Own Voice is a powerful presentation delivered by two trained presenters about their lived experience with a mental health condition, substance use, or trauma. This free presentation aims to change attitudes, assumptions, and stereotypes about living with a mental health condition.

NAMI Ending the Silence is a mental health awareness program for middle and high school age youth, offering a message of hope and encouraging students to reduce stigma surrounding mental health conditions. This free presentation is delivered by two trained speakers, including a young adult who shares their experience of living with a mental health condition.

NAMI Mass Allies for Student Mental Health is a professional development program that provides educators with information and resources to support their students' mental health needs. By hearing from a panel of four perspectives - clinical, educator, parent, and young adult - participants learn how to work as allies to identify and understand the effects of mental health conditions and trauma on students' academic success and overall well-being. There is a modest fee for this program.

NAMI Sharing Your Story with Law Enforcement is a presentation by two trained speakers offered as part of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. Speakers with lived experience navigating the mental health system for themselves or a family member share their stories to help police officers respond effectively and compassionately to people in crisis.

NAMI Mass Criminal Justice Diversion Project aims to prevent the unnecessary arrest and detention of people diagnosed with mental health conditions. The CJDP supports local police departments in engaging with people experiencing a mental health crisis, and fosters connections between law enforcement, behavioral health providers, and other community stakeholders.

NAMI Mass CEOs Against Stigma is a campaign designed to reduce the negative impact of mental health related discrimination in the workplace.

For more information, contact **Michelle Ward** at mward@namimass.org or **Eliza Williamson** at ewilliamson@namimass.org.

How We Advocate

NAMI Massachusetts sets an advocacy platform each year that directly reflects our members' experiences and the real-world issues they are facing. Our current advocacy priorities include housing, mental health parity, criminal justice reform, children's mental health care, and Department of Mental Health funding. We participate in statewide advocacy networks, coordinate advocacy efforts at the local level, and keep our members updated on advocacy opportunities.

Our Events

We host three signature events each year, open to all NAMI Mass members and allies:

Advocacy Day, held each year in April, gathers mental health advocates from across the State to inform lawmakers about our legislative priorities.

NAMIWalks Massachusetts our largest event and biggest fundraiser, brings together 5000+ people of all ages every May to combat discrimination, raise funds, and promote awareness.

The NAMI Mass Convention brings together 350+ people each October for a day of learning and networking, with workshop sessions, an exhibit hall, and our annual Board of Directors election.