



**NAMI Family Support Groups are for any adult with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. Gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar experiences.**

- ◆ Free of cost to participants
- ◆ Designed for adult loved ones of people with mental health conditions
- ◆ Led by family members of people with mental health conditions
- ◆ 90 minutes long and currently meeting in person two times a month in Brevard County (see below)
- ◆ No specific medical therapy or treatment is endorsed

Date	Location	Address	Time
2nd Tuesday	Circles of Care ALC Follow signs from parking lot	2000 Commerce Drive Melbourne, FL	6 - 7:30 pm
3rd Tuesday	Central Brevard Library	308 Forrest Avenue Cocoa, FL	6 - 7:30 pm



**NAMI Connections is a recovery Support group program that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope. NAMI Connection groups are for Peers with Mental Illness.**

**Peer Support Group Meets every Tuesday at 6– 7:30 pm via Zoom**

**ID 464 710 7237      Passcode 456654**

**For more Information about NAMI      Phone: 321-345-6365**  
**Website: [www.namibrevard.org](http://www.namibrevard.org)      Email: [namibrevard@gmail.com](mailto:namibrevard@gmail.com)**



## **You Might Be Doing Your New Year's Resolutions All Wrong**

***Announcement: What you think you know about breaking bad habits and starting new healthy ones might not be right. Here's how to turn things around. (Hint: Part of the answer is in your dopamine.)***

Article by: Libby MacCarthy [Psycom](#)

The start of a new year signals the opportunity to create a clean slate—a chance to reflect, take stock, and make changes that will help us become the best versions of ourselves. Sounds good, right?

So why are resolutions so damn hard to keep? One recent survey showed that only about 10% of people who make resolutions still stick with them by the time mid February rolls around. Yikes.

But willpower isn't necessarily to blame. The real problem might be the resolutions you picked in the first place. We often set ourselves up for failure by setting goals that are vague, unrealistic, or heavily influenced by what we believe others expect of us. And when we do 'fail,' we're left feeling guilty, disappointed, and self-loathing—a far cry from the strong sense of confidence and empowerment we were after.

That doesn't mean we should give up on resolutions. They can be a great catalyst for change. So how can we set ourselves up for success and ensure that we really take care of ourselves in the new year? Focus on making small positive changes that can help cultivate positivity and improve overall mental health.

According to Shawn Achor, a leading expert on happiness and positive psychology and author of *The Happiness Advantage* and *Big Potential: How Transforming the Pursuit of Success Raises Our Achievement, Happiness, and Well-Being*, small changes that touch on how we positively interact with others or how we cultivate our inner world can lead to big wins across the board.

When we are positive, our brains experience a major performance boost, or what Achor calls the 'happiness advantage.' Here's how it works: When we're hopeful and appreciative, dopamine floods into the body. This not only improves our mood and triggers feelings of happiness, but it also turns on all of the learning centers in the brain, enabling us to be more engaged, creative motivated, energetic, resilient and productive. In other words, choosing a resolution that taps into this dopamine lift will help you keep your promise to yourself.

The best part: no grand overtures are needed to reap the benefits. "We've found that there are ways you can train your brain to be more positive. In just a two-minute span of time, done for 21 days in a row, you can actually rewire your brain, allowing the brain to work more optimistically and more successfully," Achor explains.

## Revamp Your Resolutions

With that in mind, we've put together a top five list of achievable, expert-vetted resolutions to give you a head start to better mental health in the decade ahead:

**Practice gratitude.** Short on time? Practicing gratitude is one of the quickest and most effective ways to increase happiness, manage depression, and cultivate resilience. All it takes is jotting down or mentally acknowledging a few things you're grateful for every day. Gratitude is a skill, but with practice you can change the lens through which your brain views the world.

**Keep a journal.** Whether it's revisiting a positive experience you had during the day or doing a quick-fire brain dump of all the negative thoughts swimming around in your head, journaling is a great way to ease anxiety. The process can also help you to recognize triggers and learn how to manage them, make sense of how you're feeling, work through issues and keep yourself from ruminating so you can finally get some quality sleep.

**Move your body.** Studies show that movement is an effective form of medicine in helping manage depression. You don't have to sign up for a marathon or even join the gym but engaging in some form of exercise every day—a short walk, yoga, or a barre class—can go a long way in keeping your mental and physical health in tip-top shape. The thing that makes this different from the classic, "I want to lose five pounds" resolution is that you're focused on the action, not the outcome. It changes the intention and how you measure success.

**Unplug.** There is growing research showing a negative correlation between screen time and psychological well-being. Most of us know that Instagram, Facebook, and other social media apps are more like highlight reels than accurate portrayals of people's real lives, but it's hard not to start comparing yourself with others and start feeling anxious and inadequate because your own life seems radically less rosy. Try taking a step back from your social media accounts and see how it impacts your mood and stress levels. You might find that you're much happier (and not missing out) not being constantly connected. Plus, you may even find that you have more time to dedicate to the things and people that actually bring you joy.

**Nourish friendships.** Fact: being around other people is critical for your health. Carve out time this year to connect and deepen relationships with the people in your life that inspire you and nurture your soul. Instead of hitting up happy hour, use your time together to get out into nature or attend a cultural event or try something new. your brain into believing that these rewards are real, with a reward you genuinely enjoy."

**Don't beat yourself up.** Slip-ups are bound to happen on the route to reaching your goals. Don't throw in the towel just because you forgot to journal one morning because you were in a rush or skipped the gym for a week. Sometimes life just gets in the way. Acknowledge what happened and get back on track.



## Howie

### You're no different than me

Howie has lived with **obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)** for as long as he can remember and for years, struggled with rituals and self-taught coping skills just in order to have a productive life.

I remember being six years old and walking home from school with a weird limp because I didn't want to trip on my untied shoe laces. I couldn't retie them because that would require me to touch laces that had touched the ground.

For Howie, the fear triggered by the thought of touching his dirty shoelaces signaled the beginning of what would become a lifelong struggle with **OCD** and **depression**.

Howie kept his illness a secret until one day, while appearing on the Howard Stern radio show, he was forced to admit that he lived with overwhelming anxiety. As a comedian and talk show host, Howie thought his career was over and that no one would understand.

He was wrong.

I left the studio and almost immediately a man came up to me to tell me he too had OCD. It was the first time that I understood that I wasn't a freak. That I wasn't alone.

Far from being shunned, Howie is one of the most recognizable and beloved stars in Hollywood, seen by millions of viewers weekly on America's Got Talent. Though OCD is still a presence in his life—most notably, his fear of contamination prevents him from shaking hands, which has led him to adopt his now famous fist-bump greeting.

I'm no different than everybody else. These people—the people with mental health issues are everyone. If they don't have a mental illness or a need for mental health care now, they will. Everyone needs or could use mental health care sometime in their lives.

Using his fame to highlight the needs for greater mental health care, Howie has become a strong advocate, both in the United States and Canada—even speaking before Congress.

Not being mentally healthy is an epidemic that is sweeping the world. If you have a toothache, you can tell your coworkers, and they'll encourage you to take time out of your day to go to the dentist. The same cannot be said if you needed to take time out of your day to see a psychiatrist. Why is mental health so shameful? Why doesn't mental health get the same support as dental and physical health?



## Vanessa

### Representation matters

I'm known for being brutally honest about my condition because I think it's really important to normalize mental illness. Representation matters, and I think having folks speak out about their own experiences helps make it real for people.

Vanessa understands all too well how misconceptions, stigma, and simple ignorance can make life harder for people with mental illness. Diagnosed with **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** and **borderline personality disorder (BPD)**, Vanessa has been dealing with her issues since she was about seven years old. For her entire life, she has seen and heard how people misunderstand her conditions and judge those who have been diagnosed. Also, she has endured stigma because of the treatment she has received, which includes electroconvulsive therapy.

My diagnosis is hugely stigmatized. It took me a long time to come to terms with that. It took me longer to decide to talk about it, but I finally did. The representation of BPD in popular culture is so bad—it's often used as code for 'sociopath.' People need to understand that this is not the case, that people with the condition are not evil.

When Vanessa was seven, the nanny who had been caring for her had a stroke, and Vanessa never saw her again. At this point, Vanessa started to overeat and engage in self-harm.

I had a nanny who kind of mysteriously vanished, and that was really devastating for me. But I was already prone to mental illness because of my family history with **anxiety** and **depression**.

Vanessa's parents took her to get help, which began a long journey to arrive at the right treatment plan.

I've seen a whole bunch of different therapists, and I've tried most medications on the market. I've probably tried 30 to 40 different medications. It has not been a fun or easy process.

Vanessa has worked through that process, and she finds herself in a good place. Today, with the support of her therapist, her sisters, and a few close friends, she is moving forward with her life and career. She works as a nanny. And, although she faces occasional challenges caused by her BPD and PTSD, she is using her experiences to help the kids she cares for.

I've had a couple of days when I've had to leave work because I just got overwhelmed and started crying, but that doesn't happen very often. I think I'm oversensitive to things, but there are ways in which that makes me better with kids. The sensitivity helps. Being really tuned into other people's emotions is really helpful.

Based on her journey battling stigma and navigating the mental health system, Vanessa encourages others to keep fighting—even though it's not always easy.

Try not to be afraid. There really is help out there. It could be hard to find, and it could be a frustrating process, but you owe it to yourself to do it because otherwise, you're going to be increasingly miserable. It doesn't get better on its own.

**Notice:**

**Family to Family  
Education Class**

January 24th– March 14, 2022

6-8:30 pm

8 consecutive Mondays

Class size is limited .

**Please Register early**

**Located at Circles of Care 2000  
Commerce Dr. Melbourne Fl**



**NAMI Palm Beach  
County**  
([www.namipbc.org](http://www.namipbc.org))  
has a zoom support  
group for young adults,  
ages 18-35 years old  
every Friday from  
6pm-7:30pm.  
You need to register on  
their  
website.

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Suite 1C Brevard County  
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(321) 425-6179

### **3 Ways to Cultivate Hope** By Chris Swingle

During bipolar depression, building up a sense of hope may seem impossible—at first. Opening up to brighter possibilities is a habit worth investing in.

**Our thoughts and beliefs about hope can both indicate a mood episode and change the course of one.**

After all, a pervasive sense of hopelessness is often listed among the primary symptoms of depression, and the grandiosity or sense of invincibility characteristic of mania can, in some respects, be thought of as an overabundance of hope.

Whether you're grappling with an episode of bipolar depression, working to repair damage after an episode of mania, or struggling with the daily challenges of life with bipolar, hope can be the key to attaining or maintaining mood stability and staying the course on hard days.

True hope is active, not passive, says Anthony Scioli, PhD, coauthor of *The Power of Hope*. In other words, don't wait for good things to magically happen, but work to empower yourself. He offers these approaches:

#### **#1 Deal with Distorted Thinking**

Therapy sessions and self-help workbooks can help you monitor your mood and thoughts, examine whether your thinking is accurate, let go of self-blame, and learn strategies to reframe how you label things. Learn to see events in shades of gray rather than the black-and-white of "perfect" or "terrible."

#### **#2 Form Healing Relationships**

When you feel doomed, alienated, or powerless, you need friends who can help. Put effort into building and sustaining connections with others.

#### **#3 Follow a Spiritual Practice**

This could be praying, attending worship, singing or listening to hymns, walking in nature, or attending a spiritual retreat. Look for readings that are empowering, reassuring, or address the type of hopelessness you feel.

### **Treatment Plan**

Hope is a "central component" in recovery from mental disorders, according to a literature review published in *Social Science & Medicine*. In looking at previous studies, the reviewers concluded that while no existing interventions specifically aim at increasing hope, many recovery strategies increase hope as a secondary outcome. Among the most powerful:

The collaborative model of care, which brings together medical and mental health practitioners as well as the consumer.

Treatment from family members and caregivers that empowers clients to formulate and pursue realistic goals of their choosing.

Promoting positive factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, spirituality and well-being, peer support, and fostering relationships.

Excerpted from "The Key to Lifting Bipolar Depression," Spring 2013



### Membership Form

You can Join NAMI by going online to [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) and click on JOIN or you may fill out the form below and write a check or money order made out to NAMI Brevard County and send to our treasurer: Elizabeth Eberwein PO Box 477 Cape Canaveral, FL 32920 **One Year Membership includes** NAMI Brevard, NAMI Florida, and NAMI National, as well as NAMI Brevard voting privileges. You will also receive the magazine, *NAMI Advocate* and as a member attend our special events designated for members.

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Household \$60 \_\_\_\_\_ Regular \$40 \_\_\_\_\_ Open Door \$5 (Limited resources) \_\_\_\_\_

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