



**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)**



Everyone feels worried or anxious or down from time to time. But relatively few people develop a mental illness. What's the difference? A mental illness is a mental health condition that gets in the way of thinking, relating to others, and day-to-day function.

Dozens of mental illnesses have been identified and defined. They include depression, generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, and many more.

Mental illness is an equal opportunity issue. It affects young and old, male and female, and individuals of every race, ethnic background, education level, and income level. The good news is that it can often be treated.

Signs and symptoms of mental illness depend in part on the illness.

- feeling down for a while extreme swings in mood
- withdrawing from family, friends, or activities
- low energy or problems sleeping
- often feeling angry, hostile, or violent
- feeling paranoid, hearing voices, or having hallucinations
- often thinking about death or suicide.

In some people, symptoms of a mental illness first appear as physical problems such as stomach aches, back pain, or insomnia.

Individuals with a mental illness can often ease their symptoms and feel better by talking with a therapist and following a treatment plan that may or may not include medication.

## *Is a mobile app as good as a therapist?*

For the past two months your mood has been low, you've lost your appetite, and you can't sleep well. Your family is concerned because you are no longer interested in cooking or reading, activities you had previously enjoyed. The stress of the pandemic has changed your routine, and you struggle to balance your remote work, childcare duties, household management, and the care of your ill father. You tried to reach out to a therapist, but after an extensive search online, you found the first available appointment to be months away. A good friend suggested mobile therapy apps, but do they work?

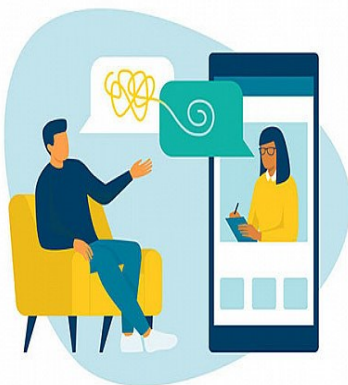
### **Mobile apps can complement therapy**

When looking at the many types of psychotherapy available, interestingly, they all result in a similar amount of symptom improvement. The strongest factor in helping patients make progress is actually the relationship with the therapist. Having a secure place to speak about your stressors, seeing your concerns validated in the eyes of another person, and developing a trusting relationship are all components of therapy. A mobile app removes the human element of a therapeutic relationship, which we know is a critical ingredient in treatment success. However, mobile apps can complement therapy through symptom trackers, reminders, reinforcement of skills, and community features to set goals and share progress.

### **When mobile apps are not enough**

Although mobile apps may seem harmless, there are a couple reasons you may want to look into a specific app or hold off altogether. The first is privacy concerns: many apps are not transparent about their security features, and less than half of mobile apps for depression have a privacy policy. The second is a delay in treatment.

Although mobile apps are becoming more promising and data-driven, they cannot replace a trained mental health clinician at this time. If you are suffering from severe symptoms, you will likely need more than a mobile app can provide you: a correct diagnosis, a human relationship, and an individualized discussion about your treatment options.



**Crisis Hotline in Brevard  
County Call 2 | 1 |**

## **Julian's Story: "The stigma that still surrounds mental illness is remarkable"**

I am never completely free of depression, even when I'm well. Every day involves some form of confrontation with depressive symptoms. Some days are easier than others but respite remains for me something to work towards.

I have had a relationship with depression for as long as I can remember. When I eventually sought treatment, some twelve years ago, what I went on to experience through psychotherapy revealed that I had been depressed since childhood. Whilst all of us in our lives experience low periods and moods, for those with a diagnosis of clinical depression these remain enduring and persistent. I guess over time I have become astute, resigned and resolved to realize that I've had and always will have, a long-term relationship with a mental illness.

I 'came out' about my mental illness just after my youngest son was born in 2002. It was an emotional time, naturally, but I found myself spiralling into a depressive state with all the classic signs of pain and anxiety. Men shouldn't experience 'post-natal depression' should they? And yet, here I was, depressed as a result of the aftermath of birth. Fears about responsibility, about love and support, about illness and vulnerability, about my own methods of coping. I mentioned 'depression' to my wife and she booked an appointment with a doctor. Without her, I wouldn't have gone.

Since that time I have never thought about anything other than being open, honest and transparent about my disability. Sometimes this has been beneficial, but equally it can be a hindrance as it can effect quite substantially how people relate to you. You would automatically think that being honest and open is always the best policy. However, the discrimination and stigma that surrounds mental illness is remarkable and does impact on how people like me live our lives. On the balance of things, though, I've always believed that people need to see who I am and what I am: a normal person with a disability that is largely, but not exclusively, hidden.

Depression can be as enriching as it can be debilitating - it might sound strange but I do believe that having depression has made me much more empathetic and sensitive to other people's problems and that certainly cannot be a bad thing.

There are coping strategies, for sure, and I have learnt to deal with my symptoms as best I can. However, sometimes, there is little that I can do to prevent it from having a deep impact. For example, social interaction becomes a fearful thing to contemplate. Feeling that you are being watched constantly; your every action, movement, spoken word or mannerism being scrutinised by everybody around you. What do I do? I become motionless and speechless, chained to my desk at work or my armchair at home. I



cannot answer the telephone, make a decision, I lose all motivation to complete small tasks like simply getting up to grab some food or a drink.

Living in a world of distorted reality is scary. I think everything that can possibly go wrong, will go wrong. I have little appreciation of how I look or come across to others. I get frustrated and angry at my inability to interact in any constructive or meaningful way. I rely on other people, particularly my wife, to do the most basic of things. I

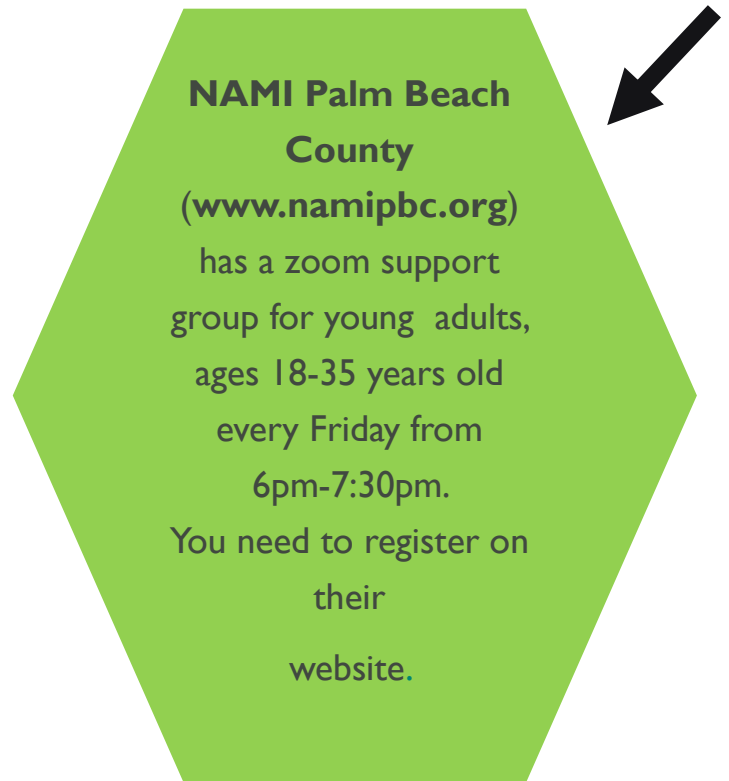
feel myself becoming stripped of my dignity, of my rationality, of my masculinity, even - the basic elements that make one feel positive about oneself.

However, that world is never static. Whilst I know I will become ill at times, I also know I will get over it. I just don't know when and sometimes even how. What happens in the intervening period is also sometimes very unpredictable. I also know that we would all benefit from a more open and compassionate understanding of depression and indeed of other mental illness.

**Perhaps that's the main reason why I 'came out'.  
Is I want to make a difference.**

## Our voices matter!

Don't forget to write your representative and share your experiences about the system and what you want to see changed. Plus, how mental health advocacy has helped you or your loved one find the help they are looking for in Brevard County.



**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.

### Contact Your Legislative Representatives

[flsenate.gov](http://flsenate.gov) or [myfloridahouse.gov](http://myfloridahouse.gov)

**SENATOR Debbie Mayfield (District 17)**  
900 E. Strawbridge Ave.  
Melbourne, FL 32901  
(321) 409-2025

**REPRESENTATIVE Renee Plasencia (District 50)**  
Suite 1C Brevard County  
Government Center North 400 South Street  
Titusville, FL 32780  
(321) 383-5151

**SENATOR Tom A. Wright (District 14)**  
1311 N US 1  
Titusville, FL 32796  
(386) 304-7630

**REPRESENTATIVE Tyler I. Sirois (District 51)**  
260 North Tropical Trail  
Merritt Island, FL 32953  
(321) 449-5711

**REPRESENTATIVE Randy Fine (District 53)**  
2539 Palm Bay Road NE, Suite 5  
Palm Bay, FL 32905  
(321) 409-2017

**REPRESENTATIVE Thad Altman (District 52)**  
1895 South Patrick Drive  
Indian Harbor Beach, FL 32937  
(321) 425-6179



**We are excited to announce registration is now open for NAMICon 2022, our annual convention taking place virtually June 14–16!**

As one of the largest community gatherings of mental health advocates in the U.S., NAMICon provides an incredible opportunity to bring awareness, resources and solutions to a wider audience of people affected by mental health conditions — both nationally and globally.

The pandemic and global events of the past two years have had a profound effect on everyone’s mental health — individuals, youth, families, communities of color and frontline professionals. It’s more important than ever for us to join Together for Mental Health, a timely and appropriate theme for our 2022 convention.

**Don’t miss out on:**

**NAMICon’s incredible value!** Registration rates will remain low for 2022: Only \$10 for students and peers, \$15 for NAMI members and \$25 for non-members.

**A special panel event with Dr. Ken Duckworth, NAMI’s Chief Medical Officer,** offering an exclusive preview of NAMI’s upcoming book *You Are Not Alone* releasing this fall. Written by Dr. Duckworth, this comprehensive guide to recovery includes real stories from individuals and families navigating their mental health journeys as well as practical answers from experts on commonly asked questions.

**Robust programming** with 30+ workshops built around five tracks focused on mental health research and treatment; youth and young adults; transforming crisis response; promoting equitable mental and emotional support for underserved communities; and best practices for NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

**Convenience and accessibility!** There are no travel costs or logistics to arrange. Your internet connection gives you access to the NAMICon experience no matter where you are.

Your registration fee includes ALL virtual activities for June 14–16. The programming for Tuesday, June 14, will be dedicated to our NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates. General attendees are invited to begin their convention experience with our opening plenary on Wednesday, June 15. More detailed schedule information will be posted on [nami.org/convention](https://nami.org/convention) in the upcoming weeks.



### 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.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIPCODE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Donations are welcome:**

Memorial Gifts/ Honorary Gifts/ Employee Matching