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NAMI Family Support Groups

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

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

(Now) ID 814 1341 6162

(As of December 7th)

Passcode 083458

ID 464 710 7237 Passcode 456654

For more Information: 321-345-6365

Website: www.namibrevard.org

Email: Molly.mcdonald51@gmail.com



GIVING THANKS CAN MAKE YOU HAPPIER

Each holiday season comes with high expectations for a cozy and festive time of year. However, for many this time of year is tinged with sadness, anxiety, or depression. Certainly, major depression or a severe anxiety disorder benefits most from professional help. But what about those who just feel lost or overwhelmed or down at this time of year? Research (and common sense) suggests that one aspect of the Thanksgiving season can actually lift the spirits, and it's built right into the holiday — being grateful.

The word gratitude is derived from the Latin word *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness (depending on the context). In some ways, gratitude encompasses all of these meanings. Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. In the process, people usually recognize that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside themselves. As a result, being grateful also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals — whether to other people, nature, or a higher power.

In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

WAYS TO CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a way for people to appreciate what they have instead of always reaching for something new in the hopes it will make them happier or thinking they can't feel satisfied until every physical and material need is met. Gratitude helps people refocus on what they have instead of what they lack. And, although it may feel contrived at first, this mental state grows stronger with use and practice.

Here are some ways to cultivate gratitude on a regular basis.

Write a thank-you note. You can make yourself happier and nurture your relationship with another person by writing a thank-you letter or email expressing your enjoyment and appreciation of that person's impact on your life. Send it, or better yet, deliver and read it in person if possible. Make a habit of sending at least one gratitude letter a month. Once in a while, write one to yourself.

Thank someone mentally. No time to write? It may help just to think about someone who has done something nice for you, and mentally thank the individual.

Keep a gratitude journal. Make it a habit to write down or share with a loved one thoughts about the gifts you've received each day.

Count your blessings. Pick a time every week to sit down and write about your blessings — reflecting on what went right or what you are grateful for. Sometimes it helps to pick a number — such as three to five things — that you will identify each week. As you write, be specific and think about the sensations you felt when something good happened to you.

Pray. People who are religious can use prayer to cultivate gratitude.

Meditate. Mindfulness meditation involves focusing on the present moment without judgment. Although people often focus on a word or phrase (such as "peace"), it is also possible to focus on what you're grateful for (the warmth of the sun, a pleasant sound, etc.). *Harvard Health Publishing*

Bipolar Disorder & Untangling Twisted Thoughts

By Stephen Propst

How we think about a situation can cause more problems than bipolar itself. Addressing our thoughts can change our feelings, behavior, and life—for the better!

Mistaken Mindset & Stability Setbacks

“My life is a complete mess. I can’t do anything right. I’m an emotional wreck. There’s no cure for my illness. I’m doomed to live in a state of chaos for life. No one can help me. No one understands. I brought all of this on myself.”

Sound familiar? It does to me because that’s a snapshot of the “twisted thoughts” and “backward beliefs” that consumed my mind for years. My mistaken mindset put my chances for recovery on hold for way too long.

Change Your Mind, Change Your Mood

What you think and believe affects your self-esteem, your well-being, and your mood stability. In the midst of mania, thinking you are indestructible can have devastating consequences. In the depths of depression, believing that your situation will never improve only makes matters worse.

There’s good news: What you think and believe can be changed ... for the better. According to the principles of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), every act and attitude has its roots in a thought or belief. When you change what you think or believe, you can change your feelings, your behavior, and your life.

The first step is understanding the types of thinking that hold you back and keep you from moving forward with recovery. Here are some basic cognitive behavioral concepts developed by pioneers Dr. Albert Ellis and Dr. Aaron Beck and popularized by Dr. David Burns (*Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy* [Harper, 1999; repr. 2008]), and others.

Types of “Twisted Thoughts”

- Overgeneralization: We take a one-time occurrence and make it the rule of thumb.
- Crystal-Balling: We predict the future, and the forecast looks grim.
- Blame Game: We blame ourselves when we could not possibly bear responsibility.
- Black & White Thinking: We interpret everything as an absolute, with no shades of gray.

Common “Backward” Beliefs

- Perfectionism: We must always perform at peak and never make a mistake.
- Unfounded Fear: We are afraid without good reason of certain people, places, situations, or scenarios.

Thought Patterns vs. Symptoms of Bipolar

In dealing with bipolar disorder, I have found that how I think about my situation can be more debilitating than the condition itself. So, what’s the answer?

To reverse this damaging trend, we need to learn some concrete ways to untwist our thinking and turn our beliefs around for the better. We need to rethink, reprogram, and regroup.

Step #1: RETHINK

RESTRUCTURE THOUGHTS TO BETTER REFLECT REALITY

For Example:

“My mood swings are all my fault.” Bipolar disorder is a real, organic, genetic medical condition. No one is to blame. Watch your internal dialogue, and stop pointing fingers at yourself. (Blame Game)

Step #2: REPROGRAM

Here’s a simple technique: Begin to replace the negative self-talk in your head by writing a more positive, realistic affirmation on an index card. Refer to it regularly whenever you find yourself embracing a convoluted thought or fostering a bad belief.

Step #3; REGROUP

Surround yourself with people who can profoundly and positively help you reprogram.

988 will not be available nationwide until July 2022, but if you or somebody you know is in crisis now, get help by texting “NAMI” to 741741 or calling the Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255.

In **Brevard County** you can call **2-1-1** and help is available.

Contact Your Legislative Representatives

flsenate.gov or MYflorida.gov

SENATOR Debbie Mayfield (District 17)
900 E. Strawbridge Ave.
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REPRESENTATIVE Renee Plasencia (District 50)
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Titusville, FL 32780
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SENATOR Tom A. Wright (District 14)
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REPRESENTATIVE Tyler I. Sirois (District 51)
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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

12 Gratitude Prompts

Name something beautiful that you saw today.

What memory are you grateful for?

What opportunities are you grateful for?

Name something in your home that you truly treasure. Why?

What are you grateful for in your significant other?

What about your body are you grateful for?

What about the current season are you grateful for?

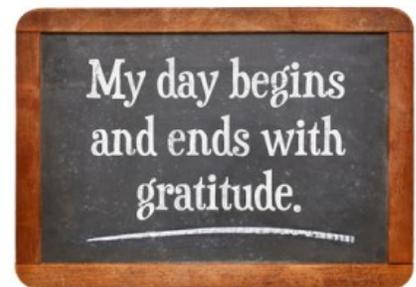
Name a struggle you currently have. What about that struggle makes you grateful?

What freedoms are you grateful for?

What talents or abilities are you grateful for?

What book are you grateful for?

Describe a piece of positive news you recently heard.





Membership Form

You can Join NAMI by going online to 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