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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 three 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 6:00 pm via Zoom

ID 814 1341 6162

Password 083458

For more Information:

Website: www.namibrevard.org

Email: namibrevard@gmail.com

WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Diagnosing mental illness isn't a straightforward science. We can't test for it the same way we can test blood sugar levels for diabetes. Each condition has its own set of unique symptoms, though symptoms often overlap. Common signs and/or symptoms can include:

*Various communities and backgrounds might view this sign differently based on their beliefs and experiences. Some people within these communities and cultures may not interpret hearing voices as unusual.

- ◆ **Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks**
- ◆ **Trying to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so**
- ◆ **Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behavior that causes harm to self or others**
- ◆ **Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or difficulty breathing**
- ◆ **Significant weight loss or gain**
- ◆ **Seeing, hearing or believing things**

50 %

of all lifetime
mental illness
begins by age

14

75%

by age

24



Halloween is one of the oldest recorded observances. The tradition started over two thousand years ago with the Celts, who believed that the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred on October 31st.

On that "Hallow's Eve"—otherwise called the Festival of Samhain—the Celts built bonfires and wore ghostly costumes to drive the evil spirits away. Some carried lanterns crafted out of potatoes or turnips to intimidate the demons they believed were around them.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reminds us that not only is it the season for ghosts and goblins, but also stigma. Costumes and seasonal attractions that feature psychos, mental patients, and insane asylums perpetuate stereotypes that mental illness is scary, frightening, and horrific. Intended as fun, these violent stereotypes serve to perpetuate stigma—which was long ago reported by former U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, as an enormous source of prejudice and discrimination for children and adults who live with mental illness.

4 Tips for Stigma-Busting Halloween

1. Think about your costume. When choosing an outfit, consider carefully if the costume you or your child is wearing will foster misconceptions about people with mental illness or demonize people who struggle with such disorders.
2. Avoid attractions that perpetuate stigma. Resist paying admission or visiting local attractions that feature mental patients, psychos, freaks, weirdos, and/or urban legends. If you're feeling outraged, consider contacting your local government officials to share your feelings about this stigmatizing form of entertainment.
3. Decorate appropriately. Halloween decor indoor or outdoor should reflect appropriate harvest or scary themes. Ghosts, witches, goblins, zombies, and the like are all stigma-free—as are pumpkins, cornstalks, and spiderwebs.
4. Decide if the time is right to fight the fight. Halloween is a season of fun for children of all ages. Seeing a stigmatizing costume or witnessing a degrading entertainment event may hurt—but don't feel as if you have to reach and teach everyone you meet. It's okay to let others fight against mental health discrimination.

Sarah

I promise things will get better. Just keep pushing on, one day at a time.

I have always been a worrier. I can look back on my childhood now at the age of 24, and recognise the signs of anxiety developing.

My stressful ways developed into anxiety around four years ago. I wasn't lucky enough to have kept any close friends from my schooling days, and went into a reckless phase after high school, developing friendships with people who I was better off away from.

When I decided it was time to leave this phase, and all the people involved in it behind, I was left virtually friendless.

I put all my physical energy into working full time (which meant having two jobs), whilst completing my full time university degree. This meant working seven days a week, and completing university assignments after finishing 12 hour shifts.

You may ask why I put myself through this, well I had a lust to travel, as well as an incredible partner who I couldn't bare seeing the world without. So I took on the financial burden of paying for him to come with me on these holidays, as he wasn't in the position to pay for himself.

When I meet people one of the first things they mention to me is the number of overseas holidays my partner and I have been on. Yes, we have been especially fortunate to travel around the world, but what most people don't understand is that travel was my escape. It gave me something to look forward to, and something to get me through the long days of being miserable in my life. When I was on a plane and it took off, this meant I could escape the life I hated so much for a short period of time.

In order to work these extreme hours I gave up every aspect of my social life and wellbeing. This meant I had a very small group of people I interacted with, none of whom were females my own age. I ate terribly and never exercised, resulting in weight gain, as I was simply too exhausted to cook or go to the gym after work. Every cent of my wage went into paying for two people to go on numerous overseas holidays, so I was never able to indulge in anything in my day to day life.

This pattern kept up for well over two years, from which I developed horrific social anxiety.

My experience of dealing with social anxiety is a feeling of overwhelming fear when interacting with individuals I wasn't comfortable with. I was unable to look people in the eye when speaking to them, and struggled to keep a conversation going. I came off as both extremely quiet and shy, as well as rude, which anyone who knows me well knows I am the opposite of.

During this period of my life my self-confidence was at an all-time low, and I felt disgusted every time I looked in the mirror. I stayed away from people as much as I could, and felt I made an embarrassment of myself whenever I went out in public. I constantly had a voice in my head saying "Why would anyone want to be friends with you? You are ugly and pathetic."

Things turned around when my partner finished his apprenticeship, and was lucky enough to get a well-paying job. This meant for the first time in our relationship I no longer held the financial burden. For the first time in over three years I was able to spend money on things which seem so trivial but play a huge role in our self-confidence, such as getting my hair done and buying some new clothes. I also cut back on my ridiculous work schedule.

I'm happy to say now that a year on things have improved tremendously.

Would I say my life is perfect and I am happy every day? No. But do I still have that feeling that I am dying on the inside? Not in the slightest.

I did small things, which made such a huge change to my life. Such as joining a netball team, regularly going to the gym, and pushing myself to interact socially whenever I was given the opportunity. I still struggle in social situations, but nowhere near to the extent in which I did. Most importantly, I have a partner who has stayed by my side, through all the anxiety attacks and sleepless crying nights, whilst loving me unconditionally, when I was an extremely hard person to love.

I recently started a job which I thought was going to be the beginning of my career. However, things are not always perfect and I realised this job was causing my anxiety to reappear. I was going back down the path to the dark place I had been for so long. I can say that for the first time in my life I put my mental health first and quit this job. It took me too long to crawl out of that pitch black, horrific place and I do not intend to ever return.

I understand my story may be nothing compared to what some people face, but if even one person relates it was worth writing.

So if you are out there, I promise things will get better. Just keep pushing on, one day at a time.

Tagged in: Stories Anxiety



One Day At A Time!

Fighting stigma about mental illness has been one of my biggest challenges since I was diagnosed 20 years ago with Bipolar depression. Struggling with the questions, the silence that follows and the awkward conversations seems to be a long term problem with those working through their mental health issues. Learning to advocate for myself and to help others feel more comfortable in those discussions seems to come when I have the tools and the support of friends and family. Education is also one the best tools that I have to break down the walls of confusion. Thanks to programs like NAMI, I have learned that I am not my illness. It doesn't define me, I am a human being with an illness like diabetes. It must be managed with the help of various coping tools including medications, therapy, doctors, family support and support groups who understand the challenges and joys of having a mental illness. All of these tools have given me a future that allows me to enjoy life around me. I am an artist so I use my creative abilities to give back to the community. I love to golf when I have the chance and I love the beach so I get there when I have the time. My life is full. I am grateful for all the people who remind that I am perfectly okay just the way I am, and I strive each day to be a better version of myself than the day before. Thanks to all who support NAMI and all it does for the community. *Mary G.*

Contact Your Legislative Representatives

flsenate.gov or MYflorida.gov

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MENTAL HEALTH WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



MENTAL
HEALTH
INCLUDES
EMOTIONAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SOCIAL
WELL-BEING

AFFECTS
THINK
FEEL
ACT
COPE
LIFE
HELPS

DETERMINE
HANDLE
STRESS
RELATE
OTHERS
MAKE
CHOICES

IMPORTANT
EVERY
STAGE
CHILDHOOD
ADOLESCENCE
ADULTHOOD

"Source: MedlinePlus, National Library of Medicine."
Courtesy of wordsearchrus.com



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 You will receive a monthly newsletter from NAMI Brevard County along with NAMI.org benefits and as a member attend our special events designated for Members.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIPCODE _____

EMAIL _____

Household \$60 _____ Regular \$40 _____ Open Door \$5 _____