

# Family: The Role, the Needs, and the Available Supports


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NAMI California  
www.namica.org




## Objectives


- Provide introduction to NAMI CA
- Describe the Family Member experience
- Explain the role of Family Members in the prevention of crisis, incarceration and relapse
- Supporting evidence of the importance of Family Members
- Overview of the supportive service available for Family Members



## NAMI CA



- 62 Local Affiliates
- Part of largest grassroots mental health organization in US
- Advocate for lives of quality and respect
- Made up of individuals and families whose lives are touched by mental illness
- Provide:
  - Advocacy
  - Support
  - Programs
  - Trainings



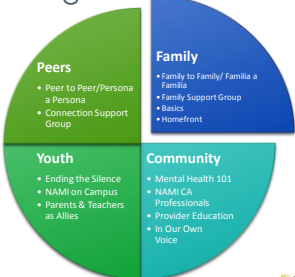
## Local California Affiliates




- Offer programs and services to their communities
- Each affiliate has their own service offering
- Offer free resources to individuals and families
- To find your local affiliate, visit [www.namica.org](http://www.namica.org) or contact NAMI CA



## NAMI CA Programs




| Peers  | Family   | Youth  | Community  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer to Peer/Persona a Persona</li> <li>• Connection Support Group</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family to Family/ Familia a Familia</li> <li>• Family Support Group</li> <li>• Basics</li> <li>• Homefront</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ending the Silence</li> <li>• NAMI on Campus</li> <li>• Parents &amp; Teachers as Allies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health 101</li> <li>• NAMI CA Professionals</li> <li>• Provider Education</li> <li>• In Our Own Voice</li> </ul> |



## NAMI CA Programs

- Are adaptable
- Are flexible
- Can be offered in multiple languages
- Can be tailored for specific audiences
  - Prison/jail employees
  - Parole Officers
  - Families of people who are incarcerated
  - Individuals recently released



## Role of Family in Individual's Recovery

- Challenges of mental illness do not only affect the individual
  - Family
  - Community
  - Coworkers
  - Friends
- Families often have a critical role in navigating the mental health system with or for their loved one
- Families often provide:
  - Financial support
  - Emotional support
  - Housing
  - Transportation
- The mental health of family members can ultimately be negatively impacted

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## Role of Family in Individual's Recovery

- Family members can experience stigma
- Isolation from:
  - Extended families
  - Communities
  - Support networks
- Families can also be responsible for attempting to prevent a crisis from occurring
  - Keeping records of loved one's symptoms, hospitalizations, medications, and arrests
  - Identifying warning signs and know what to do
  - Approaching loved one with concerns about behavior
- Increased stress + isolation = harmful to family members' mental health

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## Role of Family in Individual's Recovery

- For families with a loved one with mental illness who is also incarcerated, there can be even more challenges
  - Navigating the mental health services within the prison system
  - Traveling to visits with the loved one/taking time off work for visits
  - Legal fees
  - Increased stigma
  - Feeling unsure of how to best support the loved one
  - Planning for re-entry
  - Finding services, support and employment for loved one after re-entry
  - Establishing new dynamics after re-entry

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## What do family members need?

- Families NEED support and education
- Studies have found the best outcomes for people newly diagnosed with schizophrenia were realized when family education became part of their treatment plan<sup>(1)</sup>
- Caregivers/family members have higher rates of emotional and anxiety disorders, and are twice as likely as non-caregivers to use mental health services for their own problems<sup>(2)</sup>
- Caregivers who pay attention to their own physical and emotional health are better able to handle the challenges of supporting someone with mental illness<sup>(3)</sup>

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## How Does NAMI CA Help?

NAMI Affiliates provide information on what to do when a loved one with a mental illness is incarcerated:

- Support your relative
- Contact the jail
- Contact the Jail Medical Department (to discuss treatment)
- Provide Health Information
- Bring Medications to Jail
- Find legal representation
- Determine if you are willing to post bail

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## How Does NAMI CA Help?

**Family to Family** - 12 week educational course taught by trained family members who have a loved one with mental illness. Topics include:

- Understanding mental illness
- Self-care
- Setting boundaries
- How to advocate for your loved one
- Finding and using local support services for selves and loved ones
- Current treatments and therapies

**Family Support Group** - facilitated weekly support group led by trained family members

**Basics** - weekly class for parents of children recently diagnosed

**Homefront** - based on Family to Family, but designed for families of military service members or Veterans

*"...This 12 session class (Family to Family) not only provided excellent information about the possible causes of mental illness and current treatments, but it helped me gain empathy for my family member. I have been able to use new strategies to deal with the many difficulties with disruptive behaviors to facilitate communication among family members. I became aware of and have used local resources. I actively participate in local advocacy for evidence based practices to help individuals living with these devastating brain illnesses."*

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## How Does NAMI CA Help?

**Peer to Peer** - 10 week educational program for people living with mental illness, taught by trained individuals living well in recovery. Topics include:

- Understanding your mental illness
- Creating a relapse prevention plan
- Finding a support network
- Identifying local resources

**Connections Support Group** – facilitated support group for people living with a mental illness, led by trained individuals living well in their recovery.

- NAMI New Mexico offers the NAMI Connection support group to prisoners in the general population at Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center.



## How Does NAMI CA Help?

- Partnering with the California Highway Patrol
- Supporting Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for all California Officers
- Developing a new program for Affiliates to provide an introduction to NAMI to law enforcement



## How Else Can NAMI CA Help?

**Adapt specific other NAMI programs for statewide reach**

- **Mentors on Discharge** – local affiliate program designed to match a patient newly released from psychiatric care with an experienced, trained mentor (person with lived experience)
  - Mentors on Discharge has been shown to reduce the re-hospitalization rate of psychiatric patients in an acute care psychiatric hospital by over 70%.
  - Could be adapted by matching newly released parolees with experienced mentor to provide support, hope and guidance on re-entry
- **Friends in the Lobby** - offers smiles, compassion, information, and hope to visitors seeing their loved ones in behavioral health or psychiatric units
  - Provides families with local resources and immediate support network
  - Could be adapted for families visiting loved ones in jail/prison system



## Questions?



## Resources

- RAND Corporation Study
  - [Effects of Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Trainings Conducted Under the California Mental Health Services Authority](#)
- Program Information
  - [Family to Family](#)
  - [Family Support Group](#)
  - [Basics](#)
  - [Peer to Peer](#)
  - [Connections Support Group](#)
  - [Homefront](#)

