

Mental Illness is NOT a Choice.

In fact, mental illnesses are devastating, not only for those who have them, but also for the family and friends of those who suffer.

When first confronted with the reality of mental illness, family members face many difficult questions: Why him/her? Why us? What can we do to help? It can feel overwhelming.

The onset of mental illness typically occurs at 16 - 25 years of age.

Then comes the search for treatment and support, followed by many other hurdles. Getting your family member the help they need may seem like an uphill battle, with many setbacks.

1 in 5 Vermont families is affected by mental illness.

But you are not alone. Many others have been there before you. It helps to talk to those who understand, because they have had similar experiences and concerns.

They have searched for effective treatment programs, and learned to advocate for their loved one. Often, they have insight and experience they are willing to share, along with helpful advice and support.

You Are Not Alone!

Who We Are:



NAMI-Vermont is a nonprofit grassroots organization that assists families, friends and individuals living with serious mental illness. Our mission is to provide **support, education** and **advocacy** to improve the quality of life for more than 1 in 5 Vermonters who suffer from these devastating illnesses.

NAMI-Vermont's Goals:

- ❖ To provide **support** to families coping with the problems caused by mental illness.
- ❖ To **educate** our members and the public about the facts of mental illness, to dispel harmful myths, reduce stigma & promote recovery.
- ❖ To **advocate** for improving our system of mental health care in every community.

What Can a Family Member Do?

First, educate yourself: Dealing with the unknown can be more difficult than dealing with the illness itself. Learn more about the types, symptoms and available treatments for mental illness. **You can:**

- **Sign up for NAMI's Family-to-Family Education Course** A Free 12-week course, offered in various locations in VT. Or **Living With Mental Illness in the Family**, our 1 Day Introductory Workshop.
- **Call our toll free helpline to learn** about resources available in your community for people with mental illness.
- **Don't be afraid to talk about mental illness** with your friends and relatives. Speaking openly about your experience helps to dispel myths & educate others.
- **Become involved:** join NAMI-Vermont's advocacy for better treatment and improved supports for people with mental illness.
- **Normalize** your own life, as much as possible, while supporting your loved one. Take care of yourself, while you care for others.
- **Attend your local NAMI-VT support group.** You will find an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion within a circle of people who know what it's like to support a loved one with mental illness.
- **Join NAMI-Vermont** (*complete & return membership form--see other side of brochure*)

Mental Illnesses...

- Are neurobiological-based illnesses that interfere with one's ability to think, feel, and relate to others.
- Include depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic depression), obsessive compulsive disorder, panic and borderline personality disorders.
- Affect people from all walks of life, regardless of age, race, gender, income or intelligence.
- Often involve drug and alcohol abuse.
- Can (and do) improve with proper treatment, support and rehabilitation.



For more information, contact:

**NAMI-VERMONT HELP LINE:
1-800-639-6480**

**NAMI NATIONAL HELP LINE:
1-800-950-NAMI**

NAMI-Vermont
162 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05676

I Want to Join NAMI-Vermont!

Your Contact Information:

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip Code
Phone		
E-mail Address		

Sign me up as:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Family | \$ 30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional | 40.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | 60.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate | 80.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | 100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 'Open Door' member | 4.00 |

(limited income only)

Additional donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

I would like to receive e-mail alerts of upcoming advocacy and educational opportunities:

Yes No

Payment Method:

- Check enclosed (*payable to NAMI-VT*)
- VISA
- MasterCard
- American Express
- Discover

Account # _____ Expiration Date _____

Address from your credit card billing statement

(the last 3 digits on the signature panel;

CID # _____ *Am Ex cards the CID # is the 4 Digit # printed above the account #.)*

Mail to: NAMI-Vermont

162 S. Main St., Waterbury, VT 05676

Thank You!

NAMI-Vermont: *We're here for you!*

- ◆ We sponsor **local support groups** for family members and close friends of mental health consumers. 12 groups meet regularly throughout the state. Call for our current schedule.
- ◆ We offer **free classes and workshops** including a 1-Day Introductory Workshop and the Family-to-Family course. Learn how to understand and support your loved one, while maintaining your own well-being. Programs are offered at various locations around Vermont.
- ◆ A free **Provider Education course** helps mental health providers understand the effects of mental illness, as experienced by family members & mental health consumers.
- ◆ We present an **annual Statewide Conference** offering inspiring keynote speakers and workshops for mental health care providers, family members and mental health consumers.
- ◆ We maintain a free **lending library** with books and videos dealing with different aspects of mental illness & recovery.
- ◆ We provide a free telephone **information & referral service** for mental health consumers, family, friends and providers. NAMI-Vermont's *Family Resource Guidebook* is available upon request, at no charge.
- ◆ Our website: **www.namivt.org** offers updated information and links about mental illness, treatment and services available in Vermont.

*"As for me,
you must know
I shouldn't precisely have
chosen madness if there had
been any choice. What consoles
me is that I am beginning to
consider madness as an illness
like any other, and that
I accept it as such."*

-- Vincent van Gogh, 1898 in a letter to his brother Theo



*Vincent van Gogh
painted irises
while he was hospitalized
in France*

NAMI Vermont

*National Alliance
on Mental Illness of Vermont*



*Do you need to
know more about
mental illness?*

**Contact us at
1-800-639-6480
Toll-Free Vermont Help Line**

Website: www.namivt.org
E-mail: info@namivt.org

