



NAMI Connection Mission Statement: There will be a NAMI Connection recovery support group within reasonable traveling distance for every person in America who lives with a mental illness, every day of the week.

NAMI Connection Congratulates the Winner of our Walk T-shirt Contest!



The NAMI Connection team would like to offer a big Congratulations to **Susette Young** in Southern Maryland for being the winner of the annual NAMI Connection Walks T-Shirt Contest! After a week of voting, this winning design will be the 2010 official NAMI Connection T-Shirt available to anyone who wants to form a NAMI Connection Walk Team.



The t-shirts printed with the winning design will be available for ordering next week from www.3dASAP.com/NAMI. Keep your eyes open for an email with ordering instructions, t-shirt color choices and a limited time offer to buy one shirt at a time. T-shirts will be available for ordering on Monday, March 8, 2010. The information will also be posted on the NAMI Connection Website.

We hope that if you form a NAMI Connection walks team you will let us know about it and send us photos of your team in action to include in this newsletter. Thanks to ALL to submitted entries for this contest, we were very impressed with your creativity and look forward to more great designs next year!

DEADLINE APPROACHING: TRAINING OF STATE TRAINERS

The deadline for states to send applications to NAMI National for the Training of State Trainers is **March 8th**. Please send in those applications as soon as possible. The Training will be held on April 22-25 in St. Louis, MO at the St. Louis Hilton Airport hotel.

Testimonials

"I am grateful every day for the opportunity to facilitate this group because it has given me a new positivity that I hadn't had for a very long time."

—Mary Alice Lesiak

"When I first separated from my wife I thought I was going to be alone. I was suffering from mental illness and I had no friends or relatives who could truly support me. Then I found the NAMI Connection support group. During the worst time of my life I had people to talk to who completely understood my illness and my problems. I made new friends and had something to look forward to all week. I believe that surrounding myself with people who cared and understood is what got me through my divorce. Now I am in full recovery rebuilding my life and relationships. I was so thankful for NAMI Connection for being there for me I decided to become a facilitator. Now I am finding even more growth, recovery, and healing through helping others."

—Sean King

Want to share a positive Connection thought? Please email testimonials to connection@nami.org

Program Progress

Facilitator Trainings: 129

Facilitators Trained: 2,131

Support Groups: 486

For more information on the NAMI Connection program, please visit www.nami.org/connection or call the HelpLine at 1(800) 950-NAMI (6264)



Marketing NAMI Connection : Innovative Ideas from Successful Facilitators

We know that many of you would like ideas on how to fill your Connection groups with attendees. That's why we have gathered ideas from facilitators that are finding success in this area in their communities! Their outreach techniques have enabled them to have a consistent and considerable amount of people participating in their respective Connection groups.

Victoria Gonzalez, facilitator and state trainer from Illinois, says that advertising groups on *Craigslist* has really helped attract more people to participate in the support groups she facilitates. She also does outreach through the Spanish News, since she facilitates groups in Spanish.

For Chris Cox, facilitator from Virginia, it is a combination of strategies that have made his groups consistent with good numbers. "The Connection outreach program here started with the great support of our affiliate leaders. They were instrumental in finding the right places for our meeting and acting as contacts for consumers looking for support. Family-to-Family members bring family members to us as well. We have a strong In Our Own Voice program that conducts weekly programs inside the local Behavioral Center and they also refer consumers to us. This relationship with the Behavioral Center has blossomed and we see more and more people coming to us straight out of the hospital from the advice of the nurses and staff that work there. Another avenue that has become a strong draw for us is our contacts within the local Community Service Board (CSB). This is the organization responsible for servicing the people living with mental illness on the local level. I personally was referred to NAMI by my Psychiatrist at the CSB and I know we get many people to us by way of them. Other reasons for our steady growth are our efforts through Peer-to-Peer, advertising in the paper and even a short (free) advertisement on the local TV station".

Wayne Lewis, facilitator from Florida, noticed several factors that increase group attendance. "The day of the week and the time of day work so that no other important meetings are going on at the same time. This helps maximize attendance. I do many online webinars dealing with Mental/Health Substance Abuse and I am also on the Florida State Mental Health Planning Council. Staying well informed of what is going on in these areas is crucial to the group. The Psychiatrists from the Guidance /Care Center recommend their Clients to attend the Personal Growth Center. Those on the CSU are allowed out if they are well enough to come over to the Personal Growth Center to spend the day. Also we have Drop -ins from off the street, many are homeless and have substance abuse issues. They also attend. We also put up flyers at our Mental Health Facility and send out emails about our Connection group".

If the innovative outreach strategies listed above have worked for these facilitators, then they might work for others as well. We think it's worth the try and hope these ideas help you fill your Connection groups on a regular basis!

Facilitator Spotlight: Lorette Enochs



Lorette Enochs, who lives in the "Land of Enchantment," New Mexico, volunteers her time to coordinate the NAMI Connection Training program and facilitates a group every Monday night at her local NAMI office. She's been facilitating a group for nearly two years and is inspired by how individuals in the group have forged their own recovery and relationships within the group.



Ms. Enochs believes that forging relationships is core to successful ventures. She recently collaborated with OptumHealth of New Mexico (OHNM), the statewide entity that manages behavioral health Medicaid services for her state, to bring Connection to new communities and VA hospitals throughout the state. OptumHealth of New Mexico, which is committed to helping consumers and families on their path to recovery and resiliency, agreed as part of its contract with the state to create 80 new support groups during the next four years. With OptumHealth's assistance, seven new Connection support groups will be created next month.

Jana Spalding, vice president of OptumHealth's Consumer, Family and Youth Division, has identified many ways that OHNM can collaborate: recruiting facilitators, finding sites for the meeting, and advertising the Connection support groups. Ms. Enochs is grateful that OptumHealth values peer support groups and had the foresight to commit with the state to a plan that it would establish peer support groups. She urges NAMI affiliates to lobby for contracts, requiring the behavioral health managed care companies to establish peer support groups in their states.

Lorette is a grandmother, NAMI IOOV presenter, retired attorney, NAMI state board member, Peer-to-Peer trainer, and sits on the Forensic Intervention Consortium Board and New Life Home Board, which provides supportive housing for those living with mental illness. She enjoys walking and Scrabble. She works part-time as a sales clerk in a kitchen store and has the best equipped kitchen for someone who rarely cooks!



Congratulations to NAMI Maryland for not only hosting a Connection training in the midst of a historic blizzard, but also for graduating 16 new facilitators!



Congratulations to NAMI Illinois on their recent NAMI Connection training, graduating 19 new facilitators... way to go!



Coordinator Spotlight: Jean Dervan



What is your current role in the NAMI Connection program in your state? As Program Director, my role in the Connection program is to open up the entire state of Georgia where Connection is readily accessible to everyone in the shortest feasible time period, while at the same time making sure the groups are maintained faithful to the model.

What are some innovative things you are doing with NAMI Connection? Some of the innovative things we have done recently is to have our third state training in a relatively isolated area in rural Georgia. It was well received and appreciated, in fact it was the largest Connection training we have had thus far. We also schedule regular "tune-ups" to re-invigorate everyone.

What do you like best about NAMI Connection? What I like best about NAMI Connection is the enthusiasm of the people who come to our training classes to become facilitators to help others and the appreciation and commitment from those who attend these groups and classes.

Tell us a little about you – what are some of your favorite hobbies or past-times? Recently my husband and I installed Skype on our computer. As our family is so scattered it is just a wonderful way to keep in contact with everyone. When I find the time I enjoy antiquing, reading, music and sitting on the beach doing absolutely nothing.

Tell us one goal you wish to accomplish in 2010 One goal I have for 2010 is to cover the entire state with trainings and support groups and then throw one big party and have all the Connection trainers and facilitators come together to celebrate the fantastic work they are doing!

Upcoming Facilitator Trainings

March 13-14: Norwalk, Connecticut

March 19-21: Rio Rancho, New Mexico

March 25-27: TBD, Pennsylvania

March 26-28: Maitland, Florida

March 29-31: TBD, Pennsylvania

April 9-11: Richmond, Virginia

April 23-25: TBD, Delaware

May 21-23: Helena, Montana

May 21-23: Jackson, Mississippi

June 3-6: Montpelier, Vermont

June 24-26: Jefferson City, Missouri

July 2010: TBD, Ohio



March Facilitator Call Schedule

Conference call number: 1-888-858-6021
Conference Pass code: 4294442760

March 2nd 1:00 PM March 4th 7:00 PM
March 10th 4:00 PM March 16th 1:00 PM
March 18th 7:00 PM March 24th 4:00 PM

All facilitators are welcome on all calls, just pick the time and date that works best with your schedule!

NAMI Connection on Facebook



We want to thank everyone who has become a fan of NAMI Connection on Facebook — we have 300 fans in just three weeks!

To become a fan, just go to www.facebook.com, sign in to your account and search for NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group, become a fan and you're done! We hope to get as many Facebook fans as possible so please help us spread the word!

Have you had any recent **recognition events** in your community for NAMI Connection facilitators and/or trainers? Let us know so we can spotlight the event in one of our upcoming newsletters! connection@nami.org