



Meet the NAMI Connection Team

"NAMI Connection has given me the opportunity to meet many wonderful individuals all over the country, and it's so rewarding to see that we are reaching people that did not have support before. I love this program!"
~Candita Wacker

"I have loved every minute of working with NAMI Connection. It's amazing to me that we're helping so many people who never had support before." ~Laura Sweeney

"When I first read about the Connection program, before it even had the name Connection, I thought that the goal to have a support group within driving distance of every person with a mental illness across the country was awesome. After a year of hard work, I look at the numbers of facilitators and groups and participants and realize that we are participating in bringing so many isolated people together to talk about things that for many were unmentionable. It is humbling to be part of this national Connection, to see and hear about people who are once again, or perhaps for the first time, feeling connected." ~Anna Goodwin

"For me, working with NAMI Connection has been inspiring, heart-warming and very challenging.



Top Row: Harriet Kronick, Area 3 Field Manager; Candita Wacker, National Project Manager; Laura Sweeney, Project Assistant; Gretchen Anglin, Area 2
Bottom Row (left to right): Beth Gould, Area 4 Field Manager; Anna Goodwin, Area 1 Field Manager & Training Manager

This work pushes me to live the ideals I've been embracing in a very practical way. Everyday I get to consider what recovery means and with every person I meet I get to see it expressed differently. Fascinating!" ~ Beth Gould

"NAMI Connection is a program that works for facilitators- the best I have ever seen. It has been wonderful to be part of it!" ~Gretchen Anglin

"NAMI Connection has given me more opportunities to give back to the NAMI community than I ever imagined being able to do. I am honored to have been chosen to be part of this empowering national incentive." ~Harriet Kronick

What is NAMI Connection?

NAMI Connection is an exciting, new recovery support group program for adults living with mental illness that is expanding in communities throughout the country. These groups provide a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope.

The support groups are run by people living with mental illness themselves. Each group meets weekly for 90 minutes, is confidential, is free of charge, and is open to anyone with a mental illness, regardless of their diagnosis.

NAMI Connection groups are facilitated by trained individuals living with mental illnesses who are at a point in recovery where they want to "give back" to others. They understand the daily challenges of living with mental illness and can offer encouragement and support.

NAMI's goal is to have a support group within reasonable traveling distance for any person living with a mental illness, any day of the week, by the year 2010.

Testimonials

"Most of us with mental illness go through a period in which we search for the reason *why* we have been afflicted. After nineteen years of living with a diagnosis, working as a NAMI Connection trainer has given me the answer. I am here to encourage my peers that our experiences can give us hope and that this hope will triumph over those very experiences.

~Barbara-Ann Tuozzolo, National Trainer, Connecticut

"I finally found what I've been looking for. A support group that has structure and no matter where I am I can always go to a NAMI Connection support group and find the same thing."

~Colorado facilitator



Training Progress

Completed State Trainings: 30

Facilitators Trained: 546

For more information on NAMI Connection:

- Visit www.nami.org/connection
- Call the HelpLine at 1(800) 950-NAMI (6264)
- Send an email to connection@nami.org



Spotlight: Adria Allison, NAMI Connection National Trainer

How did you become involved in NAMI Connection?: I was trained in March 2005 as a NAMI-C.A.R.E. facilitator, and then in April 2007, I became a NAMI Connection facilitator and trainer.



How has NAMI Connection aided in your own recovery? I really like the co-facilitator model because it gives me the opportunity within my own group to participate when I need to. Having that option is important to me in my recovery because it's an outlet for my own mental illness. It touches me in such a way that every day I strive to stay in recovery. It's a security to me knowing that the entire NAMI network is there for support when I need it, and giving back in the same way that NAMI has helped me has been such a blessing.

What do you want others to know about NAMI Connection? Being a national trainer and traveling to different states has shown me that mental illness does not discriminate and affects people from all walks of life. NAMI Connection can be everywhere, so if someone were to move to a different state, they would still receive the same level of support because the model stays the same. I have seen this program built from the ground up, and it's so amazing to see how close everyone has become to make this program a success.

What other NAMI programs are you involved in? I have been trained as a Peer-to-Peer mentor and an In Our Own Voice presenter. This April, I am going to be trained as an IOOV state trainer. I am the program coordinator for Northern Mississippi, where I collaborate with 12 mental health regional facilities to get better services for consumers. I am also the secretary for my affiliate, NAMI Greenwood.

Do you have any interesting hobbies? I run an art studio where I make crosses, picture frames, bookmarks, and many other things out of barn tin. It's very rewarding because I love the creative process of making each object, and knowing that it's a very unique craft. I am hoping to put together a catalogue of my work and set up a website to expand my business.



Monthly Facilitator Calls

NAMI Connection Field Managers hold a monthly teleconference call for the facilitators in each state covering a wide variety of topics. Please contact the field manager for your state for more information.

IA, IL, IN, KY, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI, & WV
 • Anna Goodwin, 1 (866) 446-8433 or agoodwin@nami.org

AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, LA, MD, MS, NC, PR, SC, & TN
 • Gretchen Anglin, 1 (800) 985-2958 or gmeyer@nami.org

AK, AZ, CO, CT, KS, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, TX, & VT
 • Harriet Kronick, 1 (877) 400-2092 or hkronick@nami.org

CA, HI, ID, MY, ND, NE, NM, NV, OK, OR, SD, UT, WA, WY
 • Beth Gould, 1 (866) 461-4569 or bgould@nami.org

Are you interested in being a champion for NAMI Connection? To find out more about what a champion does and how to become one, contact your state office or email connection@nami.org.

Upcoming Facilitator Trainings:

- Louisiana (Lake Charles): March 28-30
- New Mexico (Albuquerque): March 28-30
- Texas (Houston): April 4-6
- Colorado (Denver): April 11-13
- Montana (Helena): April 11-13
- Massachusetts (Boston): May 2-4
- Utah (Salt Lake): May 2-4
- Georgia (Atlanta): May 2-4
- Maine (Portland): May 16-18
- Virginia (Richmond): May 16-18
- Washington (Seattle): May 16-18
- Nebraska (Omaha): May 30-June 1
- Arizona (Tucson): June 27-29
- Arkansas (Little Rock): July 11-13



What's Happening in NAMI Education

Training of Trainers: April 25-27th in St. Louis, MO

NAMI Basics: Classes are underway in Illinois, South Carolina and Utah. Teachers will be trained in California, Connecticut, Indiana, New Jersey, North Carolina and Tennessee over the next three months. For more information, contact Teri Brister at tbrister@nami.org.

Family-to-Family: Family to Family recently added two states, West Virginia and Louisiana, bringing the total number of states involved to 48. In the past six years, the NAMI *De Familia a Familia* program has been implemented in eight states and in Mexico and has reached thousands of Spanish-speaking families. The Latino Expert Group was created to implement and create strategies to build strong leadership within the grassroots and establishes solid communication among our teachers and trainers.

In Our Own Voice (IOOV): In Our Own Voice is currently active in 39 states and has reached over 30,000 audience members over the last year. Stay tuned for developments with IOOV in Spanish!

Peer-to-Peer: Peer to Peer recently launched the Persona a Persona (Spanish) pilot in 4 different sites around the country. Three of these sites have completed their classes and received excellent feedback.

For more information on all NAMI education programs, please visit www.nami.org, click on Find Support, and go to the Education, Training, and Peer Support Center.

