



# At a Glance

## What is NAMI?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979 and has blossomed into the nation's leading voice on mental health. Today, we are an alliance of more than 600 local Affiliates and 49 State Organizations who work in your community to raise awareness and provide support and education that was not previously available to those in need.

## Why NAMI On Campus?

NAMI on Campus clubs are student-led, student-run mental health organizations on college campuses. NAMI on Campus clubs:

- Raise mental health awareness with fairs, walks, activities, candlelit vigils, and more!
- Educate the campus with presentations, guest speakers and student panels.
- Advocate for improved mental health services and policies on campus.
- Support peers with signature NAMI programs from NAMI State Organizations (NSOs) and NAMI Affiliates (NAs).

As a member of a NAMI on Campus club, you will belong to the largest grassroots mental health organization in America. Club leaders have access to the staff, resources, opportunities and support that comes with being part of this national movement, including opportunities beyond your college years.

## Who can start a club?

NAMI On Campus is available to high school and colleges across the United States and are supported by NSOs and/or local NAs. To get started, reach out to your NSO or NA.

## What should you do before getting started?

1. Develop a relationship and good communication with your NA/NSO. This can be done through visiting their office (if applicable), having several meetings to discuss plans for a club, phone calls, emails, etc.

2. You will need a faculty advisor. This role is important because the faculty advisor is aware of policies and procedures around student clubs, activities, and events at your school. They can help keep the club focused and communicate with other school staff and leadership to make your plans a reality. Talk to school staff that you have a relationship with, see if they're interested in supporting NAMI On Campus or know of another staff member who would be.
3. Find a committed group of students who will help support the start of your club and see it through its development.

### **How should a club plan their year?**

All club capacities will be different, so it's best to start small and add in additional activities and events as the club develops. To start, try to have a small activity at each meeting. Then, as you build the number of attendees, work together to plan campus-wide events to show more of your peers and faculty why mental health is important. If your club starts earlier in the school year, you can put in your planning to work up to one big event during a special time, like Mental Health Awareness Month, or any other mental health awareness day/week/month.

If you have any questions through this process, as you're starting your new club, please don't hesitate to contact your NA and/or NSO. You can also email NAMI National at [namioncampus@nami.org](mailto:namioncampus@nami.org) for additional support and resources.