



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# NAMI Berks County, PA

The Official Newsletter of NAMI Berks County, PA

Issue 4

December 2018



## CONNECTION



**Beginning January 10, 2019**

**!! New Location for Connection !!**

*NAMI Connection Recovery  
Support Group  
St. James Church  
644 Penn Ave  
West Reading, PA 19611  
Use back door in alley  
2nd and 4th Thursdays  
6:30-8:00 PM*

### What is NAMI Connection?

**NAMI Connection** is a free, confidential, peer-led recovery support group for adults 18+ living with mental health challenges. Connection offers a safe, no judgment environment in which people learn from each other's experiences, share coping strategies, and offer encouragement and understanding.

**Let us help you.**

**Because mental illness is too tough a road to walk alone.**

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)



### **LAST CONNECTION MEETING**

**AT OUR 640 CENTRE AVE.  
LOCATION IS THURSDAY  
DECEMBER 27, 2018.**

*"I feel comfortable in the Connection group. I like the facilitators. It's nice to have somewhere to go and connect with people who understand and not be judged. I feel less alone. I always have a good feeling when I leave."*

# CONNECTION

*Mental Illness is a part of my life.  
I don't believe I have anything  
to be ashamed of.*

## My NAMI Story

Something in my life had gone wrong. I was ill, overwhelmed, trapped under an avalanche of negative thoughts which held me captive in bed for days on end. My husband didn't understand what had happened and neither did I. I needed help.

I found a listing for a NAMI 12-week Peer-to-Peer class that was starting soon. I didn't know what it was, but it was free, close to home and I didn't have to wait to start. My only goal was to get to the first class. I got there. I felt uncomfortable among so many strangers, very vulnerable and a little afraid, but I told myself I had succeeded. I had taken my first step toward recovery.

I completed the program, made new friends, and now had tools to use to travel a new path in life.

I had taken a few more steps forward. I took another class. I developed a WRAP: Wellness Recover Action Plan. I joined a weekly support group, and continued to see my psychiatrist and took my medication each day. I started to feel better, got a job and used what I'd learned in my Peer-to-Peer to keep steady as my life became "bigger" again.

Later, I learned about the NAMI Family to Family class. I wanted my husband to go, and he insisted I come with him, so I did. I learned more, made friends, and continued moving forward. My husband discovered he was not alone either. Both of us were able to share our experiences—as I was on both sides of this issue

Hearing how others were coping (or not) with the effects mental illness had on their lives was eye opening for me. My husband tended to put his head down and plow through—and not talk about how hard it was to not understand why I was the way I was. He gained some understanding and a vocabulary to use to talk about it.

My path to wellness has become a road. There will always be potholes, switchbacks and detours. Wellness and recovery is ongoing. But the most important wisdom I've learned is this: There is always a road, but it's up to you to start walking.

-Melinda

Connection Support Group Leader



*I have  
Schizophrenia*

*I have  
Borderline*

*#Stigma  
Free*

*I have  
Bipolar*

*I have  
Depression*

*I have  
PTSD*

**Family Support Group:**  
2nd Wednesday  
of every month  
7-8:30pm  
NAMI Office

**NAMI Office:**  
640 Centre Avenue  
Reading, PA 19601  
In the rear of the Calvary  
United Church of Christ.  
Ring the doorbell.

**Office Hours:**  
Call to schedule a meeting  
610.685.3000  
berksnami@gmail.com  
www.namiberkspa.org



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# .....Mission ~~im~~Possible!

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Mission Statement: *Recognizing that people affected by mental illness often serve as vital components of society in a wide variety of ways. NAMI Berks County, PA is a grassroots mental health organization of families and individuals whose lives have been affected by mental illness. We are an Affiliate of NAMI and of NAMI Keystone, PA. We advocate for lives of quality and respect, without discrimination and stigma, for all of our constituents. We provide leadership in advocacy, legislation policy development, education and support throughout Berks County.*

We want to offer 2 **FREE** Educational Classes in the Spring!

**R U interested?**

**NAMI Family to Family Class:** Family to Family is twelve (12) two and one half hour (2 1/2) sessions for families, partners, and friends of adults living with mental illness. The course is designed to help friends and family members to understand and support their loved one living with mental illness, while maintaining their own well-being

**NAMI Peer to Peer Class:** Peer-to-Peer is a 10 session educational program for adults with mental illness who are looking to better understand their condition and journey toward recovery or adults living with mental illness who are looking for insight.

**Space is limited so please register now by calling 610-685-3000 and leaving your name, address, phone number, and email. You can also email [berksnami@gmail.com](mailto:berksnami@gmail.com) and provide the same information. Someone will contact you with more details as the dates and times become available. You can read more about these classes online at the National NAMI website at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)**

## **NAMI HOMEFRONT— FREE CLASSES ON HELPING LOVED ONES WHO ARE VETERANS!**

NAMI Homefront is a free, 6 session educational program for families, caregivers and friends of military service members and vets with mental health conditions. **Now offered online!** We understand that attending an in-person class can be difficult for busy individuals and families. Online classes meet weekly in a virtual classroom, so participants experience the same level of interaction and learning as traditional in-person classes.

Registration is **NOW OPEN** for the following online classes\*:

- **Eastern, Mondays, 6:30 - 8:30 PM EST, Starting Jan. 7**
- **Pacific, Mondays, 6:30 - 8:30 PM PST, Starting Jan. 7**
- **Eastern Day, Tuesdays, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM EST, Starting Jan. 8**
- **Central, Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:30 PM CST, Starting Jan. 10**

\*Please note the **TIME ZONE** listed for each class time. Berks County is in **Eastern** Time Zone

<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-Homefront>

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## **UPDATES!**

We have a new Executive Director! We welcome Janice Sommerhoff to our local affiliate. Please feel free to welcome Janice by emailing her at [berksnami@gmail.com](mailto:berksnami@gmail.com). More later from Janice.

Our last newsletter we sent along Family to Family flyers to let you know about the upcoming class running Tuesday nights from September 11th to November 27th. 2018. We are happy to report that we had a full class and the results of the evaluations were positive!

**Help us save the cost of mailing this newsletter. Please send us your email so we can send it electronically and you can share with your friends and family! Email us at [berksnami@gmail.com](mailto:berksnami@gmail.com)**

## Membership Rates

Become a NAMI member at all three levels of the organization—national, state and local—with one payment! We have three membership rates depending on what makes the most sense for you:

- \$60 per year for a Household membership that includes all members of a household living at the same address
- \$40 per year for a Regular membership which is an individual membership for one person
- \$5 per year for an Open Door membership for an individual member with limited financial resources

Go to <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Join> or call 610-685-3000 for help joining NAMI Berks County, PA

**TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER! PLEASE JOIN WITH US.**

# HELP Wanted!

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer or group facilitator? We want your help! Email us at [berksnami@gmail.com](mailto:berksnami@gmail.com) or call 610-685-3000. We'd love to have you on the team!

Executive Director: Janice Sommerhoff  
President: Linda Dapcic-Angst  
Vice President: Linda Ingram  
Treasurer: Denise Zimmerman  
Secretary: Dietlinde Hoffman

NAMI Berks County, PA is our local affiliate of NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania  
[www.namiberkspa.org](http://www.namiberkspa.org)  
NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania is our state organization  
[www.namikeystonepa.org](http://www.namikeystonepa.org)  
NAMI is our National Alliance on Mental Illness [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)



640 Centre Ave  
Reading, PA 19601

PEACE, HOPE, AND JOY TO ALL DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

~~stigma~~free