

With more than 1,200 affiliates, NAMI is America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of all individuals affected by mental illness.

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NAMI Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, GA 31908
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Website: namicolumbusga.org
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Board of Directors:

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Molly Jones	Vice President
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Georgia Crisis & Access Line

Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services 24/7/365
Adults, Children & Adolescents
1-800-715-4225

Peer Support "Warm Line"

1-888-945-1414 (toll-free)

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network operates a state-funded, consumer-directed "warm line" for anyone struggling with mental health issues, 24 hours a day

Columbus ACT Team

AmericanWork, Inc.
706-641-9663

Families and Peers

Meeting in the Middle

Monthly Education Meeting

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer,
4700 Armour Road, Cols., GA 31904
February 17, 2020 -- 6:00 P.M.



Please join us for an interactive session with **Open Discussion** covering topics often discussed by both the NAMI Connection peer group and the Family/Friends support group, including:

- ❖ **Jobs and Housing**
- ❖ **Transitioning from Jail/Hospital/ Treatment facilities**
- ❖ **Hobbies, Interests, & Volunteering**
- ❖ **Other Topics You Care About**

Come and join us to share your views – or just listen to others - at our monthly meeting at 6:00 pm on February 17, 2020 at our Monday night's location, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 4700 Armour Road, Columbus, GA.

If you are able, please bring an item for the refreshment table.

TIP!

If you aren't receiving your newsletter via email, and have provided us your email address, please check your spam folder. To avoid the newsletter going to spam, add our new sending email address, news@namicolumbusga.org, to your contacts.

Upcoming Events

(Below are chances for you to get involved)

February 2020

- Feb 9 – In Our Own Voice Presenter Training – Atlanta, GA*
- Feb 17 – Monthly Education Program, 6:00-7:30pm – Family and Peers-Meeting in the Middle
- Feb 21-22 – NAMI Family to Family Teacher Training – Atlanta, GA*

March 2020

- Mar 14-15 – NAMI Family Support Group Facilitator Training – Atlanta, GA*
- Mar 16 – Monthly Education Program, 6:00-7:30pm – TBD

**If you are interested in attending a training session, a letter of recommendation from a member of the NAMI Columbus Board of Directors is required. Please secure this recommendation prior to submitting the application for the training.*

- “Open” Support Groups:**
- Every Monday night, 6-7:30 pm
Family/Friend and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups
Both groups meet at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 4700 Armour Rd.
- Every Saturday, 1-2:30 pm
NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
***Meets at The Bradley Center’s Multipurpose Room
(Use 22nd St. Parking Lot for easier access)***
- Every Thursday night, 6:30-8 pm
NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
Meets at Pierce Chapel United Methodist Church, 5122 Pierce Chapel Rd.



NAMICon 2020

Atlanta • July 15-18

Together Toward Tomorrow

The NAMI National Convention is one of the largest community gatherings of mental health advocates in the United States. Each year, our convention connects and inspires people looking for resources, research, support services and recovery strategies. Join us as we embrace our theme — **Together Toward Tomorrow** — and celebrate NAMI’s 40 years of support, education and advocacy.

The NAMI 2020 National Convention will feature:

- Top-notch researchers and clinicians providing information and tools to advance and sustain recovery from mental illness.
- Perspectives on recovery and stories of lived experience from people with mental illness and their families.
- The country’s keenest minds and savviest policymakers offering strategies and tactics to effectively advocate for changing the mental health system in our nation.
- Abundant networking opportunities to learn from peers about how we can improve the lives of all people affected by mental illness and their families.
- Inspiration, innovation and an exhilarating four days in Atlanta.

REGISTER TODAY! For registration information and early bird rates, visit: <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-National-Convention/Registration-Information>

Ways To Manage And Cope With Stress

By Katherine Ponte, BA, JD, MBA, CPRP | Jan. 13, 2020



My dad was dying. I hated my job. I was struggling with school. A classmate groped me in front of other classmates. I was having a nervous breakdown.

I wanted an explanation. I wanted something I could address to make me well. I wanted someone and something to blame. But all I was given was a label – [bipolar disorder](#).

I might have been more willing to accept my diagnosis if someone had explained it to me in the context of the life events I was experiencing. It might have made sense to me if I had connected the diagnosis with those stressful events.

Many years later, I learned that my stressful life events did have something to do with how I was feeling, reacting and behaving. For people with a pre-existing [genetic vulnerability](#) to mental illness, severe levels of stress *can* trigger mental illness. Research has shown this connection for [major depressive disorder](#) (MDD), [bipolar disorder](#) and [schizophrenia](#).

High levels of stress can also cause an episode or make symptoms [worse](#) for someone who already has mental illness. For bipolar disorder, stress can contribute to hypomania and mania. For schizophrenia, it may contribute to hallucinations and delusions. And for MDD, it can deepen depression.

This is why managing stress is so important. In order to manage stress, we need to know the warning signs that stress levels are too high and learn healthy coping techniques.

Signs Of Severe Stress

Not all stress is bad. In fact, it can be helpful for gaining motivation, building resilience and encouraging growth. However, stress can negatively affect a person and their health if not properly managed, especially for someone with mental illness.

There are many physical and emotional signs that stress is negatively affecting someone. In fact, according to the American Institute of Stress, there are [50](#) common signs and symptoms of too much stress.

One of the most common physical signs of high levels of stress is sleep deprivation. In one survey, over [40%](#) of Americans reported that stress had prevented them from sleeping. Other physical signs include frequent headaches and aches and pains. Examples of emotional signs include anger, mood swings, difficulty concentrating and irritability.

Sources Of Stress

Stress affects each person differently. A person's genes and previous experiences influence how sensitive they are to stressful life events. However, certain circumstances or life events are generally known to cause stress and can help pinpoint where an individual's symptoms might be coming from.

The [Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory](#) scores a person's "stress inventory" using 43 stressful life events. Each event is assigned a numerical score. The higher the total score for all events, the more vulnerable a person is to a stress-induced health breakdown, which may include the triggering of mental illness.

The top three stressful life events identified by the inventory are the death of a spouse, divorce and marital separation. Illness is also a top stressful life event.

When stressful life events happen, we may not be able to change the situation or eliminate our stressors, but we can learn to manage our stress levels in a healthy way.

Methods For Managing Stress

There is no one size fits all strategy to managing stress – each person should identify which coping methods work best for them. It can help to develop coping strategies that address specific sources of stress. Also, the ability to easily incorporate coping strategies into your routine and lifestyle increases

the likelihood of maintaining the practice. Keep in mind that small steps can have a big impact.

Problem-focused Coping

Problem-focused coping is when a person directly confronts a stressor or tries to find a solution to the stressor. For example, if having too many commitments is causing you stress, you may consider eliminating one of them to better manage the others. It can be tough to implement problem-focused coping if the sources are difficult to address, such as a stressful job situation or family relationship. In these cases, rather than grapple with the source of stress, an emotion-focused approach might be more effective.

Emotion-focused Coping

Emotion-focused coping is when a person focuses on regulating their reaction to a stressor. This approach allows a person to accept their stressors and find ways to shift how they experience them. For example, if a family member causes you distress, you can journal your feelings or reframe your thoughts about the situation to better regulate your feelings.

Wellness-focused Coping

There are eight [interdependent](#) dimensions of wellness: physical, intellectual, financial, environmental, spiritual, social, occupational and emotional. Each type of wellness has a different method for coping with stress.

Physical: [Any form](#) of exercise can relieve stress. [Research](#) has found that 30% of adults felt less stressed after exercising.

Intellectual: Activities that engage your mind such as reading, journaling about emotions, and jigsaw puzzles are all helpful coping tools.

Financial: According to the American Psychological Association, money and finances are a [top stressor](#) for Americans. [Money management](#) resources can provide strategies and solutions for money-related stress.

Environmental: Spending time in nature and [green spaces](#) is shown to help relieve stress.

Spiritual: Connecting with yourself and the world around you through meditation, prayer, or other forms of spirituality can have many [benefits](#) for stress relief.

Social: According to a 2015 [survey](#), “43% of those who say they have no emotional support report that their overall stress has increased in the past year, compared to 26% of those who say they have emotional support.” Staying in close touch with family and friends, seeking out opportunities to make new friends and participating in community activities are all important methods for dealing with stress.

Occupational: Next to money, work is the second leading stressor with 60% of people finding work-related stress to be significant. One important form of occupational stress relief is to do work that you are truly passionate about, if possible. It’s also helpful to take time to recharge and establish healthy boundaries and work/life balance.

Emotional: To address your emotional wellness, you can detach yourself from stressors, practice [relaxation techniques](#), try [reframing your thoughts](#), or go to therapy, among many other possibilities.

Stress is a persistent force in our lives. Many people have come to accept it as normal, even when it gets out of hand, and let it build. But changing our relationship with stress is critically important for improving our health and well-being.

Had I known that stress could trigger my bipolar, I would have done more to address the stressors in my life. We often hear “mental illness can happen to anyone.” While this is true, we should also recognize that effectively managing stress can reduce the risk of developing mental illness or worsening symptoms. And this is one of the few tangible and actionable strategies we have to reduce that risk.

The goal is not to avoid stress but to manage it effectively. Stress is something we can and should address for the sake of our mental health.

Points of Interest...



Watch AIB Network’s Documentary Story On NAMI Georgia

<https://namiga.org/watch-aib-networks-documentary-story-on-nami-georgia/>



Need a Mental Health Day? Some States Give Students the Option - The New York Times

An expert called the laws in both Utah and Oregon a “win” and said students who are “quietly suffering” from mental illness will benefit most.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/24/health/oregon-mental-health-days.html>



Guide To Navigating A Mental Health Crisis

NAMI’s Guide to Navigating a Mental Health Crisis provides important, potentially life-saving information for people experiencing mental health crises and their loved ones.

Getting Answers When You Need Them

It’s important to address a mental health emergency quickly and effectively. Crises can occur even when treatment plans have been followed and mental health professionals are involved.

NAMI created this guide so people experiencing mental health emergencies and their loved ones can have the answers and information they need immediately.

[Download the Guide to Navigating A Mental Health Crisis](#)



Mental Health By The Numbers

Millions of people in the U.S. are affected by mental illness each year. It’s important to measure how common mental illness is, so we can understand its physical, social and financial impact — and so we can *show* that no one is alone. These numbers are also powerful tools for raising public awareness, stigma-busting and advocating for better health care.

Download NAMI’s new infographics with the latest statistics and research on the prevalence, treatment, and impact of mental illness. <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>



Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, GA 31908
(706) 320-3755
Our Area's Voice on Mental Illness



Many people find their way to our classes by first attending a support group. If you are a NAMI Columbus "long timer" (we don't want to call you old), please attend either of the two weekly NAMI Connection support groups or the weekly Family support group. Newcomers can use your wisdom and hard-earned experience. Sharing a message of recovery gives the hope they are searching for. Many people tell us that the NAMI motto **"You Are Not Alone"** is the initial feeling they realize at their first meeting. If you are willing to train to be a support group facilitator, let us know!

I want to support NAMI Columbus and NAMI's mission.

Name

Address

CityStateZip

Phone Numbers (do not enter a number if you do not want to be listed in the Membership Directory (members only).)

E-Mail (Please include so we can be green and email you our monthly newsletter.)

Please check type of membership desired:

- ☐ Individual Membership - \$40 Dues
- ☐ Household Membership - \$60 Dues
- ☒ **\$5 Open Door Membership (financial hardship)**
(All dues are for 1 year and are tax-deductible.)

All memberships include NAMI National, NAMI Georgia, and NAMI Columbus membership.

- ☐ I am not joining at this time, but I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____. (Thank you!!!)

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

NAMI National, NAMI Georgia and NAMI Columbus are dedicated to eradicating stigma and improving the lives of persons with mental illnesses thereby also benefiting their friends, family and community. Catch the wave and be a part of change.

NAMI Columbus is an affiliate of NAMI Georgia, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible. Membership includes a subscription to our monthly newsletter and access to immediate news on advocacy, treatment and support issues from our national, state and local organizations.

Please make checks payable to:
NAMI Georgia & enter **"NAMI Columbus membership"** in the memo field.

Mail your check and membership form to:
NAMI Columbus
P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, Georgia 31908

You can also join safely online at www.nami.org/join .