



Columbus

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

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 Columbus, GA 31908
 (706) 320-3755 (leave a message)
 Website: namicolumbusga.org
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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

NAMI Columbus Virtual Support Group Meetings

NAMI Columbus **Family Support Group** meetings are now being held virtually. These meetings are on Monday evenings from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM via Zoom. We're happy to be able to once again offer facilitated support meetings for family members and friends of an individual with a mental health issue.

We hope you will join us for these Monday night FSG Zoom meetings. If you would like a meeting invitation to be sent to you, simply send your email address and cell phone number to:

Teresa O'Donnell, tblankenkbecker@gmail.com or
 Tawana Farley, farleytawana@yahoo.com.

NAMI Columbus **Connection Recovery Support Group** meetings will continue to be held virtually at the following times:

- Saturdays 1:00pm – 2:30pm
- Thursdays 6:30pm – 8:00pm

Email Vanessa Vivas, Vanessa.M.Vivas@gmail.com or Teresa O'Donnell, tblankenkbecker@gmail.com for an invite/link to either group.

Please email at least 24 hours prior to the session.



The NAMI Columbus Mission

We will use **Support**, **Education** and **Advocacy** to throw out lifelines of hope and help to families and consumers seeking recovery. Our vision is to create an effective and active affiliate which delivers what consumers of mental health services and families need. We work to build an area where leaders and citizens work well together to create a caring, compassionate and educated public that realizes mental illness is a biological illness and is not a character flaw or due to bad upbringing.

Upcoming Trainings

June 2021

Jun 5 – NAMI In Our Own Voice Presenter Training

(Candidates must complete an online training session before attending an in-person training)

[In Our Own Voice Presenter Application](#)

August 2021

Aug 7-8 – NAMI Family Support Group Facilitator Training

[Family Support Group Facilitator Application](#)

Aug 7-8 – NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group Facilitator Training

[Connection Support Group Facilitator Application](#)

Aug 14 – NAMI In Our Own Voice Presenter Training

(Candidates must complete an online training session before attending an in-person training)

[In Our Own Voice Presenter Application](#)

Trainings are delivered online through the Zoom platform

Please note that all applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Applicants must be current NAMI members.
2. Applicants must be actively involved in their local NAMI Georgia affiliate.
3. Applicants must be endorsed and approved by a NAMI Georgia Affiliate Board leader. A letter of recommendation from a NAMI affiliate leader must accompany your application.



NAMICon 2021, NAMI's annual national convention, will be held **virtually July 27-28, 2021**.

[REGISTER NOW!](#)

<https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/newreg.php?eventid=585902&reference=Website>

Anyone interested in and impacted by mental health should [attend this event](#) dedicated to uplifting, empowering and informing communities with resources, research, support and programming.

Here are 5 great reasons to attend:

1. **An incredible value*** — NAMICon is only **\$10** for students and peers, **\$15** for NAMI members and **\$25** for non-members.
2. **A convenient, online experience** — Your internet connection gives you access to our event no matter where you are.
3. **Plenary Speaker Joshua A. Gordon, M.D., Ph.D.** — The Director of the National Institute of Mental Health [returns to NAMICon](#) to share an overview of the current challenges and opportunities in mental health.
4. **Programming built around five tracks** — Timely and informative content focused on research, youth and young adults, mental health conditions, community support systems, and addressing mental health disparities.
5. **The largest community gathering of mental health advocates in the U.S.** — Help bring greater awareness and solutions for people living with mental health conditions.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

**YOU ARE
NOT
ALONE**

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

It's essential to prioritize our mental health and stay connected with friends, family and peers. No one should feel alone in their mental health journey or without the resources and support they need.

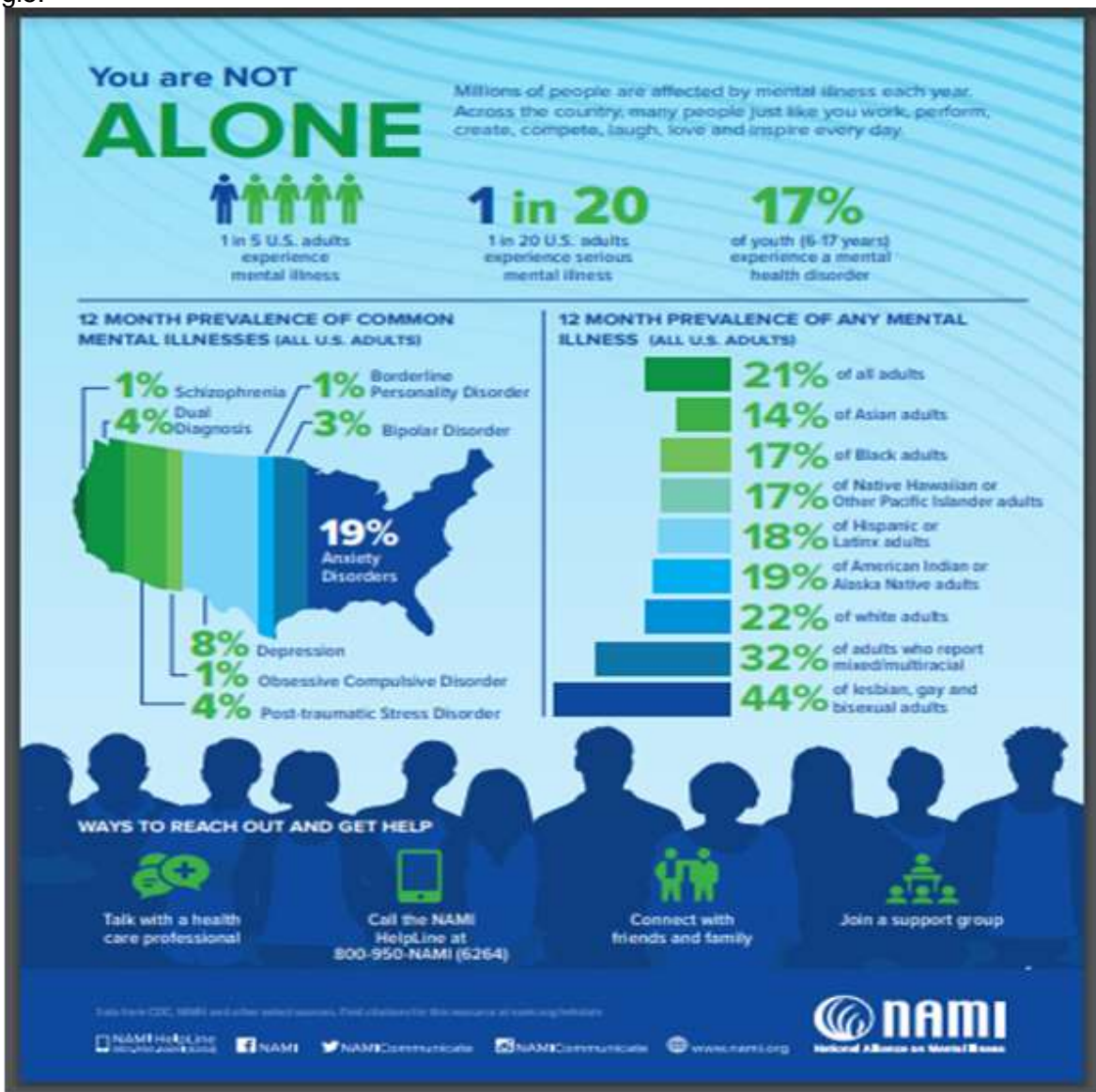
nami.org/mentalhealthmonth

[Download the 2021 Awareness Event Guide](https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Partners-and-Events/YANA2021-Partner-Guide.pdf)

<https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Partners-and-Events/YANA2021-Partner-Guide.pdf>

For 2021's Mental Health Awareness Month NAMI will continue to amplify the message of "You Are Not Alone." We will use this time to focus on the healing value of connecting in safe ways, prioritizing mental health and acknowledging that it's okay to not be okay through NAMI's blog, personal stories, videos, digital toolkits, social media engagements and national events.

Together, we can realize our shared vision of a nation where anyone affected by mental illness can get the appropriate support and quality of care to live healthy, fulfilling lives — a nation where **no one feels alone** in their struggle.





How Understanding My OCD Helped Me Manage It

Apr. 07, 2021
By Elyse Hunt

Until I was diagnosed with [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder](#) (OCD) in my early 30s, I'd always believed the misconception that OCD revolved around being super organized and not wanting to come into contact with germs. Even after my diagnosis, it took me another two years to really understand what OCD is.

When I was 16, I started experiencing symptoms of depression and urges to hurt myself. If I cut or burned myself, the urges and anxiety associated with them would temporarily disappear. If I hurt myself, I experienced instant relief. Because I was a teenager who was self-harming, I was misdiagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD). I remember several doctors telling me, "The self-harm is the only BPD symptom you have, but it doesn't really fit anywhere else."

Around 15 years later, I *finally* received my OCD diagnosis. However, it wasn't until a year or two after that I really looked into what OCD is. I quickly realized I didn't even know the basics. I had no idea that OCD involves a cycle of intrusive thoughts that become obsessive, and compulsions are actions a person takes that relieves those intrusive, obsessive thoughts. I also didn't realize that there are different types of [obsessions](#), outside of germs and keeping things organized, such as contamination, losing control, harm, perfectionism and unwanted sexual thoughts.

Once I was able to better understand OCD, it became clear how my symptoms fit — and it was a relief to fit somewhere. Once I knew what the real problem was, I felt like I had more power to do something about it. I could begin to focus on finding treatment that specifically works for OCD. I also felt less stigma toward myself after learning that having awful, intrusive thoughts is something that happens *to* me and doesn't make me a bad person.

What My OCD Looks Like

My obsessions and compulsions are mostly centered around harm. I go through periods where I'm afraid I may have hurt someone and forgotten about it or that I'm going to fatally harm myself if I don't harm myself in a more minor way first. Every time I describe my obsessions and compulsions to someone, I tell them that I realize none of this is rational, but something's just not wired correctly in my brain, and I can't reason my way out of it in the moment.

I also have obsessions around perfectionism, symmetry and doing things in a certain order. Those aren't as troubling and don't interfere as much with my daily life (most of the time) as the harm obsessions do.

While my OCD can greatly interrupt my life at times, it's not all bad. I told my last therapist that I use my OCD for good at work, almost like it's a super power. The obsessions about perfectionism and doing things in a certain order mean that my time management skills are on point. I schedule the tasks I need to do each day and set reminders for those tasks. This helped alleviate obsessive fears about forgetting to do something. At work, I'm super productive and reliable and my colleagues seem to appreciate that.

My house is very clean and uncluttered. I can invite friends to drop by whenever they'd like without having to scramble to shove things into a closet or move things so they have a place to sit. I keep track of my friends' and family members' birthdays so I can be sure to send them something or wish them a happy birthday (I'm one of the few people under 40 without a social media account). I budget and keep track of every penny that comes in and goes out. By doing that, I was able to pay off all my debt two years ago and buy my first home last year.

Some days I have to get dressed three times because I did it out of order the first time and the second time I get dressed cancels out the first. Despite this, I try to focus on the positives and use my "OCD powers" for good.

What Helps Me

When I was first researching OCD and harm obsessions, one of the most helpful [videos](#) I watched featured Steven Phillipson, Ph.D., an expert in OCD. He was saying that people who experience harm obsessions fear that just by having these disturbing, intrusive thoughts, they believe they have a greater likelihood of acting on these violent thoughts. He then went on to say, "I tell persons on a regular basis that I would leave them in a room with a knife and my children for a weekend, and I would be more concerned about their safety than I would my children's safety."

Even after hearing this, I still occasionally have doubts about what having these thoughts says about me as a person. Whenever I have these doubts, I go back and watch Dr. Phillipson's video again. Hearing an expert say that he would trust his children around someone who has harm obsessions reassures me that I'm not going to suddenly become a dangerous person.

Learning more about OCD, and harm obsessions in particular, has been helpful for me. Other things that have helped are:

- Seeing a therapist on a weekly basis.
- Reading other people's stories about their experiences with harm obsessions.
- I work in web production, so thinking about these intrusive thoughts as bugs or glitches that are going on in my brain brings me some relief.
- I view the intrusive thoughts as something that's happening *to* me, not thoughts that are coming *from* me. Not in the sense that I feel helpless or that I have no control, but there's relief in knowing that these thoughts aren't something I'm willingly or consciously choosing to think about.
- Sticking to my routines. I do best when my days are structured and I know what to expect.
- When things don't go as planned, I try to remember that I can start over the next day. That helps me not get stuck on being upset over things not happening the way I expected them to.

My self-harm has become very infrequent in the years since I've been diagnosed with OCD. Once I knew what I was dealing with and understood why I was having these thoughts, what the self-harm really was (compulsive behaviors) and how to deal with them in a healthier way, things got easier to manage.

If you live with OCD, I encourage you to keep going, even on the hardest days. Remember that we can start fresh the next day and things can and do get better.



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.

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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!!!)

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 .