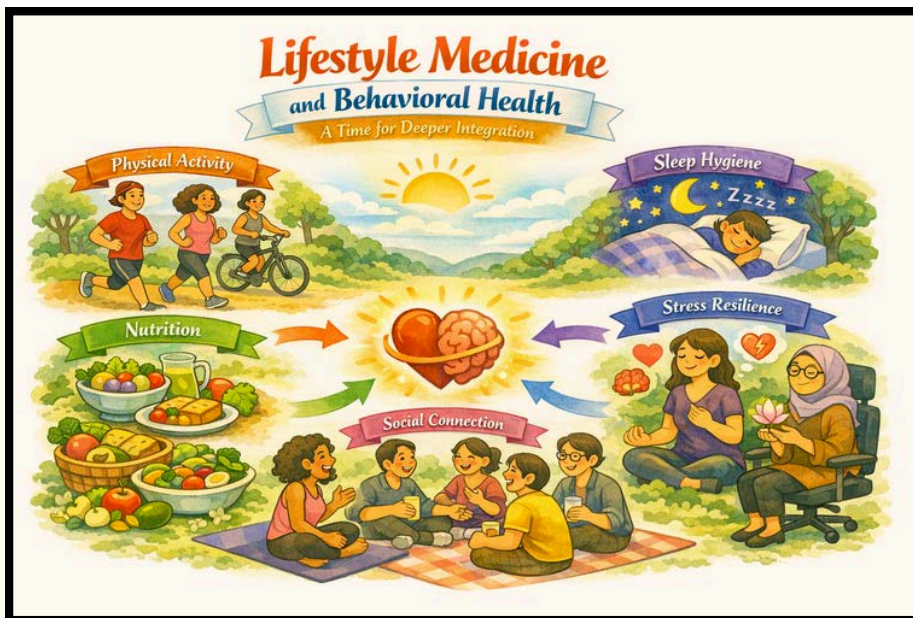


NEWSLETTER


nami | **Columbus**
 National Alliance on Mental Illness


The U.S. faces a growing mental health crisis marked by rising prevalence, limited treatment outcomes, and mounting social stressors. Integrating lifestyle medicine with behavioral health offers a more comprehensive approach. Nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress resilience, social connection, and reduced substance use are biologically active interventions that influence neuroplasticity and emotional regulation. Embedding these practices into assessment, psychotherapy, and community care can strengthen resilience, improve outcomes, and advance whole-person mental health for individuals and communities.

In this Issue

- Leadership Corner**
- Connecting with the Community**
- Upcoming Events**
- Facilitator Spotlight**
- Upcoming NAMI GA Training**

NAMI Columbus Support Groups

Ways to Support

Resources Page

To read more about Lifestyle Medicine
[Click Here](#)

NAMI Columbus Leadership Corner

Dear NAMI Columbus Community,

As we step into a new season, I want to share my gratitude for each of you — our members, families, supporters, and neighbors who continue to show up for yourselves and for one another. Whether you've been part of NAMI for years or are just beginning to explore what we offer, you are an important part of this community. Your presence, your story, and your wellbeing matter.

In recent months, we've seen how powerful it is when people come together with honesty, courage, and compassion. Mental health journeys are rarely simple, and no one should have to navigate them alone. At NAMI Columbus, we work to create spaces where people feel seen, supported, and understood — places where hope can take root even on difficult days.

As your Outreach Coordinator, my goal is to help more individuals and families discover these resources and feel welcomed from the start. If you know someone who might benefit from a support group, an education program, or simply a reminder that they're not alone, I encourage you to share our name.

Thank you for being part of this community. Together, we are building something meaningful — a network of understanding, resilience, and shared humanity.

With warmth and appreciation,

**~ Phil Tirado
Outreach Coordinator**

Connecting with the Columbus, GA Community

February 2026

Communities of Transformation

First Presbyterian Church
3310 10th Ct
Phenix City, AL



Kristine Wells with Community Members

Upcoming NAMI Events



For more information email the NAMICON Planning Team at meetings@nami.org.

NAMICON brings dynamic and important voices together to improve mental health for all through mental health awareness, education and advocacy.

It's where personal journeys are celebrated, positive change takes root, and new connections and community cultivate a safe space, fostering support, hope, and healing.

Facilitator Spotlight

Kristine Walls

Kristine first connected with NAMI in 1996 after being discharged from a mental health inpatient program. A NAMI Connection meeting helped her feel understood and reminded her that she was not alone. That experience inspired years of service as a Connection Support Group Leader, In Our Own Voice presenter, and Peer-to-Peer mentor, eventually earning her recognition as the 2007 NAMI Georgia's P2P Mentor of the Year and a seat on the NAMI Columbus Board of Directors.

After taking time away for self-care, she returned with renewed commitment. She now serves as a Connection Mentor and member of the Leadership Team and helped bring back in-person Connection groups after COVID-19.

One of her most meaningful traditions is preparing Christmas gift bags for patients at West Central Georgia Regional Hospital—an effort that has grown into a NAMI Columbus initiative supporting all 200 patients each holiday season.

Outside of NAMI, she enjoys water aerobics at the Y, meals with friends, early-morning stargazing, and trips to the beach. Her ideal self-care day includes a good lunch, a fresh haircut, and getting her nails done.



If you are interested in becoming a Facilitator:

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.

Upcoming NAMI Training

NAMI Family Support Group Facilitator - June 26th - 27th, 2026, 9AM - 5PM

NAMI Connections Support Group Facilitator - April 25th - 26th, 2026 9AM-5PM

NAMI Ending the Silence Presenter Training - June 11th, 2026 9AM-5PM

NAMI In Our Own Voice Presenter Training - June 20th, 2026 9AM-5PM

Training and Support For Community Responders and Law Enforcement

If you are interested in any of the above training, visit the NAMI GA Program Leader page at [NAMI GA Program Leader](#)

For questions, contact:

E-mail: programsteam@namiga.org

NAMI - Columbus Connections Support Groups

In-Person Meetings

Every Tuesday

Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

Location: First Presbyterian Church

1100 First Ave – Columbus, GA

Online Meetings via Zoom

Every Saturday

Time: 1:00pm-2:30pm

Request Link to Join

Contact Vanessa.m.vivas@gmail.com

NAMI - Columbus Family Support Groups

Online Meetings via Zoom

1st Monday of Every Month / Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

Request Link to Join / Contact darlene.akom@gmail.com

NAMI would like to hear from you on how are support groups are serving the community. Please take a moment and provide some feedback on our Signature Programs:

[Click here](#) to share Connections Support Group Feedback

[Click here](#) to share Family Support Group Feedback

Foods That Cause Anxiety

Foods That Cause Anxiety

1. Fruit juice
2. Soda
3. Candy
4. Caffeine
5. Processed foods
6. Food additives
7. Sugar alternatives
8. White breads
9. Energy drinks
10. Alcohol



CHOOSING therapy

How Are Nutrition & Mental Health Linked?

Eating foods that are satisfying and good for our body, while practicing mindful and intuitive eating, can help with overall mental and physical health.

Poor nutrition can be a factor for those experiencing a consistent low mood. Many find that a healthy diet is best when used in combination with therapy and medication.

For more information [Click here.](#)

Best Foods for Depression

— Nourish Your Mind and Body —



- Omega-3 Rich Foods**
Supports brain health
- Leafy Greens**
High in folate & antioxidants
- Whole Grains**
Balances blood sugar
- Berries**
Rich in antioxidants
- Probiotic Foods**
Boosts gut health
- Dark Chocolate**
Enhances mood

Mood-Boosting Nutrients

- Vitamin D
- B Vitamins
- Mg Magnesium
- Zn Zinc

Eat Well, Feel Better

Ways to Support NAMI Columbus

Join NAMI @ [NAMI.org](https://nami.org).

There Are Two Ways To Become A Part Of NAMI Today:

- Create a free NAMI.org account to start connecting with NAMI and to get all the latest updates.
- 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
- Make sure to choose NAMI - Columbus as your affiliate.

Local Resources

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

NAMI - Columbus

(706) 320-3755 (leave a message)

Website: namicolumbusga.org

E-mail: info@namicolumbusga.org

