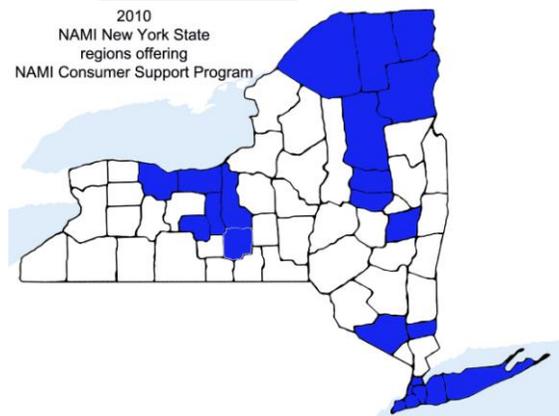
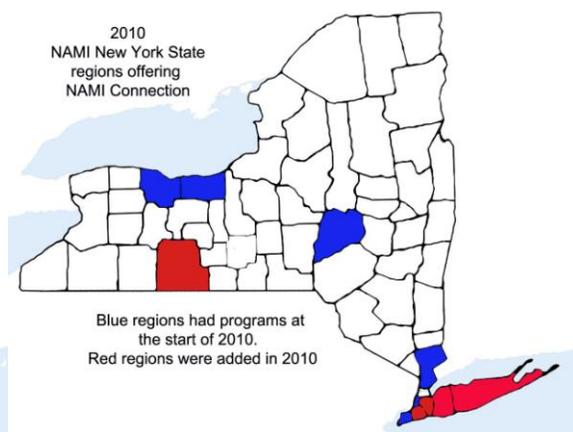
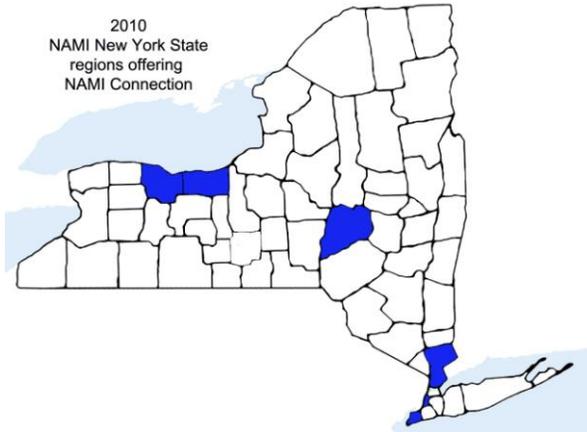


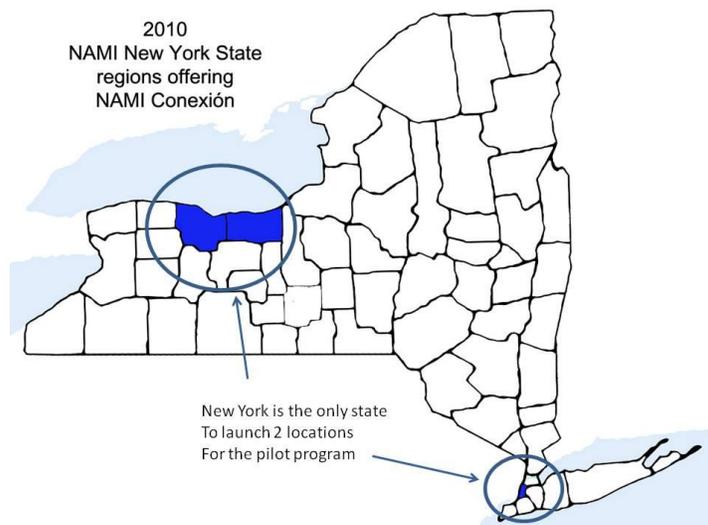
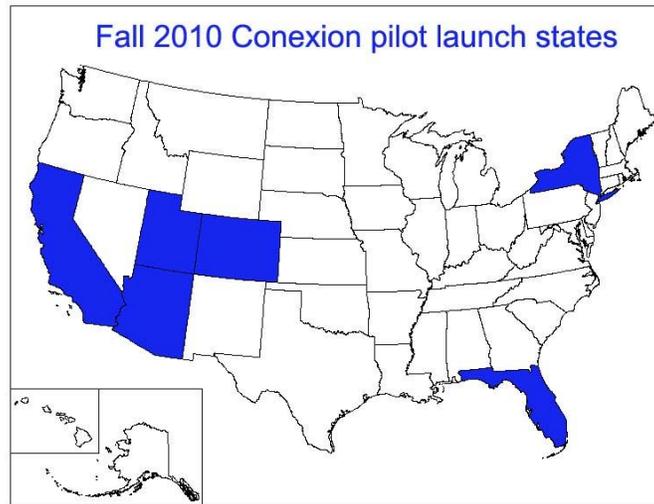


The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

## Connection / Conexión



## Conexión



Conexión is the Spanish version of the NAMI Signature program Connection. New York is one of 6 states to launch the program in 2010.

## **NAMI Education, Training, and Peer Support Center Team**

*Lynne Saunders*, Director of Field Services (with an emphasis on family and Veterans programs)

*Cynthia Evans*, Director of Field Services (with an emphasis on consumer programs)

Lynne and Cynthia will focus on technical assistance and support to the field across all programs, including continuing education in program leadership and management.

*Teri Brister*, Director of Training (with an emphasis on family, child and adolescent programs)

*Sarah O'Brien*, Director of Training (with an emphasis on consumer programs)

Teri and Sarah will focus on training, program content and updates, and will be responsible for repurposing existing programs into virtual formats.

*Candita Sabavala*, Departmental Project Director

Candita will work with departmental directors and staff to provide project oversight and direct supervision of support staff to ensure all departmental deliverables are met.

*Maura Bulger and Carmen Argueta* will continue as our indispensable departmental Coordinators, responsible for support functions across programs, with Carmen taking on the additional role of Spanish Language Specialist. In their support role as departmental assistants, *Blakelee Sharpe* will be in charge of document management, and *Marshall Epstein* will manage the demanding task of order fulfillment for all programs.

## Cumulative Program Data as of June 2010

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### NAMI Connection: Launched in 2007

- States now in the program: 45
- Trained support group facilitators on the state level: 2,200+
- Foreign countries now in program: none
- State and National Trainers: 130+
- Active Support Groups: nearly 500

NAMI NYS Connection program has taken advantage of the grant from NAMI National for State Trainers. We have 4 State Trainers (1 Metro NYC, 1 Otsego, 2 Rochester) in addition to having a National Trainer who moved into New York (Metro NYC).

NAMI NYS held 2 refresher training and 2 full trainings for the Connection program in Metro NYC and Rochester areas.

NAMI NYS now has 10 groups statewide in addition to the Spanish language version Conexión two pilot locations. 2010 reports indicated 1069 attendees with 2009 had 413. The reported data indicates a 158% increase in attendees. With the increased trainings in 2010 this number is expected to grow substantially in 2011. This growth is expected to be in the 40% range in 2011. Some conversion from Consumer support model to Connection is expected in 2011.

Conexión is the Spanish version of the NAMI Signature program Connection. New York is one of 6 states to launch the program and is the only state to launch it in 2 locations: NAMI Rochester and NAMI East Flatbush. With the multilingual resources in New York State we anticipate expansion in the Metro NY region in 2011 to be 1 or 2 new locations (50%-100% growth).

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## NAMI PEER PROGRAMS: BASIC PRINCIPLES

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NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program  
NAMI Provider Education Program  
NAMI Family Support Group Facilitator Skill Training Program  
NAMI Peer-to-Peer Recovery Education Course  
NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group  
NAMI In Our Own Voice  
NAMI Basics

- ◆ Serious and persistent mental illness is a traumatic event for families and consumers alike, and must be understood in terms of this fundamental clinical perspective.
- ◆ Families and consumers adjust to this traumatic experience over time in a predictable process of coming to terms with profound dislocation in their lives.
- ◆ In each stage of adaptation, their emotional responses reflect a natural reaction to this process of adjustment, but their needs will differ in each stage.
- ◆ Family/consumer strength, persistence and heroism in the face of this overwhelming human challenge must be recognized and validated.
- ◆ Recovery and the reconstruction of personal priorities must be the goal of treatment
- ◆ Because of their lived experience, family members and consumers make ideal teachers, and peer-directed education courses provide a dimension of emotional healing not available in any other setting.
- ◆ Peer-directed educational and support programs must be included as an integral part of mental health services and be paid for by mental health systems.

*Evidence from our Spanish classes indicates that because these basic principles underlie the curriculum, the beneficial impact of Family-to-Family is transcultural.*



### What is NAMI Connection?

The NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group Program is a peer-based, mutual support group program for any adult living with a mental illness. Connection groups provide a place for individuals who have in common the experience of living with mental illness, to share experiences and use them as learning opportunities. Groups are a safe space to confront the challenges that all consumers face, regardless of diagnosis

Each group:

- Meets weekly for 90 minutes
- Is offered free of charge to NAMI members and non-members alike
- Follows a flexible structure without an educational format
- Does not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies

All groups are **confidential** - participants can share as much or as little personal information as they wish.

Connection groups maintain a positive atmosphere through **sincere, uncritical acceptance** modeled by the facilitators, the guideline to “keep it in the here and now,” and the invitation for group members to share “what has worked” for them. These groups provide a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope.

Connection groups should add to, and not replace, the treatment plans determined by individuals and their mental health care provider.

The vision of the NAMI Connection program is that every person in this country who lives with a mental illness will have, within reasonable traveling distance, a Connection group to attend.

### Who Are NAMI Connection Facilitators?

Connection groups are led by **two trained facilitators** who are in recovery themselves and are at a point where they want to “give back” to others. They understand the daily challenges of living with a mental illness and can offer encouragement and support. Using structures and processes, the facilitators’ responsibility is to keep the group talking. Facilitators are trained to lead, but not to instruct or do therapy.

Connection facilitators attend an intense two or three day training designed to help them develop the skills they need to facilitate a Connection Group.

Individuals wishing to become volunteer facilitators apply to be selected to attend trainings. All applicants are interviewed using a screening tool specially developed for Connection applicants. Those selected to attend receive skill training in the Connection model. Certified facilitators commit to a minimum of one year of service facilitating, in pairs as leaders, weekly 90 minute groups and to uphold the fidelity of the Connection model. Groups can have more than two facilitators who can share responsibilities. Facilitators need to be, or become, NAMI members.

# CONNECTION TESTIMONIALS

I don't know where I'd be without NAMI Connection; it literally saved my life. I'm so grateful for my group and now I just want to share this program with everyone living with a mental illness.

It is such a blessed relief to meet so many wonderful people who are intelligent and capable, while dealing with a mental illness. All the facilitators have been so fabulous! Thank you so much for this program and giving me hope and the vision of a

NAMI Connection has enabled me to take a good look at my illness and see that I am not alone. The program has given me additional tools to not only accept my illness, but to help others along the way.

NAMI Connection has helped not only me, but also my family, to accept my mental illness.

If just one word were to be used to describe NAMI Connection, that word would be lifesaver; but otherwise NAMI Connection is a word and meaning of its own, complete with a heart that beats by the many people that it has helped.

The Connection group is the best one because people can solve problems there. It isn't just a bunch of sad stories; people are coming up with solutions and stuff to do for the next week. One of our group attendees is taking her meds and getting herself to her counselor and is just about able to go back to her career in great part due to Connection.

Getting involved with NAMI Connection has helped me to get involved with other people who share the same issues as I do, which means I've made some really good friends. It has also helped me to become more of an advocate for myself in dealing with illness and has helped me to start taking better care of myself.

I am not alone! There is a place where people understand me, are there to help me, and I feel better about myself when I help someone else. I can get involved in NAMI Connection and make a difference!

NAMI Connection has broadened my view of the entire support group process. I enjoy referring to the posters because this provides a structure which we all know we have in common. I also gain confidence in myself with each group I co-facilitate. Thank you NAMI Connection for providing a supportive sanctuary for our communities!

I am grateful every day for the opportunity to facilitate this group because it has given me a new positivity that I hadn't had for a very long time.

NAMI Connection has made me realize that I can truly feel comfortable around my peers, and I really needed that feeling!

When I first separated from my wife I thought I was going to be alone. I was suffering from mental illness and I had no friends or relatives who could truly support me. Then I found the NAMI Connection support group. During the worst time of my life I had people to talk to who completely understood my illness and my problems. I made new friends and had something to look forward to all week. I believe that surrounding myself with people who cared and understood is what got me through my divorce. Now I am in full recovery rebuilding my life and relationships. I was