



The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

Hearts & Minds

What Is Hearts & Minds?

The NAMI Hearts & Minds program is an online, interactive, educational initiative promoting the idea of wellness in both mind and body. Wellness is an ongoing process of learning how to make choices that support a more successful, healthy life.

Engaging in a wellness effort can make a huge difference in the quality of your life. One study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, showed that taking the wellness approach can result in a 17 percent decline in total medical visits and a 35 percent decline in medical visits for minor illnesses.

Wellness is about the individual; you can decide what parts of your life you would like to change and you can determine your own success.

Increased Heart Disease Risk for People with Mental Illness

People living with mental illness are often at higher risk for heart disease and much of that risk is *preventable*.

[People living with mental illness are more likely to have classic heart-risk factors](#), such as cigarette smoking, obesity, diabetes, elevated cholesterol and hypertension (high blood pressure), some of which can be compounded by some antipsychotic medications.

Metabolic Syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes

America is having an epidemic of diabetes according to the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Unfortunately, the risk is greater for people living with mental illness, especially those taking second-generation [atypical antipsychotic medications \(SGAs\)](#). Another issue to be aware of is [metabolic syndrome](#), a condition that can be a precursor to [diabetes](#).

FAQ About Wellness and Mental Illness

The more you know, the more you can increase your odds of living a long and full life. Knowledge is power and even small changes in your choices can help improve your life. Have questions or concerns?

Take a look at [frequently asked questions](#) answered by NAMI Medical Director Ken Duckworth, M.D.

Questions?

If you need more information on any of the wellness topics here at the Hearts & Minds Web site or have any questions, please send an e-mail to heartsandminds@nami.org.

Downloads

[Metabolic Syndrome and Diabetes Fact Sheet](#) (PDF)

[Hearts and Minds: A Roadmap to Wellness for Individuals Living with Mental Illness](#)
(PDF)

[More downloads and resources](#)

[Native American wellness resources](#)

<http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=Resources195>

video

<http://www.youtube.com/user/NAMIVideo#p/u/4/bVhP8SwmNds>

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.

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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.