About Mental Illness

Mental illness is a term used for a group of disorders causing severe disturbances in thinking, feeling, sensing, and relating that can result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life. Mental illness can affect persons of any age, sex, race, religion, social, and economic background.

Mental illness affects 20% of Americans and is more common than cancer, diabetes, or heart disease. Yet less than one third seek treatment because of stigma or lack of affordable, accessible, effective services.

The number of children who have mental disorders is estimated to be 18 million. 50% of children with a serious mental illness drop out of school. A large percentage of those who drop out, end up in juvenile detention centers.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 24 and the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. A majority of the 30,000 Americans who commit suicide each year are believed to suffer from a mental illness.

Nearly one-third of the nation’s estimated 600,000 homeless individuals are believed to be adults with mental illness.

Other NAMI NJ Programs

Family-to-Family Education Program: A free 12-week course for family caregivers of individuals with severe mental illnesses.

Visions for Tomorrow: A free 8-week workshop for primary caregivers of children and adolescents with brain disorders.

In Our Own Voice, Living with Mental Illness: A powerful and inspiring community outreach presentation of hope by recovering consumers.

Law Enforcement Education Program: Designed for law enforcement officials on recognizing symptoms of mental illness and handling crisis situations.

Professional Education: Education program for mental health service providers co-taught by consumers, professionals and family members.

Multicultural Programs: Education and support programs providing outreach to Hispanic, Asian and other communities.

Mental Illness Awareness Programs: Educational activities designed to overcome stigma and increase understanding about mental illness.

Breaking the Silence: Separate age-appropriate programs designed to educate elementary, middle, and high school-age children about mental illness.

NAMI NEW JERSEY “EDUCATING the EDUCATORS”

A program designed to help educators understand children with biologically based mental illness.

“Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.”

- Vincent Van Gogh
About the Program

“Educating the Educators” is a program developed by NAMI NEW JERSEY (NAMI NJ) to enlighten/inform educators about mental illness and present practical tools to help motivate children with social and emotional disorders. Most children with these disorders are bright and creative. Many are gifted with extraordinary talents waiting to be explored. But they are often hindered by the exhaustion of the constant struggle to cope with the effects of their disorder.

This program offers insights into the magnitude of their courageous struggle and offers resources for educators to share with co-workers, families, and students to help every child stay in school and reach their full potential.

Come share their journey and open your horizons to a whole new appreciation for the road they walk and the role you can play in positively shaping their lives.

Part I: Biological Nature of Mental Illness

Mental illnesses are biological brain disorders. They are not caused by poor parenting skills, or weaknesses of character. Learn the facts and the fiction of childhood-onset mental illness.

Part II: Family Perspective

Mental illness has a devastating effect on the child as well as the family. Most families are very devoted and work tirelessly to help their seriously ill children understand, cope, and persevere in spite of everyday challenges. Experience a walk in their shoes.

Part III: Where Do We Go From Here?

Learn what resources/tools are available to the school, the students, and to the families that will lead to a more enriching experience for everyone involved in guiding each child towards a successful future.

For more information on “Educating the Educators” and to schedule a presentation, please contact Lorrie Baumann, Director of School Education Programs, at (908) 685-0206 or schoolprograms@naminj.org.

NAMI NEW JERSEY

NAMI NJ is a state affiliate of NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness, a national grassroots, non-profit organization with over 220,000 members nationwide dedicated to fighting the devastating effects of mental illness on individuals and families. NAMI NJ has local affiliates throughout NJ.

One in five is affected by severe and persistent mental illness. No segment of our society is immune.

Famous People Affected by Mental Illness

Abraham Lincoln  Eugene O’Neill
Winston Churchill  Ernest Hemingway
Vincent Van Gogh  Isaac Newton
Terry Bradshaw  Jane Pauley
Patty Duke  Ludwig Von Beethoven
Sylvia Plath  Janis Joplin
Vivian Leigh  Edna St. Vincent Millay
Emily Dickinson  Agatha Christy
Marilyn Monroe  John Nash

50% of children with a Serious Emotional Disorder (SED) drop out of school. (President’s New Freedom Commission Report on Mental Health, 2003). We want children to learn and grow up to be productive members of society. There are no magic answers to making that happen, especially for kids facing the constant challenges of living with a brain disorder.