



Boulder County

Mission Statement

To provide support, education and advocacy for persons with mental illness and their families. To promote better quality of care, rights and interest of citizens with mental illness, particularly of those who cannot speak for themselves, and to advocate policies at the local, state and national levels to accomplish these objectives. To help families and friends of persons with mental illness by providing emotional support, education and information.

Board of Directors

President - Greg Coleman

Treasurer - Nancy Coleman

Program Director - Helen Todd

Board Member - Phoebe Norton

Board Member - Barbara Hancock

If you are interested in becoming a board member of NAMI Boulder County, please contact us at 303-443-4591.



President's Corner

Greetings,

Our annual meeting proved to be a great success. Barbara Hancock, Phoebe Norton and Helen Todd were elected to the Board. All participated in the potluck dinner while enjoying the informative presentation of one of NAMI's new signature programs; Ending the Silence. Allison Greenstein and Stacey Bennett presented the program.

"NAMI Ending the Silence" is a national mental health education program for high school students, based on real-life experiences "NAMI Ending the Silence" features individuals and family members whose lives have been affected by mental illness, who visit high schools to provide "real-life" perspectives based on personal experiences.

Free 50-minute presentations are designed to complement health, science or psychology classes and are typically presented in the freshman or sophomore year of high school. Each trained presentation team includes a young adult in recovery.

Approximately 20% of youth ages 13 to 18 experience mental illness in any given year. About 50% of mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.

"NAMI Ending the Silence will raise awareness about mental illness and promote dialogue. It will encourage students to take care of themselves and each other," said NAMI Executive Director Michael Fitzpatrick.

"The program provides real faces and real-life stories that help high school students learn more effectively. Students get a rare opportunity to ask questions about mental illness that are too often surrounded by silence. Ultimately, NAMI's goal is to help save lives."

Ending the Silence is one of many programs that NAMI Boulder County has presented at its monthly meetings.

We encourage you to watch for upcoming announcements regarding monthly topics that are of interest to the Mental Health community. We are excited to announce upcoming Family to Family and Basics classes in the fall. Please see the newsflash in this newsletter.

NAMI Colorado will hold the NAMI Annual Conference in October and plans to have a number of current topics presented by a host of guest speakers. NAMI will send a Save the Date announcement as soon as the location is identified. If you or your loved ones need assistance, please call our office at 303-443-4591.



Greg C. Coleman, President

Newsflash!

New Classes Starting in September

Starting in **September**, we will be offering 3 new classes in Boulder, Broomfield and Longmont. **Contact Helen at 303.601.4300 or htodd@namibouldercounty.org** to register.

NAMI Basics will be held in Boulder starting on Tuesday, September 19 and will meet weekly from 6-9 pm through October 24. NAMI Basics is a free, six-session program designed for parents and caregivers of children and teenagers with emotional and behavioral difficulties. NAMI Basics helps parents and caregivers to understand the illnesses that are causing those behavioral difficulties, and the critical role families play in the treatment of those illnesses. “The course is inclusive of almost all aspects of family and child resources. I could have spent a lifetime getting all this information on my own. I feel supported, strong and ready to go forward.”

NAMI Family-to-Family will be held in Broomfield and Longmont on Sundays from 5:30-8:30 pm, beginning on Sept 17. NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session education program for family, partners, friends and significant others of adults living with mental illness. The course is designed to help all family members understand and support their loved one living with mental illness, while maintaining their own well-being. The course includes information on illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression and other mental health conditions. “This course helped me understand mental illness and communicate more effectively with my daughter, and I now realize that I am not alone in this.”

Thousands of families describe these classes as life-changing. They are taught by trained teachers who know what it is like to have a loved one living with mental illness.

If you are someone who is struggling with a child, a teenager or an adult with mental health issues, or if you know someone who is, **please contact Helen Todd at 303.601.4300 or htodd@namibouldercounty.org**. If the dates of the courses do not work with your schedule, contact Helen.

Welcome to Our New Family-to-Family Facilitators!

Bob Yudnich

Hello, my name is Bob and I am a new instructor with the Family-to-Family NAMI Classes. My wife Karen has been teaching Family-to-Family classes for 5 years with Nancy Coleman. I am a third generation Coloradan growing up in Pueblo.

My family has a long history with mental illness on my father's side. My father had schizophrenia. His brother was admitted into the Colorado State Hospital because of mental illness. I had a cousin who was treated for mental illness. I also have a son who is diagnosed with schizo-affective disorder and I personally suffered with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) most of my adult life.

Growing up, nobody in my family talked about mental illness. It was a combination of not knowing about these diseases and also trying to keep this "illness" a secret. Personally, I thought everybody was upset and miserable all the time. It didn't occur to me for many years that I had a brain chemistry problem, and it took me many years more to finally get on the proper medicines and dietary restrictions to control the illness.

It has been a long and painful journey not only for me but also for my family, but we have all made positive gains learning about our brain disorders, and with medicine and coping skills, our quality of life has significantly increased. If I can enlighten families who are struggling with mental illness through education and give them some tools to help them, then my goal of helping families struggling with mental illness will be a success.

Glen Gray

My name is Glen, and I'm a new instructor for Family to Family NAMI. I was invited to attend a class because my wife of 40 years was diagnosed with bipolar schizo-affective disorder after a suicide attempt. Up to that point we had lived a roller coaster life financially and emotionally. After the suicide attempt she was institutionalized. We received great help, and education about the disorder. She was put on meds, but wouldn't take them, or follow psychiatric help. Again, a roller coaster life.

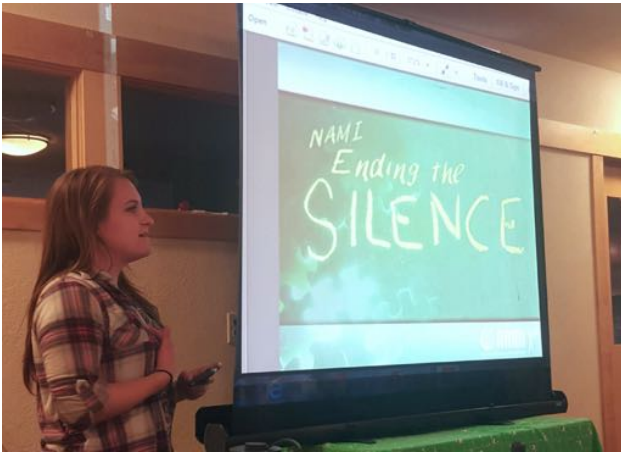
After going through the NAMI course, I was equipped to help educate our family, and my wife. I was able to present her disorder with science and facts. Miraculously, she would read some of the material, and accepted by educated facts that she was indeed bipolar. She accepted she had a brain disorder which was the cause of her episodes and darkness. Miracle!

Through the course work, I met families that were broken; alone in their family member's mental illness. It was heart breaking, but being in a group of people going through similar problems, and going through the NAMI material gave me hope. It was the encouragement, and the support of each other during class that inspired me to become an instructor.

Recently my wife left me and moved to the mountains. We are legally separated, but she is doing well in her mountain environment. We are still working on life because it's always evolving in dealing with mental illness.

We have 3 kids and 8 amazing grandkids. We are just taking one moment at a time in this journey with mental illness.

NAMI is an organization that will educate you and give you tools to cope, and will bring HOPE back into your life.



Bring “Ending the Silence” to Your Community

If you are interested in becoming a presenter for the Ending the Silence program, **contact Helen Todd @htodd@namibouldercounty.org**

- 1 in 5 kids experiences a mental health condition; only 20% of them actually get help
- About 50% of students ages 14+ with a mental health condition will drop out of school
- Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds
- The earlier the better: early identification and intervention provide better outcomes

“Ending the Silence” Presentation at Boulder County Meeting on 6/14/17

The highlight of the NAMI Boulder County annual meeting was a presentation of the new NAMI initiative, “Ending the Silence,” a 50-minute educational program about mental illness that is designed for high school students. The two presenters, one of whom was a young adult, both had lived experience of mental illness and told their stories as a part of the program.

The presentation consisted of personal stories, educational slides, videos, and discussion. The videos in the program were made by students and the “actors” in the videos were all real young people telling of their real experiences. The program included:

- Signs and symptoms of mental illness
- Personal perspectives on the experience of living with mental illness
- Ways to seek help for themselves or a friend
- Opportunity for discussion
- Statistics of how mental illness affects youth
- Recovery and coping strategies
- Ways to help reduce stigma
- Resource handouts

The presenters began by noting that mental illness can affect anyone, that it is a medical illness like any physical illness, and that it is common and treatable. They ask how many in the audience have, or know someone who has, a mental illness. In the high school classes, between 1/3 to 1/2 of the students raise their hands. Educational information was combined with videos of individual students speaking briefly about what it feels like to have a mental illness.

Throughout the program the presenters asked questions that drew the members of the audience into the conversation. “What is stigma?” “What should you do if you think you might be suffering from a mental illness?” “What should you do if you have a friend who might be suffering from a mental illness?” “What should you do if you think someone might be suicidal?” “What are some negative coping skills that increase symptoms?” “What are some positive coping skills that decrease symptoms?” “What can you do to help reduce stigma?”

The program ended with time for questions from the audience. Audience members received a detailed handout on “How to Help a Friend” and another with descriptions of eleven mental illnesses. The presenters said that feedback from student audiences has been positive, with themes like, “Thank you, I learned a lot,” “I was curious,” “Glad someone is talking about it,” “I have a friend...,” “I found it personally relevant,” “I don’t feel so alone anymore.”

NAMI Support & Education Programs

Recovery is a journey, and there is hope

NAMI CLASSES IN BOULDER COUNTY

NEW CLASSES STARTING IN SEPTEMBER!
REGISTER NOW!

Questions about our free classes? Want to sign up?
Contact **Helen Todd** at helentodd.nami@gmail.com or
303.601.4330.

NAMI Basics is a free, 6-week education program for parents and family caregivers of children and teens who are experiencing symptoms of a mental illness or have already been diagnosed. You'll learn the facts about mental health conditions and how best to support your child at home, at school and when they're getting medical care. <https://www.nami.org/basics>.

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people living with mental illness. The group setting provides mutual support and shared positive impact—you can experience compassion and reinforcement from people who understand your situation. This program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to an individual living with a mental health condition. <https://www.nami.org/f2f>

NAMI Basics and **Family-to-Family** classes are taught by NAMI-trained facilitators who have been there, and includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises. These programs provide critical information and strategies for taking care of the person you love, taking care of yourself and you'll come to discover that you're not alone. Recovery is a journey, and there is hope.

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER

Longmont/Firestone Longs Peak Bipolar Support and Recovery Group (DBSA) Meets Wednesdays 6-8pm at the Longmont Perkins restaurant. Second Wednesday of the month in Firestone at Carbon Valley Library. Contact Laurie for more information, 303-810-9629, DBSALongspeak@gmail.com.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Meets in Boulder and Broomfield, weekly peer-only meetings and one friends and family meeting per month. www.boulderdbsa.com. Contact for more information, 720-443-2849, boulderdbsa@gmail.com.

The Sutherland Bipolar Center The Sutherland Seminar Series is an 8-part educational series about bipolar disorder. Meets Mondays in Longmont, 6:30-8:30. Also available as an audio download! For more information, call 303-492-5680 or visit www.rdsfoundation.org.

SUICIDE SURVIVORS

Free support group for family and friends of someone who has died from suicide. Longmont Senior Center, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Contact is Betsy Owens. Call 970-978-6802.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Adult OCD Support Group Support for people with OCD, their families and friends. First and third Monday, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Alfalfa's Market Community Room, 1651 Broadway, Boulder, Contact Brent, 303-422-9704.

Teen OCD Support Group For teens with OCD ages 12-19. First Wednesday of the month, 6:00-8:00. Call 303-815-8076 or email lilyangelina44@gmail.com.

International OCD Foundation
<https://iocdf.org/>

FAITH-BASED SUPPORT GROUPS

Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health and Wellness for persons in recovery and family members, 2nd and 4th Monday, every month throughout the year, 7:00-8:30 p.m. First Congregational Church, Boulder. Call 702-839-4139 or email anne.weiher@gmail.com

"Shift" groups every Friday night at Flatirons Community Church. Learn more at www.flatironschurch.com/shift

Mental Health Support Groups are offered at Immaculate Conception in Lafayette. Two support groups are available: one for those with lived experience of mental illness and another for family and friends. All are welcome. First and third Wednesday of the month, 7:00pm-8:30p. 715 Cabrini Dr., Lafayette. Please call Helen at 303-601-4330 or email htodd@namibouldercounty.org for more information.

OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS

Social Phobics Anonymous
www.healsocialanxiety.com

"Soft Voices" Drop-In Center, Longmont
Resource and friendship center for adults with mental illness, Tuesday – Friday afternoons 1:00 pm to 3pm; crafts on Wed afternoons; art on Fridays and music once a month usually on the 3rd Thursday of the month, 5th & Kimbark. Contact Gil at 303-776-0410.

Join the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Your dues include membership in NAMI National, NAMI Colorado and NAMI Boulder County. You will get the newsletters published by NAMI National and NAMI Boulder County. If it is more convenient for you, you can join online at www.nami.org using a credit card.

- \$40 per year individual/\$60 per year family membership
- \$5 per year for people with a limited income
- I want to support NAMI Boulder County with a tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

• *Does your employer have a matching gifts program?*

Your membership dues and gifts will help provide support, education and advocacy for Boulder County Individuals and families who are coping with serious mental illness.

I am interested in:

Learning about volunteer opportunities, either ongoing or one-time only

Arranging for speaker or presentations on mental illness for my club, church, work, or other group

Helping with advocacy efforts by writing letters/making phone calls to my elected representatives

Name _____ Email Address _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Alternate phone _____

Mail this form with your check to: NAMI Boulder County, 1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder, CO 80304