

### JOIN US FOR SAMHAJ ANNUAL CELEBRATION



# SAMHAJ Celebrating 25 years!!!

Date: Sunday December 14, 2025
Time: 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET
Venue: 560 Stelton Road, Deewan Banquet,
Piscataway, NJ

SAMHAJ's annual celebration is a chance for us to come together and recognize our wonderful volunteers, supporters, and community members. We invite you and your families to join us in celebrating these outstanding individuals who make SAMHAJ possible. There will be lunch, entertainment, prizes, and great company. We hope to see you there! Please <u>register here</u>. For sponsorship levels and information <u>click here</u> and for more information please email

samhaj@naminj.org before December 12, 2025.

### **DECEMBER IS SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD) AWARENESS MONTH**



Major Depressive Disorder with a Seasonal Pattern (formerly known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD) is characterized by recurrent episodes of depression in late fall and winter, alternating with periods of normal mood the rest of the year.

Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health were the first to suggest this condition was a response to decreased light and experimented with the use of bright light to address the symptoms. Scientists have identified that the neurotransmitter serotonin may not be working optimally in many people who experience this disorder.

This disorder's most common presentation is of an atypical depression. With classic depression, people tend to lose weight and sleep less. This condition is the kind of atypical depression often seen in bipolar disorder—people tend to gain weight and sleep more.

To learn more about SAD from National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) please <u>click here</u>.

To learn more about SAD from National Institute of mental Health (NIMH) please <u>click here</u>.

### **DECEMBER 3RD IS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

International Day of Person's with Disabilities is a United Nations sanctioned observance that raises awareness for disability issues. It is observed internationally on December 3rd. This year's theme, Fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress builds upon the commitment of world leaders to promote a just, inclusive equitable and sustainable world and the understanding that social development progress requires the inclusion of all segments of society. Read more **here.** 

For more information about New Jersey's resources for individuals with disabilities visit New

#### JOIN SAMHAJ SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS



# Connection National Alliance on Mental Illness RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP

### SAMHAJ Virtual Family Support Group

For Family Members, Caregivers, and Friends of People with Mental Health Conditions.

**Date:** Thursday, December 4, 2025 **Time:** 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM ET **Venue:** Online - Zoom

Next virtual group is on January 8, 2025

# SAMHAJ Virtual Connection Recovery Support Group

For Individuals with Lived Experience of Mental Health Conditions.

Date: Thursday, December 4, 2025 Time: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM ET

**Venue:** Online - Zoom Next virtual group is on January 8, 2025

### REGISTER HERE FOR VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

# SAMHAJ In-Person Family Support Group

For Family Members, Caregivers, and Friends of People with Mental Health Conditions.

Date: Thursday, January 18, 2026
Time: 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET
Venue: East Brunswick Public Library
2 Jean Walling, East Brunswick, Civic
Center Dr, East Brunswick, NJ 08816

# SAMHAJ In-Person Connection Recovery Support Group

For Individuals with Lived Experience of Mental Health Conditions.

Date: Thursday, January 18, 2026 Time: 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET Venue: East Brunswick Public Library 2 Jean Walling, East Brunswick, Civic Center Dr, East Brunswick, NJ 08816

REGISTER HERE FOR IN PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS

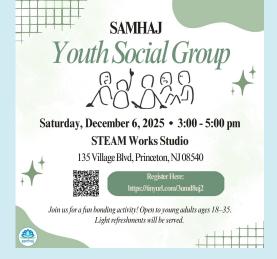
Click here for NAMI NJ Online Support Groups
Click here for NAMI NJ Advocacy

#### YOUTH SOCIAL GROUP

### **Youth Social Group In-Person Gathering**

Date: Saturday, December 6th, 2025 Time: 3:00 - 5:00 pm Venue: STEAM Works Studio 135 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540

Join us for our South Asian Youth Social group! We will be doing a a hands-on creative science activity designed to spark curiosity, connection, and conversation. Please note this is strictly



for SAMHAJ youth group. Any questions reach out to samhaj support@naminj.org

Disclaimer: As an attendee of a NAMI NJ event or program, as well as anyone entitled to act on my behalf, herby forever waive, release, and hold NAMI NJ, and its employees and agents harmless from any and all claims, suits, liability, actions, judgments, attorney's fees, costs, and any expenses of any kind resulting from injuries or damages, grounded in tort or otherwise, that I and/or my representatives, sustain during or related to my participation or involvement in this program; other than claims based upon intentional or reckless misconduct of NAMI-NJ. NAMI NJ can use names, photos, and video/audio recordings of participants and can be published.

#### **REGISTER HERE**

### **CHAI AND CHAT**



The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and NAMI NJ SAMHAJ are hosting a series of 3 community conversations on mental wellness! Designed for, by and about South Asians, Chai & Chat provides a safe space to explore what mental wellness means to us and to discover ways to support well-being for ourselves and each other. Please reach out to samhaj@naminj.org or samhaj\_support@naminj.org if you would like to hear more about Chai & Chat. We successfully completed our first Chai & Chat series and we will have our next series coming up soon.

### **UPCOMING OUTREACHES, PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS**



# Join the Creative Mindset Workshop! Arts & Crafts for Youth 7th-12th Grade

Co-sponsored by SPAN, join NAMI NJ for an Arts & Crafts opportunity for youth in the 7th - 12th grades at the Westfield Memorial Library. There will be refreshments, goodies and more!

The activities were designed by a work group of folks with overlapping experience in creativity and mental health, including art therapists, youth program directors and professional artists.

For more information, click the links below.

For **Monday, December 1, 3:30 - 5:00**, <u>click here</u>. For **Tuesday, December 2, 3:30 - 5:00**, <u>click here</u>.

#### **NAMI Middlesex Young Adult Club**

Our Young Adult Club provides recreational opportunities and fellowship. The events are generally held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday afternoon of every month in Middlesex County, unless we have a special outing planned! Email Sam Hartman at hartman.sam@gmail.com or call (732) 745-0709 for more information or to sign up for our outings.

### **Upcoming Outings:**

12/11 – Jingle Mingle with IFSS at 151 Centennial Ave in Piscataway 5:00 – 7:30

NAMI Ask the Expert: Facts, Myths and Misconceptions
About Al



Time: 2:00-3:30pm

Date: Thursday December 11, 2025

Venue: Virtual

It seems like each week we hear more about what AI can do for both good and bad in mental health. This webinar aims to go beyond the hype and explore how AI really works so that we can understand

what it does well, where it messes up, and where it may move next. Taking a critical lens, this webinar will explore the current evidence for AI in mental health treatments, the known risks/harms, and introduces ways to make more informed decisions around whether and which AI to use. Register for the webinar <a href="https://example.com/here">here</a>.



# Supporting Friends and Loved Ones with Mental Health Conditions

Time: 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Date: January 12, 2026
Venue: Monroe Township Library
4 Municipal Plaza, Monroe Township, NJ 08831

NAMI Family and Friends is a free 90-minute seminar that informs people who have loved ones with a mental health condition how to best support them. Led by trained people with lived experience of supporting a family member with a mental health condition, this seminar will teach about:

- Understanding diagnoses, treatment, and recovery
- Effective communication strategies
- The importance of self-care
- Crisis preparation strategies
- NAMI and community resources

Registration Opens December 13, 2025. Register here.



### **NAMI Basics by NAMI Middlesex**

**Time:** 6:00pm - 8:30pm

**Date:** Tuesday Evenings from January 13 to February 1 **Venue:** YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center 520 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08854

NAMI NJ is excited to invite you to NAMI Middlesex's first NAMI Basics Class, which will be taking place on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm starting on January 13, 2026, through February 17, 2026.

NAMI BASICS is a free education course for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness, aged 21 and under. This course provides an overview of the diagnostic process: types and subtypes of major mental illnesses that can develop in childhood and adolescence, including ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Compulsive Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Mood Disorder, Depressive Disorders, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and Substance Use Disorders.

The course is taught by trained teachers who have shared experience as parents/caregivers of individuals who developed symptoms of mental illness in childhood or adolescence. The loved one involved should be 21 or under for parents/caregivers to benefit from this course. For questions, please call (732) 745-0709 or email namiofmiddlesex@gmail.com. Register <u>here</u>.

If you are interested in volunteering with us please fill out the form <a href="here">here</a> and want to learn about SAMHAJ please <a href="here">email</a>. Or if you are connected with any South Asian Organization and would like to invite NAMI NJ SAMHAJ to learn about our free resources and educational programs please <a href="mailto:emailto:emailto:programs">emailto:e







### NAMI NJ STATEWIDE RESOURCES

Where to get help

NAMI HelpLine

988: Reimagining Crisis Respons e

A NAMI Resource Guide to Navigating - A Mental Health Crisis

New Jersey Resources 2024 First Edition

### NAMI FAMILY CAREGIVER HELPLINE

The NAMI Family Caregiver HelpLine is a free, confidential service providing caregiver-led support, tools and strategies, trusted guidance, and connection at every stage of the caregiving journey. Whenever caregiving for a loved one with mental illness feels overwhelming, a simple call, text, email, or letter to the NAMI Family Caregiver HelpLine will connect you to a community of support grounded in lived experience.

If nothing else feels easy, finding experienced support can be. Take a moment today to connect with the NAMI Family Caregiver HelpLine. Reach out by phone, text, or chat.

Text "Family" to 62640

Chat at nami.org/talktous Email helpline@ nami.org

Send letter to NAMI HelpLine, 4301 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 Call 1-800-950-6264 Press Ext 4

Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET.

### NAMI TEEN & YOUNG ADULT (T&YA) HELPLINE





NAMI is proud to introduce the <u>Teen & Young Adult (T&YA) HelpLine</u>: A free nationwide peer-support service providing information, resource referrals, and support to teens and young adults. Our T&YA Specialists are young people who understand what you're going through because they have been through stuff, too. They are experienced and well-trained. They care and want to help you find a way forward. Reach out by phone, text, or chat.

Text "Friend" to 62640

Chat at nami.org/talktous

Call 1-800-950-6264

Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET.

### **EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND RESOURCES FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Mind the Gap Webinar Series**

The NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, in conjunction with Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, will be hosting a free webinar series that addresses practice gaps in mental health services. All webinars start at noon and are either 1 hour or 1.5 hours in length. CEs and CMEs are pending. To register <u>click here.</u>

### **AARP Virtual Community Center**

AARP virtual Community Center is providing FREE interactive online events and classes designed for learning, self improvement, and fun. As part of their virtual community center they have educational events and resources for caregivers to support our loved ones. Please click here to find out more about <u>Caregiving Events</u>

### **Understanding and Addressing the Needs of People with Dual Diagnosis**

This one-day workshop will review the relationship between mental health and/or mental illness, and problem behavior. We will look at ways that mental illness may contribute to problem behavior, strategies to support individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses, and coordinating behavior intervention with therapeutic supports. To register **click here**.

### PODCASTS, BLOGS AND ARTICLES



# Hope Starts With Us: Pathways to Address Youth Mental Health

NAMI joined Macy's Social Impact Collaborative, along with the Trust for Public Land and other nonprofit organizations, to conduct a study with the goal of gaining a better understanding of what is impacting youth mental health – directly from young people themselves. In this episode of NAMI's podcast Hope Starts With Us, guest host Kate

Kennedy-Lynch talks with NAMI Associate Medical Director Dr. Christine Crawford, the Trust for Public Land's Dr. Pooja Tandon, and Taanvi Arekapudi, a young person who participated in the youth study. Together, they will discuss key findings from the study, where young people are looking for help, how outdoor time can help families and young people, and advice for talking to young people about mental health concerns. Listen to the full episode <u>here</u>.



# Speaking of Psychology: Learning to embrace winter, with Kari Leibowitz, PhD

In this episode of Speaking of Psychology, psychologist Kari Leibowitz, PhD, author of How to Winter, discusses how winter affects our bodies and minds and shares practical strategies inspired by her time spent abroad in Tromsø, Norway. The conversation offers a refreshing perspective on

how a simple mindset shift can help you approach winter with more ease, resilience, and even joy. Listen to the full podcast **here**.



## NAMI Ask the Expert: Recognizing and Overcoming Barriers to Mental Health in Rural America

Each year, as we recognize the third Thursday of November as Rural Health Day, it's important to acknowledge that mental health is the foundation of overall health for the 46 million people living in rural communities across the country. There is a mental health emergency in rural

America due to inherent barriers to mental healthcare that lead to suicide rates that are 49% higher among rural residents compared to urban residents. You may not realize it, but regardless of where you live – a city, the suburbs, in the country – you depend upon the mental and physical wellness of the people living in rural America for the food you eat every day. Rural communities include those who labor to raise, harvest, process, and package the foods that fill our shopping carts and satisfy our appetites. Watch the recording <u>here</u>.



# NAMI Virtual Town Hall: It Takes a Village: Supportive Communities for Young Adults

NAMI recently hosted a virtual Town Hall in partnership with <u>The Steve Fund</u>. It Takes a Village: Supportive Communities for Young Adults brings families, caregivers, and mental health professionals together to create stronger, more effective support systems for young people.

Participants explored practical, culturally attuned tools and strategies to better respond to the mental health needs of youth. Central to this work is honoring and amplifying the real-life experiences of young people and their families as drivers of meaningful change in mental health care and advocacy. Watch the recording from the town hall **here**.

### FROM THE STATE OF NJ & DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

### **NJ Disability Hub**

New Jersey is committed to making this state a safe, accessible, and affordable place to live for all people, including those living with disabilities. Many services for individuals with disabilities are offered by the State and various other organizations. This website brings together these resources into one place for New Jersey residents with disabilities, caregivers, parents, and advocates. Access the website <a href="here.">here.</a>

### NJ Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S)

In response to a national mental wellness crisis in youth and young adults, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families has proposed to launch a statewide, innovative hub-and-spoke model of services and resources intended to support youth mental wellness and promote prevention initiatives (prevention of bullying, prevention of teen suicide, prevention of substance use, etc...). To read more about the resources available <u>click here.</u>

#### NJ Human Services - New Jersey Resources 2024 First Edition:

This comprehensive guide identifies many helpful programs and services the Department of HUman Services offers to NJ residents, caregivers and advocates, as well as resources and programs offered by our partners inother agencies. Please find the <u>link here to the NJ Resources</u>.

#### NJ Deptartment of Health Hotline Index

The Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services provides <u>contact information for</u> <u>organizations</u> that help people with mental health concerns. They also have contacts to help veterans, gamblers, and substance abusers.



### **Energy Assistance Programs**

Low-Income eligible households that are having a difficulty paying their heating and cooling bills may be able to receive assistance from the state. Please contact energyassistance@carcnj.org or 732-774-3282 to see if you qualify.



### **State Theatre New Jersey**

Every State Theatre New Jersey presented performance tickets are \$10 per person for families and individuals enrolled in New Jersey's Family First Program, Students and Medicaid card holders. The program is part of STNJ's mission to help remove economic barriers that prevent access to the performing arts.

### **Legal Rights of Psychiatric Patients:**

Individuals receiving psychiatric in-patient treatment at psychiatric hospitals have legal rights. The rights of a patient depend on what legal status the individual has. There are three main legal statuses: voluntary, involuntary, and Conditional Extension Pending Placement (CEPP). To find out more information about Psychiatric advance directive and legal rights from DRNJ <u>click here.</u>

### **Health Insurance for Undocumented Kids in NJ:**

New Jersey has a program that allows undocumented families to enroll their children in NJ Family care (Medicaid). Great news to all the immigrant families whose children may benefit from this program. Please <u>click here</u> to learn more about health insurance for undocumented kids in NJ.

### **Earned Sick Leave Law in NJ**

Employers of all sizes must provide full-time, part-time, and temporary employees with up to 40 hours of earned sick leave per year so they can care for themselves or a loved one. This law applies to almost all workers in New Jersey. For more information click <u>here.</u>

### What is Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity?

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) provides important protections related to mental health and substance addiction benefits. This law generally requires that the financial requirements (copayments, deductibles, coinsurance or out-of-pocket maximums) and treatment limitations used by health plans be comparable for medical/surgical and mental health/substance addiction services. Please <u>click here</u> to get more information on MHPAEA.

### **RESEARCH PROJECTS**

NAMI NJ is committed to improving the lives of people impacted by mental health conditions through effective treatments, equitable public policies, and greater knowledge and understanding in society. Research is essential to advance each of these goals. NAMI NJ does not accept financial compensation for recruiting research participants. NAMI NJ also does not endorse any products or treatments. Please <u>click here</u> to find a list of research projects on our website.



## Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) for South Asian American (SAA) adults (18+):

This project targets SAA parents, religious leaders, dance teachers, sports coaches, mentors, as well as other community leaders (non-mental health professionals) working with SAA youth.

This FREE training and research study includes:

- 2 hours of self-paced pre-work completed online any time before the training day
- A live Zoom training on either Saturday, August 16th or Saturday, September 20th from 10 AM to 4 PM EST (includes a 1-hour lunch break) led by Ami Patel, a fifth-year doctoral candidate in School Psychology and Cixin Wang, Associate Professor in School Psychology at University of Maryland, College Park
- An opportunity to earn up to \$30 for completing up to three surveys these help us understand the impact of the training for SAA adults
- The YMHFA training is typically priced at \$179 per person. However, with the funding support from UMD, it is offered to you free of charge.

Spots are limited - be sure to sign up soon to secure your place! Here is the sign-up and screening survey: <a href="https://umdsurvey.umd.edu/jfe/form/SV\_56JJOvZKnjl32Rg">https://umdsurvey.umd.edu/jfe/form/SV\_56JJOvZKnjl32Rg</a>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to her at <a href="mailto:amikumar@umd.edu">amikumar@umd.edu</a>.

### <u>Psychosis Risk Throughout Development Program:</u>

The Psychosis Risk Throughout Development Program at Rutgers University is conducting a study with the goal of more accurately diagnosing psychosis in children and adolescents and predicting

what happens to symptoms of psychosis over time. Most of the study involves remote video interviews about psychiatric symptoms and online tests about how a child thinks. They are recruiting children and adolescents 6 to 17 years old where there is concern for psychosis. They also recruit 6 to 17 year old children and adolescents who do not have psychosis. They offer compensation up to \$140 depending on which parts of the study the child qualifies to participate in. Please call them at (856) 390-5472 or see the QR code on the <u>attached flyer</u> to send your information to them online.



### Perspectives on Food-related Practices among South Asians

Seeking adults volunteers of South Asian origin to participate in a one-hour interview about their food-related practices. The purpose of the study is to better understand the cultural, social, and individual factors that influence South Asian dietary choices.

For More Information please contact: Srivarsha Kaloth ssk185@rwjms.rutgers.edu

Please complete this <u>survey</u> or contact us via <u>email</u> to check your eligibility.

#### **RESPITE CENTERS**

Peer Respite is a state-funded short-term residential program offering an alternative to an inpatient psychiatric hospitalization. Peer Respites are staffed 24/7 with individuals who have lived experience. The Respite House provides a setting in which individuals can work on their recovery. Please contact the agency listed below covering your county or the nearest county.

### **Collaborative Support Programs (CSP)**

Middlesex County: (732) 354-4403 Essex County: (862) 229-1401 Passaic County: (862) 239-9896

The CSPNJ Respite Program offers a clean, safe, supportive, tranquil, and non-judgmental environment in a residential community. It is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by individuals with lived experience who are trained and experienced in supporting others to transform a crisis into an opportunity for enhancing personal wellness. Guests can be provided support at the house for a maximum of 10 days and offered follow up support for up to 30 days. We offer intensive peer support and involvement in wellness activities on site and through follow up support to help guests to restore balance, and plan for adjustments to their home, their associated valued roles, and their community activities.

### **Legacy Treatment Services**

#### **Burlington County: (609) 261-3034**

Kairos House (formerly Crisis House), located in Burlington County, is a short-term residential program that offers a safe, therapeutic option for those who are at risk of hospitalization due to exacerbation of their mental illness; or for those who need further stabilization and/or a transition period following an inpatient stay. Services include case management, treatment, housing assistance, wellness groups and life skills training. Kairos House residents are often referred from Legacy's Screening and Crisis Intervention Program.

### **Crosswinds Peer Respite**

Ocean County: (848) 221-3022

Crosswinds Peer Respite, located in Ocean County, is the first adult mental health respite program to open in New Jersey. The program offers a safe, supportive environment for adults to stay on a short-term basis when experiencing or on the verge of a mental health crisis. Crosswinds offers peer support, case management, education, support groups, medication services, co-occurring substance abuse services, Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) and follow-up support. It serves as a crisis alternative that aims to avoid the repetitive cycle of psychiatric hospitalization.

### **Oaks Integrated Care**

Camden County: (856) 427-6584

Oaks Integrated Care Harveys Haven Crisis House provides short-term residential support and safety. Program residents are often referred from Oaks Integrated Care's Crisis Stabilization and

Mental Health Urgent Care.

### NJ Dept. of Health Screening Services by County

Each county has an agency designated to screen for psychiatric emergency services. Find your county designated screening information here

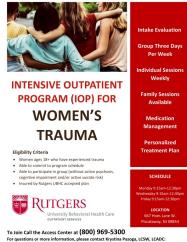
### PARTIAL/INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

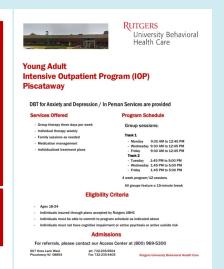
**Rutgers University** Behavioral Health Care Adult Acute Partial Hospital Women's Trauma IOP of Manmouth Junction.

**Rutgers University** Behavioral Health Care Program.

Rutgers Young adult Intensive outpatient **Program (For young adults** ages 18 to 24)







### SAMHAJ OFFERS HOPE, RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

South Asian American Mental Health Awareness in Jersey is a NAMI NJ initiative to provide support, education and advocacy to people of South Asian origin in NJ who are affected by mental illness. We offer support groups, educational events and phone referral service.

### **Donate Today!**

At the option- 'Feel free to let us know why you are passionate about our cause!' Please mention you would like to designate your contribution to SAMHAJ program. Thank you!

#### SAMHAJ - NAMI New Jersey

email: samhaj@naminj.org | phone: 732-940-0991 Ext 116 www.naminj.org/programs/multicultural/Samhaj

Check us out on





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