

Participant Workbook



Community Cares

NAMI Ventura County's Community Cares Program

Welcome to Community Cares!

Community Cares is NAMI Ventura County's effort at empowering you to monitor, manage, and support your mental health. This year, 2020, has been unprecedented in its impact on our individual and community mental health and morale. More than ever, every single person needs the knowledge and tools to support themselves, their family, and their community.

What are you going to get from Community Cares? The focus of community cares is to help you prevent, identify, and seek treatment for mental health concerns as early as possible. This NAMI program will give you tools to know what to look for and what to do if you see concerning signs. Additionally, we're going to give you some tools to help focus on and promote your own mental wellness.

What's this workbook? This workbook is a companion to the Community Cares seminar. It will give you space to explore and expand on the tools our facilitators teach during the seminar. It's for your eyes only, so use these pages to their full extent for your notes, mental wellness exploration and exercises.

Reflection Questions: During this seminar, you're going to hear a lot of information. It might shed some light or open some doors in your mind. Many pages of this workbook include reflection questions. You might want to fill them in as we go or come back and spend some time with them after the seminar.

Taking it Digital: Some sections of this workbook include smartphone apps you can take advantage of for information and mental wellness tools. NAMI Ventura County does not recommend or endorse any specific app or app developer. At the time of publication, these apps are available on the operating systems and at the costs listed. Those details are subject to change.

Diagnoses: The Community Cares seminar only covers the most common mental health conditions. We are not medical professionals and neither diagnosis participants nor recommend specific treatments. Symptoms lasting more than two weeks should be evaluated by a medical professional.

Understanding Mental Health: Getting Started

What do you think of when you hear the term Mental Health?

Your answer likely has a lot to do with your life experiences, cultural background and previous mental health education. The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

The WHO’s definition of mental health makes a lot of sense. But, it also brings up a lot of questions. What happens if a person’s life stresses are extreme rather than normal? What if someone can work productively some days but not others? What exactly does well-being mean to me?

Take a minute to brainstorm on the chart below.

Ways I Maintain My:	
Physical Health	Mental Health

Reflect: Do you focus more on maintaining your physical or mental health? Why?

Stress: Your Life

Let’s face it: Stress is unavoidable.

You probably have some idea of the toll stress can take on your body. You may even have experienced stress-related headaches, chest pain or insomnia among other things. But do you know about the effects stress can have on your brain?

During times of stress, the brain is our first line of defense and does a lot of work to prepare and protect us from a potential threat.

The brain is made up of parts that work together to control our bodies. Different parts of the brain control and perform different tasks. Researchers believe that when one part of the brain is engaged, the other parts may not have as much energy to efficiently complete their own tasks. For instance, during a dangerous situation, the part of the brain that controls survival

instincts, the amygdala, may take over, leaving the other parts of the brain with less energy to complete their tasks.

In the short term, small doses of stress might sharpen a person’s reflexes or alertness. But chronic or extreme stress can produce negative effects on the brain. In addition to contributing to developing a mental illness, stress can even cause the human brain to shrink in volume. (Source: Harvard Health)

What is Your Stress Level TODAY?


Non-Existent


Mild


Okay


High


Extreme

Reflect: My Stress

My Stressors
Long & Short-Term

My Stress Syntoms
Mood, Emotions & Body

Notes:

©2022 NIMH/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

Understanding Mental Health: Wellness & Mood

What happens when well-being starts to break down?

The American Psychiatric Association defines mental illnesses as “health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behavior (or a combination of these). Mental illnesses are associated with distress, and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities.”

Did you notice how broad that definition seems? That’s because, like any other health condition, mental health and mental illness occur along a spectrum. As individuals very few of us are perfect pictures of mental health or entirely consumed by mental illness. Our well-being fluctuates throughout our day and over the course of our lifetime.

Mental health conditions across the spectrum involve emotional health, psychological health and social well-being. The focus of Community Cares is to teach you to recognize, acknowledge and address mental health conditions early and effectively.

Try This: Mood Tracking

Mood tracking is a simple tool for monitoring your well-being. Recording your mood daily can be a helpful tool for recognizing and tracking patterns. You can DIY a mood-tracking system or use one of the many free smartphone apps. Whatever method you choose, this exercise is inexpensive and time-friendly.

How is your well-being TODAY?



I'm great!



I'm good.



I'm okay.



I'm not so good



I'm struggling

Taking it Digital: Mood Tracking Apps

Moodily (*Free, Android & IOS*)

MoodPanda (*Free, Android & IOS*)

Daylio (*Free, Android & IOS*)

eMoods Social Distancing Wellness Tracker
(*Free, Android & IOS*)

Worry Watch (\$3.99, *IOS*)

MoodTrack Diary (*Free, Android & IOS*)

aiMei (*Free, Android*)

iMoodJournal (*Free, Android & IOS*)

T2 Mood Tracker (*Free, Android & IOS*)

NAMI Ventura County does not recommend or endorse any specific app or app developer

Reflect: My Mood

What type of mood am I in right now?

What are the reasons for my current mood?

How might my current mood affect my decision-making and communication style?

©2022 NAMI/VENTURA COUNTY
Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

Stigma: Stomp It Out!

Words matter! The language we use can either perpetuate stigma or help create environment that encourages positivity and progress. The use of stigmatizing language, whether it's meant to be harmful or not, discourages open conversation about mental health and wellness. Shifting our language is one way to be an ally. Use language that looks at the person first, rather than seeing the person as an illness.

Destigmatize Your Language

Change This:

It drives me crazy/nuts/insane.

He's bipolar/a schizophrenic/OCD.

Committed suicide

Suffering from/afflicted with/victim of...

She's psycho

They're an addict.

He's emotionally disturbed.

To That:

It annoys me/bothers me/irritates me.

He has bipolar disorder/has schizophrenia/has OCD.

Died by suicide/completed suicide

Lives with/experiences...

She's out of control/unreasonable/angry.

They have a substance use disorder.

He has a serious mental health condition.

Now Keep Busting Stigma By:

Learning More

Listening to people who experience mental illness

Responding to stigmatizing media

Speaking up about stigma

Talking openly about mental illness

Demanding change from elected officials

Supporting stigma-busting organizations

Notes:

Reflect: Stigma

How is the public you different than the private you?

©2022 NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

EVERY DAY
IS A
FREE
START

Diagnosis: Learning NOT Labels

We're going to jump into discussing the most common mental health challenges. On the next several pages, you'll find information about diagnoses and their most common symptoms.

We want to reassure you that it's okay if you hear something in these diagnoses that sounds familiar. Take a deep breath! We aren't diagnosing. We aren't judging.

It might be jarring or upsetting to identify with the experiences and symptoms we talk about in Community Cares. If you've experienced a symptom or recognize a behavior, for right now just make note of it. You can come back to it later.

Please keep in mind that symptoms lasting more than two weeks should be evaluated by a medical professional.

Remember:

Mental health conditions are medical conditions.

NAMI advises anyone experiencing new symptoms to seek a full physical evaluation.

They aren't the fault of the person experiencing symptoms or their family.

Mental health conditions aren't something to be ashamed of, anyone can have a mental health condition.

A mental health condition doesn't mean a person can't have a good life or achieve goals.

“Before I was formally introduced to my anxiety,

I called it by a bunch of other names—nervousness, weakness, timidity. Employers called it laziness, distractedness, and ‘not being a team player.’ My ex called it clinginess. My mother called it oversensitivity and immaturity.

It's About Awareness

“But we were all wrong,

and learning that we were all wrong, that there was an actual medical thing going on, overwhelmed me because it meant that it wasn't a tornado of character flaws that landed me where I was. The problem was not that I simply chose not to be ‘normal,’ that I allowed my fears, baseless as they may have been, to conquer and dictate so much of my life. The problem was my brain. It was a chemical imbalance, something physical, not imagined.”

*Tracy Clayton,
Writer & Podcast Host*

Diagnosis: Anxiety Awareness Worksheet

Anxiety disorders are a group of related conditions, each having unique symptoms. However, all anxiety disorders have one thing in common: persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States. Over 40 million adults in the U.S. (19.1%) have an anxiety disorder. Meanwhile, approximately 7% of children aged 3-17 experience issues with anxiety each year. Most people develop symptoms before age 21. (Source: NAMI.org)

Emotional Symptoms:

- ☐ Feelings of apprehension or dread
- ☐ Feeling tense or jumpy
- ☐ Restlessness or irritability
- ☐ Anticipating the worst
- ☐ Being watchful for signs of danger

Physical Symptoms:

- ☐ Pounding or racing heart
- ☐ Shortness of breath
- ☐ Upset Stomach
- ☐ Sweating, tremors and twitches
- ☐ Headaches, fatigue and insomnia
- ☐ Upset stomach, frequent urination or diarrhea

These symptoms feel: ☐ Unfamiliar ☒ Familiar ☐ Concerning ☐ I need more info

Notes:

©2022 NIMH/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

©2022 NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

©2022 NIMH
Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted
SANTA CLARA COUNTY

©2022 NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

**Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted**

©2022 NIMH/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

©2022 NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

**Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted**

©2022 NIMH/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

Treatment: My Bottom Lines

Treatment for mental health symptoms is as individual as the person seeking it. Knowing your bottom lines can help you work collaboratively with a treatment provider to reach your mental health and wellness goals. Identifying your values and priorities as well as boundaries and barriers can serve as a useful foundation for evaluating treatment options as well as its ongoing efficacy.

Remember's NAMI's Bottom Lines

Mental health conditions are medical conditions.

NAMI advises anyone experiencing new symptoms to seek a full physical evaluation.

They aren't the fault of the person experiencing symptoms or their family.

Mental health conditions aren't something to be ashamed of, anyone can have a mental health condition.

A mental health condition doesn't mean a person can't have a good life or achieve goals.

Reflect: Treatment Barriers

What are my barriers to addressing a mental health concern?

Emotional Barriers:

Cultural Barriers:

Financial Barriers:

Informational Barriers:

Notes:

Treatment: My Priorities

Let's start here:

I do my best when...

I struggle when...

I am comfortable when...

I wish I could...

I wish I thought....

What are 10 things that are important to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Notes:

What are the three most important things to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are the values that are nearest to your heart?

A black and white line drawing of a mandala. The background is filled with a repeating pattern of stylized leaves and geometric shapes, creating a symmetrical, circular design. In the center, there is a large, cloud-like bubble containing the text "GIVE YOURSELF permission TO REST". The words "GIVE YOURSELF" and "TO REST" are in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font, while "permission" is in a smaller, cursive script font. A diagonal watermark reading "© 2023 KIMCRAFTY.COM" is visible across the image.

GIVE YOURSELF
permission
TO REST

©2022 NIMH/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

©2022 NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

Suicide Prevention: Support

Always Take All Signs of Suicidal Behavior Seriously

Prevention & Support Tips:

Offer support.: You're not responsible for preventing someone from attempting suicide, but your action may help someone stay safe and receive treatment.

Call a Hotline: Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255) to reach a trained counselor.

Encourage Treatment: They may not have the energy or motivation to get help. If the person doesn't want to consult a doctor or mental health provider, suggest finding help from a support group, crisis center or faith community.

Offer to Help: You can research treatment options, make phone calls and review insurance information, or offer to go with the person to an appointment.

Encourage Communication: They may be tempted to hide feelings because they feel ashamed, guilty or embarrassed. Listen attentively and avoid interrupting.

Acknowledge Feelings Respectfully: Don't try to talk the person out of their feelings or express

Notes:

shock. Even though the thinking is not logical, the emotions are real. Not respecting that can discourage communication.

Don't Be Judgmental: Saying "It could be worse" or "You have everything to live for" can reinforce feelings of shame and guilt. Instead, ask questions like "How can I help?".

Secrets are Dangerous: Never promise to keep someone's suicidal feelings a secret. Gently explain that you have to take action if they are in danger.

Offer Reassurance: Reassure them that with appropriate treatment, they can feel better again.

Discourage Drugs & Alcohol: Using drugs or alcohol can lead to reckless behavior or worsening of mental health symptoms. Offer to help find treatment if they can't stop.

Remove Dangerous Objects: If possible, remove any items that could be used for suicide. If the person takes medication, encourage them to have someone safeguard it and give it as prescribed.

For Attempt Survivors:

Connections is an online directory resource where individuals who have attempted suicide or who struggle with suicidal thinking can connect one-on-one with other suicide attempt survivors who are living in recovery. Through their lived experience, Peer Supporters can provide valuable knowledge and assistance in navigating life after a suicide attempt or experience with suicidal thinking. (<https://save.org/peersupport/>)

Self Care: Benefits

Can you remember the last time you did something simply because you enjoyed doing it?

Self-care is proven to reduce anxiety, boost mood, increase productivity and lower the health risks associated with chronic stress. With all those benefits, why is it so difficult to practice regularly? Knowing that we should clearly isn't enough. In part, the problem is tied to how we've come to think about the concept of self-care.

Rather than being tied to a specific outcome, such as meeting a goal or learning a skill, the entire goal of self-care is to knowingly engage in a practice for our own benefit. Self-care benefits the mind, helping us maintain our wellness.

I practice self-care...

- ☐ Everyday
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ A few times a month
- ☐ A few times a year
- ☐ Pretty much never

I enjoy self-care...

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

I feel _____ about self care...

- ☐ Excited
- ☐ Curious
- ☐ Apathetic
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Frustrated

Notes:

©2022 NIMH/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

©2022 NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

Self Care: Simple Daily Practices

Gratitude: Getting Started

Gratitude is the skill of focusing on what you have, rather than what you deserve or want. This skill is shown to improve resilience, improve self-esteem, enhance empathy and reduce toxic emotions. There is no one method to keeping a gratitude journal. The practice can be as simple as writing down just a few things a couple days a week. Here are a few helpful tips to get you started.

Write it Down: Rather than doing the exercise in your head, make sure to record it. The goal is to remember a

positive event, experience, person or thing in your life and remember the good emotions attached to it.

Be Specific & Get Personal: Being specific is key to fostering gratitude. Focusing on people has more impact than focusing on things.

Consider All the Angles: Consider the negative outcomes you have avoided, prevented or turned into something positive. Use good fortune or luck as something to be grateful for.

Taking it Digital: Gratitude Apps

Gratitude (*Free, Android & IOS*)
365 Gratitude (*Free, Android & IOS*)
Day One Journal (*Free, Android & IOS*)
Grateful: A Gratitude Journal (*Free, IOS*)

Live Happy (*Free, IOS*)
Happyfeed (*Free, IOS*)
Presently: A Gratitude Journal
(*Free, Android & IOS*)

NAMI Ventura County does not recommend or endorse any specific app or app developer

Notes:

Communication: Working from Empathy

What is empathy?

At its core, empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. In opposition to sympathy, which is feeling sorry for someone, empathy is the practice of feeling with someone.

While that might not seem like a huge distinction, sympathy is a dead end. The feeling of pity leads us to turn away from the person or situation because we are on the outside looking in. Empathy, on the other hand, compels us into compassionate action because we can feel and understand the person or situation.

Empathy fosters healthy relationships, reduces stress and helps build positivity.

Here are the building blocks to practicing empathy:

Listen: Give your undivided attention to the speaker. Don't interrupt. Let them vent their emotions.

Give Up Judgements: Don't make assumptions and set your bias aside. We all have prejudices but it's crucial to being empathic to acknowledge the judgements we make and set them aside.

Imagine to Connect: You may not have experienced what your speaker is talking about. Here's where imagination is important. Imagine yourself in the situation. What might you be feeling and thinking?

Acknowledge: Show your understanding by expressing what you imagine that experience must feel like. It's okay if you don't know what to say.

Show Love: Empathetic gestures don't need to be grand to be important and effective. It can be as simple as offering a hug or making the time and space for a friend to vent. Offering help, even if it's declined, opens the door for providing help and support.

Notes:

Reflect: Empathy

What small act of kindness was I once shown that I've never forgotten?

©2022 NIM/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

Communication: Listening & Reflecting

Active listening means fully concentrating on what a person is expressing by using all your senses. Rather than passively hearing the words being spoken, active listening includes observing the speaker's body language.

Taking verbal and non-verbal cues together allows the listener to develop a more accurate understanding of what is being said.

Listening is:

Focused

Voluntary

Intentional

Hearing is:

Accidental

Involuntary

Effortless

Active Listening Checklist:

- ☐ Show Interest
- ☐ Eliminate Distractions
- ☐ Make Eye Contact
- ☐ Show Non-Verbal Attentiveness
(Sit facing speaker, nodding, etc.)
- ☐ Don't interrupt
- ☐ Read the Message:
- ☐ Read Body Language
(Facial cues, posture, fidgeting, etc.)
- ☐ Listen for feelings
- ☐ Ask open-ended questions to clarify

Reflective Responses are steeped in empathy. Reflective responses validate the speaker's feelings even if you don't agree with what they are saying.

Acknowledge: The reality of the speaker's experience. That just means recognizing it is real and true to them, rather than you.

Focus on Feelings: Focus your response of what someone having that experience must be feeling, rather than what you are feeling.

Communicate Reflection: Choose words to show you understand what and how they feel.

Reflect: Active Listening

Name a person you know and respect.

How do you know when that person is listening to you and understanding what you are saying?

©2022 NIM/VENTURA COUNTY

Participant Manual
Demo Version
Page Omitted

Moving Forward: NAMI Programs

Classes

Family to Family: Free, eight-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. Research shows this program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition. Class is taught by NAMI-trained family members. Offered in Spanish as Familia a Familia

Peer to Peer: Free, eight-session educational program for adults with mental health conditions who are looking to better understand themselves and their recovery. Taught by trained leaders with lived experience, this program includes activities, discussions and informative videos.

Provider Education: NAMI Provider introduces mental health professionals to the unique perspectives of people with mental health conditions and their families. You'll develop enhanced empathy for their daily challenges and recognize the importance of including them in all aspects of the treatment process.

Seminars

Family & Friends: Free two or four-hour seminar that informs people who have loved ones with a mental health condition how to best support them. It's also an opportunity to meet other people in similar situations and gain community support.

Community Cares: Free two-hour seminar that engages any person interested in learning more about mental health and wellness. NAMI Ventura County's Community Cares seminar is a conversation starter and tool for community organizations, businesses and individuals looking to support wellness.

Support Groups

Family Support Groups: Peer-led support group for any adult with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. Gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar experiences. Offered in Spanish as Grupo de Apoyo.

NAMI Connection: Free, peer-led support group for any adult who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. You will gain insight from hearing the

challenges and successes of others, and the groups are led by trained leaders who've been there.

Community Education & Outreach

In Our Own Voice: These presentations change attitudes, assumptions and ideas about people with mental health conditions. Free 90-minute presentations provide a personal perspective of mental health conditions, as leaders with lived experience talk openly about what it's like to have a mental health condition.

Ending the Silence: NAMI Ending the Silence is an engaging presentation that helps students, families or school staff learn about the warning signs of mental health conditions and what steps to take if you or a loved one are showing symptoms of a mental health condition.

NAMI on Campus: NAMI on Campus is an exciting extension of NAMI's mission into the campus community. NAMI on Campus clubs are student-led clubs that tackle mental health issues on campus by raising mental health awareness, educating the campus community, supporting students, promoting services and supports and advocating.

FaithNet: NAMI FaithNet is an interfaith resource network of NAMI members, friends, clergy and congregations of all faith traditions striving to encourage welcoming, caring congregations as well as to promote the vital role of spirituality in the recovery journeys of many who live with mental health conditions, those for whom faith is a key component.

NAMI On-Demand

NAMI Basics: Free, six-session education program for parents, caregivers and other family who provide care for youth experiencing mental health symptoms. NAMI Basics is available online.

NAMI Homefront: Free, six-session educational program for families, caregivers and friends of military service members and veterans with mental health conditions. NAMI Homefront is designed to address the unique needs of family, caregivers and friends of those who have served or are currently serving our country. The program is taught by trained family members of service members/veterans with mental health conditions.

©2022 NAMI VENTURA COUNTY

Contact NAMI Ventura County

Office: 805.641.2426 **Resource Line:** 805.500.NAMI (6264)

Website: www.namiventura.org **Email:** info@namiventura.org

555 Airport Way, Suite F, Camarillo, CA 93012/P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011-1613

NAMI Ventura County Community Cares©2020

Empower Your Mental Health

Education.

Support.

Advocacy.

Start Here.



Ventura County