



The fundamentals of caring for you, your family and your child with mental illness

A NAMI peer education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness

Compiled and Written by
Teri S. Brister, Ph.D., LPC
Director, NAMI Programs for Young Families

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Class 1: Introduction: It's not your fault; Mental illnesses are brain disorders

Special features of the course; learning about the normative stages of our emotional reactions to the trauma of mental illness; our belief system and principles; accepting that mental illnesses are biological brain disorders.

Class 2: The biology of Mental Illness; getting an accurate diagnosis

An overview of human development; specifics of brain development; current research on brain mechanisms involved in mental illness in children and adolescents; overview of the diagnostic process; and overview of the types and subtypes of major mental illnesses that can develop in childhood and adolescence (ADHD, ODD, CD, Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Schizophrenia, OCD and Substance Use Disorders)

Class 3: Treatment Works

Telling your stories; overview of treatment options available; explanation of evidence base practice designations; review of various types of mental health professionals in the field; overview of medication as a treatment option for children and adolescents, including the current debate within the field on the subject, black box warnings, etc.

Class 4: Objective and subjective family burden

Learning about family burden and the impact of mental illness on each family member; learning various skills that can be used to improve day to day communications within the family as well as during episodes of crisis; communication skills, problem solving skills, tips for handling challenging behavior, crisis preparation and response, developing a relapse plan

Class 5: The systems involved with your child and the importance of record keeping

Learning the importance of keeping records on your child; reviewing a sample record keeping system; Overview of the systems your child may be involved with including the mental health

system, the school system and the juvenile justice system; introduction to issues that will arise as your child reaches adulthood

Class 6: Advocacy, review, sharing and evaluation

Building an advocacy team for your child; meet people who are resources for you in advocating for your child; invitation to join NAMI in the fight to end discrimination and ensure access to appropriate treatment services; reminders about self-care; evaluations and certificates

VI. References

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VIII. Outreach and Marketing

Class 1 AGENDA

Introduction: It's not your fault – Mental Illnesses are Brain Disorders

- A. Welcome
- B. Introductions to NAMI
- C. Introduction of the teachers
- D. Introduction to the NAMI Basics Education Program
 - Goals of NAMI Basics
 - NAMI Basics Belief System & Principles
 - Stigma of Mental Illness
 - Statistics on Mental Illness in Children/Adolescents in U.S.
- E. Participant introductions
- F. “Welcome to Holland”
- G. This is the illness your family has to live with
 - Mental Illness as a Traumatic Event
 - Predictable Stages of Emotional Reactions among Family Members Dealing with Mental Illness
 - Double edged sword – Positive & Negative Symptoms of Mental Illness
- H. Adjourn

Class 2 AGENDA

The biology of mental illness and getting an accurate diagnosis

- A. Human Development
 - Theories of Psychosocial Human Development
 - Brain Development

- B. The Biology of Mental Illness
 - Current Brain Research Findings for Children and Adolescents
 - Concordance Rates in Mental Illness

- C. Getting an accurate diagnosis
 - Majority of the symptoms are behavioral
 - Difficulty differentiating between illness and child
 - Getting an accurate diagnosis as soon as possible is critical for getting to treatment
 - Handout on finding the right diagnosis

- D. Overview of the illnesses: this is the burden your child bears. Ask not what illness your child has, but what illness has your child.
 - ADHD, Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Oppositional Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Childhood Onset Schizophrenia, Substance Abuse Disorders and Co-Morbid Disorders

- E. Adjourn

Class 3 AGENDA

Treatment

- A. Telling Your Stories
- B. Treatment options available
 - Importance of early identification, evaluation and treatment
 - Comprehensive psychiatric evaluation
 - Outpatient services overview
 - Inpatient services overview
 - Bio-psycho-social dimensions of mental illness
 - Evidence Based Practice overview
- C. The medication dilemma – in all illnesses every attempt is made to avoid mortal consequences. Treatment is the secondary intervention to keep something from getting worse. There is no primary prevention against mental illness.
 - Brain chemistry involved in most common mental illnesses
 - Basics mechanisms of action of psychotropic medications
 - Overview of the dilemma of treating mental illness in children/adolescents with medication: no long term studies of the effects of medication on this population; disagreement among the experts; lack of FDA approval for many medications; Black Box Warnings
 - Importance of making the best decisions possible for your child and your family
- E. Adjourn

Class 4 AGENDA

Objective and subjective family burden

- A. Objective and subjective family burden
 - Impact of ignoring symptoms of mental illness
 - Minimizing negative impact on other family members
- B. Communication skills
 - Basic communication guidelines
 - I statements
 - Reflective responses
- C. Problem solving skills
 - Collaborative Problem Solving
- D. Tips for handling difficult children
 - Survival strategies for managing rage
 - Overview of some basic behavioral interventions
- E. Crisis preparation & response
 - Overview of self injurious behavior, including suicide attempts
 - Development of Crisis Plan
 - Development of Relapse Plan
- H. Adjourn

Class 5 AGENDA

Overview of the systems your child may be involved with: Mental Health, School, Juvenile Justice

- A. Record Keeping
 - Overview of importance of personal record keeping, including sample record keeping system

- B. Overview of the Mental Health system
 - Overview of Government insurance programs, including state specific information on Medicaid & SCHIP
 - Overview of private insurance mental health coverage and barriers
 - Overview of state inpatient and outpatient mental health services
 - Overview of rights of individuals receiving mental health services

- C. Overview of School System's role
 - Overview of IDEA, Section 505 and other federal legislation regarding free and adequate education for children with disabilities
 - Overview of state specific Special Education regulations and procedures
 - Overview of IEP, process and role of the family in that process

- D. Overview of Juvenile Justice System

- E. Introduction to Transition Issues

- F. Adjourn

Class 6 AGENDA

Advocacy, Review, Sharing and Evaluation

- A. Presentations by local, or state, child advocacy experts
- B. Review of items identified as most pressing from Class 1
- C. Discussion of plans for self-care for family members
- D. Referral to Graduate School
 - NAMI membership & Advocacy opportunities
 - Additional modules available as part of NAMI Basics
 - Post graduation plans for participants
- E. Course Evaluation
- F. Diplomas
- G. Adjourn