

# Understanding your role in early intervention

Effective community-based mental  
health programs

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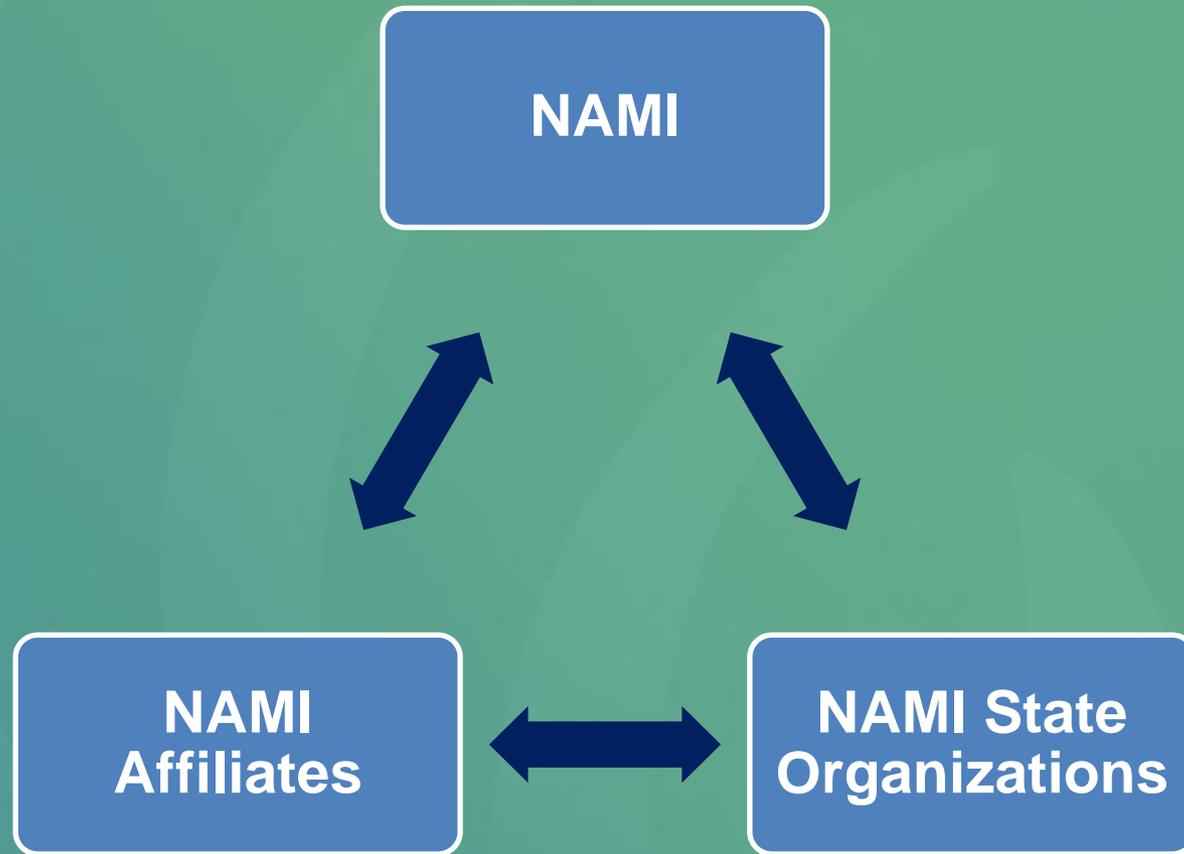
*The NAMI effect*

# Who is NAMI?

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization. NAMI provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

*Hope starts with you.*

# Three Levels of NAMI



*Hope starts with you.*

# The Four Pillars of NAMI



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# Why is important to talk about mental health and youth?

- NIMH reports that 50% of adults with mental illness experienced symptoms before the age of 14; 75% by the age of 24
- 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 will experience a mental health condition
- Less than 50% of those affected are receiving treatment
- The average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years

# Why is important to talk about mental health and youth?

- Approximately 50% of students age 14 and older with mental illness will drop out of school
- 70% of youth in state and local juvenile justice systems have a mental illness
- Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death in youth ages 15-24 in the U.S.

# Why is important to talk about mental health and youth?

- Children and youth spend a great deal of time as school
- Students with an emotional disturbance are more likely to be
  - ✓ In a segregated classroom
  - ✓ Suspended
  - ✓ Fail
  - ✓ Drop out

# What are the barriers?

- Not sure what is happening –  
Expert controversy
- Myths and stereotypes about mental health -  
Stigma
- Not sure what to do or where to turn –  
Lack of resources (education and mental health)

# What can we do?

- Early identification of symptoms
- Intervention to secure appropriate treatment
- Raise awareness about mental health conditions
- Decrease the stigma
- Just Do It!!!



**Improving Lives:**  
*be part of the* **SOLUTION**



Education and Support Programs For People  
Whose Lives Have Been Affected by Mental Illness

*The NAMI effect*

# NAMI Community-based awareness programs for youth and young adults

- NAMI Parents & Teachers as Allies
- NAMI Ending the Silence
- Say It Out Loud
- NAMI On Campus
- OK2Talk



# NAMI Parents & Teachers as Allies





- Why does mental health matter?
- The facts about mental health and youth
- Early identification and intervention are essential to recovery
- Risks of not intervening

# What is Your Role and Why is it Important?

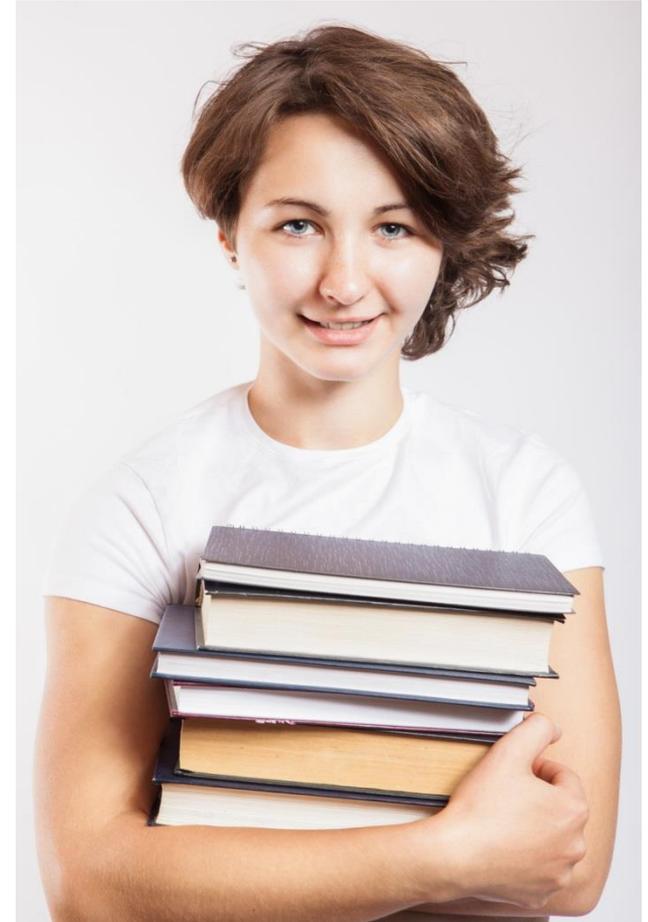
- You spend a lot of time with your students
- You are an expert observer
- Information about behaviors at school can help identify mental health issues earlier
- You and your school provide a critical link to referral for an evaluation





# Four Steps to Early Intervention

- Step #1: Know the warning signs
- Step #2: Reach out and share concerns
- Step #3: Provide resources and supports
- Step #4: Implement strategies to promote student success and wellness





# Step #1: Know the **WARNING SIGNS**





# Warning Signs of a Mental Health Condition

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks
- Severe out-of-control behaviors
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits

Jensen et al. (2011). Overlooked and Underserved: "Action Signs" for Identifying Children With Unmet Mental Health Needs. *Pediatrics*, 128(5), 970-979.



# Warning Signs of a Mental Health Condition

- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still
- Intense worries or fears
- Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight
- Repeated use of alcohol or drugs
- Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so

Jensen et al. (2011). Overlooked and Underserved: "Action Signs" for Identifying Children With Unmet Mental Health Needs. *Pediatrics*, 128(5), 970-979.



# Key Academic Indicators

- Misses class frequently
- Misses assignments and tests
- Quality of work gets worse
- Extremely disorganized
- Expresses violence, thoughts of death, hopelessness, social isolation or confusion in schoolwork
- Frequently seeks special conditions
- Shows patterns of perfectionism
- Responds very emotionally to grades



# Warning Signs of Suicide

## **Immediate attention is needed if your student**

- talks, writes or draws about death
- says they
  - want to die or kill themselves
  - have no reason to live
  - are a burden to others
  - won't be here tomorrow
  - feel hopeless, desperate or trapped
- looks for ways to attempt suicide
- gives away possessions
- behaves recklessly

# How Should You Respond?

## Take action **IMMEDIATELY**:

- Ask, "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- Don't leave her alone
- Escort him to the school mental health contact
- Share relevant information with the mental health contact
- Determine who will contact her parents





## Step #2: Reach Out and Share Concerns

Choose a pathway:

- Speak with the school mental health contact
- Reach out to your student
- Reach out to your student's parents





# Step #3: Provide Resources and Supports





# Step #4: Implement Strategies to Promote Student Success and Wellness





# Strategies to Promote Success

- Classroom adjustments
  - Put an outline on the board of the day's activities
  - Allow extended time on exams and assignments
  - Permit videotaped oral presentations
- Incorporate activities into curriculum
  - Improve communication and problem solving skills
  - Raise mental health awareness and reduce stigma
  - Help your students get organized
- Communication
  - Keep a record of warning signs/problematic behavior
  - Maintain regular communication between home and school

# Promote Resilience and Wellbeing

- Caring relationships and sense of belonging
- Positive and high expectations, with support
- Opportunities to participate and contribute



# Create a Safe Environment: Prevent Bullying

- Know and implement your school and district policies on bullying
- Let students know you're available to listen and help
- Conduct classroom activities around bullying
- Discuss bullying with colleagues
- Take action **IMMEDIATELY**



# Why Partner with Families?

- You and their parents are the closest observers of your students
- Behaviors caused by mental health issues can look very different at home and school
- Good communication between school and families helps get a complete picture of the issue



- Together, you can help your student get the treatment he needs earlier



# What do Families See at Home?

- Never slows down or has “head in the clouds”
- Nothing pleases their child
- Severe separation anxiety/not wanting to go to school
- Exhausting and demanding behavior
- Low frustration tolerance, making it difficult to participate in family activities
- Disrupted sleep cycles or night terrors
- Prefers isolation to involvement in social activities



# Predictable Stages of Reactions

## **Stage I – Dealing with catastrophic events**

Emotions: Crisis/shock, denial, hope against hope

Needs: Support, comfort, empathy, help finding resources, early intervention, prognosis

## **Stage II – Learning to cope**

Emotions: Anger/guilt/resentment, recognition, grief

Needs: Vent feelings, hope, education, self-care, networking, skill training, letting go, cooperation from system

## **Stage III – Moving into advocacy**

Emotions: Understanding, acceptance, advocacy/action

Needs: Activism, restoring balance in life, responsiveness from system

# How NAMI Can Help

- NAMI Family Support Group
- NAMI Family-to-Family
- NAMI Basics
- NAMI Ending the Silence
- NAMI website:  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

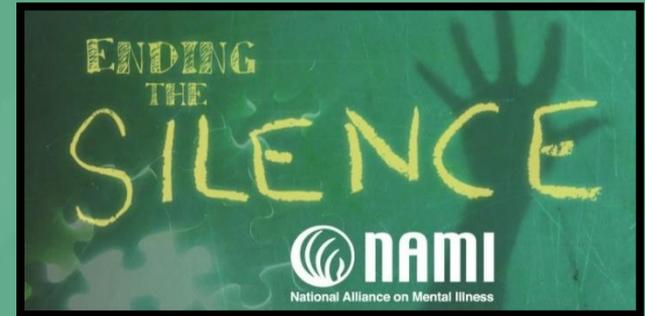


# NAMI Ending the Silence

## Mental Health Education Presentation for Middle and High School Students

Presentation made by a team

1. parent or other family member
2. young adult

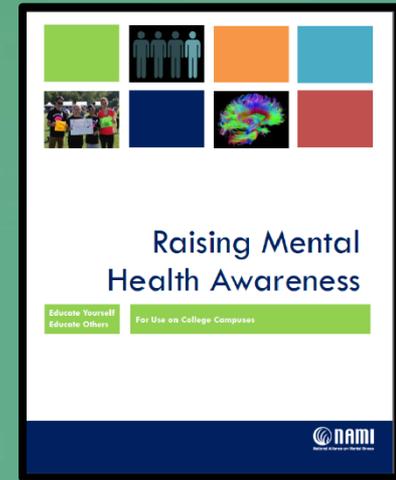


Includes

1. Facts about youth and mental health conditions
2. Most common early warning signs
3. When and how to seek help for themselves or for a friend
4. When it's not okay to keep a secret
5. Contact information for local mental health and youth support services

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# NAMI On Campus Clubs



Raising Mental Health Awareness  
on College Campuses:  
North- American Interfraternity Conference and  
national Pan-Hellenic Council  
partnership to raise mental  
Awareness among their  
member chapters

[www.nami.org/namioncampus](http://www.nami.org/namioncampus)



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# OK2Talk.org

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ok2talk.org

+ Follow oktotalk tumblr.

## SAY ANYTHING.

It's time we talked about mental health. Share what's on your mind.

**OK2TALK-ORG** SUBMIT GET HELP ABOUT EN ESPAÑOL NEED TO TALK? 1 (800) 273-TALK

Hope starts with *you.*

# Say it Out Loud

Toolkit components:

- Instructional webinar
- Guide for Discussion Group Facilitator
- Short Film
- Fact Sheets

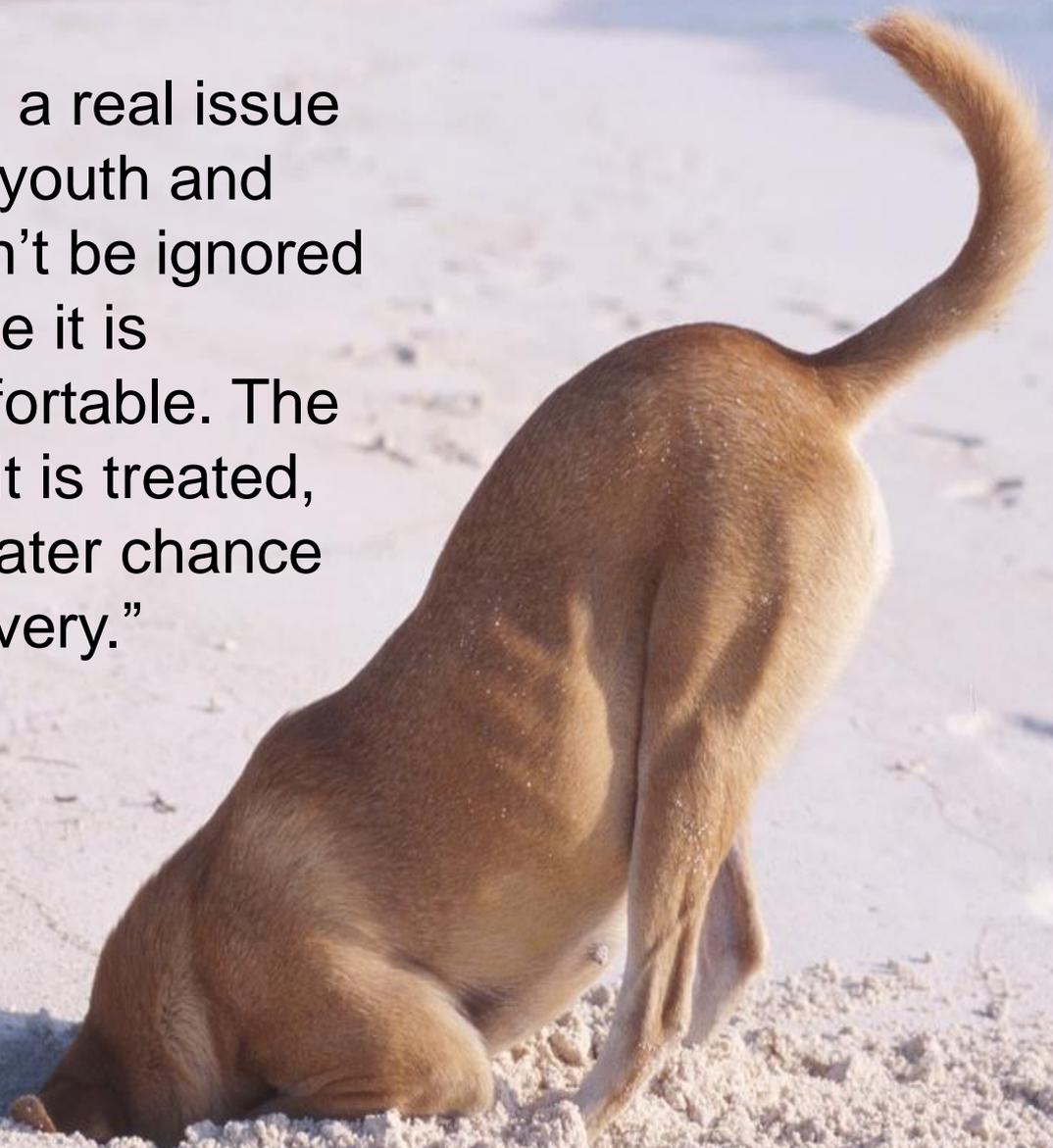


[www.nami.org/sayitoutloud](http://www.nami.org/sayitoutloud)



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“This is a real issue for our youth and shouldn’t be ignored because it is uncomfortable. The earlier it is treated, the greater chance of recovery.”



# Take home messages . . .

- We've made tremendous progress in 30 years
- There is hope when people with mental illness are identified early and provided with effective treatment and support to reach their full potential
- They deserve our commitment to do better so that they too can realize their hopes and dreams

# Take home messages . . .

- Respect and listen to the person
- Take early symptoms seriously and “hit it hard”
- Tell the person often that you believe them and mean it
- The students you see are complete human beings who feel love, fear, shame and hope, not just their diagnoses
- Keep students and families at the center of all decisions

*Hope starts with you.*

# Take home messages . . .

- Say and mean: I'm here for YOU, what do YOU need to make YOU better?
- Send a message of hope
- Be an innovator who works with people to find treatment approaches that work
- Don't let your biases guide what you do

# Questions?

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To learn more visit

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)