

# LIVES improving LIVES

## What is NAMI of Erie County?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Erie County, NAMI, is focused on fostering personal growth and family stability by educating family members and individuals facing the challenges of mental illness in Erie County. By promoting a climate of confidentiality and respect for the dignity of all who are served by the organization, NAMI of Erie County provides support to those touched by mental illness.

NAMI of Erie County is part of the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. Each year, NAMI helps over 6,000 families and individuals in the Erie community. Founded in 1984, by a group of parents, NAMI of Erie County strives to spread awareness about mental illness through education.

*"I teach mostly out of gratitude; I am so grateful for having the class available when my family needed it the most. Now, I know what others are going through and I feel responsible to carry on what was given to me so long ago."*

Missi Berquist, Family-to-Family Graduate & Teacher

## Membership

NAMI's membership consists of families, friends, and people living with mental illness such as major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder.

To learn more about NAMI of Erie County and the Family-to-Family Program, please visit [www.NAMIErie.org](http://www.NAMIErie.org).

## Who can attend a NAMI Family-to-Family education course?

The course is open to all family members and caregivers of individuals with mental illness.

## How can I register for the next NAMI Family-to-Family education course?

To register for the next Family-to-Family education course, please contact NAMI of Erie County by phone at 814-456-1773, or visit [www.NAMIErie.org](http://www.NAMIErie.org).

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1611 Peach Street, Suite 105  
Erie, PA 16501-2120  
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
814-456-1773  
[www.NAMIErie.org](http://www.NAMIErie.org)



# FAMILY-TO-FAMILY program

A FREE, 12-week course for family members and caregivers of individuals with mental illness.

# you are **NOT ALONE**

Despite gains in the treatment and opportunities for recovery, coping with the difficulties that many people encounter in caring for a relative or friend with mental illness can be difficult. The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program is a 12-week course for family members and caregivers of loved ones with mental illness.

The Family-to-Family course increases empowerment, reduces burden in the home, increases family stability, and promotes the path to family recovery. The Family-to-Family program also provides education about mental illness, understanding of the mental health system and self-care for family members and caregivers

Additionally, the program covers topics on current research, empathy skills, communication techniques, crisis strategies, coping mechanisms for caregivers, and guidance on local, state, and national resources.

Course participants gain valuable information, insight and understanding of their loved one that many describe as life-changing.



*“I feel like I now have the knowledge needed to care for my son. NAMI has helped me build a support group of people with similar family challenges. I highly recommend NAMI’s Family-to-Family course.”*

Christina Halli, Family-to-Family Graduate

## education and support **FOR FAMILIES**

### Why is the Family-to-Family program unique?

Classes are taught by trained mentors, or family teachers, who have faced the challenges of a loved one living with mental illness, treatments and medications, and rehabilitation. The course provides participants with comprehensive information on mental illness. It teaches self-care, problem-solving skills, and communication skills, which can later be taught to the entire family unit. This course has been offered in several other countries and has touched the lives of more than 300,000 participants.

### This Course:

- Meets weekly for 12-weeks
- Is taught by trained NAMI family members who have relatives with mental illness
- Follows a structured format covering issues frequently faced by families dealing with mental illness
- A national program that is offered in 49 states, two provinces in Canada, Mexico and Italy.

*“We found NAMI’s Family-to-Family class and it helped us realize we weren’t alone. NAMI’s programs are a great way to show families they aren’t the only one’s facing these challenges. Thanks to NAMI, I have hope for the future.”*

Kathy Bruno, Family-to-Family Graduate

### The course teaches the knowledge and skills that family members need to cope more effectively. Participants of the program can expect the following:

- Interact with other family members in a confidential setting
- Gain understanding into how mental illness affects your relative
- Take an eye-opening look inside some of today’s current brain research related to mental illness
- Insight on how families can become advocates for better treatment for their relatives
- Learn about the medication issues involved in mental illness and the latest treatment options
- Acquire skills to cope with worry and stress; learn to focus on care for you as well as your loved ones