NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group Program is a peer-based, mutual support group model. The vision is that every person in this country who lives with a mental illness will have, within reasonable driving distance, a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group to attend.

A NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group is an alliance of individuals who have in common the experience of living with mental illness. It provides a place to share our experiences and use them as learning opportunities for ourselves and others. Connection groups are a safe space to confront the challenges that all consumers face, regardless of diagnosis: low self-esteem; social isolation; dual diagnosis; stigma and discrimination; etc.

NAMI Connection Facilitators are individuals living with mental illnesses and are at a point in recovery where they want to "give back" to others. They attend an intense training designed to help them develop the skills they need to facilitate a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group.

NAMI Connection Facilitators:

- ☆ Apply to be selected to attend trainings and include a reference in their application
- ☆ Receive skill training in the NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group model
- ☆ Are volunteers
- ☆ Work in pairs to co-facilitate weekly 90 minute groups (a minimum of 2 facilitators per group is required)
- ☆ Commit to a minimum of one year of service
- ☆ Commit to fidelity to the NAMI Connection model

NAMI Connection Trainees do not need to be members of NAMI prior to attending the Facilitator training. The expectation is that NAMI Connection facilitator trainees will become members at the training if they are not members already. Open Door memberships (a reduced rate) are available for individuals with low incomes. Special note: Attending a facilitator training does not guarantee becoming certified as a facilitator

Keys to starting successful Connection groups: Sites, meeting days and times should be arranged prior to facilitator trainings. This way, facilitators can begin groups directly after the training occurs. Local Affiliate leaders are instrumental in making these arrangements with the sites and the facilitators.