

NAMI Connection Satisfaction Survey

In the spring of 2008, the NAMI Connection Team and the University of Maryland joined together to conduct a satisfaction survey for attendees of the NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group Program. The anonymous survey was administered to support group attendees in fifteen different states, which resulted in over 400 completed surveys. The University of Maryland was then able to do an analysis from the information received of how people are feeling about the program.

We are delighted to share that NAMI Connection support group attendees are feeling very satisfied with the program! Per the table below, you can see the satisfaction level for each of the

specific areas we asked participants to rate. The University of Maryland is preparing a more detailed report which we will distribute upon its completion.

We would like to extend a big thank you to all facilitators and participants who were part of this important initiative.



Testimonials

NAMI Connection has enabled me to take a good look at my illness and see that I am not alone. The program has given me additional tools to not only accept my illness, but to help others along the way.

NAMI Connection has helped not only me, but also my family, to accept my mental illness.

If just one word were to be used to describe NAMI Connection, that word would be lifesaver; but otherwise NAMI Connection is a word and meaning of its own, complete with a heart that beats by the many people that it has helped.



Survey Questions	Percentage*:
1. NAMI Connection is helpful because I can contribute to the group.	91%
2. NAMI Connection gives me a chance to talk and feel understood.	95%
3. NAMI Connection makes me feel better when I leave than when I came in.	92%
4. NAMI Connection gives me support from people like me who are going through similar circumstances.	93%
5. NAMI Connection allows me to talk openly about all aspects of my illness (providers, meds, symptoms, side effects, etc.).	92%
6. NAMI Connection has produced positive changes in my recovery.	88%
7. NAMI Connection gives me practical information to help me deal with my problems.	92%
8. NAMI Connection gives me a better understanding of the resources available in my community.	85%
9. NAMI Connection's group discussions about my medications have helped me make decisions about my treatment.	65%

*Percentage of people who responded "somewhat" or "a lot"

Training Progress:

Facilitator Trainings: 54
Total Facilitators Trained: 1,026
Total Support Groups: 236

For more information on NAMI Connection:

- Visit our website at www.nami.org/connection
- Call the HelpLine at 1(800) 950-NAMI (6264)
- Send an email to connection@nami.org



NAMI Connection at the 2008 Democratic National Convention

Written by: Lacey Berumen, NAMI Colorado Executive Director

Colorado was very excited to be chosen as the location for the 2008 Democratic National Convention. It was an honor to be the host city. After years of planning, Colorado also made history in being the first recovery friendly convention. NAMI Colorado was honored to be invited to co-host the first Wellness and Recovery rooms held at a Delegation convention. The rooms were designed to be friendly harbors in the busy day- to-day operations of the convention.



We were able to begin the convention with a Recovery Caucus with speeches by former Representative Andrew Romanoff of Colorado who welcomed us. Representative Patrick Kennedy who spoke about the importance of being able to get Parity passed at the federal level and Rhode Island senator Tom Coderre who spoke about his struggle with alcohol and his own recovery.

One of the rooms open during the day hours at the Denver Convention Center offered refreshments, space to relax, resource tables, a daily NAMI Connection support group meeting, and Twelve Step meetings. The other room was at the Pepsi Center where the evening business meeting, speeches and votes occurred. This area also provided space to rest and receive support.

During the event, NAMI had the opportunity to reach up to 30,000 caucus attendees, because you could not go more than 100 feet in any direction and not see a sign advertising the recovery rooms. We

also had prominent signage at the Pepsi Center, which saw 70,000 in attendance, as well as 300 foreign dignitaries.

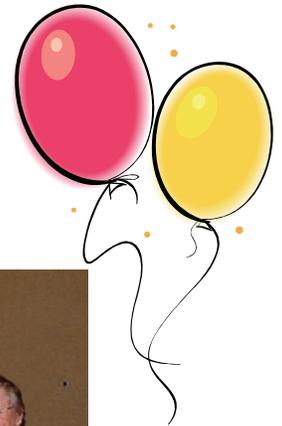
However, the best part was the fact that as a 2007 rollout state, Colorado Connection facilitators did not only staff the resource room and provide peer support, but also held daily Connection support group meetings and talked about the Connection program to individuals from all of the states. We were honored to have visits from NAMI Members in California, Nevada, New Mexico and Arizona. The Connection Facilitators were also able to see Democracy in action having access to events at the Pepsi Center, Health Care Reform parties, Star studied lunches and several were even awarded tickets to see the Barak Obama acceptance speech at Invesco Field.



These were once in a lifetime events that helped us to reinforce how important it is for consumers to get involved and to tell their stories, so we can make a difference. As NAMI Colorado continues to grow our Connection program we hope that the folks we were able to speak with at the convention go home and connect with their local NAMI's and encourage their states to adopt the Connection programs. As one of our facilitators stated " Today is the day I can make a difference in decreasing the stigma around mental illness, no more will we stand along the sidelines waiting for change to happen."

NAMI Connection has trained over 1,000 facilitators!

This month NAMI Connection reached the milestone of having trained over 1,000 facilitators to lead support groups in their states. The program has held over 50 trainings in 30 states, and is still growing! The NAMI Connection team would like to congratulate and thank everyone who has been part of this success.





SPOTLIGHT: Heather Henry, NAMI Maryland Coordinator of Education Programs and Publications

How did you first get involved in NAMI? I came into NAMI pretty much by accident. I was looking for mental health resources for people I was working with and stumbled on NAMI, and then began working in the state office. It was only after working here that I realized the value of NAMI in my personal and family life as well. NAMI was there for me when I went through a rough time in my recovery and helped me to better accept and live with mental illness in my life.

What other programs do you work with besides NAMI Connection? I am the program coordinator for both our family and consumer programs, including Family-to-Family, Family Support Group, Peer-to-Peer, In Our Own Voice, and a multi-county consumer advocacy project (in addition to publications, the education conference, and grants).

What are you doing to make NAMI Connection a success? One of the biggest things I am doing to make Connection a success is encouraging and supporting the facilitators and coordinators at the local level (honestly I think they deserve more credit than I do...), and to spread what is working in one affiliate to another affiliate who might be able to use it. I have also worked with affiliate leaders to impart the importance of Connection and its role in engaging consumer involvement. I have talked with providers and other consumer organizations throughout the state to partner in providing Connection, allowing us to spread Connection support groups. One big step in our success is developing the link between Connection and Peer-to-Peer,

to the point where we, as a state, found funding from the Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration to provide statewide Connection trainings. I think my biggest strength is being told of a problem and trying to come up with a solution to it; for example, creating a post-training workshop for Connection trainers to further build on the strengths our or state trainers.

What kind of feedback have you heard about the program? The beauty of Connection is that just about everyone gains from it. People seem to like it because it actually uses the group members' strength to come up with strategies for living well with mental illness; because it looks forward instead of backwards, and it focuses on the positive, instead of the negative. This, in some form or fashion, is what I hear from people.



What do you want to see happen with NAMI Connection, both in your state and nationally? We would like to see Connection continue to spread throughout the state. In Maryland, we really take to heart the national goal of being able to offer a Connection support group within driving distance of everyone in the state by 2010. We have expanded, through the work of our affiliates, to 11 sites throughout the state, and we're working with affiliates to provide more groups in the coming months. We would like to see Connection as a place where consumers can come and grow in their recovery, thereby becoming more confident and more empowered in their own lives and in the community.

How did you first get involved with NAMI? I first became aware of NAMI as a social work student at Virginia Commonwealth University. NAMI Virginia has always been heavily involved with state-level advocacy and as a student I was very interested in policy change and mental health. When the Program Coordinator position became available, I jumped at the chance to join NAMI Virginia and head the programs. It is a great fit for me personally and professionally and I enjoy my work for NAMI.

What other programs do you work with besides NAMI Connection? In addition to the Connection program, I also coordinate Peer-to-Peer, In Our Own Voice, Family-to-Family, Family Support Groups, MESA, and Visions.

What are you doing to make NAMI Connection a success? I think the key to making Connection a success is working closely with your NAMI Connection Field Manager to create a plan on recruitment, training, ongoing support and retention, program expansion, and outreach and marketing. Then the Program Coordinator and Field Manager need to follow through with that plan, but also constantly adjust it to the needs of the program and Affiliates. The Program Coordinator should be



tapped into the network of Affiliates to partner with them and create new Connection leadership at the Affiliate level. One last key thing is for the Program Coordinator to be

SPOTLIGHT: Liz Sussan, NAMI Virginia Program Coordinator



available to the trained facilitators to listen to their needs and concerns and then act to help them resolve those concerns.

What kind of feedback have you heard about the program? I have heard that communities are anxious to get more support and that NAMI Affiliates have a desire to offer the Connection program to help fill the gaps. I have had facilitators tell me that facilitating the groups have contributed positively to their own recovery and allow them to "give back" in a meaningful way. I have heard that the training and ongoing support of the Connection program really offers a good base of knowledge for the facilitators.

What do you want to see happen with NAMI Connection, both in your state and nationally? I know that the Connection program will continue to grow in Virginia and nationally. In Virginia, we will need additional trained facilitators and Champions to support our program expansion. For the future, I hope that the same level of field support continues while the program expands, and I want to see peer and mutual support grow and become a model for the recovery movement.

A personal message from Liz: Gretchen Anglin has been our Field Manager since the beginning of the Connection rollout in Virginia. She really has been a huge component of our success. Her education, guidance, and support has been critical to me being successful at my job. Thank you, Gretchen!



Are you interested in being a champion for NAMI Connection?

In every community, NAMI is looking for Champions to help ensure that NAMI Connection becomes a successful and flourishing program.

Champions can:

- Work with facilitators and local affiliates to distribute NAMI Connection marketing materials to agencies, mental health centers, and other local locations
- Identify sites for NAMI Connection support groups, such as churches, clubhouses, drop-in centers, and hospitals.
- Identify and recruit potential champions and support group facilitators.

Who can become a champion? Champions are consumers, family members, peer support specialists, mental health professionals, former affiliate board members; anyone who is interested in making NAMI Connection succeed in their local area.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a champion, contact your state office or email connection@nami.org for more information on how to help!



Monthly Facilitator Calls

NAMI Connection Field Managers hold a monthly teleconference call for the **facilitators, affiliate leaders, and state coordinators** in each state covering a wide variety of topics. Please contact the field manager for your state for more information.

IA, IL, IN, KY, MI, MN, MO, OH, SD, UT, WI, & WV

- Anna Goodwin, 1 (866) 446-8433 or agoodwin@nami.org

AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, LA, MD, MS, NC, PR, SC, & TN

- Gretchen Anglin, 1 (800) 985-2958 or gmeyer@nami.org

AK, AZ, CO, CT, KS, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, TX, & VT

- Harriet Kronick, 1 (877) 400-2092 or hkronick@nami.org

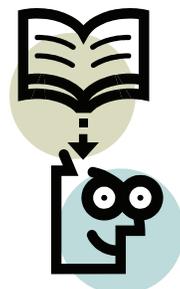
CA, HI, ID, MY, ND, NE, NM, NV, OK, OR, WA, WY

- Beth Gould, 1 (866) 461-4569 or bgould@nami.org

Recent & Upcoming Facilitator Trainings:

Texas (Fort Worth): 7-9
Kentucky (Louisville): 7-9
Illinois (Alton): 7-9
Illinois (Naperville): 14-16
Massachusetts (Springfield): 14-16
Louisiana (Baton Rouge): 14-16
December:
Utah (Salt Lake City): 5-7
New Mexico (Albuquerque): 5-7
South Carolina (Winnsboro): 5-7
Florida (Orlando): 12-14
Coming Soon:
Indiana: TBA
Wisconsin: TBA

September:
Pennsylvania (Harrisburg): 5-7
Nebraska (Grand Island): 12-14
Washington (Seattle): 26-28
Arkansas (Little Rock): 26-28
October:
Georgia (Atlanta): 3-5
Arizona (Phoenix): 3-5
Ohio (Columbus): 3-5
Delaware (Dover): 17-19
Missouri (St. Louis): 17-19
Colorado (Denver): 17-19
November:
Virginia (Herndon): 7-9
Connecticut (TBA): 7-9



Do you want to contribute to the next NAMI Connection newsletter?

We want to hear from you! We're looking for people to contribute to the NAMI Connection newsletter and share their successes, tips, and creativity.

Including:

- Poetry
- Articles about local/state involvement in NAMI Connection
- Personal stories
- Artwork
- Spotlight suggestions
- Anything else you want to contribute to the newsletter

For more information or to submit your piece, email connection@nami.org.