



Student Manual

The complete guide to running (successfully!) a NAMI on Campus High School Club



NAMI On Campus High School - Student Manual

Welcome!

At the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), we are thrilled to be working alongside young people like you to make a change in our world. We believe that amazing things are happening and even more are to come, because of young adults like you. We are here to help you with your NAMI on Campus High School Club, every step of the way.

You are about to start on an incredible high school experience, one that will teach you important life skills and educate you about something that affects us all, in one way or another: mental health and wellness.

- About 1 out of 5 young people between the ages of 9 to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder that impacts their daily lives.
- Half of lifetime disorders begin by age of 14, but there is an average of 10 years before these individuals seek out treatment due to stigma.
- On any given day, 20% of students in a classroom are experiencing mental health conditions. They can be brief and mild, or they can be more serious and last a lifetime.
- Of those 20%, 80% will go undiagnosed and untreated.
- Left untreated, mental health conditions can worsen and become debilitating. They can lead to other issues such as substance abuse, truancy, problems with peers, problems with parents, victimization, dropping out of school, homicide, and suicide.¹

These statistics tell us that most people know someone with a mental health issue, whether they are aware of it or not. Emotional distress isn't always noticeable. People can be suffering in silence or using negative coping skills to deal with their emotions.

Through the NAMI On Campus Club, you will be setting an example for other young people across the country and establishing yourself as a mental health advocate. Your role in the Club will help people at your school in ways you might never, ever know or be able to count. But just know, your NAMI On Campus Club will make differences and will make things better, whether you can see those changes or not. We thank you for spending your high school years focusing on mental health and wellness and getting involved with NAMI!

As a student leader of a NAMI On Campus Club, you are setting an example for other students on your campus. Just by bringing the Club to your school, you are making a difference. As part of the NAMI On Campus High School movement, you are making a stand to start educating your generation about the facts, and putting an end to the stigma and discrimination against mental illness once and for all. You've actually already started this process of change, just by signing up for the NAMI On Campus Club. You are off to a fantastic start!

Team NAMI

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¹ (Facts on Children's Mental Health in America)

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Acknowledgements

The NAMI On Campus High School (NCHS) program was developed in 2013 by NAMI California, with permission to pilot from NAMI National, to promote the voices of students within the high school environment and increase awareness, advocacy, and acceptance for students experiencing a mental health condition. The launch of this program was supported by the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63) grant. The high school program was envisioned by NAMI California's CEO Jessica Cruz and rolled out by their COO Steven Kite and the NAMI CA staff. Today they partner with both state and private organizations to move this mission forward. Its goal is to give high school students the education and tools at an early phase of their lives so that they are better equipped to recognize mental health conditions in themselves or others, to access the services they need sooner, and to reduce stigma on high school campuses. As of 2024 NAMI California and their affiliates support 150 NCHS clubs statewide and growing.

NAMI CA provides support through materials such as Student and Advisor Manuals, Activity guides, and Club Toolkits. NAMI CA holds NAMI on Campus High School Info Webinars as well as the 5-hour Trainings for all our new clubs and clubs with new leaders. In addition, the clubs are supported through our local NAMI Affiliates in partnership to provide Ending the Silence Presentations, resources, and attend and support local events.

For any questions specific to these materials, please contact nchs@namica.org.

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About NAMI

Who is NAMI?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest nonprofit, grassroots organization that provides support, education and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and friends. Founded in 1979, the NAMI organization consists of a national office, 50 NAMI State Organizations, and more than 1,000 local NAMI Affiliates nationwide.

What Does NAMI Do?

NAMI Local Affiliates offer programs, classes, and support groups to people who either have a mental illness themselves, or a friend or family member of someone with a mental illness. We incorporate the lived experience of people who have lived with mental illness into our programs so they can share their journeys to recovery and provide real examples of hope. NAMI State Organizations (NSOs) provide program support, training, and assistance to affiliates throughout the state, and also provide advocacy at the state level.

The NAMI On Campus High School Project

In 2013 the NAMI on Campus High School Club program was developed by NAMI California, with permission to pilot from NAMI National, to promote the voices of students within the high school environment, and increase awareness, advocacy, and acceptance for students experiencing a mental health condition. Its goal is to give high school students the education and tools at an early phase of their lives, so they are better equipped to recognize mental health conditions in themselves or others get the services they need sooner, and to reduce stigma on campus.

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About NAMI On Campus High School

What is a NAMI On Campus High School Club?

NAMI On Campus High School Clubs are student-led groups on high school campuses, where students can talk openly about mental health and wellness, learn ways to support friends or family members who have a mental illness, and educate others on campus about mental health and wellness. The goal of NAMI On Campus Clubs is to end stigma by raising awareness that mental illness is not rare and should be treated like any other kind of medical condition.

The purpose of NAMI On Campus (NOC) Clubs is to:

- Educate and increase the awareness of students, teachers, faculty and school administration about mental health and wellness
- Be supportive of students who are living with mental illness
- Provide information on school and community resources
- Encourage people to recognize early signs of mental illness
- Encourage students who are having mental health issues to think about getting help
- Work to end the stigma that surrounds mental illness
- Create an inclusive, safe, and supportive school environment
- Let students know there is help available if they need it

What is Stigma?

Stigma is a negative and degrading attitude towards others, usually based on lack of information and understanding. Stigma is what happens when a person is treated differently because they have a mental illness or have a friend or a family member with a mental illness. Words like “crazy”, “lunatic”, “psycho” are all examples of stigma. Stigma is a problem because it prevents young people from getting the help they need for a mental health condition out of fear. Ending stigma relating to mental illness is a big part of NOC Clubs.

Why Does My School Need a NOC Club?

Mental illness in young people is being talked about more and more in the news, in media and online. 1 out of 5 students has a mental health condition, and it's important that we all get the facts about mental illness right to avoid mislabeling or stigmatizing. NAMI On Campus Clubs are one way for students to get the conversation started on their campuses about what mental illness is and isn't, and to let people know that it's ok if they are living with a mental health condition or know someone who is.

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NAMI On Campus Clubs are also great ways to show people that recovery is possible by bringing presenters who have a mental illness to campus for special events or hosting other activities that fight back against stigma (more on those activities later!).

Who Can Join NOC Clubs?

NAMI On Campus Clubs are open to all students, whether they live with a mental health condition, are a family member or friend of someone with a mental health condition, or just are interested in mental health or advocacy. Everyone is welcome!

NAMI On Campus High School Club Mission

The official mission of the NAMI On Campus High School Club is:

NAMI on Campus High School Clubs are student-led Clubs that address mental health issues by raising mental health awareness, educating the high school community, supporting students, promoting services and supports, and creating a greater dialogue for mental health and wellness. These Clubs are open to all students, whether they live with a mental health condition, are a family member or friend of someone with a mental health condition or have an interest in mental health. NAMI On Campus educates and empowers students to seek the help they need.

Bringing NOC to Your Campus

Benefits to Students, Teachers, and Your School

Starting an NOC Club at your school will be an awesome and educational experience for everyone. Below are just some of the benefits that NOC will bring to you, your teachers, and your school:

Students Will Benefit By:

- Expanding their awareness of mental health and wellness
- Learning about the various mental conditions
- Meeting and working with other students on campus and students from other NOC High School Clubs in your area
- Developing leadership skills
- Learning how to run meetings, prepare agendas, promote campus activities and hold events
- Having a positive impact on their peers
- Reducing stigma and discrimination against mental illness on campus
- Knowing that they have helped make having a mental illness more acceptable in their school
- Being a positive role model to other students
- Participating in an extension of NAMI, the largest grassroots nonprofit organization that provides support and resources to people with mental health conditions and their families
- Gaining valuable experience in working with other people and adults
- How to identify and develop resources

Teachers and School Administration Will Benefit By:

- Gaining access to a network of volunteers and resources, on a national and local level, to help with projects, classroom presentations and education
- Bringing lived experience presentations to your school to help provide students with face-to-face personal contact with someone who is living well in their recovery from a mental health condition
- Having personal contacts at NAMI who can help or provide direction to additional mental health resources
- Having access to full NOC curriculum and manuals
- Networking with other teachers and administration who also have a focus on mental health in their schools and who have brought NOC to their schools
- Creating a safe, supportive school environment for students with mental health conditions or who have family or friends with mental health conditions
- Having more information on mental health resources available to students and staff

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High School Campuses Will Benefit By:

- Having a Club on campus that is open to all students, where the focus is on raising awareness of mental health and wellness and on reducing stigma and discrimination against mental illness
- Creating a more accepting environment for students with a mental health condition or who family members or friends with mental health condition
- Establishing themselves as a school that values the mental wellness of their students and takes a proactive approach to early prevention and intervention of students in need of services or support
- Creating an environment that is accepting of all students and one that discourages the bullying of and by students with mental health conditions

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NOC Is / NOC Isn't

Sometimes, there might be confusion from students, parents, or teachers about what exactly a NOC Club is all about. Use this comparison chart to help answer any questions and review it often to remind yourself as well.

NOC Is...

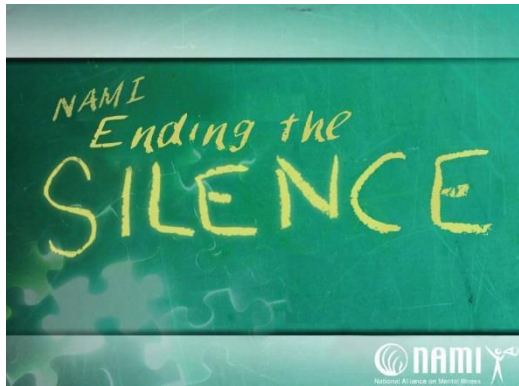
- a place to learn more about mental health and wellness, not just mental illnesses
- a group of young people passionate about creating a safe and supportive school environment
- an opportunity to see if the mental health field is a possible career-path
- a way for students to work together to combat stigma and discrimination against people with a mental illness
- a place for students to develop leadership skills that will help them the rest of their lives
- a club that is open to all students
- about learning how to be a supportive friend to someone who is in distress, and recognizing the signs of when someone needs help

NOC Isn't...

- a support or therapy group
- a place to get diagnosed or medication
- about identifying or labeling others who may or may not have a mental illness
- a place to promote medications or treatments
- a group just for people who have a mental illness or who have a family member with a mental illness

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Ending the Silence



What are some of the ways your NOC Club can start reducing stigma on your campus? NAMI's program, Ending the Silence, is a great way to bring your school together for a presentation that will educate and fight back against stigma.

NAMI Ending the Silence (ETS) is a 50-minute mental health awareness program for high school age youth. Teens learn how to recognize the early warning signs of mental illness and what to do if they or someone they know is exhibiting these signs. NAMI Ending the Silence instills a message of

hope and recovery and encourages teens to reduce stigma and end the silence surrounding mental illness.

Some quotes from those who have attended a presentation:

"Now I know I am not alone and that I should start talking instead of keeping it to myself."

"I'm grateful for your presentation because it helped me get the courage to face a mental illness I think I might have and I feel encouraged to seek help."

How the Program Works

- Presented in health, science or psychology classes, youth groups, clubs, and after-school programs.
- Delivered by a trained two-person team, one of whom is a young adult living in recovery with a mental health condition.
- Includes presenter stories, educational slides, videos, and discussion.
- Provides teens with resources and tools to help themselves, friends or family members who may be experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition.
- ETS reduces stigma through:
 - Education—provides accurate information about mental illness to promote understanding and dispel myths.
 - Personal contact—puts a human face to mental illness and provides hope that recovery is possible.

What can my NOC Club do with ETS?

As members of NOC, you will want to think of lots of activities to bring to your campus that will help clear up the myths and wrong ideas about mental illness. ETS is perfect way to do just that. As a year-long goal of each NOC Club, your Club could work together to plan and coordinate bringing an ETS presentation to your school.

Here are the basics:

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Step 1: Talk with your school administrator

Find out the rules and policies for having a guest speaker come to your school. Make sure you get any approvals taken care of right away, which should be easy since they're helping you already!

Step 2: Talk with your local Affiliate

Contact your local NAMI Affiliate to talk with them about your plans. Your local Affiliate may or may not have the ETS program; if they don't, they or the NAMI State Organization can help you find the next closest one that does.

Step 3: Pick a date, location, and format

ETS works best in classroom-sized audiences (20-30 students) instead of a huge assembly.

Because assemblies have so many students, they often don't feel comfortable enough to ask questions or talk with the presenters. You'll want to decide as a Club how you want to host the ETS presentation. A few ideas are:

- Have an afterschool event that students have to RSVP. Only accept the first 30 students that RSVP
- Talk with your Health Science or Life Skills teachers about having an ETS presentation in one of their class periods
- If your school has "free" periods or study periods, see if you can get permission to have the ETS presentation during one of those periods

Once you have a few ideas for dates, check back with your local NAMI Affiliate. He or she will check with the ETS Coordinator to find out when their ETS presenters are available to present.

Step 4: Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper, or on the school Facebook page. Post flyers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends about why they would want to attend.

Step 5: Host the Presentation

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be presenting in or help them set up their equipment. If your Club has a budget, you might want to offer a snack like cookies or fruit to the attendees of the presentation. As the members of the NOC Club, the Club President should give a short welcome to the audience, tell the audience about the NOC Club, and then introduce the presenters. Have fliers for upcoming events or Club information handy in case people want to learn more.

Each NOC Club is encouraged to hold at least 1 ETS presentation at some point in their school year. When your Club begins to plan for the ETS presentation, your NAMI State Organization can help you with the details and planning.

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What Do I Do As A Member?

As a member of the NOC Club on your campus, you can expect to learn more about mental health and wellness, acquire new skills, meet new people and have a fun experience. It's important to know what's expected of you as a member, so that you can feel good about your contributions to the Club and also balance the other responsibilities in your life. Below is a list of the general expectations of a student member of the Club.

Each NOC Club member is expected to:

- Attend Club meetings on a regular basis
- Communicate with your Advisor and President when you won't be able to make it to a meeting or event
- Contribute to the Club by voicing ideas, thoughts or comments
- Participate in Club votes and elections
- Be a positive role model for anti-stigma and acceptance
- Participate in the planning and coordination of bringing an ETS presentation to your campus
- Be respectful of your peers and Advisor's viewpoints, experiences and comments
- Be respectful of your co-members' privacy if they choose to share something personal but not dangerous (for example: a student shares that her father has depression. She might be ok with talking with the Club about it but doesn't want it discussed outside of the Club).
- Agree to immediately get help from an adult if you are concerned about another student hurting him or herself or others (for example: A student shares that she sometimes cuts herself and thinks about suicide. This is dangerous activity, and an adult must be told).

This is just a list to get started. As your Club develops, your members and Advisor might feel it's a good idea to add more to this list or to refer back to it as a reminder at each meeting.

What Does Your Advisor Do?

Your Advisor has an important role in your NOC Club. He or she must be present at each and every meeting or Club event, and will help you with running meetings, finding new members, and planning activities. The Advisor was selected because he or she is knowledgeable about mental health and can contribute to your meetings and discussions in an educational way. Your advisor is one of your greatest resources and will be a huge help to you as your Club gets going. Please note that your advisor is not a therapist and by law, all teachers are mandated reporters and therefore must report if they feel you are in danger.

Below are the guidelines for what your Advisor is responsible for:

- Attend every Club meeting or event
- Set the date and time of each NOC student meeting for the school year
- Set a date for the end of the year NOC school celebration
- Help students develop a project plan for the year

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- Schedule the date and time for the annual presentation to school faculty, school and district leadership, and school board (depending on the size of your district, it may take several months to get on a school board agenda)
- Oversee Club operations (reserving meeting locations, etc.)
- Provide guidance to the Club members on activities, leading meetings, etc.
- Be one of many trusted adults for students to come to with concerns, questions and if they need help for themselves, a friend, or a family member
- Be a positive role model of anti-stigma behavior
- Complete all reporting requirements to the NAMI State Organization
- Help facilitate resolutions if conflicts with students arise
- Provide guidance on the officer election process
- Help students with fundraising and management of budgets and funds
- Create a safe, accepting, and open-minded atmosphere in which to thrive

FAQs

Q: What is the minimum number of members for the Club?

A: To get started, you'll need at least 4 student members and one Advisor. As your Club grows and more and more people learn about it on campus, your membership will probably grow too.

Q: What's the best way to get our administration excited about our NOC Club?

A: Make an appointment with your principal or other key administration members to give a brief presentation about the NOC Club and what you hope to accomplish for the year. Focus on the benefits the school and other students will receive by having this Club available to them. If you want a little extra help or back-up, ask your local NAMI Affiliate if they will join you to present on the NAMI organization.

Share with your administrator how NOC will improve school climate, student engagement and ultimately academics. Make sure you use the statistics on mental health and illness that are provided to you in this manual.

Q: What are some good ways to get other students excited about the Club?

A: In order to get people excited, you need to be excited! Be passionate about what you're doing in the Club and your own unique role in creating a safe and stigma-free school environment. When other students see your members being confident and excited about the NOC Club, chances are they will want to find out what it's all about, too.

Also...food helps. People love coming to an event if there's the promise of a free snack. If your Club has the funds, offer cookies, fruit, muffins or other snacks at meetings or events. Some local businesses will

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be happy to sponsor these activities by donating snacks or materials. The goal is to get people to your Club's activity; once they're there, they'll forget their plates and be focused on your NOC Club.

Q: How many community service projects should our Club do in a school year?

A: That's up to your Club! As long as the Club is supporting the mission and values of NOC, you can do as many community service projects as you'd like. It's a good way to get involved with your community, meet new people, and let your communities know about the important mission of the NOC Club, so you'll definitely want to get involved in various ways. Your local NAMI Affiliate might have community events already planned that your Club members can volunteer at or attend.

Q: Are there established projects our Club could get involved in right away?

A: Yes. A presentation of *Ending the Silence* will be a great way to get people excited! An ETS presentation can be coordinated at your school with your local NAMI affiliate.

Q: Do students need to be a certain age to join a NOC High School Club?

A: Nope! All students are welcome. Club Officers must be in at least the 10th grade, but 9th graders are welcome to join as members and participate in all activities.

Q: When and how do we vote for Club officers?

A: If it is the first year of the Club, officers will be voted in by members and advisors in the first 2 weeks of the Club. The first Club meeting should be for explaining the roles of Officers and asking for people to nominate themselves or someone else for each role. The 2nd meeting should be where those candidates can spend a minute or two (or more, if you have the time), explaining why he or she would be the best fit for that Officer position. Student members and the advisor can then vote for each Officer.

If your Club is going into its second or more years, you will vote for new Officers in the spring before school ends for the year. The newly elected officers will then take on their new jobs when school starts back up. This will let everyone know who the officers are in case they want to get together during the break. Electing officers in advance will also help make sure your Club is set up for success before the new school year starts. For more info on officer roles and the voting process, see the section of the manual on voting. This process is flexible; there are other terms of service you can explore if it works for your site (i.e. January to January office terms).

Q: Do you have to be an expert in mental health or have a mental illness to be in the Club?

A: All students can join the Club! You do not need to be an expert about mental illness to be successful in your NOC Club. NAMI is here to help you with resources and guidance so that you have the tools to educate yourselves and others through your Club's activities. Students who support creating a safer school environment that is stigma-free are welcome to join. You do not need to have a mental illness to join the Club.

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NOC High School Club Procedures

Eligibility and Participation

In order to participate in the NOC Club as a member or officer, students must follow the guidelines for Club eligibility set by their school. A NOC Club membership is open to students in 9th-12th grades (with district sponsorship, middle schools may also apply to be a Club). The Club's membership should be made up of students representing all grade levels at the school, with the goal of sustaining the Club the following year. Student officers will determine their own policies about missing meetings.

Representing NOC is a privilege and responsibility. Students that repeatedly act in ways that don't support the mission of NOC or participate in stigmatizing behavior will meet with the Advisor and Club President to address these behaviors. NOC believes in providing opportunities for everyone to learn ways to be more supportive of people with mental health conditions. Students will be given the chance to change their behaviors or they will be asked to leave the Club.

Requirements of NOC Clubs

Please review the following items to see if your school is ready to meet the requirements of running a NOC Club.

Uphold the Mission of NAMI's NOC Program and Protect Your NSO and NAMI name

Maintaining the high quality, positive outcomes and the name of your NSO and NAMI are the responsibilities of each student leader in a NOC club. Part of how your NSO ensures that the program operates safely and properly is to address any variances to club operations (such as misuse of logo; conducting activities that don't align with the goal of the club; misuse of incorrect information or not demonstrating stigma-free behavior).

It is the responsibility of each club, their advisor, and their school to ensure that the club is operating safely and in accordance with all school rules and policies.

Complete the Club Startup Process

Each school that is interested in starting a club must go through the same process. You can review the steps to startup at <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-on-Campus/NAMI-On-Campus-High-School> or connect with namioncampus@nami.org directly.

Maintain Communications with Your Local Affiliate

Your local Affiliate is a wonderful resource for you about mental health info, programs, and services. It's important for your Affiliate to know your club and know what's going on with activities and events, so they can show their support and be in the loop of what's happening in their community.

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Club Update Reports

In order to be in “good standing” as a NOC Club, twice a year (December and May/June) clubs must complete an online Club Update Report for your NAMI State Organization to collect data. Your NSO will send the links out for these online reports twice a year through email.

Don't worry - it's just a few questions about how things are going and how we can improve. You will need to keep track of how many meetings and events you've had, and attendance at those.

Post-Event Report

After your NOC Club hosts an event on their campus or in community, complete a post event report describing the event and the impact that it had. This is a short report so that your NAMI State Organization can review the individual impacts of each NOC Club. The report should be completed within a week of the event.

Annual Renewal of Existing Clubs

At the start of each school year, clubs must complete an Annual Renewal form so that your NAMI State Organization knows they are active. Your NSO will begin sending out annual renewal forms in August each year to the clubs to have them renew their status, provide updated contact information, etc. Once your NSO receives your renewal form, they will send you any updated materials for the new school year.

For more information annual renewal process please see the “Annual Renewal Process” section. Your NSO will also ask for links to any social media pages so we can stay in touch and follow along as your club grows!

Parent/Family Letter

We ask that you please find a way to distribute this information as part of your club's start-up process. You will also need to distribute this information as part of your yearly re-registration process. A letter template is already in the Start Up Packet that you received. Depending on what methods of communication your school uses, this could be by mailing a letter to each family, putting the letter in a school/parent newsletter, posting it to social media, or on your school's website.

The goal of the letter is to inform all families from your school that the NOC Club is starting, and that resources and services for mental illness are available in your community. It's also important that parents and family members are aware of the signs and symptoms of a mental illness in a teenager, as those symptoms can appear differently in adults.

We know that the earlier a person gets treatment for a mental health condition, the better-so this is one way of helping to ensure all families have some information and facts. If you have a concern or issue with distributing this letter, please reach out to us and we can brainstorm together.

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Fundraising

Fundraising is not a required part of running an NOC Club. If your club does choose to fundraise, the funds must be spent in the following ways only:

- To support future activities, events or materials for your NOC Club
- To be donated to your local NAMI Affiliate
- To be donated to your NAMI State Organization

Each club can determine how best to utilize any funds that are raised, but they must be spent in the above ways only.

Club Structure

NOC is flexible in how each club decides to be structured, and we support you in finding the way that works best for your school. At a minimum, your club will need a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Some clubs like to have multiple people in each role, or have roles switch each quarter. When changes do occur, please send those updates to your NSO via email or their preferred contact method.

To summarize, the requirements for Clubs are:

- ✓ Uphold the mission of NOC
- ✓ Complete the Start-Up Process
- ✓ Maintain communications with your local Affiliate
- ✓ Register your club events
- ✓ Complete 2 Club Update Reports each year
- ✓ Re-register your club at the beginning of each school year
- ✓ Maintain, at a minimum, President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary roles
- ✓ Any funds raised must be spent appropriately

Inclusive NOC Clubs

NOC Clubs are inclusive. What does that mean, exactly? Good question. It's a term that Club members should get used to and know how to explain it to others easily and in an understandable way. We'll give you an overview here, but it would be a great idea to have one of your first Club meetings include a discussion topic of what inclusivity means and how your Club will apply it at your school.

An inclusive NOC Club is one that everyone can join, no matter if they have a mental illness, have a family member or friend with a mental illness, or are just curious and want to learn more. It also means that everyone is welcome to get involved, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, family structure, age, or mental health.

Being inclusive means more than just saying everyone on campus is invited to participate in Club activities or join as a member. It means being proactive and actually trying to get everyone involved. It also means that your Club will be respectful of each person's different views, experiences, and identities.

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In this section, you'll find guidelines for making your Club a safe environment for everyone. We also have some tips on how to get student involvement on campus.

How to Be Inclusive

Make every person feel valued.

The students who join the NOC Club because they are passionate about making a positive change on campus or who have a family member with a mental illness are just as valuable and important as the students who actually have a mental illness themselves. Everyone brings something unique to the party, no matter where they are coming from. Being inclusive means recognizing that each person's unique situation or interests are what makes the Club so strong and diverse.

Learn about different cultures and mental health

Different countries and cultures view mental health and wellness in different ways. In your Club, you may have members that have different perspectives than you on how mental illness develops or can be treated. It's totally ok (in fact, it's great!) to have different viewpoints, as long as everyone feels respected. If your members want to learn more about how a specific culture views mental health, ask students that are part of that culture to join.

Be Ok With What People Want to Share

Some of your Club members may be an open book about their experiences with mental illness. Some might feel like hanging back and taking it all in for a few meetings before contributing. Whatever each member decides to share with the group is totally fine. People should not feel that they need to make a declaration of how they are connected to mental health in order to join the Club or participate in activities, or be questioned about why they joined the Club.

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Don't Make Tokens Out of Members

If a student member shares that he or she has a mental illness, or has a family member with a mental illness, thank the person for sharing and leave it at that. It's ok to ask questions while the conversation is happening, but the Club should not expect that person to act as the expert on that particular mental illness or always be ready to discuss their experiences.

Each member has lots of different interests, experiences and ideas to help shape the Club. He or she should not be identified only by their mental illness, even if it's done with the intention of being supportive and showing interest in their condition. The diagnosis of a person is just a small part of who the person is. You wouldn't want to always have to answer questions about your diabetes or asthma, would you?

Tips for Inclusivity

Making your Club inclusive is pretty simple. Just follow these steps and you're on your way!

Use Person-First Language.

Person first language is putting the person before the mental illness.

For example, "Jim Carrey, the actor with depression, spoke about his experiences in a new interview".

NOT *"Jim Carrey did a new interview. He's depressed".*

Ask People for Their Pronouns

When your club begins introductions, make it a habit to state your name and pronouns to show members that this is a safe place to be who they are. If someone accidentally uses the wrong pronouns for someone, respectfully correct them.

For example, "Hello everyone. My name is Jane Doe. I use pronouns She/Her/Hers."

Include Your Inclusivity in Advertisements

Make it clear that everyone is welcome at Club meetings and activities on all your fliers, advertisements and posters.

Have Activities That Appeal to Everyone

Are you bringing in guest speakers? Showing a movie about mental illness? Reading a book about a person's journey? Incorporate as many different cultures, backgrounds, races and sexual orientations as possible so that there is variety and inclusivity in your Club.

Don't Title People

No one likes titles. Whether you're a math whiz, a book worm, or a science geek, no labels feel good. That's because they try to categorize us into one single thing, instead of describing the entire person we are. That goes for labels in the Club as well. Don't use labels like "She's a family member" or "He's mentally ill".

Have Flyers, Posters and Meeting Materials in Different Languages

Having educational materials in different languages will include non-English speaking or reading

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students in your outreach efforts. When posters or materials are made in different languages, the translations will need to be verified.

Work Together With Other Inclusive Clubs

Your campus might have a Gay Straight Alliance Club or a Cultural Diversity Club. Find ways to collaborate on events or activities, or hold a joint meeting, to learn more about one another's missions. These Clubs are all about reducing stigma on campus, too, just different kinds of stigma.

Be Aware of Physical Limitations

Some of your classmates may need to meet in accessible locations due to a physical limitation. Think about your meeting location when choosing your next spot.

Club Officers

NAMI does not have specific requirements for what officer positions your NOC Club needs to have, other than a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Club Officers must be in at least the 10th grade, but 9th graders are welcome to join as members and participate in all activities. Your school may have requirements so check with them before deciding on officers. Many NOC Club leaders find that as the Club grows, more leadership roles are needed.

It is up to you to decide what your Club's goals will be and who you will need to accomplish your goals. You will want to choose officers you trust and who can help with the responsibilities of starting and running a NOC Club. Do not try to do everything on your own!

Here are some guidelines for common officer positions. Keep in mind these tasks can be interchangeable, added on to, or simplified- whatever works for your Club.

President

1. Leads meetings during the school year.
2. Attends all meetings and events. If the President is unable to attend a meeting or event, the President needs to let the Vice-President know so he or she can lead the meeting.
3. Organizes all meetings by having an agenda ready, and starting and ending on time
4. Makes sure meetings are fun and respectful
5. Is responsible for knowing the school rules for Clubs and for following those rules
6. Helps to plan and lead Club activities
7. Is a role model for mental illness awareness and acceptance, and demonstrates stigma-free behavior
8. Assigns tasks to other Club officers or members
9. Facilitates goal setting for the Club each year
10. Provides encouragement to all members of the Club
11. Meets with Advisor to discuss upcoming meetings, projects or challenges
12. Is the official representative and advocate of the Club

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13. Together with the Advisor, the President is the main point of contact between the NOC Club and the NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate.
14. Promotes the Club on campus and reaches out to students to get them involved

Vice President

1. Helps the President with managing the Club
2. Runs Club meetings if the President is not in attendance
3. Attends all Club meetings and activities
4. Promotes the Club on campus and reaches out to students to get them involved
5. Provides encouragement to all members of the Club
6. Is a role model for mental illness awareness and acceptance, and demonstrates stigma-free behavior

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Treasurer

1. Manages the funds of the Club according to school policy and procedure
2. Keeps track of the Club expenses
3. Leads and organizes fundraisers
4. Promotes the Club on campus and reach out to students to get them involved
5. Provides encouragement to all members of the Club
6. Is a role model for mental illness awareness and acceptance, and demonstrates stigma-free behavior

Secretary

1. Takes detailed notes at each meeting about what happened and what tasks there are to complete
2. Attends all Club meetings and activities
3. Takes attendance at each meeting
4. Keeps records of membership; including each members name, contact info, grade level, parent permission slip (if required), photo release, and date they joined the Club
5. Keeps track of updating and maintaining bylaws, contact lists, and forms
6. Promotes the Club on campus and reach out to students to get them involved
7. Provides encouragement to all members of the Club
8. Is a role model for mental illness awareness and acceptance, and demonstrates stigma-free behavior

Elections

Officer elections will take place each spring in order to elect new officers before the next school year. Your advisor can help you with planning for your Club elections. You should use a “blind” vote, which means no one knows who voted for whom. This can be done by making a simple checklist where members will check next to the name of the person they are voting for and passing it to one person to count them.

In order to achieve sustainability, we encourage officers to not fulfill the same role more than once. For example, if you were the Treasurer this year, you can't be the Treasurer again the next year, but you can be the Vice-President. It's important to always try to get new members who haven't been officers before to get elected so that your Club can draw from different ideas and experiences.

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School Policies & Rules

NOC Club members and advisors must follow all school rules, policies and procedures. Club leaders and Advisors are responsible for checking with their administration for information and understanding on rules.

If a conflict occurs between a school rule or policy and NOC Club guideline, please contact your NAMI State Organization so we can work with you to create a solution. Always follow school rules and policies until a resolution has been decided.

Annual Renewal Process

At the start of each school year, clubs must complete an Annual Renewal Form so the NAMI State Organization knows they are still active. We want to make sure that we are up to date on who your Club Advisor and Club Leaders are. Your NSO will be sending out Annual Renewal Forms in August of each year to the clubs to have them renew their status, provide updated contact information, etc. Once we get your renewal, we will send you any updated materials for the school year.

To ensure this, each NOC Club must renew their club.

Each NOC Club must make sure to:

- Complete Annual Renewal Form for your club at the start of each school year
- Send in your new club mission statement (if applicable)
- Provide your NSO with updated contact information (if applicable)
- Inform your NSO of any changes to Club Advisors or Club Leaders

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Mental Health and Culture

Mental health and illness can be viewed in many ways in different cultures. Culture refers to our beliefs, how we are each raised, and the community we surround ourselves with. This cultural experience influences how we feel about mental health, whether it's something we talk openly about, and if we seek help or not. It's important to be aware of and accepting of people's different perspectives and respect their beliefs. The info below will help give you an idea of how different cultural communities view mental illness; but remember, this doesn't mean ALL people of that culture hold these same beliefs.

From www.NAMI.org

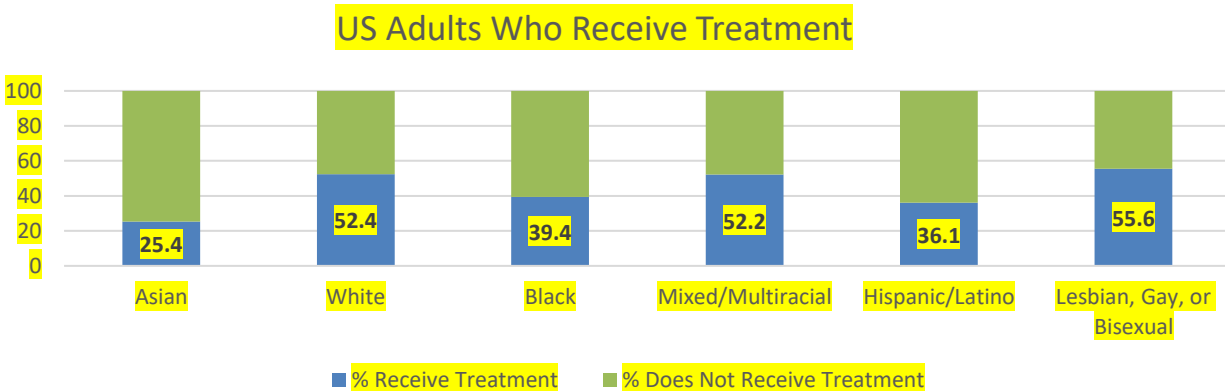
Statistics and Analysis

Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions by Cultural Background

- Non-Hispanic Asian - 16.4%
- Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander- 18.1%
- Non-Hispanic White - 23.9%
- Non-Hispanic Black or African American - 21.4%
- Non-Hispanic Native American/Alaskan Native- 26.6%
- Hispanic or Latino- 20.7%
- Non-Hispanic mixed/multiracial - 34.9%
- Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual - 50.2%

Treatment Rates Among US Adults

Mental health treatment—therapy, medication, self-care—have made recovery a reality for most people experiencing mental illness. Although taking the first steps can be confusing or difficult, it is important to start exploring options.



LGBTQ+ and Suicide Facts

Youth and adults who identify within the LGBTQ+ community have a high chance of thinking about suicide or attempting.

- Transgender adults are nearly 9x more likely to attempt suicide at some point in their lifetime than the general population.

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- LGBTQ youth are nearly 4x more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.
- 45% of LGBTQ youth have thoughts of suicide within a year.
- 11% of transgender individuals reported being denied care by mental health clinics due to bias or discrimination

Critical Issues Faced by Multicultural Communities

- Less access to treatment
- Culturally insensitive health care system
- Less likely to receive treatment
- Racism, bias, homophobia, or discrimination in treatment settings
- Poorer quality of care
- Language barriers
- High levels of stigma
- Lower rates of health insurance

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Confidentiality

You and your advisor must have a very clear understanding of the confidentiality policies of your school and school district. Because of the nature of the Club, there may be very open and honest discussions. It is important to know and understand when you should be a trusted friend and just listen; and when you need to refer your classmate to appropriate resources or your advisor.

It's also important to know the rules your Advisor must follow. He or she is required to report certain behaviors to ensure students are safe and getting the help the student needs.

You should immediately seek professional help if any of the following occurs:

- Someone shares that they hurt themselves (such as cutting, burning, etc.) or others
- Someone shares that they are being hurt by someone else
- Someone shares that they think about or are planning to hurt themselves or others
- Someone shares that they think about suicide, is planning suicide or has attempted suicide
- Someone is in distress and needs assistance

Appropriate actions and referrals will need to be made if any of the above occurs, or if any other concerning behavior or statements are noticed. As stated before, advisors are mandated reporters and therefore, the confidentiality that exists in patient/doctor relationships does not apply to student/advisor relationships.

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What to Do if a Mental Health Emergency Occurs

A mental health emergency is a situation in which a person is not able to cope with their emotions or surroundings. No matter what a crisis may look like, they should always be taken seriously and help should be found immediately. If a person is in a mental health crisis or emergency, they might have the following symptoms:

- Extreme anger or panic
- Talking about suicide, or other types of self-harm
- Talking about hurting others
- Being violent or disruptive
- Not able to speak clearly (for example, slurred or garbled speech; disjointed thoughts)
- Being confused or “out of it”

If someone is showing these signs, whether it’s during a NOC Club meeting or not, you should immediately call for help. Your high school might have an emergency hotline already established. If there is one, make sure everyone in your Club knows it.

You can always call 9-1-1 for immediate help.

Or call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 OR 1-800-273- 8255

If a person is acting out of control or has a tendency towards violence, you should never try to approach them. A trained mental health professional is the right person to handle getting close to a person who is in distress.

School Policies on Crisis

Your school may have an emergency action plan or policies on how to handle this kind of situation. Talk with your administration about this and make sure everyone is on the same page about your school rules.

Fill in the form below and have it available at all Club meetings or ask teachers to hang a copy in their classrooms. Club members should each receive a copy when this form is complete and add it to their Club binders. (This could be one of your Club activities.)

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EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Call 911 for Emergency, Fire, or Police

ON CAMPUS

School Mental Health Services: _____

School Mental Health Counselor: _____

School Emergency Plan is located: _____

LOCAL

School District Crisis Line: _____

Local Children's Shelter: _____

Local Youth Services: _____

Local Suicide Prevention: _____

Substance Abuse: _____

Mental Health: _____

Local CPS: _____

Local NAMI Affiliate: _____

Additional Local Resources

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NATIONAL

NAMI

Helpline: (800) 950-6264

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, supports and research and is steadfast in its commitment to raise awareness and build a community for hope for all of those in need.

The Information HelpLine is an information and referral service which can be reached by calling 1 (800) 950-NAMI (6264), Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.- 6 p.m., EST.

Boys Town National Suicide Hotline

800-448-3000

Provides short-term crisis intervention and counseling and referrals to local community resources. Counsels on parent-child conflicts, marital and family issues, suicide, pregnancy, runaway youth, physical and sexual abuse, and other issues. Operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

Covenant House Hotline

800-786-2929

Crisis line for youth, teens, and families. Gives callers locally-based referrals throughout the United States. Provides help for youth and parents regarding drugs, abuse, homelessness, runaway children, and message relays. Operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders (ANAD)

630-577-1330

National eating disorder non-profit organization. Treatment referral, support groups, conferences, education, statistics and events.

Mental Health America

800-969-6642

Information on mental health topics and referrals, access to an info specialist. Operates Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

National Youth Crisis Hotline **4663**

800 442-4673/800-448-

Provides counseling and referrals to local drug treatment centers, shelters, and counseling services. Responds to youth dealing with pregnancy, molestation, suicide, and child abuse. Operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

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Your First Few Meetings

Your NOC High School Club has been approved, you've got your team of officers, and you've found an awesome advisor! Now what?

Finding the Right Meeting Place

Your meeting spot should be somewhere everyone can feel comfortable and somewhere that's easily accessible. You might want to consider a room that's a bit off the beaten path, so that members feel at ease talking and sharing without having a crowded hallway right out the door. A good idea for your meeting set-up would be to have a large circle of chairs or desks. This will make it harder for side conversations to spring up and allow for everyone to be looking at one another.

Once you find the perfect spot to call home, get permission from your school and see if there is a room reservation schedule to make sure another Club doesn't use it at the same times as your Club.

Advertising Your First Meetings

When your NOC Club first starts, you'll need to do a lot of promotion and advertising on campus to get the word out. Below are a few ideas for how to get the buzz going about NOC:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's social media page
- Hang flyers all around school
- Put flyers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the Club
- Participate in your school's Club or extracurricular fair if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

Put your flyers and posters out in the open, in areas that get a lot of traffic from students. Even if your initial turnout is less than what you had hoped for, keep advertising. Promotion isn't a one-time thing; it's an ongoing task that should involve the entire Club. Make sure you understand your school's rules and policies about posting and distributing materials around campus.

Finally, it's important to remember that just by getting the word out about NOC is powerful. For students to see your messages as they walk through the halls will have an impact, even if they never

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attend a meeting. It tells them that there is now a Club focused on education about mental health and wellness and creating a more supportive, stigma-free school environment.

Club Mission Statement

The NOC Club Mission Statement is what defines what your Club is all about. It can be a reminder of what's important to the group, or a statement about goals. The mission statement you created will help your Club stay on track, remember what's important to the Club, and reinforce the reasons for the Club. You will have already completed your club's mission statement in the Start-Up Packet that was submitted.

Sometimes, even with a mission statement, Clubs find themselves confused or distracted, or focusing on goals that aren't in line with the mission statement. If this happens, it's a good idea to refer back to your mission statement to remind yourself and the Club about what the purpose and objectives are. When you're planning an event or activity, look at the mission statement and ask the Club as a group, "Does this activity support our mission statement?" This simple exercise will help everyone's projects stay on track. If your club ever decides to update your mission statement, please make sure to re-submit your new mission statement during the yearly re-registration process.

Club Ground Rules

What kind of Club would you rather belong to: one that has clear and fair expectations for how everyone should act and treat one another; or one where rules are kind of blurry and no one is really sure what's ok and what's not?

The most successful Clubs have rules. Rules help people understand what's appropriate and what's not. During your very first Club meeting, ground rules or a safety contract should be created. You can write ideas for rules on a whiteboard or on a large poster board (just make sure the Secretary is writing all the incredible ideas down before it gets erased!). Go around the room and talk about what kind of ground rules need to be in place so everyone feels safe, accepted, and comfortable.

Here are a few important ones to get you started:

- Be respectful
- Respect Privacy
- Share what you've learned
- Use person-first language
- Don't use stigmatizing words (psycho, crazy, loony)
- One person talks at a time
- Phones off during meetings
- Judgment-free zone
- Only share what you're ready to share

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Have the group participate in defining these rules and elaborating on them. For example, it may be appropriate to start a new poster board or list with all the words that the group feels aren't appropriate for the NOC Club.

Once you have ground rules set, review them together as often as needed. Some Clubs find that it works best for them to start each meeting with a review of the ground rules, both to remind everyone and for new members. Some only review them when it seems people might need a refresher. Whatever works for your Club is fine as long as the ground rules are being respected.

Your Advisor and Club Officers should not be shy about enforcing the ground rules. You are the leaders of the Club, so if you see a ground rule being bent or broken, speak up or pull that student aside to address it. Your Club members are looking to you to be role models and lead the Club.

Getting to Know One Another

When your Club first meets, some people might have known each other for years and some might be in a room of strangers. Break the ice right off the bat by getting your members to know one another. There are tons of great team-building activities on the internet. Here are a few places to check out:

- Ice Breakers for Teens: <http://everydaylife.globalpost.com/icebreakers-teens-3167.html>
- Youth Development Network: <http://www.ydnetwork.org/icebreakers-and-energizers>
- Youth Work Resources: <http://youthworker.org/section/ice-breakers-mixers>

Other ways to get to know one another:

Learn the names of your members

It is friendlier to say, "Hey, Brian!" vs. "Hey, you!"

Find Time to Talk One on One

Make it a point to chat one-on-one with each member over the course of the first few weeks of the Club. Even just a quick conversation about what you each had for lunch goes a long way to people feeling comfortable with someone new.

Get Feedback

Ask your members for their feedback on how meetings are going, or if they have ideas for Club activities right from the get-go. This will help them to feel valued and listened to.

Find Something That Unites You

Maybe it's a Club song, a phrase, a Club wristband or Club t-shirts. Find something that makes everyone feel unified and like they belong to the group when they see or hear that reminder.

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Getting Input From Members

Routinely checking in with your members and giving everyone a role so they are engaged will keep people coming back. Everyone wants to know they are listened to and that their opinions matter, so create an atmosphere where sharing ideas is encouraged. A couple of ways to do this are:

- Go around the room at the end of each meeting. Each person says what the highlight (best part) of the meeting was for them. This will help you get a sense of what the group likes and where there is room for improvement.
- Give a survey at the end of a meeting. Surveys can be anonymous so people will feel free to be honest without hurting feelings.
- Have a suggestion box, so people can make comments whenever they think of them in an anonymous way.

The feedback you get from members will help to shape the Club into something they will want to continue to be involved in.

NOC Club Toolkit

This section of the NOC High School Manual goes over the items located in your electronic Toolkit. The toolkit contains lots of useful templates, forms, and ideas for you to use as you run the NOC Club. Feel free to use or get inspiration from anything in the toolkit. The templates in the toolkit are so that you can change them to make them your own.

If you have suggestions for other things to add to the toolkit that would be helpful, let us know! We want to hear from you about what materials you need to be successful.

● Meeting Agendas

Agendas are the outline of how you want the meeting to go. Sometimes there are blocks of time planned for each section of the agenda, to help everyone stay on track.

Reasons Agendas Work:

- They give structure to a meeting
- Your members will know what to expect from the meeting
- They help you stay on schedule
- They're professional and show your administration, campus adults and parents that you take being a leader of the Club seriously
- They'll help future Club leaders have an idea of what was done at each meeting
- They can be changed and are flexible

You should always have an agenda ready before the meeting and have printed copies for everyone. Keep a copy of each meeting's agenda so you have a record of what you were planning. Your Advisor can help you with deciding how much info or detail to put in an agenda; what matters is that you have put some planning into your meeting and have a goal of what should take place.

A typical agenda has the following parts (again, this is totally flexible!)

Welcome - Welcome the group to the NOC Club; some Clubs like to read the mission statement or go over ground rules during the welcome.

Ice Breaker or Warm-Up - Start your meeting with an activity to get everyone talking and moving. This will help set the tone for the rest of the meeting.

Agenda - Review what you are planning to do in the meeting that day. Distribute printed copies of agendas. It's a good idea to ask the group if there is something else that needs to be added to the agenda that you may have forgotten or didn't know about.

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Announcements - Share any news or updates with the group; birthdays, celebrations, any special recognition or thanks to members.

Meeting Topic or Activity - This will vary from meeting to meeting, depending on what the group is working on or focusing on at that time.

Project Update - Any projects that are being worked on should be discussed and members should give an update on the status. If upcoming projects are being planned, discuss those plans and how everything is coming along.

Wrap-Up/Questions/Closing Comments - If there are any questions members have, now is a good time to answer them. Give a closing statement where you thank everyone for coming and for being a part of NOC. You should also let everyone know the next meeting date and time.

● Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are detailed notes taken during the meeting by the Secretary. They show what was done during the meeting, if anything was voted on or decided, and if there are any projects or tasks that need to be completed.

Minutes should be reviewed by the Club Officers when the Secretary is done; it's usually very hard to get *everything* that happened down in writing! The other officers can add any missing info before the minutes get stored as a record of the meeting.

● Meeting Sign-In Sheet

You will need to have a sign-in sheet for each person to sign into at every meeting. This helps you track attendance which will be helpful when reporting to your NAMI State Organization.

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● Club Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules that a Club follows to make sure they are sticking to their mission and to help give members a framework of what's acceptable. Below are sample bylaws that you might want to consider including in your Club's bylaws. Each Club's officers will work together with the Advisor in the first few weeks to decide on their Club's bylaws. The Club will then vote to accept the bylaws.

Sample Bylaws

Article 1. Club Mission

1. Increase mental health awareness on campus
2. Provide a positive place on campus where students can share their thoughts and experiences with mental health
3. Work to reduce stigma
4. Create and lead campus activities designed to educate people about mental health
5. Bring noted speakers to campus to share their personal journeys with mental illness and recovery

Article 2. Code of Ethics

1. All members will be respectful and responsible for their own actions
2. Members will be role models on their campus and in their community for mental health support and acceptance
3. Students will follow the rules and policies of their school

Article 3. Membership

1. Any currently enrolled student may join the Club
2. Only 10th-12th graders are able to run for an Officer Position
3. The NOC Club will not discriminate against race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity.

Article 4. Officer Positions

1. The Club will elect and maintain officer roles of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Other officer positions can be added by a Club vote
2. Officers will hold their role for 1 school year
3. After the initial year of the Club, officers are elected in the Spring for the following school year
4. In the first year of the Club, officers are elected within the first 2 weeks of the new school year
5. Officers must attend each Club meeting; each officer can miss one Club meeting per quarter.

Article 5. Advisors

1. Each NOC Club needs at least 1 faculty Advisor
2. Each advisor must have a background in mental health and be on campus 4 out of the 5 school days

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3. Advisors can vote and participate in Club meetings and activities

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4. The Advisor must be present at every Club meeting and activity
5. The Advisor will work closely with the officers to provide feedback on meetings, help with planning events, and coordinating elections or membership drives

Article 6. Meetings

1. Meetings will happen every other week.
2. At least one adult advisor must be present during the entire meeting
3. All meeting attendees must sign in at each meeting

Language Required by Your School

Please note that your school may also have specific requirements on what language needs to be included in your Club's bylaws. Check with your advisor or school administrators to see if there is any language you must include to get recognized by your school.

● Flyers for Club Meetings

Remember how important it is to advertise your meetings? When preparing your flyers, there are a few key points to remember:

Make It Stand Out From the Crowd

Chances are your school's bulletin boards and hallways already have lots of flyers and posters. What will make your NOC Club flyer visually unique and different from the rest? The goal is to catch a person's eye so they'll want to learn more.

Figure Out Your Primary Message

What is the one thing you're trying to say with your flyer? Is it "Come to our next meeting"; "The NOC Club is now on campus"; or "NOC is open to everyone"? Each flyer should have only one message. Having too many things on one piece of paper is overwhelming. If you have lots of things to say, say them on different flyers.

Include the Stuff People Need to Know

Don't forget to put the date, time, and location of your meeting.

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Plan Ahead

Hang your flyers early enough that people can plan to attend. That may mean planning a week or two ahead of time to design the flyer, have someone proofread it, get it approved (if your school requires it), printed and hung.

● Brochures

As the NOC Club grows and takes on more projects, you might want to have a brochure or two that explains about the project or the Club in general. NAMI has a NOC Club brochure that you can customize with your Club contact info and details.

● Press Releases

Starting a mental health Club on a high school campus is a big deal. Newspapers in your community may be interested in publishing a press release about this huge accomplishment or about other activities that your NOC Club completes over the year. You should check with your school and Advisor first about rules regarding press releases from a school Club and see if it's ok. It might be something the administration needs to approve or release themselves.

Your campus newspaper will definitely want to feature a press release or an article describing the Club. Help them out by doing most of the work ahead of time, so that it will be an easy decision for the editors to add your press release into the paper or the school district listserv.

A press release is a brief article written to make an announcement. In this case, the announcement is that NOC Club has been started or accomplished something important. Press releases usually have quotes and photos from the people involved.

● Social Media Content

Social media is a great way to get the word out about the Club and get people's attention. Remember to check with your school district about their policies regarding using social media!

What to Consider When Posting

Do's

- Use official hashtags (e.g., #StigmaFree, #Act4MentalHealth, #TeamNAMI)
- Check with your NSO's social media policies before posting
- Give proper credit when sharing articles, images, videos, and other content where appropriate
- Share verified and correct facts and statistics about mental health

Don'ts

- Disclose information about anyone without their consent

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- Use disrespectful language or label people
- Harass or discriminate other users, or threaten, coerce, or intimidate others

Tips on Creating Posts

Posting consistently on social media is very important in building followers and supporters. The first step in starting your social media account is to create either a theme or go-to format that remains consistent throughout your posting. This can be the backgrounds of your posts, hashtags, or even the way you write on your posts. Consistency also includes how often you post to your account. Creating a schedule will help you stay on track and prepare for future posts relating to club promotion, events, mental health related awareness days, and those in between posts. Here are some examples of posts you can create and how you can best get the word out about your club.

Canva is a great tool for you to use when crafting posts or creating flyers for your club. It can be accessed for free online or in their app. They have templates that you can work from, or you can create a post from scratch and use their stickers in combination with your own pictures and graphics. To take a look at what they have to offer check out their website here- [canva.com](https://www.canva.com).

● Event Calendar

There are tons of great events and seasonal activities happening all year long that you can incorporate into your club. These events can be the focus of a meeting or inspire a campus activity. If you think of other important dates we don't have listed in the calendar, please let us know!

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Ideas & Resources for Running Your Club

Running any kind of Club can be exciting, educational, and rewarding. Keeping it all in perspective as you take on this new challenge will help you get the most out of it and have fun along the way.

Tips to Remember

Delegate, Delegate, Delegate

Nobody can do it all, all by themselves. The Club officers are all a leadership team together and the Club members are there to help as well. Assign tasks that are easy and simple to do, and that clear up your time for other projects.

Ask For Help

Your advisor, administration, officers, Club members, and local NAMI Affiliate are all resources to rely on for help. Don't be embarrassed or shy to ask for help when you need it. NAMI is always here to lend an ear or a hand as well.

Have Realistic Expectations

Success doesn't happen overnight (even though we sometimes think it will!). Clubs take time to grow and develop. Your NOC Club is not a failure if it doesn't have a huge turnout or if some of your activities fizzle. The Club is taking off and that takes time, care, and dedication.

Have Fun!

NOC is about reducing stigma and discrimination related to mental illness and increasing awareness about mental health and wellness. This should also be a fun and rewarding experience for you. Think of fun ways to accomplish the mission of NOC and enjoy your time with the Club.

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Tips for Running Meetings

Be on time

As a Club leader, you should show up early so you can get set-up, greet people as they come in and be ready to start on time.

Be Ready

Have materials, like agendas, sign in sheets, and activities ready to go ahead of time.

Be a Good Listener

Listen to your members and interact with everyone; not just your friends or people you know really well.

Be a Leader

Members will be looking for the leaders of the Club to take charge and lead the meeting. If there are no leaders, the meetings will drift and not have any structure.

Be a Role Model

Show your commitment to the mission and model positive behavior.

Be Excited

Your enthusiasm will cause others to be enthusiastic. Congratulate people on accomplishments or share good news with the group. These small things will get the crowd buzzing with excitement.

Meeting Topic Ideas

Each meeting should have a topic or focus that the meeting will center on. This will help make sure your NOC Club will have a wide variety of mental health topics included in the Club, and you'll avoid falling in a rut and discussing the same thing each week.

Below are ideas for meeting topics. You should also come up with your own ideas as topics become important to your members. If you have ideas that aren't listed here, let NAMI know!

Meeting Topic Ideas

- What does mental health and wellness mean to you?
- How do you stay mentally healthy?
- What is stigma?
- What does a stigma-free school look like?
- How does the media (TV, Movies, Music) portray mental illness?

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- How is stigma against mental illness similar to racism? How is it different? How can racism and stigma against mental illness overlap?
- What do you think is the single most important thing to tell other people about mental illness?
- What do you think it's like to be someone who doesn't have any kind of experience with mental illness? How do you think they feel about it?
- What do you think it's like to be someone with a mental illness, or who has a family member with a mental illness? How do you think they feel about it?
- What are ways we can put an end to stigma on campus? What about in our community?
- 1 out of 4 teenagers have a mental health condition; what does that mean for our school, for example?
- What's the difference between mental health and mental illness?
- Who do you think understands mental illness better: adults or youth?
- What kinds of misconceptions do you think other students might have about NOC?
- How can we help other students learn about mental illness?
- Do we all know what to do if we recognize signs of a mental health condition in ourselves? In a classmate?
- How can people be supportive of someone going through a tough time?
- How would you explain NOC to a total stranger?

Activity Ideas

Sometimes it can be hard to come up with fresh ideas on what activities your NOC Club can do to make a difference in the lives of students and in your school. To help you out, we pulled together some of the best activities we've heard of to get you started.

Bringing Mental Health Awareness to Campus

One of the goals of NOC Club is to bring awareness of mental health to your high school. Here are some activities that can help achieve that goal.

- Write, direct, act and produce a Public Service Announcement about student mental health for the Directing Change campaign. For more info, visit www.directingchange.org
- Distribute lime green ribbons or wristbands to promote mental health awareness.
- Tie-dye or decorate t-shirts lime green, and have your entire Club wear them on the same day.
- Connect with your NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate to bring NAMIWalks or NAMIBikes or an ETS presentation to your school.
- Host a talent show, art show, or poetry reading on campus that focuses on mental health as a theme.
- Provide students Holiday Grams for purchase to send a kind message to another student or faculty member.
- Provide information booths at community festivals/events.

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- Participate in Mental Illness Awareness Week, which is held the first full week of October. NAMI can get you materials and supplies to use during this week and for other mental health weeks/days.
- Host an after school mental health workshop series with guest speakers.
- Let students know how they can maintain their mental health and wellness, including eating healthy, staying active, socializing and developing healthy coping skills.
- Organize a yoga class in your campus quad or pass out fliers on breathing techniques to teach people about positive and free stress-relievers.
- Create posters that feature a mental illness statistic, like one in four young adults have a mental illness, and hang them around your campus.
- Research celebrities who have a mental health condition. Hang fliers with their photos around school. You can either include their mental health condition on the flier or use it as a teaser of what they can find out in the next meeting.
- Show a movie dealing with mental health, with your school's permission, during your lunch period or after school.
- Host a mental health fair at your school with activities such as speakers from outside organizations, handing out positive mantras, conducting a balloon toss, etc.
- Organize a design competition for t-shirts, Club poster or logo related to mental health and wellness.
- Work with your campus newspaper to run a blog or column series about mental health.
- Celebrate good days or share something that makes you happy. Students can post to their Facebook, Twitter pages and elsewhere positive messages about mental health.
- Hang a poster-sized "contract" for people to sign if they commit to stop using language that stigmatizes mental illness.
- Plan a photography, writing or video contest where students can be creative and focus on a mental health condition on campus.

Educating Your Peers

Teaching your classmates and campus about mental health and wellness can be done in a lot of fun, interactive ways. Here are few:

- As part of your NOC Club project, NAMI's *Ending the Silence* presentation will educate students and give them a chance to talk with a young person with a mental illness. Brainstorm ahead of time the questions your Club wants to ask someone with a mental health condition.
- Find a movie that deals with mental illness and host a screening at your school. After the movie, have a few questions ready to ask the group about what they thought. Don't forget the popcorn!
- Search YouTube and the web for videos, articles, blogs and journals of young people with mental health conditions or with family members who have a mental health condition. Gather all these links into one place, and post to your school website (get permission first) or Club Facebook page.

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- Make two lists: one list with all the myths about mental illness and one with the truths. Put these side by side somewhere where other students will see it.
- If you have a local celebrity or public figure, like a newscaster or radio DJ, who has a mental health condition, ask them to come speak at your school about their experiences.

Creating a Safe School Environment

Making your school feel more accepting and supportive of people struggling with mental illness is a big deal. Below are some ideas to help your Club get started:

- If your school allows it, write messages in chalk on the sidewalks that promote positivity or give people info on getting help if they need it.
- Learn all you can about what services are available on campus. If there is a school psychologist or mental health professional, see if your school paper will do a feature on that person and what their job is like.
- Bring your local NAMI Affiliate to your campus to distribute info on resources or careers in the mental health field during career fairs.
- Treat each and every person you meet with respect and support; you never know what they're going through or dealing with on their own.
- Talk to teachers about mental health and being supportive. Ask if they can put up a sign or sticker in their classrooms that let students know it is a "safe" zone and that the teacher will listen if they are having an issue.
- Organize after-school activities like bowling, mini golf, or dodge ball, to get people to socialize and make new friends.
- Plan a mental health assembly and invite experts from your town to speak about ways to stay mentally healthy.
- Give a presentation about mental health and NOC Club at to your school board.²

Ice Breakers & Energizers

At certain points in the Club or in campus activities, you might feel like throwing in an icebreaker to shake things up and get people moving. Here are some ice breakers to get you started:

Pictionary

Description:

- Using Pictionary as an icebreaker would allow students to work together on teams to guess what the other student is drawing.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or paper (can use whiteboard feature if on zoom)
- Writing utensil

Social Distance Elements:

² (NAMI on Campus Ideas Booklet, 2013)

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- Can be performed 6-feet apart
- Can be performed on virtually on zoom or other platforms

Time:

- Varies
- Each round can be from 30 to 60 seconds
- Can set time limit to fit club meeting or event agenda

Steps:

1. Before activity, write out different objects on small pieces of paper. Make sure there are enough for the amount of rounds you plan to do
2. Break into two or more teams
3. Each group will rotate the person who is drawing after each round
4. Each person drawing will have 30 to 60 seconds to draw while their team tries to guess what their person is drawing.
5. After the time is up or the team has guessed the drawing, it is the next team's turn.
6. Repeat as many rounds as your club would like.

Two Truths, One Lie

Description:

- Two truths and a lie would allow students to learn more about each other and engage in a fun way.

Materials:

- None!

Social Distance Elements:

- Can be performed 6-feet apart
- Can be performed virtually on zoom or other platforms

Time:

- Varies, but each student should share for about a 60 seconds and students could take around 30 seconds to guess

Steps:

1. Each student in the group (group size can vary, but around 4 students per group might be a good size) comes up with two truths and one lie about themselves and their lives
2. Students take turns sharing their three stories/facts
3. The other students in the group go around saying what they think is the lie out of the three things shared
4. These steps are repeated until everyone in the group has shared.

Build a Story

Description:

- Using build a story as an icebreaker would allow students to collaborate in order to create a story.

Materials:

- None!

Social Distance Elements:

- Can be performed 6-feet apart
- Can be performed virtually on zoom or other platforms

Time:

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- Varies depending on how many students are involved, but creating the story should take around 3 minutes
- Can set time limit to fit club meeting or event agenda

Steps:

1. Before beginning activity, group leaders have students form a circle so it is clear whose turn it is.
2. Group leaders start by saying one word to start off the story.
3. Students take turns adding each word until story is complete (group members and students involved can decide when the story should end or if a new one should be started)

Would You Rather

Description:

- Playing would you rather as an icebreaker will allow students to learn more about each other and their likes/dislikes.

Materials:

- Paper/index cards
- Writing utensil

Social Distance Elements:

- Can be performed 6-feet apart
- Can be performed on virtually on zoom or other platforms

Time:

- Varies
- Each round could be around 2-3 minutes so everyone can answer the prompt
- Can set time limit to fit club meeting or event agenda

Steps:

1. Before beginning the activity, club leaders should write down would you rather prompts on index cards. (Around 2-3 prompts per group, number of cards will depend on how many groups there are).
2. Leaders should split students into groups of whatever size (3-4 students per group may be best)
3. Leaders deliver prompts to students
4. Each student will then answer the would you rather question
5. Activity is finished when everyone in the group has answered the question

Charades

Description:

- This icebreaker allows students to laugh and do something lighthearted. Students will act out a given word while others try to guess it.

Materials:

- Paper/ index cards
- Writing utensil

Social Distance Elements:

- Can be performed 6-feet apart
- Can be performed on virtually on zoom or other platforms

Time:

- Varies

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- Each student can be given 30-60 seconds to act out their charade.

Steps:

1. Before activity is started, club leaders should write down actions/words on index cards/pieces of paper.
2. Leaders should split students into groups of whatever size (3-4 students per group may be best)
3. Leaders deliver prompts to students
4. Students draw from the pile of paper/index cards to find the word/object they will act out
5. Timer is started and the other group members have to guess the charade within a certain amount of time (30-60 seconds)
6. The group member to guess the charade first picks next until everyone in the group has gone.

Here are some great websites to check out for more ideas:

- Wilderdom <http://www.wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html>
- TeamPedia.com <http://www.teampedia.net>
- Ice Breakers for Teens: <http://everydaylife.globalpost.com/icebreakers-teens-3167.html>
- Youth Development Network: <http://www.ydnetwork.org/icebreakers-and-energizers>
- Youth Work Resources: <http://youthworker.org/section/ice-breakers-mixers>

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Books

Some of your Club activities may center on reading a book or hosting a book Club. Below are books written for high school students that have characters with mental illnesses.

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden by Joanne Greenberg

Enveloped in the dark inner kingdom of her schizophrenia, sixteen-year-old Deborah is haunted by private tormentors that isolate her from the outside world. With the reluctant and fearful consent of her parents, she enters a mental hospital where she will spend the next three years battling to regain her sanity with the help of a gifted psychiatrist. As Deborah struggles toward the possibility of the "normal" life she and her family hopes for, the reader is inexorably drawn into her private suffering and deep determination to confront her demons.

So.B.It by Sarah Weeks

Although she lives an unconventional lifestyle with her mentally disabled mother and their doting neighbor, Bernadette, Heidi has a lucky streak that has a way of pointing her in the right direction. When a mysterious word in her mother's vocabulary begins to haunt her, Heidi's thirst for the truth leads her on a cross-country journey in search of the secrets of her past.

It's Kind of A Funny Story by Ned Vizzini

At his new school, Craig realizes that he isn't brilliant compared to the other kids; he's just average, and maybe not even that. The stress becomes unbearable and Craig stops eating and sleeping—until, one night, he nearly kills himself. Craig's suicidal episode gets him checked into a mental hospital. There, isolated from the crushing pressures of school and friends, Craig is finally able to confront the sources of his anxiety.

Some Girls Are by Courtney Summers

Climbing to the top of the social ladder is hard--falling from it is even harder. Regina Afton used to be a member of the Fearsome Fivesome, an all-girl clique both feared and revered by the students at Hallowell High... until vicious rumors about her and her best friend's boyfriend start going around. Now Regina's been "frozen out" and her ex-best friends are out for revenge. If Regina was guilty, it would be one thing, but the rumors are far from the terrifying truth and the bullying is getting more intense by the day. She takes solace in the company of Michael Hayden, a misfit with a tragic past who she herself used to bully. Friendship doesn't come easily for these onetime enemies, and as Regina works hard to make amends for her past, she realizes Michael could be more than just a friend... if threats from the Fearsome Foursome don't break them both first.

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Skin by Adrienne Maria Vrettos

Donnie's life is unraveling. His parents' marriage is falling apart, and his sister is slowly slipping away in the grip of her illness. To top it all off, he accidentally starts a rumor at school that hurts someone he cares about and leaves him an outcast.

So Donnie does the only thing he knows how to do: He tries to fix things, to make everything the way it was before. Before his parents stopped loving each other, before his sister disappeared, before he was alone. But some things are beyond repair, and it will take all Donnie's strength to stop looking back and start moving forward again.

Staying Silent for Sarah Byrnes by Chris Crutcher

Sarah Byrnes and Eric have been friends for years. When they were children, his fat and her terrible scars made them both outcasts. Later, although swimming slimmed Eric, she stayed his closest friend.

Now Sarah Byrnes -- the smartest, toughest person Eric has ever known -- sits silent in a hospital. Eric must uncover the terrible secret she's hiding, before its dark currents pull them both under.

Ball Don't Lie by Matt de la Pena

Sticky is a beat-around-the-head foster kid with nowhere to call home but the street, and an outer shell so tough that no one will take him in. He started out life so far behind the pack that the finish line seems nearly unreachable. He's a white boy living and playing in a world where he doesn't seem to belong.

But Sticky can ball. And basketball might just be his ticket out . . . if he can only realize that he doesn't have to be the person everyone else expects him to be.

Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy by Sonya Sones

It happens just like that, in the blink of an eye. An older sister has a mental breakdown and has to be hospitalized. A younger sister is left behind to cope with a family torn apart by grief and friends who turn their backs on her. But worst of all is the loss of her big sister, her confidante, her best friend, who has gone someplace no one can reach.

Nobel Genes by Rune Michaels

Imagine your mother told you that your biological father—whom you'd never met—was a Nobel prize-winning genius? His life consists of a series of halves; his genes are half from a donor bank that featured Nobel winners. He spends half his time sharing in his mother's manic ups and the other half in her depressive downs. And he always has to be half-awake in the middle of the night so that when his mother wakes up and plays with her pills, he can count them and make sure the proper amount are still there before he goes to sleep.

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Lisa, Bright and Dark by John Neufeld

A young girl's journey toward the strange hypnotic world of madness, and about a group of her friends who unite to get her help.

But Inside I'm Screaming by Elizabeth Flock

While breaking the hottest news story of the year, broadcast journalist Isabel Murphy falls apart on live television in front of an audience of millions. She lands at Three Breezes, a four-star psychiatric hospital nicknamed the "nut hut," where she begins the painful process of recovering the life everyone thought she had.

Kissing Doorknobs by Terry Spencer Hesser

During her preschool years, Tara Sullivan lived in terror that something bad would happen to her mother while they were apart. In grade school, she panicked during the practice fire drills. Practice for what?, Tara asked. For the upcoming disaster that was bound to happen?

Before Tara knew it, she was counting every crack in the sidewalk. Over time, Tara's "quirks" grew and developed: arranging her meals on plates, nonstop prayer rituals, until she developed a new ritual wherein she kissed her fingers and touched doorknobs....

A Child Called It by Dave Pelzer

This book chronicles the unforgettable account of one of the most severe child abuse cases in California history. It is the story of Dave Pelzer, who was brutally beaten and starved by his emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother: a mother who played tortuous, unpredictable games--games that left him nearly dead. He had to learn how to play his mother's games in order to survive because she no longer considered him a son, but a slave; and no longer a boy, but an "it."

Movies

Who doesn't love a good flick? You can screen a movie as a Club activity or as a Club meeting, with school permission. It's always a good idea to have some discussion around the movies so that people can talk about what they think and their reactions to the characters. Here are some movies (all PG-13 and below) that deal with mental illness.

Inside Out (2015) PG

After young Riley is uprooted from her Midwest life and moved to San Francisco, her emotions - Joy, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness - conflict on how best to navigate a new city, house, and school.

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A New State of Mind: Ending the Stigma on Mental Illness (2013)

One in four American adults is living with a diagnosable mental illness in a given year, but many of them are afraid to reach out for the help they need. "A New State of Mind" features just a few of the millions of Californians who are refusing to stay silent while untreated mental illness takes an unnecessary toll on our families and communities.

Room to Breathe (2013)

Room To Breathe is a surprising story of transformation as struggling kids in a San Francisco public middle school are introduced to the practice of mindfulness meditation.

Call Me Crazy: A Five Film (2013)

Through the five shorts named after each title character -- Lucy, Eddie, Allison, Grace and Maggie -- powerful relationships built on hope and triumph raise a new understanding of what happens when a loved one struggles with mental illness.

The Soloist (2009) PG-13

A Los Angeles journalist befriends a homeless Juilliard-trained musician, while looking for a new article for the paper.

Canvas (2006) PG-13

A woman's schizophrenia affects her relationships with her husband and son.

A Beautiful Mind (2001) PG-13

After a brilliant but asocial mathematician accepts secret work in cryptography, his life takes a turn to the nightmarish.

What about Bob (1991) PG

A successful psychiatrist loses his mind after one of his most dependent patients, a highly manipulative obsessive-compulsive, tracks him down during his family vacation.

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Creating a Mental Health Campaign on Campus

Now that you've got a toolkit full of ideas and suggestions for how to run an awesome Club, it's time to put those tools to use. Planning is the key to success for pretty much any event, project, or campaign. Thinking about what you want to accomplish and following the right steps will help you get where you want to go and have fun along the way.

Getting Started

Before you plan a campaign or project, think about why you're doing it.

Step 1. What's the issue?

Identify a single problem or issue that you want to improve with this campaign. There might be other, smaller goals, but here is where you should think about the number one priority.

Example: Students at our school don't realize that mental health affects everyone. They think that it means you're crazy or you should be in an institution.

Step 2. Brainstorm

As a Club, start thinking out loud about your main goal. What are some examples of this issue that people have seen on campus? Why do they think that is? What do they think would make a difference? What do they think will not make a difference?

Example. We've heard students making fun of people with mental health conditions and talk about sending them to the loony bin. When a sophomore had to be hospitalized last year for depression, a lot of kids called the student "psycho" and told him he needs to go back to the hospital.

Step 3. Set Goals

When setting goals, be specific, be clear, be realistic and figure out how you'll know when you've achieved your goal. Writing your goals down ensures that everyone can see it and agrees that's the goal.

Example: Our Club's goals for this campaign are to educate our school on the facts about mental illness and explain how the myths are wrong. Since we can't reach every single student on campus, we will start with the sophomore class. We will bring an Ending the Silence presentation to each of the science classes, so that all the sophomores are reached. We will know we accomplished our goals when all the sophomore classes have received an Ending the Silence presentation.

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Step 4: Give Everyone a Job

Now that you know what your Club's goals are with this campaign, it's time to assign tasks and roles. Talk with the members about what needs to get done and start assigning people to complete each one. You should always ask members before you assign them a task; they might have too much on their plates already and can't take on any more. That's ok. They can contribute while in the meetings or by offering moral support, if they can't take on any tasks for this campaign.

Example:

- **Jacob**->Talk with ½ of the sophomore science teachers about when they can have an ETS Presentation
- **Ramona**-> Talk with ½ of the sophomore science teachers about when they can have an ETS Presentation
- **Hannah**-> Contact our local NAMI to let them know our plan and find out what dates their ETS presenters can come to school
- **Frank**-> Make posters to hang in the science classes to get students interested in the upcoming presentation
- **Arthur**-> Meet with the school newspaper staff to get them to do an article about ETS

Step 5: What Do We Need?

Find out what kinds of supplies or materials you'll need to complete this campaign. You also might need more information or to meet with someone to discuss part of the project. Create a list of everything you need, so you can cross the items off as a Club as you get them. If there are materials you need like art supplies or food for an event, think about asking local businesses to donate them to the Club.

Example: We need...

- Poster board
- Markers
- A calendar to mark the dates of the ETS presentations
- Thank you cards to send to the presenters after they come to our school

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Step 6: Spread the Word

It's all about getting the word out now. Share what you're up to with anybody and everybody on campus. Hang posters, talk to teachers, use social media, and tell your friends. The more people who know about your campaign, the better. People can't learn from something they aren't hearing about, right?

Example:

We hung posters in all the sophomore science classrooms, and even the junior and senior classrooms, too. This way, they'll see that we are having ETS presentations and it will get them thinking about what that is. Plus, they might be jealous the sophomores are getting the presentation and they haven't! We also posted an ad in our school paper and had the science teachers give their students a quick overview of what they'll learn. We've heard the school buzzing now about ETS, and everyone is really excited to see what's it's all about.

Step 7: Wrap Up The Campaign

Your campaign will eventually end with an event or project being completed. During the event or project, stay flexible and have fun. Having a positive attitude through it all will be important to how your Club feels about the campaign when it's all done. Reflect as a Club on what worked and what didn't and make notes for what you would do the same or different next time.

Example:

After the presentations were over, we talked with the science teachers to get their reactions and feedback. They were thrilled to have had the information from ETS shared with their students and wanted to make sure this happened again next year. Since then, we've seen positive changes on campus. The sophomores are treating each other better, and when a student shared that his dad had schizophrenia, they were supportive and kind.

Getting Past Some of the Bumps

It's a true fact that running the NOC Club won't always be a walk in the park. Starting something new always bring along some challenges and hitting some road bumps is normal. Don't get discouraged if you find the Club experiencing some of these growing pains. We've provided solutions and feedback on some of the most common issues, but feel free to contact your State NAMI if you have a problem not listed here.

We're having a hard time finding new members.

Getting new people involved for the long-term is a common hurdle. People get busy, get involved with new projects or activities, or decide to spend more time with friends and family. Part of making sure you always have new people getting involved with the Club will mean constantly promoting it and being

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“seen” on campus. Things like wearing all lime green, hosting a lunch-time activity, presenting at an assembly are all ways to catch people’s attention and let them know the NOC Club is here. If you find you’re lacking new members, brainstorm ways to reach out to student groups you haven’t been able to reach yet and find ways to get them involved. Think about creating a Recruitment Committee in your Club that will focus on building membership.

Our Club has been active for a while now, and it just hasn’t seemed to make a difference in our school.

Even if your whole school hasn’t started wearing green ribbons or attending every single NOC Club meeting, you’ve made a difference, just by being there. Having a mental health awareness Club on a high school campus is pretty new and different even though stigma and mental health have been around for a long time. Students can’t help but see your fliers or hear about the Club activities in their daily announcements, which make a difference to their overall impression of mental illness. By seeing that their school has this kind of Club, it “normalizes” mental illness and makes it something more comfortable to discuss and accept.

People are nervous to get involved because they think it means they have a mental illness.

Think about the messages your Club has been putting out on fliers, brochures and in other materials. Has the message only focused on helping those with a mental illness? If that’s the case, others might just assume that NOC Club isn’t for them if they don’t meet those specific criteria. Try offering activities that will appeal to people who are interested in the mental health or psychology field for a career, or who want to learn how to be a better friend or family member to someone who is experiencing a mental health challenge. Don’t limit the Club to only one kind of audience, and chances are your membership will start to become much more diverse.

We hang up tons of flyers- but the next day they’re all torn down.

Seeing all your hard work and talent in shreds can definitely be a bummer. Some people do this just for fun or to impress others with their disregard for classmate’s efforts. Either way, the goal is to make your posters more permanent or at least more difficult to remove. See if there is a protected bulletin board or glass case where you can hang a flyer. Can you get permission from teachers to hang posters in their classrooms instead of hallways? What about an electronic flyer; does your school have an email list or list serve where you can email all the students at once? Try to outthink the people who are tearing the posters down and get creative. If the problem persists or you notice other Clubs posters are safe and sound, bring this to the attention of your administration for help.

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Some adults on campus aren't being supportive.

Adults, just like students, might react differently towards something if they don't completely get it yet or understand the purpose. If you're finding that there are campus adults who don't seem to support or believe in all the amazing work your NOC Club is doing, try sharing more about the Club with them. Use the "NOC Is/NOC Isn't" and "Benefits" info in the manual to educate this person about the Club's mission, goals and activities. You can also talk with your Advisor and have him or her facilitate a conversation with the campus adults. Try involving him or her in an upcoming activity so they can see for themselves what you are all about.

Mental Health Resource Guide

Part of running a NOC Club is to be an advocate of accurate mental health information. What does that mean exactly? It means learning and understanding the true facts about mental illness, so that when you hear myths you can help educate the people around you. Here are the mental health statistics listed in the beginning of your manual:

- About 1 out of 5 young people between the ages of 9 to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder that impacts their daily lives.
- Half of lifetime disorders begin by age of 14, but there is an average of 10 years before these individuals seek out treatment due to stigma
- On any given day, 20% of students in a classroom are experiencing mental health conditions. They can be brief and mild, or they can be more serious and last a lifetime.
- Of those 20%, 80% will go undiagnosed and untreated.
- Left untreated, mental health conditions can worsen and become debilitating. They can lead to other issues such as substance abuse, truancy, problems with peers, problems with parents, victimization, dropping out of school, homicide, and suicide.³

Having a good understanding of how mental illness and mental health can affect teenagers will also help you be a supportive friend and classmate. Knowing what it really means to have bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, or any other mental illness, can help you understand a bit more about what that person is going through. It is also important to recognize how different cultures respond to mental illness. Culture- a person's beliefs, norms, values, and language- plays a key role in how people perceive and experience mental illness. NOC is an inclusive club and welcoming to everyone, therefore, it is important to acknowledge all cultural perspectives. In this section, we will also provide ideas on how to support someone with a mental health condition and give some of the common signs of the conditions.

Let's start with mental health.

Everyone has it! Mental health is how we each cope with everyday life. Some days, you might feel more confident or let things roll off your back more easily. On other days, maybe after you've gone through a breakup or have a big test to study for, your mental state may be more stressed, sad, or anxious.

These are all completely normal things to feel, and normal ways to feel them. It's when the feelings get to be so overwhelming that they make living your normal, everyday life a challenge. When things like getting out of bed, going to school, spending time with friends and family, working at your job or doing your hobbies becomes something you just can't do-that's when your mental health is becoming a problem, and possibly a mental illness.

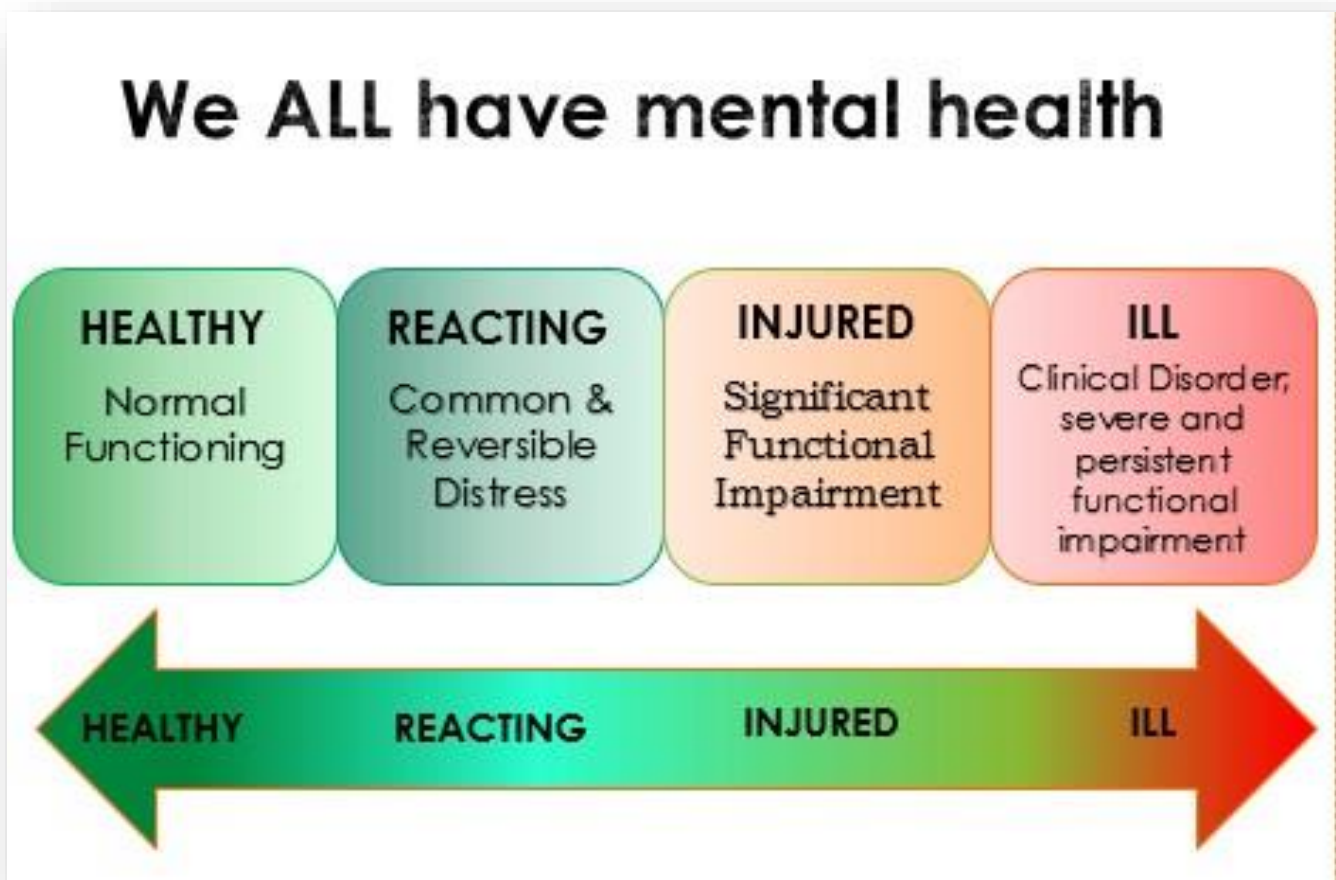
³ (Facts on Children's Mental Health in America)

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Mental health is a spectrum. A spectrum is a way of measuring where you fall on a scale. When people ask how hungry you are, on a scale of 1 to 10, that's a spectrum. If you say 1 or 2, then maybe you're not hungry right then. But if you say an 8 or a 9, then you must be starving! The point is, you're never NOT on the scale...it's just a matter of where you are.

The same goes for mental health. Below is the mental health spectrum. See if you can pinpoint where you are on it right this very minute. Now think of how you felt on your first day of school, right before a big date, or that time you had to speak in front of a group. Where would you be then?



As you can see, you're moving along the mental health spectrum all the time, depending on what's going on around you. There is a difference between exhibiting signs that lean toward the right of the spectrum and having a diagnosable mental health condition. It's when you move to the right side of the spectrum and stay there that your mental health condition may be a problem.

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So, What is Mental Illness?

A mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are a disorder of the brain.⁴

When someone is on the right side of the mental health spectrum, they are most likely experiencing some sort of mental illness. Their thinking, feeling, moods and ability to interact in their daily lives has been disrupted by what's going on.

Just like diabetes, heart disease, or sports injuries - **mental illnesses are treatable.**

Okay, So How Does a Brain 'Get Sick' in the First Place?

Mental illness can occur when the brain (or part of the brain) is not working well or is working in the wrong way. When the brain is not working properly, one or more of its six functions will be disrupted (thinking or cognition, perception or sensing, emotion or feeling, signaling, physical functions and/or behavior). When these malfunctions significantly disrupt a person's life, we say that the person has a mental disorder or a mental illness.

There is no one cause of mental illness, and the causes are complicated. Mental illness arises as a result of genetics (the effect of genes on brain development and brain function) and environment (the effect of things outside the brain on the brain – such as infection; malnutrition; severe stress; etc.). The environment and genes interact in complex ways to create mental disorders.

As the information above has shown you, mental illness is a disorder of the brain, just like liver disease is an illness of the liver. Similar to physical illness, mental illness is not something that you can just 'snap out of' and it is not due to personal weakness. Mental illness has to do with brain chemistry and brain function and has nothing to do with a lack of willpower.

Mental illness is due to a number of complex factors beyond our control. Luckily, for many of us, getting help is something we can control.⁵

Mental Illnesses & Indicators

Now that you know some general facts about mental illness, this guide will break down some of the more common mental illnesses found among youth.

Major depression

Major depression is much more than having a bad day or having a case of the blues. A person with depression will feel down for weeks or months at a time (not just a few days), and will really have a hard

⁴ (Mental Illnesses)

⁵ (Wishart)

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time connecting with other people, doing schoolwork, enjoying hobbies, or interacting with friends. Research has shown that about 8 percent of teens meet the criteria for major depression in any single day.⁶

Signs that a person may be experiencing depression include:

- Feeling sad or down for several weeks at a time
- Talking about suicide or being dead
- Being much more irritable
- Suddenly having a hard time in school or at home
- Going to the school nurse a lot for physical aches or pains
- Not wanting to do the things he or she used to love- like sports, art, hanging with friends, or any other hobbies
- Abusing drugs and alcohol

Bipolar disorder

Sometimes, people will say they were acting so “bipolar” because they switched from being happy to sad, or excited to down, very quickly. This is not an entirely true definition of bipolar disorder and using the word in that way can also promote the stigma of mental illness.

Actual bipolar disorder is when someone may be in a serious depressive mood and then their mood switches very quickly to exact opposite. This second stage of bipolar disorder is called mania, and it can include extreme highs, energy, irritability or anger.⁷

Someone who is in a manic state of bipolar disorder might have these as symptoms:

- Feeling overly happy for a long time
- Being really irritable over lots of things
- Overconfidence or thinking really highly of yourself, like you can do absolutely anything
- Talking very fast
- Not sleeping or not sleeping enough
- Doing risky and dangerous activities, like using drugs or having unprotected sex
- Having a “racing mind” where your thoughts are jumping every second
- Getting distracted very easily
- Feeling anxious or jumpy

A person in the depressive state of bipolar disorder might have symptoms that could look like these:

- Doesn't have any interest in doing things he or she used to love
- Feeling very hopeless, helpless or like he or she doesn't matter for a long period of time

⁶ (Depression in Children and Adolescents Fact Sheet)

⁷ (Wishart)

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- Feeling super tired, all the time

⁶ (Depression in Children and Adolescents Fact Sheet)

⁷ (Wishart)

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- Not able to concentrate or make easy decisions, like what to eat for lunch or what to wear
- Eating and sleeping differently than before
- Moving and talking slower than normal
- Thinking about death or suicide

Anxiety Disorders

Feeling a little anxious during certain times is normal and something that happens to everyone. Anxiety disorders are when the nervousness, worries and anxiety get to be too much and start to interfere with a person's life.

Thanks to recent studies, we know that about 8 percent of teens ages 13-18 have an anxiety disorder.⁸ Anxiety disorders are not rare, and there are several different kinds.

Panic Disorder

This is when people are hit with sudden and very real feelings of fear and terror. These panic attacks have sometimes been described as the feeling a person gets in the split second before a car crash, but the panic attacks can last for several minutes. A panic attack can have chest pain, make it hard to breathe, dizziness, upset stomach and even more worry about having another panic attack.

Social Anxiety Disorder

This is a fear of being in social situations, which makes it hard for people with Social Anxiety Disorder to make friends, be around people or communicate. People with this disorder are typically worried about saying or doing something in front of others that will embarrass them, so they avoid social situations all together.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD is the repetitive and unwanted thoughts, which are called obsessions, and/or routines that a person with OCD feels he or she "must" do in order to keep something bad from happening. People with OCD might get that what they are thinking or doing don't make sense, but they feel they have to keep doing them or worry that the thoughts they are having might be true.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

This is a serious and constant worrying about everyday events. People with this disorder sometimes worry about the very worst outcomes of simple tasks or events, which can make it challenging for them to get through the day.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

⁸ (Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents)

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PTSD is classified as an anxiety disorder and includes an event(s) that can be harmful to self or others and the response to the event(s) that includes prolonged feelings of fear and helplessness.

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are not just about losing weight or being thin. Eating disorders are what happen when weight and body image become a physical AND mental issue. Both girls and guys can be affected by an eating disorder, although more girls are treated for it.

Anorexia Nervosa

Anorexia is a serious eating disorder that focuses on a person being very afraid of gaining weight and that person not eating enough each day in order to maintain a healthy weight. People with anorexia may believe they are overweight (when in fact they aren't) or might not believe that what they are doing to their body is a big deal.

Bulimia Nervosa

People with Bulimia will eat everything they can all at once, and then try to get rid of everything they ate by making themselves vomit, or abusing laxatives and diet pills. Over-exercising and not eating for long periods of time are also signs of bulimia.

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

This is when a person has a really hard time sitting still, focusing on one thing at a time, and paying attention. Everyone has days where their minds wander during a class lecture, or they are fidgety and don't want to sit still. ADHD is when a person feels like that all the time and the symptoms change and vary a lot of the time.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness where the person is not able to think clearly, handle emotions, and seems to not be able to understand what reality is and what is a delusion or hallucination. People with schizophrenia might hear or see things that aren't really happening, speak in strange ways, believe they are in danger or be paranoid they are being watched or followed. Because of this, people with schizophrenia sometimes find it very difficult to keep doing daily activities like going to school, playing sports, or spending time with friends. Symptoms, like hallucinations and delusions, usually show up in young people between the ages of 16 and 30.⁹

HALLUCINATIONS are when someone sees, hears, or feels things that aren't there
DELUSIONS are when someone believes something that is not true or is paranoid

Schizophrenia does have treatment options and many people are able to find a treatment plan that works well for them and manages their symptoms.

⁹ (What is schizophrenia?)

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Substance-related Disorders

There are two types of substance-related disorders: substance dependence and substance abuse. While we know that substance-related disorders are not always considered mental illnesses, some people use substances to make them feel better about their mental health condition.

What is substance dependence?

Physical substance dependence is when a person's body gets so used to the substance that he/she can no longer function without it in their system. Plus, his/her body needs more and more of the substance to feel the effects, so they build up tolerance. If he/she does stop taking the substance, his/her body will go through withdrawal, meaning they'll experience a range of uncomfortable symptoms.

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Psychological substance dependence

Psychological substance dependence is when his/her thoughts become obsessed with using and obtaining the substance. They'll skip out on their responsibilities, miss school and neglect friends, all because their mind can only think about trying to get the next fix. It becomes extremely difficult to stop—this is called craving!

What is substance abuse?

Substance abuse is when a person continues to crave and abuse the substance despite negative consequences.¹⁰

Suicide & Self-Injury

We all have ways of coping with everyday life stuff- maybe you get together for Fro-Yo with friends after a long school week or watch a funny movie to get out of a funk. These are examples of positive coping skills.

There are also negative ways of coping. Negative coping skills are often dangerous and should always be taken seriously. For someone experiencing a mental health condition or being stigmatized for having a family member with a condition, they may turn to drugs, alcohol, self-injury, or suicide to help cope with their pain.

In this section, we will share info on self-injury and suicide and help you understand some of the reasons and warning signs of these negative coping skills. There are also tips and resources for you, if you or someone you know is using any of these negative coping skills to feel better.

Self-injury

Self-injury is not really a mental illness but it can be a big sign that something is wrong. Self-injury is when someone causes harm to themselves on purpose without wanting to die. It often occurs together with a mental illness.

Some examples of self-injury are below:

- Carving
- Scratching
- Branding
- Marking
- Picking and pulling skin and hair
- Burning/abrasions
- Cutting
- Biting
- Headbanging

¹⁰ (Wishart)

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- Bruising
- Hitting
- Tattooing
- Excessive body piercing¹¹

The reasons someone may try acts of self-injury vary, but may include:

- Feeling a sense of emotional release
- Gaining control over their body or relationships
- Relieving anger
- Self-hatred or guilt
- Escaping feelings of emptiness or numbness, etc.¹²

Signs of Self-Injury

A person who is hurting themselves will usually try to hide the behavior from their family and friends. Below are some signs that something is going on- but remember, you don't have to be 100% certain to get help for someone.

- **Unexplained wounds or scars** from cuts, bruises, or burns, usually on the wrists, arms, thighs, or chest.
- **Blood stains** on clothing or towels
- **Sharp objects or cutting instruments**, such as razors, knives, needles, glass shards, or bottle caps, in the person's locker, backpack or bedroom
- **Lots of "accidents"** – a person might try to say they are super clumsy or accident prone to explain why they have so many cuts and bruises
- **Covering up.** A person who self-injures may always wear long sleeves or long pants, even in hot weather.¹²

Suicide

Talking about suicide will not put the idea into someone's head. If you think someone you know is suicidal – ask them!!! They will be relieved that you cared enough to ask, and it will open the doors to a conversation about getting help.

The following are some of the signs a person who is suicidal might have. If you notice any of these, talk to your friend about getting help and tell a trusted adult right away.

- Talking about wanting to die or kill himself or herself
- Trying to find a way to commit suicide, like researching ways online
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

¹¹ (Self-Injury in Adolescents)

¹² (Wishart)

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- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Using drugs and alcohol to feel better
- Being alone more often
- Getting really angry and talking about getting revenge¹³

How You Can Help

As a member of the NOC Club, you now have lots of information about mental illness, self-injury and suicide. If you notice that someone you know is showing signs of hurting themselves or thinking about suicide, what can you do to help? It's important that you understand your role and how to get this person help. Below are steps to follow if someone you know is hurting himself or herself.

If this is an emergency situation (someone is threatening to harm themselves or others), get help immediately. Call 911 or find trusted adults right away. Do not follow the steps below if this is an emergency.

Step 1: Try to get them to open up and talk about how they're feeling.

Step 2: Do not be judgmental – just listen to them.

Step 3: Find out if they have a plan already in place.

Step 4: Do not leave him/her alone.

Step 5: You can't save him/her on your own!

Step 6: Tell your parents or an adult you trust.

Helpful Resources

Words that Can Help -

http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Find_Support/NAMI_on_Campus1/Words_That_Can_Help.htm

- A list of words and phrases to say to support a friend living with a mental health condition.

¹³ (Melinda Smith, 2013)

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Half of Us – <http://www.halfofus.com/>

- Half of Us, mtvU and **The Jed Foundation** want to initiate a public dialogue to raise awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues and connect students to the appropriate resources to get help. The Half of Us website provides videos of young people and celebrities discussing their journeys to recovery from a mental illness and provides information on mental health conditions in young adults.

NAMI – www.nami.org

- A source of information about all facets of NAMI advocacy at the national and state levels; current information on research; basic information about major mental illnesses, newest medication strategies, discussion groups and best treatment practices.

StrengthOfUs.org - <http://strengthofus.org>

- StrengthofUs is an online community developed by NAMI and young adults. It's designed to inspire young adults impacted by mental health issues to think positive, stay strong and achieve their goals through peer support and resource sharing.

To Write Love on Her Arms - <http://twloha.com/>

- A musical movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for young adults struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide.

Love is Louder - <http://www.loveislouder.com/>

- Individuals, communities, schools and organizations have embraced Love is Louder as a way to address with issues like bullying, negative self-image, discrimination, loneliness and depression.

ReachOut.com - <http://us.reachout.com/>

- ReachOut.com is a safe place for teens and young adults to improve their understanding of mental health issues, develop resilience, build their coping-skills and increase help-seeking behavior. It provides evidence-based information and supports, real life stories and the ability to connect and contribute in a safe and supported community.

The Trevor Project - <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

- Founded in 1998, The Trevor Project is the leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization specifically for the LGBTQ Community. The Trevor Project provides resources, community, and advocacy/educational programs to create a safe environment for everyone with the goal to end suicide with LGBTQ youth.

The Jason Foundation - <https://jasonfoundation.com/>

- The Jason Foundation seeks to end youth suicide by reaching young people, educators and the community through educational programs. The Jason Foundation offers a curriculum for students and seminars for teachers and parents with the sole purpose of educating and helping students, parents, and teachers identify at-risk youth to prevent suicide.

Walk In Our Shoes – <http://www.walkinourshoes.org/>

- Walk In Our Shoes campaign is funded through voter approved Proposition 63 and aims to teach people about mental health through personal stories from individuals with a mental illness.

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Contact Us

If you ever need additional resources than what is listed here or are looking for extra support, please give us a call. Your role in the NOC Club is essential and we firmly believe in your power to become a mental health advocate and help spread mental health awareness! We hope you find the experience of working with the NOC program rewarding, educational and inspiring.

Contact Info

For questions or support, please contact your local NAMI Affiliate, NAMI State Organization, or NAMI national.

Team NAMI

namioncampus@nami.org

(703) 524-7600

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