

## Group Guidelines

- Start and stop on time
- Time limit for Opening Stories (2-3 min.)
- Absolute confidentiality
- Be respectful
- Keep it in the here and now (we can't change the past)
- Empathize with each other's situation

## Principles of Support

- We will see the individual first, not the illness
- We recognize that mental illnesses are medical illnesses that may have environmental triggers
- We understand that mental illnesses are traumatic events
- We aim for better coping skills
- We find strength in sharing experiences
- We reject stigma in ourselves and others
- We won't judge anyone's pain as less than our own
- We forgive ourselves and reject guilt
- We embrace humor as healthy
- We accept we cannot resolve all problems
- We expect a better future in a realistic way
- We will never give up hope!

## **What is NAMI Family Support Group?**

NAMI Family Support Groups, offered by NAMI Affiliates in communities across the country, are free, confidential and safe groups of families helping families who live with mental health challenges in their lives. Families join a caring group of individuals helping one another through their learned wisdom. Families are no longer alone and they have a renewed sense of hope for their loved one living with mental health challenges.

## **What are the goals of NAMI Family Support Group?**

- To encourage, support and empower people
- To provide this support free of charge and confidentially
- To make this support available to any family member of an individual living with a mental illness
- To provide a support group that is led by trained facilitators who are also family members of an individual living with mental illness themselves

## **What people are saying about NAMI Family Support Group?**

*“The most beneficial thing for me was that I am not alone. I found the support group at the time I really needed it!”* A family caregiver

## **About NAMI**

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