

Connection Support Group Facilitator

NAMI's Connection Support Group is a free peer-based, mutual support group for people living with mental illness or illnesses. Support groups aim to provide a welcoming, respectful, and safe space to build awareness and understanding while learning from and connecting with others. NAMI groups are a place for people to find support, comfort and respect.

Connection Support Groups are available across the state of Minnesota, both in person and virtually. Support groups are created intentionally as spaces for individuals to connect with peers who have lived experience with mental illness or illnesses. NAMI offers an African American Support Group, a BIPOC (biracial-bicultural welcome) Support Group, LGBTQ+ groups, Dual Diagnosis Support Group, Spanish-language Support Group and Young Adult Support Groups. It is NAMI's hope that a culturally competent and easily accessible group is available to all.

Facilitators are asked to provide a welcoming, safe, judgement-free space for participants who live with mental illnesses. Support groups help participants build awareness and understanding while connecting with others in their community who face similar experiences. Facilitators maintain a culturally affirming, confidential and safe setting as they guide group members in sharing challenges, successes, and learning from one another.

Commitment: Successfully Complete the Connection Support Group Training (2 Days)
*Typically held 2x each year in the fall and spring.
Successfully complete Volunteer Orientation (1.5 hours)
2+ Hours Weekly (90 Minutes for the Support Group, 30 Minutes of Preparation)
One Year Minimum Commitment

Qualifications

- Must identify as a person living with mental illness or mental illnesses, who is willing to share their wellness journey with others.
- Ability to lead in commitment to social justice and use in support group spaces of inclusive, welcoming and respectful action and language.
- Willingness to learn and follow the NAMI support group model.
- A positive regard for mutual support and ability to support others in a culturally affirming and trauma informed manner.
- Good communication skills including leading and guiding group conversation, encouraging group knowledge and empathy to provide support.
- Access to reliable internet to conduct virtual support group meetings (for virtual support group leaders), or access to reliable transportation to meeting sites (for in person support group leaders).
- Successfully complete yearly training refresher with Peer Program Coordinator.

- Highly reliable and punctual.
- Possess ability to self-disclose your personal experience when appropriate in group settings.
- If the support group facilitator is also a mental health professional: an understanding of and willingness to facilitate the group as a peer and not as a professional.

Responsibilities and Duties

- Keep NAMI Minnesota and the Peer Program Coordinator informed of any changes in your contact information, ability to schedule and fulfill your group commitments, and/or any successes, concerns, or problems you may encounter.
- Attend the full two-day NAMI Connection Support Group facilitator training and additional workshops as needed.
- For virtual facilitators, request additional Zoom training or technical support as needed.
- Attending a Question, Persuade, Refer class and a Hope for Recovery program is strongly recommended.
- Coordinate the location, date, and time of the group with NAMI Minnesota and/or your local affiliate.
- Allow NAMI Minnesota to publish your first name and telephone number as the contact for your support group.
- Take calls from people interested in attending the support group, promptly responding to inquiries as well as provide technical support in logging in for those interested in attending for virtual support group leaders.
- Advertise the support group locally, if you are comfortable doing so.
- Conduct meetings in accordance with the NAMI Connection Support Group model.
- Assemble materials for participants and for general group use (posters for in-session reference, resource table materials, etc.)
- Open and close meetings promptly and guide the content and process of the group experience.
- Promote a culturally affirming, confidential and respectful group atmosphere to ensure members feel welcomed, safe and included.
- Participate in monthly facilitator check-in process with Peer Program Coordinator and provide suggestions for improvements on the program.
- Submit weekly group reports to NAMI National.
- Identify participants in the group who would make good facilitators and recommend them for training.
- Respond promptly to inquiries and requests for further information from NAMI Minnesota.
- Notify NAMI Minnesota if you will or will not be continuing as a facilitator after your initial commitment has been met.

I agree, by my signature, to uphold the NAMI Connections Support Group Facilitator Agreement as outlined above.

NAMI Connections

Support Group Facilitator: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

For Office Use Only:

Program Director Training Certification: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Volunteer Resources Tracking Form: Int: _____ Date: ____/____/____