



For family, caregivers and friends of Military Service Members and Veterans of all ages and eras, living with depression, anxiety, PTSD or other behavioral/emotional challenges.

NAMI Homefront is an educational program based on the NAMI Family-to-Family program which has been offered by the VA clinics and hospitals throughout the US since the late 1990's. NAMI Homefront has been modified to address specific needs of families of Military Service Members and Veterans who are facing post-deployment or post-discharge challenges whether it is recent or in the past (e.g. Korean Conflict etc). It was developed with the assistance of family/friend/veterans/military service personnel, the VA, DoD, health professionals and the RAND Corporation. It has been piloted in 6 states and Wisconsin is the 2nd state to have training to offer it here. Two volunteers from NAMI Portage-Wood County have been trained and will offer the first class here in January 2015.

Starts February 10, 6 weeks

6-8:30 pm

St. Paul Methodist Church, 600 Wilshire Blvd, Stevens Point

FREE, open to the public but registration is required.

Confidential – participants and discussions are confidential

To find out more, call Co-Leader: Kay Jewell, 715-254-1864 or Lisa Cychosz at 715-630-8227

Who Should Attend

Any loved one, over age 18, of Service Members/Veterans living with depression, anxiety, PTSD or other behavioral/emotional challenges. They do not have to have a diagnosis or be in treatment. They do not have to be living with the family member, they may be MIA, or even deceased but the family member is interested in participating. Everyone is eligible regardless of discharge status. You do not have to be a member of NAMI to attend.

Why You Should Attend – What You Can Expect Information

- Fundamental information necessary for the family to understand what the Service Member or Veteran is experiencing
- Up-to-date information on conditions, like PTSD, and substance abuse and its impact on a person's mind, behavior & emotions.
- Current research on treatments including evidence-based therapies, medications and side effects.

Guidance and coaching

- How to recognize warning signs, manage crises and new ways to approach solving problems and communicating.
- Strategies for self-care including stress management and emotional overload and the impact on the Service Member and the entire family.
- Guidance on locating appropriate federal, state and local support and services.

A community

Perhaps most importantly, you will know you are not alone. Recovery is a journey and there is hope for all individuals and families. You will experience compassion and reinforcement from people who relate to your experiences. Through your participation, you have the opportunity to help others.

What Others Have to Say About NAMI Family-to-Family Classes Taught in Partnership with the VA

"You realize that he will never be the same having been through war. I learned how to treat him more as an adult than as a hurt child." — Mother of a Veteran after graduating from a NAMI Family-to-Family class held at a VA clinic

"We are still friends with everyone that was in the class. There's always an open ear and an open heart and a shoulder to cry on if you need it." — Father of a Veteran after graduating from a NAMI Family-to-Family class held at a VA hospital

What to do until NAMI Homefront is offered here: contact us to talk about what is available (support groups, education) and/or check out our website for resources and support.

NAMI – Portage-Wood County Activities and Resources- <http://www.namiportagewoodcounties.org>

Program Curriculum

Class 1: Introduction to Family Education

Special features of the course; learning about the normative stages of our emotional reactions to the challenges presented by mental illness in the family; the belief system and principles that NAMI programs are based on; recognizing that mental illnesses are fundamentally biological disorders; addressing the challenges presented by the stigma around mental illness, specifically in the military culture.

Class 2: The Biology of Mental Illness and Getting a Diagnosis

Overview of development and functions of key brain areas; research on functional and structural brain changes related to mental illness and brain injury; overview of the diagnostic process; critical periods in illness development and symptom management; strategies in development of a Crisis File and sharing participant personal stories.

Class 3: Understanding Trauma and Overview of Diagnoses

Discussion of trauma from the perspective of the general public, then specifically about various types of trauma experienced by military personnel and their families; emphasize a picture of normal reactions to abnormal events and normalizing the fact that there is always some level of residue associated with exposure to trauma; overview of the types and subtypes of some of the major mental illnesses including mood episodes and mood disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, co-occurring brain disorder and addictive disorders.

Class 4: Treatment Systems and Services

Overview of the systems that may be involved in the Service Member's treatment including the Department of Defense Military Health System, the Department of Veterans Affairs Health system and civilian mental healthcare systems; overview of different type of healthcare providers of mental health services; overview of different types of therapy and treatment, including medications; emphasize the importance of working collaboratively (the Service Member, the healthcare provider and the family) to achieve the best outcomes; suggestions and tips on communicating with the healthcare provider and the importance of advocating for the needs of the Service Member and the Family.

Class 5: Crisis Preparation and Communication Skills

Acknowledge the impact of mental illness on each family member and the Service Member; learning to separate the symptoms and behavior from the individual; loving the person behind the illness; learning various skills that can be used to improve day to day communications within the family as well as during episodes of crisis; communication skills, problem solving skills, tips for handling challenging behavior, crisis preparation and response, developing a relapse plan

Class 6: Family Roles, Recovery and Self-Care

The unique challenges of various family roles (spouse/partner vs. parent vs. sibling, etc.); the importance of self-care in being an effective family caregiver; discussion of any unresolved needs of participants; emphasize building an advocacy team for the Service Member; invitation to join NAMI in the fight to end discrimination and ensure access to appropriate treatment services; evaluations and certificates.