NAMI Seattle Helpline FAQ

What is the Helpline?

One of NAMI Seattle’s oldest programs is our Helpline, which is a listening and resource referral line for any members of the Seattle community seeking assistance in navigating the mental health system.

Who answers Helpline calls?

Our Helpline is staffed primarily by volunteers who have their own experiences with mental health, whether as a peer or a family member of someone with a mental health condition.

How do I reach the Helpline?

Our Helpline can be accessed in the following ways:

**Phone:** 206.783.9264

**Email:** helpline@namiseattle.org

**Text:** 206.207.7765

When can I reach the Helpline?

NAMI Seattle staff hours are 9am-5pm Monday-Thursday. However, due to the small size of our organization and changing volunteer schedules, we do not always have someone available to answer Helpline calls at all times during office hours. All Helpline callers are encouraged to leave a voicemail with their contact information and a few details about their question or need; we return all calls where contact information is given.
What can Helpline volunteers help me with?

- The chance to talk over your experience with a mental health condition or challenge that you may be having (yourself or with a family member). Helpline volunteers are individuals who themselves have been impacted by mental illness at a personal level or within their families.
- Listening empathetically and offering emotional support.
- Sharing some aspects of their own experiences with mental illness.
- Offering ideas, strategies and coping skills.
- Determining and finding resources for you in the following areas:
  - Mental health counseling
  - Mental health resources for LGBTQ+ folx
  - Culturally and/or religiously competent mental health resources
  - Youth mental health resources
  - Psychiatry (Inpatient/Outpatient) options in Seattle
  - Information on mental health treatments (we do not offer personal recommendations)
  - Support groups
  - Educational programs on mental health
  - Information about other NAMI affiliates in WA state
  - Information on mental health conditions
  - Information on the mental health resources available in Seattle and suggestions (typically based on personal experiences, not professional training) about how to navigate local systems
  - NAMI-approved current clinical trials for mental health treatment
  - Resources that offer employment rehabilitation help in the Seattle area
  - Resources for neglect, abuse, and discrimination based on having a disability.
  - Resources for people who are experiencing sexual harassment/assault or domestic violence.

Please note: Helpline volunteers are NOT able to provide:

- Counseling/therapy or crisis intervention
- Legal advice – we refer callers to the CLEAR hotline, 211 or Disability Rights WA
- Housing navigation – we refer people most often to 211 for housing navigation and have a small list of emergency shelters that we can refer callers to. Due to the complicated housing waitlist situation in Seattle, our Helpline is not able to keep an updated list of available housing in King County. We are able to do a general lookup of housing and shelters but are not able to guarantee an available housing resource.
- Advocacy for individuals or families within the mental health or criminal justice systems (i.e. in-court advocates)
- Prioritized referrals to service agencies, health providers, etc.
- Guaranteed responses to all calls at the time that they are made (for urgent or time-sensitive matters, we encourage you to call 866.427.4747)
If you have any questions or concerns, please email NAMI Seattle’s Volunteer & Resource Coordinator at faarah@namiseattle.org. Thank you for letting others know about this resource!