At NAMI Seattle, we emphasize that those struggling with mental health conditions are not alone. During the pandemic, we had to work harder than ever to make sure that those living with mental health conditions, their loved ones, and those experiencing mental health challenges for the first time had the valuable support and connection they needed.

History
Originally founded as “Washington Advocates for the Mentally Ill” in 1978, we worked with other concerned groups across the country to launch a national advocacy and support organization: The National Alliance on Mental Illness, or NAMI. Today, NAMI is the largest grassroots mental health organization in the nation.

Mission
To address the unmet mental health needs within our community through support, referral, education, and outreach.

Vision
A world where all those impacted by mental illness know they are not alone, and are empowered to live a fulfilling life.

Statement on Racial Equity
NAMI Seattle is committed to using our values of Kindness, Community, Integrity and Empowerment to guide the work we do to address racial inequities within our organization and beyond. Please see namiseattle.org/about for our full racial equity statement.
A Note from Our Board

My experience with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) causes me to look for certainty in all aspects of my life. Unfortunately for us all, 2020 was a year filled with uncertainty. From a global pandemic, to police brutality, to white supremacy - we were unsure about the health and wellbeing of our country, our loved ones, and ourselves. As Treasurer of NAMI Seattle, I was also unsure about NAMI Seattle’s financial future and our ability to serve the community long-term.

Because of all these uncertainties, I know that COVID-19 exacerbated my OCD and negatively impacted my general mental health. Luckily, thanks to my privilege, I have access to an incredible psychiatrist, low-cost medication, and a stable job. Recognizing my privilege is why I joined the board of NAMI Seattle. I wanted to ensure that everyone in our community has access to the mental health resources they deserve and that is why I am also so proud of the work accomplished by NAMI Seattle’s incredible staff this past year.

Seattle needed us more than ever in 2020 and NAMI Seattle stepped up to address both new and old unmet mental health needs within our community. In the wake of police violence, we formed a weekly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Support Group to recognize the unique mental health struggles faced by the BIPOC community. The staff (with inspiring grace) shifted all our programming and support groups from in-person to virtual, which ensured our services continued with little interruption during the pandemic. As the year progressed, our virtual programming proved indispensable, as the pandemic increasingly took a toll on our collective mental health. We also found that virtual offerings reduced barriers to access within our community and we plan to continue a mixed in-person, virtual program offerings going forward.

2021 will continue to be a year of uncertainty both for our community and for NAMI Seattle. However, with your continued help and volunteering and financial support, we know that NAMI Seattle can tolerate any uncertainty just as my OCD treatment has taught me to do.

Eli Lieberman
NAMI Seattle Board Treasurer
“This group literally saved my life. [...] I came out feeling so understood, fulfilled, and having gotten so much more help than I'd felt in maybe all my years since I have been diagnosed with a mental illness.”
---Anonymous, Connections Support group attendee

**Support Groups**

Many people rely on support groups to maintain their mental health. These groups are usually in-person in a comfortable and safe space. When this was no longer possible due to the pandemic, our volunteers and staff rallied quickly to ensure the supportive community of these groups would stay strong. At this time all NAMI Seattle Support groups are available online.

**Family Education and Support**

Our Family-to-Family class and its Spanish equivalent De Familia a Familia were offered in 2020, as well as our Family and Friends class, presented in both English and Spanish. These courses, focusing on educating the family and friends of a person living with a mental health condition, form the cornerstone of breaking stigma. With information and connection from these programs, family members become strong advocates for their loved one living with a mental health condition.

**Did you know?**

A 2018 study found that “support groups are effective at reducing symptoms, substance misuse, hospitalizations and use of services, as well as improving social competence and increasing healthy behaviors, self-esteem and perceptions of overall wellbeing” (Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapy)
Did you Know?

Early intervention with coordinated specialty care can drastically improve the long-term outcomes and independence of individuals with psychosis disorders, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Youth Education
When young people experience the symptoms of a mental health condition, shame, confusion, and stigma often prevent them from speaking about how they are feeling with an adult. Ending the Silence brings young adults to classroom settings, currently online, to tell middle and high school students that “it’s OK not to be OK” sometimes, and that talking about emotions is healthy and helpful for everyone.

Mental Health Leadership
Mental health has long been a taboo topic in workplaces, places of faith, and other settings. Our professional development workshops aim to end stigmatizing views of mental illness and create communities that support mental health. In 2020, we worked with diverse groups including businesses, religious community groups, and nonprofit organizations to educate community leaders and workplace managers about the importance of mental health.

Did you Know?
Employment rates among individuals with severe mental health conditions such as schizophrenia, major depressive disorder, or bipolar disorder more than double when they receive evidence-based supported employment services.
In 2020 NAMI Seattle joined the virtual world in a big way! We worked with a wide range of community members to both educate and bring joy to Seattle in difficult times. We also recorded many of these events and continue to share them on our website.

**Black Artists' Coping Event**
We partnered with the Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas to present the unique perspectives of Black storytellers and artists during a time of physical distancing. Featuring artists Lauren Du Pree, Dani Terrell, & Sharon Nyree Williams (sharonnwilliams.com), along with Clinical Psychologist Dr. Katrina Sanford (drkatrinasanford.com) and produced by Menrva Labs.

Left: Lauren Du Pree (see more at: justdupree.com)
Above: Original artwork by Dani Tirrell (see more at: danitirrell.com)

**NAMI Walks Your Way**
In 2020, Washington's biggest event to break the stigma of mental illness went virtual with NAMIWalks Your Way. From walking in the back yard, to yoga, to painting, people throughout Western Washington got creative to show their support for mental health awareness!

**Small Drawings, High Hopes**
Seattle artist Kyle Krauskopf joined NAMI to tell his story about mental health and art through a virtual art show. Kyle highlighted how different emotions can manifest in artistic expression.

Left: Kyle Krauskopf (see more at: kylekrauskopf.com)
By the Numbers

214 people connected to resources and support through our Helpline.

Over 800 people attended our professional development workshops teaching business leaders, organizations, and community groups about mental health.

More than 700 students, teachers and caregivers learned about the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions and how to get help through Ending the Silence.

174 support group meetings; most of these met online for the first time ever!

Participants in our BIPOC virtual support group tuned in from 27 different zip codes across 3 different states.
Thank you to our 2020 partners:

The Peg and Rick Young Foundation

Kaiser Permanente

Nesholm Family Foundation

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Thank you to our former staff:
Faarah Misbah and Sien Méndez