

Key Messages: NAMI Homefront

What is NAMI Homefront?

- A six-session education program for families of military Service Members and Veterans living with mental health conditions.
- Available free of charge to participants.
- Designed to help family members understand and support their Service Member/Veteran while maintaining their own well-being.
- Offers current information about a range of mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and co-occurring substance use disorders.
- Taught by trained family members of Service Members and Veterans who also have experience with mental health conditions.
- An adaptation of NAMI Family-to-Family which has been designated as an Evidence-based Practice by SAMHSA.
- NAMI Homefront does not recommend or endorse any medications or other therapies.
- NAMI Homefront is copyrighted.

The Goals of NAMI Homefront Include:

- Provide current information about the major mental illnesses, including PTSD, co-occurring substance use disorders and the most current research available on the biological aspects of these illnesses.
- Provide accurate information on the possibilities for living in recovery, including a variety of treatment strategies.
- Promote empathy by creating an understanding of the subjective, lived experience of a person living with mental illness.
- Provide specific skills training in the areas of problem solving, dealing with trauma, communication techniques and handling crises and relapse.
- Focus on needs of the caregiver such as learning to cope with worry, stress and emotional overload.
- Provide guidance on locating appropriate federal, state and local supports and services for Service Members and Veterans within the community and offer tips of advocating for those resources.

What Does the Research Say about NAMI Homefront?

Research on NAMI Homefront is currently underway. However, several studies have been conducted on NAMI Family-to-Family from which NAMI Homefront is adapted. NAMI Family-to-Family has been the subject of several research studies, including doctoral dissertations and masters theses. The most notable research studies have been conducted under the direction of Dr. Lisa Dixon and staff at the University of Maryland Medical Center. The results of three of Dr. Dixon's studies have appeared in peer-reviewed professional journals (2001, 2004, 2011 and 2013).

The most notable of these studies was published in June 2011 and included a control group, thus lifting NAMI Family-to-Family to the category of programs considered to be evidence-based. This four-year study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health found that family members who participated in the NAMI Family-to-Family program showed the following improvements when compared to the family members who did not take the course:

- Significantly greater overall empowerment as well as empowerment within their family, the service system and their community.
- Greater knowledge of mental illness.
- Higher rating of coping skills.
- Lower ratings of anxiety related to being able to control conditions.
- Higher reported levels of problem solving skills related to family functioning.

The most exciting aspect of this study was that in a six-month follow up, participant reports indicated that all of these effects were still in place. The NAMI Family-to-Family program has been taught in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) clinics and hospitals since 2000.

What Is the Community Scope and Reach of NAMI Homefront?

- Established in 2014
- Available in 10 states as of October 2014
- Approximately 750 classes are taught each year.
- More than 100 volunteer family members have been trained to teach NAMI Homefront.

How was NAMI Homefront Developed?

NAMI established an expert advisory group comprised of Veterans, family members, NAMI's Veteran and Military Council, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Rand Corporation and the [Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving](#) to help guide the development of the program. Input and guidance from this group of stakeholders helped ensure that NAMI Homefront addresses the specialized needs of Service Member and Veteran families.

In late 2014, the first round of NAMI Homefront classes was taught in six states as a pilot program (Illinois, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and South Carolina). Instructors were drawn from NAMI Affiliates with experience teaching NAMI Family-to-Family at VA sites who also have a personal connection to Service Members or Veterans.

How do People Learn about NAMI Homefront?

NAMI Homefront teachers are trained to provide community outreach and marketing for the program. In addition to traditional methods of outreach, such as flyers and brochures, NAMI Homefront is promoted electronically via newsletters, websites and social media maintained by NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

As with other NAMI education and support programs, NAMI Homefront offers a vital community resource while also raising public awareness of NAMI generally and introduces NAMI to audiences who do not already know about us.

How can I get involved?

Contact your NAMI Affiliate if you or someone you know would like to attend a NAMI Homefront class. Visit www.nami.org/local or call 800-950-NAMI (6264).