

# WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO TREAT BRAIN HEALTH DIFFERENTLY THAN OTHER TYPES OF ILLNESSES. **THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES**

*Dear NAMI Friends & Family,*

No matter the emotion, when we strive to find a place of stillness and allow ourselves to feel, we often emerge stronger people. More grateful people. We find grace. We are then able to move forward with renewed clarity and energy.

This past year has challenged our community and our world in ways we never expected. Finding grace seemed out of reach for many of us. And yet, amidst the chaos, we have made some great strides in mental health. Telemedicine has become the norm and provided access to millions of individuals who previously had barriers to care; our schools are including mental health education as an integral part of the curriculum; and **the public conversation about mental health is louder and more widespread than ever.**

The challenge going forward is to carry this momentum into 2021 and beyond. We need to keep the pressure on local, state, and national funders to support mental health at the same level as physical illnesses. We need to continue to educate our young people, train and support law enforcement and first responders, and offer resources to peers and families. Most importantly, we must ensure that mental health care is widely available to everyone in our community.

There is still much work to be done, and we are grateful for our volunteers and supporters who are dedicated to NAMI Rochester. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, but for a moment, we encourage you to pause and breathe in this incredible time of change.

Be still, and we guarantee you will hear the revolution roaring.



*Heather Newton, Executive Director*



*Sally Weiss, Board President*



**IN THE  
U.S.**

**1 in 5**

*people live with a  
mental health condition*

**4 in 5**

*people are their  
family and friends*

## **COLLABORATION IS REVOLUTIONARY:**

Within days of the March 2020 shutdown, we joined our community partners to provide immediate mental health support.

### **Here's what we did:**

- **Volunteered at Foodlink** to pack emergency food boxes. Offered weekly peer support to fellows in the Foodlink **Career Empowerment Program**, many of whom live with substance use disorders and/or mental health conditions.
- Printed and distributed **20,000 mental health resource cards** for first responders, law enforcement, medical professionals, and the Monroe County Department of Health.
- **Donated NAMI staff** to become trained Volunteer Crisis Counselors at **211/LIFE LINE** to help with the dramatic increase in call volume.

## **EDUCATION IS REVOLUTIONARY:**

**NEW! Youth Mental Health First Aid:** Internationally recognized certification course that addresses mental health challenges for youth and guidance on how to plan for both crisis and non-crisis situations.

**NEW! Suicide Safety for School Staff:** 90-minute training sessions designed to meet school administration, faculty, and staff needs. The emphasis is on recognizing warning signs, clarifying the referral process in place at school, and making a warm handoff.

**NEW! Bridging the Gap:** This 90-minute interactive program helps parents identify the signs and symptoms of mental health struggles, how to start the conversation with someone you're concerned about, and recognize when it's time to reach out to professionals.

**NEW! Working Minds:** In response to the growing demand from employers across our region, we are proud to introduce Working Minds in early 2021. This Nationally-Accredited program trains organizations **to proactively address the early warning signs of mental health challenges and suicide in the workplace.**

**ONGOING Ending the Silence – Serving more than 40 schools:** Presentation for middle and high school students that helps raise awareness and change perceptions around mental health. Students gain a better understanding about the warning signs of a mental illness for themselves and their friends.

**90%**

*of people who  
die by suicide  
have experienced  
symptoms of a  
mental health  
condition*

**74%**

*of high school  
students report having  
experienced anxiety as  
a result of COVID-19*

**67%**

*of young adults tell  
a friend they are  
struggling before  
telling anyone else*

## RESPONSIVENESS IS REVOLUTIONARY:

As most businesses were closing down, NAMI Rochester increased our daily programming.

**Mindfulness Mondays, Wellness Wednesdays, and Family Fridays:** Open to peers, family members and the community to learn more about mindfulness, healthy coping skills and activities to help ease stress and anxiety.

In late-March, we offered a Zoom workshop for older adults at **Episcopal Senior Life** called "10 Tips for Mental Wellness." We had no idea it would become a weekly meeting with a loyal (and growing!) group of seniors. Week after week meetings begin with a prepared topic and naturally flow into conversations about mental health, wellness, and life in general. The group celebrates its 25th meeting in November.

**Family to Family, Peer to Peer, Family Support Group, and Connections Support Group:** We quickly transitioned **ALL** NAMI signature programs to an all virtual-format and provided ongoing technical support to those who needed it.

# 1/4

*of adults 65 yrs. and older have experienced anxiety or depression during the pandemic*

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The Mental Health Revolution is about demanding that mental health be given the same attention, funding, and respect as any other medical condition.

Please visit [namiroc.org](http://namiroc.org) or email [info@namirochester.org](mailto:info@namirochester.org) to find out how you can join the revolution.

**LEADING  
THE MENTAL HEALTH  
REVOLUTION**



We envision a world where stigma is no longer a barrier to treatment, support is readily available, and mental illness is universally accepted as a treatable medical condition.

320 N. Goodman St, Suite 102 & 103, Rochester, NY 14607

**ALL NAMI Rochester programs and classes are provided at no cost**