

Family-To-Family



The next Family-to-Family is currently enrolling. Classes will be held at the NAMI-WCI office in the St. Elizabeth School of Nursing.

Call 765.423.6939 to reserve a place in the class.

Lost and Found

We were lost and devastated when our daughter's college counselor called and said that she would have to come home because of "psychiatric problems." What had happened to our beautiful girl? It was the beginning of a long journey; psychiatrists, medications, therapists, setbacks, different medications, a continuing search for support.

At first, we were so focused on our child's illness that we didn't realize the toll that it was taking on our family. Our ignorance of what mental illness is lead to unspoken feelings of guilt and blame. We didn't know how to react to our daughter's behavior. We felt cut off from her treatment. We were exhausted, confused and angry, sometimes with each other.

Then a friend asked us if we had been to NAMI. What is "NAMI?" Two weeks into NAMI-WCI's *Family-to-Family education course* we discovered that *we were not alone*. As time went on, we learned how to respond to crises and to communicate effectively with our daughter. We found out how medications work. We discovered treatments and support systems available in our community. Lastly, we learned how to take care of ourselves and each other. Family-to-Family helped us to set realistic expectations for each other. Now, there is really hope for us as a family.



West Central Indiana's Voice on Mental Illness

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Family-to-Family is a twelve week education course that has been taught, free of charge, to more than 100,000 family members who have a seriously mentally ill loved one. The course includes:

- information on each of the serious mental illnesses
- up-to-date information on medications and side effects
- current research on the biology of the brain
- strategies for handling crises and relapse
- workshops for problem solving, listening & communication
- locating appropriate supports and services within the community
- "care for the caregiver": coping with stress and emotional overload

All this is taught by trained NAMI-WCI family members.

Study Shows Long-term Benefits Family-to-Family Participants¹

A University of Maryland study of 95 families, has demonstrated significant benefits to participants in Family-to-Family classes. Compared to a control group, six months following their classes, Family-to-Family graduates: 1. Had greater knowledge of the causes and treatment of mental illness; 2. Felt less burdened by their loved one's illness; 3. Had an improved understanding of the mental health system; 4. Showed a reduction in depression. The authors conclude that Family-to-Family meets the national criteria for an "evidenced based practice."

¹L. Dixon, et. al. *Acta Psychiar. Scand* 2004;109:207-215