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## **Free 12-Session Class for Those Living With Adults Who Have Mental Health Challenges**

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**Categories :** [Healthy Living](#)

**Tagged as :** [Family-to-Family](#), [NAMI Southwest Connecticut 2019](#), [NAMI Southwest CT 2019](#)

**Date :** August 10, 2019

If you live with or are a family member of someone with a mental illness, you can learn more about it, how you can help and how you can cope with a free, 12-week class starting in early September in Stamford.

The Southwest Connecticut Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness is offering the class on Monday evenings, starting Sept. 9 at St. John's Lutheran Church at 884 Newfield Ave.

— [an announcement](#) from *NAMI Southwest CT*

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session education program for family, partners, friends and significant others of adults living with mental health challenges.

The NAMI Family-to-Family class is a designated evidence-based program taught by NAMI-trained family

members with lived experience. Research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to an individual living with a mental health condition.

### **NAMI of SW Connecticut's Family-to-Family class**

- When: 7 p.m., Monday evenings, beginning Sept. 9, 2019
- Where: St. John's Lutheran Church, [884 Newfield Ave., Stamford](#).
- ?For information and to register, call Bob at (203) 849-9573.

The course is designed to help family members understand and support their loved one living with mental illness, while maintaining their own well-being.

The course includes information on conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression and other mental health conditions. Thousands of families describe the program as life-changing.

Here are some of the questions the course provides answers to:

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What are the major mental illnesses and how can I get a clear diagnosis for my relative? The course provides current information, including diagnostic criteria, for schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder (manic depression), panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and co-occurring addictive disorders.

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What are the best treatments now available for my relative? The course presents current research related to the biology of brain disorders and the evidence-based, most effective treatments to promote recovery.

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What are all these medications for? The course provides up-to-date information about medications, side effects, and strategies for medication adherence.

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How can my relative and I communicate better? The course teaches empathy through understanding the subjective, lived experience of a person with mental illness, and includes special workshops for problem solving, listening, and communication techniques.

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What do I do if there is a crisis? The course teaches strategies for handling crises and relapse.

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What local services in my community am I missing out on? The course provides guidance on locating appropriate supports and services within the community and information on advocacy initiatives designed to improve and expand services.

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How do I take care of myself in all of this? The course includes a focus on care for the caregiver: coping with worry, stress and emotional overload. ?

If you are a caregiver for someone with a mental health challenge, we highly recommend this course.