



## *Parents and Teachers as Allies*

### In-Service Mental Health Education for School Professionals

NAMI is delighted to announce the expansion of our *Parents and Teachers as Allies* in-service mental health education program for school professionals. This two-hour in-service program focuses on helping school professionals and families within the school community better understand the early warning signs of mental illnesses in children and adolescents and how best to intervene so that youth with mental health treatment needs are linked with services. It also covers the lived experience of mental illnesses and how schools can best communicate with families about mental health related concerns.

This program responds to the recommendations included in Goal 4 of President Bush's New Freedom Commission report on mental health that calls for schools to play a larger role in the early identification of mental health treatment needs in children and in linking them to appropriate services. Our program is based on NAMI's highly successful *Parents and Teachers as Allies* (P&TA) publication.

The components of the in-service education program for school professionals include the following:

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – an education professional, who is also a family member, welcomes the school professionals and introduces the topics to be covered, often with a personal story.
- II. **Early Warning Signs of Mental Illnesses** – a facilitator walks the school professionals through the early warning signs of mental illnesses, closely following the P&TA publication.
- III. **Family Response** – a parent or caregiver of a child with mental illness covers the predictable stages of emotional reactions among family members dealing with the challenges of mental illness and the lived experience of raising a child with a mental illness.
- IV. **Living with Mental Illness** – a mental health consumer that experienced the early onset of mental illness shares a view from the inside, including a discussion about the positive and negative impact that their school experience had on their life.
- V. **Group Discussion**
- VI. **Closing Remarks and Evaluation**

This program is designed for teachers, administrators, school health professionals, parents and others in the school community.

The program is designed to target schools in urban, suburban, rural, and culturally diverse communities. The toolkit has been developed to be culturally sensitive and a Spanish language version of the *Parents & Teachers as Allies* publication has been developed.

NAMI has also worked with the University of Maryland on an evaluation component to measure the program's success and to help ensure continuous quality and program improvement.

*For more information about this program, please contact:*

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