



Student comments
after attending a
NAMI DuPage mental
health presentation:

"Thank you for the presentation. I always thought mental health was not a real thing, but now I understand."

"I suffer from really bad depression and social anxiety, and it makes me feel good and better that I'm not alone and there are more people out there who struggle as well. I am speaking to a therapist outside of school and I'm getting better and also have family I can speak to."

Dear Friend,

Each day at NAMI DuPage, we confront the harsh reality of what the United States Surgeon General has labeled "the defining public health crisis of our time" – our youth's growing mental health needs.

Recent statistics are deeply concerning. Between 30-40% of our youth experience anxiety and/or depression, with the age of onset becoming alarmingly younger. Tragically, we are witnessing a surge in suicide rates among our children and young adults, with the Centers for Disease Control reporting that as many as 9% of high school students have attempted suicide.

But in this crisis, we firmly believe in the power of hope, recovery, and resilience. NAMI DuPage has been a leader in youth mental health programs for decades, making a significant impact through our "Ending the Silence Program," reaching over 100,000 DuPage students since 2007. Developed by NAMI DuPage and adopted by NAMI Affiliates nationwide, this program equips students to recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness, access resources, and combat the stigma around mental health. What sets this program apart is the invaluable perspective of individuals with lived experience who bravely share their mental health journeys, helping students realize that mental illness can impact anyone and that recovery is possible.

Our commitment to youth extends far beyond classroom presentations. In addition to school programs for grades 5-12, we offer a dedicated teen support group, stress relief workshops, and crucial resources for parents and teachers. We've established a NAMI on Campus Club at the College of DuPage and actively participate in anti-stigma campaigns in local high schools. We touch the lives of over 15,000 young individuals and their families each year through our youth programs.



"Thank you, I really enjoyed the lesson and I hope you can come back another day. I never knew suicide affected people that much."

"This was an informational visit that helped me learn a lot about mental health. I became more aware of my mental health and the health of others around me. Thank you!"

"I'm really happy you came to talk about that. Most people would not take it seriously. I'm currently talking to a counselor."



Yet, the demand for our services outpaces our resources. We hope you will partner with us in our effort to expand services to address some of the most urgent needs of children and families, including:

1. Launching "Teen Talk," an online forum for teens to ask mental health questions and discuss mental health topics,
2. Offering more workshops focusing on mental health issues relevant to teens,
3. Expanding programs to reach at-risk populations, including the court system and abused or neglected children,
4. Providing youth mental health programs/training to coaches, scout leaders, and others who work with youth,
5. Creating a support group tailored for tweens and enhancing workshops for younger students,
6. Establishing additional NAMI on Campus Clubs in local colleges and high schools,
7. Offering more support for parents through 1:1 services with social workers and peers,
8. Undertaking a sustainability analysis for a teen drop-in center, addressing ongoing mental health needs in a non-clinical setting.

Each of these vital initiatives requires additional resources – dedicated staff, passionate peers, and financial support.

We invite you to join us in this critical endeavor. Whether financial, volunteer engagement, or advocacy, your contribution will make a tangible difference in the lives of thousands of young people and their families in our community. Together, we can build a stronger, healthier, and more resilient community for everyone.

Please consider donating today by visiting us at www.namidupage.org or mailing a check to our offices using the enclosed envelope. We welcome the opportunity to discuss how you can get involved, and we thank you for your time, compassion, and unwavering commitment to the well-being of our youth.

Kind regards,

Geri Kerger

