



# NAMI Delaware



Message From Josh

## A Heartfelt Thank-You!

Dear NAMI Delaware Community,

As we wrap up our organization's 40th anniversary celebrations, we're immensely grateful and proud. Today, we wish to take a moment to express our deepest appreciation to all our members, supporters and volunteers — with special thanks to the founding members whose unwavering support has been the cornerstone of our success.

Over the past four decades, NAMI Delaware has evolved and grown, touching countless lives and making a meaningful impact statewide. None of this would have been possible without your continuous encouragement, engagement and belief in our mission.

To our founding members: You sowed the seeds of this remarkable journey. Your visionary spirit and dedication laid the strong foundation upon which we stand today. Your foresight in establishing this organization created a legacy that has endured through time.

We've witnessed tremendous growth, innovation and evolution, and we owe it all to the support we've received from our members, donors, foundations, corporate partners, community supporters and government partners. For those who have shared their journey with us: You have been the driving force that propels us forward. Your voices, ideas and stories have enriched our community and created a vibrant tapestry of experiences.

As we commemorate 40 years of excellence, we look back with tremendous pride at our achievements and forward with great anticipation of the exciting possibilities that lie ahead. Our commitment to the well-being of our community remains unwavering, and we will continue to provide you with advocacy, education, support and housing for another 40 years and beyond.

This is a significant milestone, and we celebrate it with immense gratitude in our hearts. Thank you for being part of our journey. Together, we've made NAMI Delaware what it is today: a source of inspiration, support and growth.

Here's to 40 years of making a difference, and many more to come!

With gratitude,



*Joshua Thomas, Ph.D.*  
CEO/Executive Director

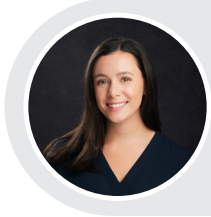
# Emily Culbertson Hired for Development Leadership Role

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Emily Culbertson, who has a background in development and fundraising, as the Senior Director of Partnerships.

**"Emily's experience and track record with building relationships and community engagement mean she is the best person for this new position," said Dr. Joshua Thomas, CEO and Executive Director of NAMI Delaware. "Her accomplishments and background working with mental wellness advocacy will help her spread NAMI Delaware's message to more people and funders."**

Culbertson, the newest addition to the team, recently held the position of Sales Development

Representative at RethinkEd, an educational software firm dedicated to mental wellness support. In this role, she was crucial in ensuring that school districts throughout the East Coast gained access to vital mental wellness resources. Before her tenure at RethinkEd, she served for six years as the Associate Director of Development at the Kutztown University Foundation, where she skillfully managed significant gift closures, greatly contributing to the institution's fundraising success. Notably, she played a pivotal role in the Together, We're Golden Comprehensive Campaign, aiding the foundation in achieving its \$40 million goal. Culbertson is a proud alumna of Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, holding a bachelor's degree in business.



"I enjoy working to strengthen organizations' networks and supporter bases, and there is no greater mission than mental health care and support for people living with mental illness," said Culbertson. "The critical work that NAMI does is essential to building a stronger and more caring society, and I look forward to being involved and helping grow its capacity and funding."

## NAMI Delaware Honors Leaders With Awards

NAMI Delaware recently presented eight people and organizations with special awards at the Inspiring Hope Conference, recognizing exceptional leadership and service to people living with mental illness.

"These champions show the many different ways that a community can serve and lead," said Dr. Joshua Thomas, CEO and Executive Director of NAMI Delaware. "From board service to direct care, law enforcement to legislation, staff members to public servants, they all demonstrate the enduring spirit of commitment and dedication to supporting people experiencing mental illness. We are in their debt."

### **This year's honorees are:**

- Volunteer of the Year: Edward M. McNally, Esq, NAMI Delaware's board secretary.
- Healthcare Professional of the Year: Dr. Aileen Fink, Director of the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services in the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.
- Organization of the Year: New Castle County Police Department.
- Officer of the Year: Major Stephen Thayer, Officer with the Veterans Administration Police Department.

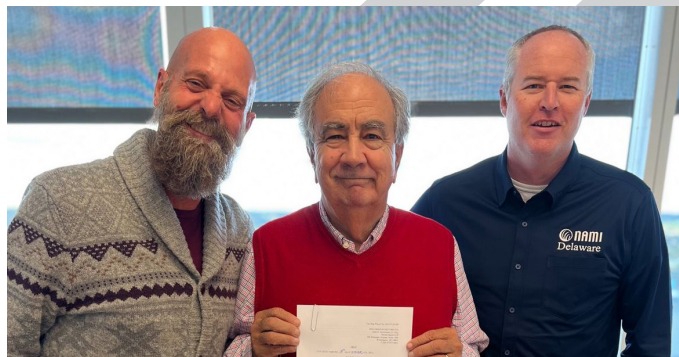
- Equity and Inclusion Advocacy for Mental Health Award: Norwood Coleman, member of NAMI Delaware's Advisory Board.
- Legislator of the Year: Delaware Speaker of the House Valerie Longhurst.
- Staff Member of the Year: Wesley Ingram, NAMI Delaware's programs manager.
- The Simon and Jill Shute Advocacy Award: Roseanne Faust, Assistant Director of Community Mental Health and Addiction Services with the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.



Pictured left to right: Norwood Coleman, Colonel Joseph Bloch for New Castle County Police Department, Speaker Valerie Longhurst, Major Stephen Thayer, Roseanne Faust, Wesley Ingram and Edward M. McNally, Esq.

## 77th Property Acquired

In October, NAMI Delaware closed on its 77th property to serve those living with mental illness. This property will be our eighth group home! Part of our mission is to provide safe and affordable housing for people with mental illness. The acquisition was paid for with generous grant funding from New Castle County. It was an exciting day! We are grateful!



## The Season of Giving

In the spirit of giving and creating a brighter, more compassionate Delaware, we invite you to watch a special message from our Board President, Mary Berger.

For more information on ways to support NAMI Delaware, including making a gift or exploring legacy giving options, please reach out to Emily Culbertson, Senior Director of Partnerships, at [Eculbertson@namide.org](mailto:Eculbertson@namide.org) or 302-427-0787 x122.

Your generosity is the driving force behind our mission, and your support is deeply appreciated. Your contribution today will provide compassion tomorrow statewide.

Checks can be mailed to: 2400 W. 4th St., Wilmington, DE 19805 Attn: Development Office

Please give by December 31, 2023.



## 'Tis the Season To Be Aware of Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal Affective Disorder is a type of depression that affects around 5% of adults in the U.S., and it typically lasts about 40% of the year. It also tends to affect women more than men, with rates being three times higher for women. The clinical name for this disorder is the rather wordy "major depressive disorder with a seasonal pattern." But it's more commonly known as SAD.

Perhaps you or someone you know experiences a deep slump in your mood with the change of the seasons. While it isn't uncommon to feel a little worse for wear during the fall and winter, when it comes to SAD the effects are much more intense and disruptive. Shockingly enough, SAD isn't confined to the winter; you can experience it during the summer as well.

### SAD's symptoms may include:

- Extreme fatigue and lack of energy.
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness.
- Trouble concentrating.
- Hypersomnia (excessive sleeping).

- Overeating.
- Weight gain.
- Lack of interest in activities or socialization.

### The summer variant may include symptoms of:

- Agitation and restlessness.
- Anxiety.
- Decreased appetite and weight loss.
- Episodes of violent behavior.
- Trouble sleeping (insomnia).

### Diagnosis criteria

Within the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-TR-5" (commonly referred to as DSM-5), SAD is not its own independent diagnosis. Rather SAD is a type of major depression that follows a consistent season pattern. With winter SAD, the symptoms typically begin in autumn months, such as October and November, and subsist until March or April. More specifically, according to the DSM-5, the requirements are:



- There is a temporal relationship between the onset of major depressive episodes in major depressive disorder or bipolar disorder and a particular time of year (e.g., in the fall or winter).
- Full remission (or a change from depression to mania or hypomania in bipolar disorders) also occurs at a characteristic time of year (e.g., spring).
- In the past two years, two major depressive episodes have occurred that demonstrate the seasonal pattern, with these episodes substantially outnumbering the nonseasonal depressive episodes over the individual's lifetime.
- The seasonal depressive episodes are not attributable to other seasonal psychosocial stressors, such as regularly being unemployed during the winter.

### Coping with SAD

Some treatments for SAD may require a diagnosis by a medical professional. Treatments typically consist of medications, talk therapy, and light therapy. Patients are encouraged to talk with their physician about the various options available for treating SAD. In the meantime, here is some general advice on what to do if you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of SAD.

### Go outside!

Regular exercise can help improve your mood. Try to get 30 minutes of exercise at least three times a week. Exercise can also help with the feeling of lethargy you may experience during the day, as doing physical activity stimulates your body into a more awakened state. Even if you don't feel like doing it, pushing yourself to get up and go outdoors will help counteract the cycle of being cooped up and lethargic.

The other reason to go outside is to get sunlight. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, among the benefits of vitamin D is that it helps with serotonin production. Serotonin and melatonin help maintain the body's internal rhythm. It's not uncommon for people with S.A.D. to have a vitamin D deficiency. Even on a cold day, if it's sunny outside it's worth going out and exposing yourself to the natural light.

### Seek support

An important thing to remember is that you're not alone; you should confide in people you trust about how you feel and seek their support. Bottling up your feelings isn't good in the long term for yourself or the people in your life. A supportive environment can help you weather difficult times.

**Special thanks to our staff and volunteer leadership who are individuals with a passion for mental health.**

#### Staff:

[namidelaware.org/staff](http://namidelaware.org/staff)

#### Volunteer Leadership:

[namidelaware.org/volunteer-leadership](http://namidelaware.org/volunteer-leadership)



302-427-0787 | [namidelaware.org](http://namidelaware.org)

## We're grateful for you!

Your support helped us shine as national leaders. NAMI Delaware was recently recognized as the nation's top chapter for its outreach, advocacy and education. Thank you for making all this happen.



SCAN TO DONATE