The Virginia Family Network Wants Parents and Youth to Know... That They Are Not Alone!

Launched in June 2011, the Virginia Family Network (VFN) is a grassroots network of families who provide support, education, and resources to other families with children and youth with mental health needs while ensuring that the voices of families and youth are represented throughout their communities and the system as a whole.

What does VFN want to do for parents?

• **Support Groups:** Our goal is to have at least one parent support group in every region of the state. These groups provide support and education for parents, and they are active in their communities to ensure that it is the families’ needs and experiences that are driving the design and delivery of local services. We already have several groups up and running, and we are recruiting parent leaders to start even more groups this year!

• **Trainings:** Offering trainings to parents is also a vital part of our mission, and we will offer a variety of trainings for parents that provide them with the skills they need to be advocates for their children and leaders in their communities. We currently offer a parent leadership training known as “Driving the Care for Your Family” and a six week education program known as NAMI Basics.

• **Resources and Information:** And, of course, we want to provide parents with resources and information to better educate them on the issues and experiences that may face. We are proud of our statewide e-newsletter that includes information on materials, trainings, articles, etc. that are especially relevant to families.

What does VFN want to do for youth?

• **Support Groups:** We want youth to have a voice in their communities and to have the opportunity to get support from other youth. These groups will be led by the youth themselves (under the supervision of a youth facilitator) with the goal of supporting youth while empowering them to be advocates and leaders in their communities. We are recruiting young adults to serve as facilitators of these groups. These young adults should have some connection to mental health, whether as an individual or a family member, and should be ready and committed to mentoring and guiding these youth groups.

• **Trainings:** Offering trainings to youth is also a vital part of our mission, and we will offer trainings that focus on the skills they need to be active participants in their own care and leaders in their communities.

• **Resources and Information:** And, of course, we want to provide youth with resources and information that are relevant to their needs and experiences.

JOIN US TODAY!

We need you to help us grow our efforts! Here are some ways that you can get involved:

• Start or join a parent support group
• Start a youth support group
• Hand out this flyer to other parents and youth
• Sign up for our e-newsletter at namivirginia.org/programs/virginia-family-network
  • Become a parent or youth trainer
  • Serve as a point of contact and support to other parents in your community
• Post this flyer in your local library, school, community service board, local CSA office, etc.
• Host a VFN training at your local organization, school, community service board, etc.
  • And many more!

For more information, contact Stephany Melton Hardison, smelton@namivirginia.org or 804-285-8264 ext. 206 or visit our website, www.namivirginia.org/programs/virginia-family-network.

The Virginia Family Network is a program of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Virginia (NAMI Virginia).

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