

The holiday season can be a challenging time for our stress levels, especially those with mental health issues. Here are 5 ways to help lessen stress and anxiety during the holiday season:

1) Leaving all your preparations to the last minute can cause unnecessary stress, but **planning ahead can save you time and money**. One of the things you can do to plan ahead is to make an organized to-do list and shopping list. To help you organize your to-do list you can simply use a calendar and list your to-do items on various dates; having a plan as to when you will do each item on your list will put less strain on your budget by spreading it out and lessen your stress level by allowing you to have more time to get everything done.

2) In order to escape the large shopping crowds at the mall you could **shop for your Christmas gifts online**. Many websites have sales and shop-and-save options that help you save money and they send your item right to your door.

3) When you can't get around a stressful situation such as being in large crowds or being around a stressful family member, try to use grounding or **relaxation techniques** such as deep breathing, carry a smooth rock in your pocket and focus on rubbing it instead of focusing on the stressful situation, or take a break from the situation and go for a walk.

4) Decide which holiday activities are important or significant for you and only participate in those activities. **Don't be afraid to say 'no'** to invites if you feel that the extra activity may cause you extra stress or anxiety. By doing so you will not overwhelm yourself with holiday 'obligations' and you will actually be doing the things you enjoy.

5) **Take care of yourself**. Make sure you eat right, get enough sleep, and exercise. Try to not indulge in excessive alcohol and fatty/sugary foods. This will help to combat the stress and anxiety that the holiday season can bring.

~Leah DeMarest, M.S.
Executive Director



Free Services Offered by NAMI Central Iowa

DAILY

Support and activities for persons with mental illness at the **Mental Health Wellness Center, Monday to Friday, 1-4PM**

WEEKLY

NAMI Connection support group for persons with mental illness:

Thursday 2-3:30PM Wellness Center

MONTHLY

Educational meetings featuring local specialists speaking on topics relating to mental health

3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM
(location varies, see events page)

Support group for family members
4th Thursday of the month at 7:00PM

YEARLY series of educational classes offered for persons with mental illness and for family members

Family to Family for family members of adults with mental illness

Peer to Peer for adults with mental illness

Basics for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with serious mental or emotional disorders

****All activities and the office are located at**

**416 Douglas Avenue, Suites 203/205
Ames, Iowa**

Have questions or need help?

Call or email the office at

(515) 292-9400

namiofci@gmail.com;

<http://namici.org/>

Board Member Profile:



My name is Stacy Renfro and I am one of the newest NAMI CI board members who started in July. I am pleased to be serving this community and I look forward to contributing to the outstanding mission of NAMI CI. I currently work at Iowa State University promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics education to youth. I love my job because I feel connected to the mission of providing a high-quality educational experience for the next generation of students.

My personal connection to mental health comes from supporting some of my closest friends as they face mental illness struggles and, therefore, I feel passionate about spreading awareness about mental illness and advocating for others. Having a background in marketing can help advance the mission of NAMI CI and I look forward to helping spread the word about the programming and resources available. I am excited to learn more about the organization and continue to meet the people that are a part of this community.

Outside of work I enjoy gardening, reading, running and spending time with my husband and dogs. Soon my husband and I will be welcoming our first child into the world. Looking forward to what the future holds!



MentalHealthChannel
CHANGING MINDS

The Mental Health Channel is a new online network that's changing the conversation through inspiring true stories. Check it out at <http://mentalhealthchannel.tv>.



ISU NAMI on Campus is a new, up-and-coming organization at Iowa State University. NAMI on Campus is dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for students at ISU who are affected by mental illness.

If you are interested in becoming a member of this organization, please contact Hannah Nehring at hnehring@iastate.edu, or Maranda Rupalo at mmrupalo@iastate.edu.

Things to Do in Central Iowa: Holiday Season 2015

Boone Lighted Parade

Get in the holiday spirit with a lighted parade in downtown Boone!

Location: Downtown Boone

Date: Thursday, December 3, 2015

Time: 7 p.m.

Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer Presentation

Start this holiday season with Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer! Rudolph soars into Stephens Auditorium for this faithful adaptation of this wonderful tradition that speaks to the misfit in all of us.

Location: Stephens Auditorium, Ames, Iowa

Date: Thursday, December 3, 2015

Time: 6:30 p.m.

To purchase tickets:

<http://www.center.iastate.edu/events/variety/rudolph-the-red-nosed-reindeer/>.



Winterfest

Winterfest will be a fun filled event with tons of activities: the Jingle Jog, Campanile tours and more! Great for the whole family, with a princess meet and greet, bingo, spin art frisbees, and so much more! Get into the holiday spirit with this exciting event that is free and open to the public.

Location: ISU Memorial Union, 2229 Lincoln Way

Date: Friday, December 4, 2015

For more information, visit:

http://www.sac.iastate.edu/en/sac_annual_events/winterfest/.



Snow Magic

Step back in time in Downtown Ames with an Old-Fashioned Christmas celebration hosted by the Ames Historical Society.

Create your own Christmas Traditions by visiting your favorite Downtown businesses.

Location: Main Street Cultural District, Ames

Date: Saturday, December 5, 2015

For more information, visit:

<http://www.amesdowntown.org/events/-/snow-magic/>.

Breakfast with Santa

Come to Reiman Gardens to enjoy holiday music, a hearty breakfast buffet, meet Santa, and create your own holiday themed craft! (Preregistration and prepayment required.)

Location: Reiman Gardens, 1407 University Blvd, Ames

Date: Saturday, December 12, 2015

For more information, visit:

<http://www.reimangardens.com/event/breakfast-santa/>.

NAMI-CI does not offer an educational program in December.

The January program will be held on January 19 at 7 pm at the Ames Public Library. Watch Facebook and the NAMI website for the topic and speaker announcement.



NAMI Central Iowa
416 Douglas Ave Suite 203
Ames, Iowa 50010

Change Service Requested

December 2015 Newsletter

The NAMI-CI newsletter is published six times a year by NAMI Central Iowa ([NAMI-CI](#)). NAMI-CI is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. Our mission is to provide them with [support](#), [education](#), and [advocacy](#).

NAMI-CI is a [United Way](#) partner agency and is an affiliate of [NAMI Iowa](#) and of NAMI, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#).



To make changes to your contact information, to receive your newsletter by email, or if you no longer wish to receive the NAMI-CI newsletter, email or phone the NAMI-CI office at namiofci@gmail.com or 515-292-9400.

Becoming a member of NAMI-CI is easy. Just complete this form and mail with appropriate dues to:

NAMI-CI
416 Douglas Ave Suite 203
Ames, IA 50010

Membership Dues

___ Family/Individual	\$ 35.00*
___ Limited Income	\$ 3.00
___ Extra donation	\$ _____

*Includes \$15 Local/\$10 State/\$10 National

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