What are the best resources for learning more about SMI?

Family members and other allies can improve their ability to help a loved one with a severe mental illness (SMI) by learning more about brain-based conditions and participating in support networks. This resource lists places to find training, information, and support. Some also provide ways to participate in advocacy to improve mental health care systems.

A primary national resource for education, family support, and treatment options is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

SAMHSA's support portal includes information to help you find health care, cope with your own illness or the illness of a loved one, understand different types of treatment, and figure out a way to pay for needed care. SAMHSA supports a helpline for treatment referrals and information about mental health and substance use conditions: 800-662-4357.

Education about psychiatric illnesses

Research Weekly: Stay up to date on the latest studies and research on SMI from a wide variety of academic and professional publications. TAC’s research team reviews and presents the key points while adding helpful context to allow families to find out about developments that are otherwise typically behind a paywall.
**NAMI Family to Family:** This eight-session training from the National Alliance on Mental illness (NAMI) offers psychoeducation for family caregivers. The national website directs you to a local affiliate to seek in person or virtual training opportunities in English or Spanish.

**Henry Amador Center on Anosognosia:** Family caregivers can learn a motivational interviewing strategy called LEAP® to help a person maintain engagement with treatment. Amador’s book, “I Am Not Sick I Don’t Need Help!” helps caregivers understand an illness symptom called anosognosia, which blocks the brain's ability to recognize its own impairment or understand the need for treatment.

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) training for family caregivers:** NAMI Marin County provides this free online training series to share strategies from Dr. Douglas Turkington, a fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and founding fellow of the Faculty of Cognitive Therapy in Philadelphia. Turkington has published numerous articles and books about the use of CBT for psychosis. He also partners with University of Washington Spirit Lab to offer CBT training for caregivers.

**Mental Health First Aid:** This training is for people just beginning to learn about mental illness who may encounter someone needing helping in their neighborhood, at work or school, in church, or other spaces within the community. MHFA is not comprehensive or built specifically for caregivers.

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:** This online resource supports learning about what to do if someone you love is at risk for suicide and how to have honest conversations. The site includes information about the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

**Support**

**Treatment Advocacy Family Support Group:** This is a private Facebook group run by TAC for loved ones of people with SMI. This is a place for sharing of family resources and support from other family members.

**CureSZ Foundation Mentor Program:** The program pairs caregivers of loved ones recently diagnosed with schizophrenia and other serious psychiatric brain disorders with others who have walked a similar journey.

**Mental Health America:** MHA provides peer training and supports peer advocacy and networking through affiliates located in many states. A peer is someone who has experienced mental illness and uses their experiences and training to walk alongside others.

**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance:** DBSA offers wellness tools, peer training, support networks, and online resources for individuals and friends and family.
Co-dependents Anonymous: An offshoot of other “Anonymous” groups, CoDA offers support for those seeking to develop healthy boundaries and to change toxic patterns within complicated relationships. Though not expressly for loved ones of our populations, many resources and groups focus on issues that are relevant to those supporting people with SMI.

Families for Care Support Group on Facebook: This private group is for people whose loved ones suffer from SMI. By agreeing to the group norms and completing a questionnaire, anyone can apply. Without membership, posts and comments are hidden.

Schizophrenia and Psychosis Action Alliance: In person and virtual support groups are for individuals and families, with options to register for support in English or Spanish. The alliance advocates for schizophrenia and psychosis spectrum disorders to be universally recognized and treated as neurobiological brain illnesses.

NAMI Support Groups: The national site guides you to local support group options for individuals and family members.

Stop Walking on Eggshells: This support network is for family and loved ones of people diagnosed with borderline and/or narcissistic personality disorders, or for people who have these conditions comorbid with others.

Do you know of other resources for information or support that you believe we should include here? Reach out to our family resource team to make a recommendation by sending an email to help@treatmentadvocacycenter.org.