

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS AND THE JED FOUNDATION RELEASE *STARTING THE CONVERSATION: COLLEGE AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH,*

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES ON STARTING A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

WASHINGTON, D.C.—[The National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#), in partnership with [The Jed Foundation](#) (JED), today released “*Starting the Conversation: College and Your Mental Health*,” a guide to help students and parents talk about mental health.

Approximately [75% of mental health conditions](#) begin by age 24, making college a critical time, especially as students transition away from their support systems. With [one in five young adults](#) living with a mental health condition and suicide ranking as the [second leading cause of death](#) among 15 to 24 year olds, it is vital to talk about mental health before students leave for college. The guide contains information about mental health, privacy laws and how students can keep their parents informed.

“College is an incredible time in a young adult’s life, but also a stressful time when the vast majority of mental illnesses first appear. Yet, when students prepare to go off to college, they often get vaccines and families talk about nutrition or exercise, but skip addressing mental health needs,” said Mary Giliberti, J.D., NAMI Chief Executive Officer. “Reading this guide, having conversations together and knowing where to go for help are important steps to keep students mentally well and avoid tragedy from emerging mental illnesses.”

Key takeaways:

- **Mental health conditions are common.** One in five young adults will experience a mental health condition during their college years. When facing a mental illness, students should know they are not alone.
- **There are warning signs.** Parents and students should learn how to recognize the warning signs of mental illness in themselves and in others before it’s too late. Being informed can save lives.

- **Seek help when you need it.** Students should be aware of the mental health resources and care options available to them— for example, most colleges have health clinics on campus—and should not hesitate to ask for help.
- **Know the laws.** Health privacy laws prevent mental health professionals from sharing sensitive information with families. Having a support system that is aware and involved will better enable students to overcome mental health challenges.

“Going to college is a major life milestone and time of significant change for students and their families,” said John MacPhee, JED Chief Executive Officer. “This guide will help students and parents better prepare for this transition by helping them understand and discuss issues related to college student mental health and establish a plan to address potential concerns together.”

Starting the Conversation: College and Your Mental Health is a resource for students and parents to start this important conversation. While it may be hard to initiate, it can make all the difference. Download the guide and learn more at nami.org/collegeguide.

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