Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or socioeconomic status. Mental illnesses are biological, and with treatment adults and children can and do recover. Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing.

Being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+) is not a mental illness. However, LGBTQ+ people face unique risks to their mental health. Many face discrimination from family members, peers, and coworkers as well as society at large. Studies indicate that experiencing social discrimination is a strong predictor of mental health issues.

Studies have shown that lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults are more than twice as likely as heterosexual adults to experience a mental health condition. Transgender individuals are nearly four times as likely as cisgender individuals (people whose gender identity corresponds with their birth sex) individuals to experience a mental health condition. In particular, LGBTQ+ adults are more likely to report depression, panic and anxiety disorders, and substance abuse. LGBTQ+ youth are especially at risk, being 20-40% more likely than their peers to attempt suicide, and more likely to experience anxiety and depression. Being an LGBTQ+ person of color, having a disability, or living in poverty, means facing multiple types of discrimination. In addition, people who both identify as LGBTQ+ and live with a mental illness face discrimination for both identities; being unable to open up in treatment or support group settings negatively impacts the therapeutic experience and recovery.

NAMI Minnesota's mission is to champion justice, dignity, and respect for all people affected by mental illness. Through education, advocacy, and support, we strive to effect positive changes in the mental health system and increase the public and professional understanding of mental illnesses. NAMI Minnesota rejects “reparative” therapies which deny the natural diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity, and supports LGBTQ+ affirming therapy, treatment, and support groups.

NAMI Minnesota holds peer-led support groups for people living with mental illness, and for families, friends and loved ones of people living with a mental illness. These groups are open to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, and you are warmly welcome. NAMI Minnesota also offers support groups for LGBTQ+ people with mental illnesses.

If you, your partner, or a family member is experiencing a mental illness, you are not alone.
For more information about support, education, or advocacy, contact NAMI Minnesota.

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