

## February: The Month of (Self) Love

Instead of getting caught up in the consumerism associated with Valentine's Day, February can be an ideal time to shift the focus inward and prioritize self-love. Embracing a month dedicated to personal well-being allows individuals to nurture their mental, emotional, and physical health. Whether through practicing self-care routines, engaging in activities that bring joy, or simply remembering to be kind to yourself, this approach encourages a deeper connection within.

Taking the time to prioritize self-love can be a transformative act of kindness towards yourself. Here at NAMI Fox Valley, our "be kind" slogan often is interpreted as encouragement to be kind to others. But, when designing our original t-shirt many years ago, we found that the message of being kind to ourselves held just as much weight.



When you love yourself, it sets the stage for better relationships with others, based on really knowing and valuing yourself. Ultimately, February offers a chance to celebrate and value yourself, creating a fulfilling feeling that goes beyond outside pressures of traditional Valentine's Day celebrations.

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## Upcoming Classes

### Family-to-Family

Wednesdays, Mar. 27-May 15  
@NAMI FV | 6-8:30 PM

[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

### Peer-to-Peer

Wednesdays, April 3-May 22  
@NAMI FV | 6-8 PM

[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

### NAMIBasics On Demand+

Self-paced course  
Begins April 2024

[REGISTER ONLINE](#)



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# Finding Voice and Purpose

## Kjersta Lind, Volunteer Outreach Speaker



I first became involved with NAMI Fox Valley in the spring of 2022 when I started going to the young adult support group (which is awesome by the way, and if you're interested you should totally go). Then, toward the end of 2022, I started volunteering as member of NAMI Fox Valley's speakers bureau.

I had a really bad bout of depression in 2020/2021, and I went through a lot of treatment to get to where I am now. When I speak to groups as a NAMI Fox Valley volunteer, I get to tell people what it was like for me and what it took for me to get better. So far I've been able to speak to police officers and partnering organizations, teachers starting up mental health advocacy clubs, nursing students, and state senators who were working on a mental health related bill.

There are so many people who struggle in silence, are too ashamed to seek help, are unable to find care, or who have been told to suck it up by people who don't understand. There are people with mental illness who aren't taken seriously for one reason or another and whose stories are brushed off and ignored. There are people who are unable to find the words to describe their suffering. I have been given this opportunity to speak my truth while there are so many others who are unable to have their voices heard. What an honor it is that I can use my voice to speak the words that others can't. I hope I can do right by them.

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*Speak the truth, even if your voice shakes.*  
-Maggie Kuhn

I am proud that I am making a difference. When I speak, I know that the people are listening to me, that they care enough to be there, and that they have gained some understanding of how hard it is to manage/recover from a mental illness. I'm proud knowing that they will leave with a little more empathy for people who struggle, like me. It gives me hope that we can make life better for people with mental illness.

I'm proud of myself, that I'm able to get up in front of people and speak boldly through the tears, something I would have never been able to do a few years ago. I am proud that I'm making a difference. And I am so grateful to NAMI Fox Valley for helping me do so.

# What to Expect at our Support Groups

If you haven't yet participated in one of NAMI Fox Valley's peer or family support groups, you may be curious about what the groups are like and what you can expect if you do join us for a group meeting.

Whether you join us for an in-person meeting or one of our virtual meeting options, you can always expect to find a compassionate and understanding environment among people with similar experiences. The groups provide a safe space for open discussion in which you can safely share about your feelings, challenges, and triumphs without fear of judgement. If you're not ready to share, that's okay, too – you aren't required to do so!

Group meetings are facilitated by trained individuals with their own lived experience. The meetings focus on discussing the "here and now" of what participants are going through, while always ending on a positive note. Along with general discussion, the meetings may include a brief educational component, as well as information on resources and coping strategies. The support groups aim to empower you, offering a lifeline of understanding and encouragement as you navigate the complexities of your own or your loved one's mental health challenges.

If you think you might benefit from a NAMI Fox Valley support group but haven't joined us for a meeting yet, we hope to have the opportunity to welcome you at a meeting soon! For more information on our support groups, click on one of the buttons below.



[Peer Support Groups](#)

[Family Support Groups](#)

[Teen Support Group](#)

## Mental Health and Yoga

There is such a deep and wide range of tools and practices that individuals use to nurture mental health and wellness. Creative exploration, mindfulness techniques, exercise, social connection opportunities ... the list could be endless! This month, we're shining a special spotlight on one practice that many people find enhances both their mental and physical health: yoga.

Yoga offers a holistic approach to health, integrating physical postures, breathwork, meditation, and mindfulness techniques. Through its multifaceted practice, yoga addresses the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit, fostering balance and harmony within oneself. One of the most significant advantages of yoga is its ability to reduce stress and anxiety. By engaging in controlled breathing and mindful movement, individuals can activate their body's relaxation response, leading to decreased cortisol levels and a greater sense of calm. The combination of movement, breathwork, and meditation can uplift spirits, release tension, and promote restful sleep, contributing to overall mental wellness.

Here at NAMI Fox Valley, we are excited to begin to offer periodic yoga workshops open for registration by individuals who participate in our support groups. If you are a support group participant, keep an eye on your email for upcoming opportunities!