**NAMI of North Central PA LGBTQ+ Youth Virtual Support Group -**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What is a support group and how is it different from a therapy group?**

A support group is safe space to explore thoughts and feelings. Support groups are typically made up of individuals who are all working through similar issues (emotional, social, etc.). The primary goals of support groups are to help the participants connect with one-another for support and to talk about the shared issues. While a therapy group is also a safe space to explore thoughts and feelings, these groups are more structured and individuals who participate typically have specific treatment-related goals.

1. **Do I need to let someone know that I want to participate in a meeting/group?**

Yes – you will need to email nami.ncpa@gmail.com to express your interest in attending the first meeting/group. Someone will get back to you with more instructions about how to access the next scheduled meeting/group. After you have expressed interest in the group, we will send you an email with a link to participate each month unless you let us know that you would no longer to receive these invite emails.

1. **Who else will be in the support group?**
* Other youth, 14 to 18 years old, who identify as being a part of the LGBTQ+ community.
* Group Facilitator
* (Possibly other youth service systems professionals, although this is a rare occurrence. The intent of their participation is to help support the youth they serve.)
1. **Who are the people who facilitate the meeting/group?**

At present there are three licensed mental health professionals who facilitate the meeting/group in a monthly rotation.

1. **I’m a little nervous. What can I expect if I participate in a support group?**

First – it is completely understandable and expected to feel nervous to attend your first support group! (We can almost guarantee that every participant has felt some level of nervousness prior to their first participation.) Second - while there might be some slight variations in the structure of the group based on a given month’s facilitator, you can often expect the following components: introductions; a review of participation guidelines and answering any preliminary questions; and discussion with peers in a safe (virtual) space.

1. **Do I need to attend every group to participate?**

Absolutely not! Participation is voluntary, so you are free to join one month and not another. If you have expressed your interest in attending or have attended once, you will often get an email with the participation link in the month’s to follow without specifically emailing to request to participate.

1. **Do I need to keep my camera on during the meeting/group?**

Yes. In order to ensure all participants’ safety, we do require that you keep your camera on for the duration of the meeting/group. If you choose not to turn your camera off, the facilitator will need to remove you from the group after one verbal reminder about the camera policy.

1. **Is there a cost to attend this group/meeting?**

No! Participation in this support group is FREE.

1. **Will what I share in the support be shared with others?**

Generally, no. As all of the facilitators are licensed mental health providers, exceptions to confidentiality would be in the event that there are safety concerns about the participant or others mentioned in the group. This will be more thoroughly discussed at the start of each group and any questions about this can be answered.

1. **Is a support group a replacement for seeking/seeing a licensed healthcare professional?**

No, a peer support group is not a substitute for mental health treatment. While these groups may offer additional support to participants, it is important to seek out treatment from a licensed professional if wanted/needed. Should you need information about mental health resources, such information can be provided by the group facilitators upon request.