



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2753 W. Central Ave
Toledo, Ohio 43606
419-243-1119
419-243-4534 (fax)

www.positiveconnections4u.org

The *Positive Connections* program is a collaborative partnership between the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Greater Toledo (NAMI) and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Ohio (BBBS), to help children who are dealing with emotional/mental and/or behavioral difficulties within their life or a loved one's life.

The purpose of this program is to help children understand and cope with their own, or a love one's, emotional/mental and/or behavioral disorder by providing psycho-education, peer support and one-to-one mentoring with a caring adult role model. **Please note that the NAMICAN caregiver support group and MindWorks support group, for children 4-17, are now being offered at the same time as Positive Connections. Please take advantage of this support group even if you or your child is not participating with Positive Connections. Attendance at NAMICAN is required for your child/siblings to attend MindWorks.**



General Information:

If you have questions about the program or would like to make a referral, please contact Stephanie Souza, Program Coordinator, at NAMI of Greater Toledo, 419-243-1119, via email ssouza@namitoledo.org or www.positiveconnections4u.org. Please note that referrals are taken on a first come first serve basis. All other referrals are placed on the waiting list to be contacted for upcoming sessions. Thank you for your interest in the program.

Program Goals:

- Education to increase awareness and understanding of emotional/mental or behavioral disorders/symptoms
- Education and support to increase coping skills
- Identification of support system & introduction to mentor

Admission Criteria:

Children must be between the ages of 4 – 17 years of age who are experiencing the effects of mental illness/emotional/behavioral difficulties within their daily living, either their own or that of a loved one. Participants must be able to participate in and learn from the group process.

Education/support:

Positive Connections offers a 12-week psycho-educational group at NAMI to teach children about different types of mental illness/emotional/behavioral difficulties and assist the children in developing coping strategies. **Children must attend 10 out of 12 groups to continue in the program and achieve completion to progress to the mentoring assignment component of the program.**

Mentoring:

Upon completion of the program, children will be matched with a volunteer mentor, through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Ohio, for a minimum of 12 months, post program completion. Parents will be expected to be involved in the process in conjunction with BBBS. Mentor matches can sometimes take time due to availability of appropriate mentors.