

Aruna Rao, MA

Aruna Rao is the Director of Educational Programs at NAMI NEW JERSEY (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in New Jersey), a statewide organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons affected by serious mental illness. She has initiated and developed multicultural outreach programs to reach immigrant families affected by mental illness in New Jersey, including two programs for Asian immigrants. SAMHAJ (South Asian Mental Health Awareness in Jersey) and CAMHOP NJ (Chinese American Mental Health Outreach Program) provide support and education for families of people affected by mental illness from the South Asian and Chinese communities in New Jersey.

Aruna has received the 2003 Leadership Award from The NJ Asian American Association for Human Services, and the 2002 Multicultural Outreach Award from NAMI. Aruna has made several presentations on mental health issues to community and professional audiences, coordinated support groups for Asian families affected by mental illness, and has hosted a talk show on mental health on a New Jersey South Asian radio station.