

IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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AP Announces Stylebook Rules on Mental Illness Entry on Mental Illness Added to AP Stylebook

Columbia, MD. March 13, 2013 - For years, NAMI has worked to have the news media abandon inaccurate, careless, or stigmatizing language or practices in reporting on mental illness.

Finally, the [Associated Press](#) has included rules on [mental illness](#) in the new edition of the AP Stylebook, the Bible used throughout the industry.

In other words, the mental health community has won a huge victory—a seismic shift in the terrain of popular culture. If necessary, mental health advocates, looking forward, can cite the [AP Stylebook](#) as an authority in getting wayward editors and reporters to change their ways in how they report about mental illness.

Founded in 1846, AP is a global news network whose reporting is seen or heard by more than half the world's population. The new rules include:

- [Mental illness](#) is a general condition. Specific disorders are types of mental illness and should be used whenever possible
- Don't rely on hearsay or speculate on a diagnosis....Provide examples of symptoms.
- Do not use derogatory terms, such as insane, crazy/crazed, nuts or deranged, unless they are part of a quotation that is essential to the story.
- Wherever possible, rely on people with mental illness to talk about their own diagnoses.
- Avoid using mental health terms to describe non-health issues. Don't say that an awards show, for example, was schizophrenic.
- Do not assume that mental illness is a factor in a violent crime, and verify statements to that effect. A past history of mental illness is not necessarily a reliable indicator. Studies have shown that the vast majority of people with mental illness are not violent, and experts say most people who are violent do not suffer from mental illness

Please send a message of thanks to AP at info@ap.org. Please share the new rules with editors and reporters in your community. Please also review the rules carefully and apply them in anything you write!

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About NAMI Maryland

NAMI Maryland is a grassroots organization dedicated to education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with mental illnesses and their families. For more information go to www.namimd.org or call 1.877.878.2371.