



Geetha Balagopal

Welcome to [my personal NAMIWalks page](#). I am walking for NAMI, to honor my precious daughters - My beautiful Shalini, who suffers from mental illness, and my beautiful Priya, who was lost to suicide in 2016.

I walk because I want Priya to be remembered for how she lived and not for how she died. I want her to be remembered for how hard she worked to eradicate stigma and help others and how driven she was to succeed academically

and personally and professionally in spite of suffering immense pain for over 10 years of her young life.

I also walk because I don't want another family to lose a loved one to suicide. I got this information from my friend Bernie who has been supporting survivors of suicide for over 26 years. One suicide every 11.9 minutes, one attempt made every 29 seconds.

Over 852 thousand lost since 1991 (year she was born). 5.1 million survivors of suicide loss like me – one in 63 Americans- let's bring those numbers down.

I know that I will always be Priya's mom and that she will always be part of me. I will spend the rest of my days honoring her and her fight and struggle and all that she was to me and my family.

Priya had this to say about mental illness (in November 2014)

"Mental illness is difficult because it's like fighting a battle that your mind convinces you is not actually happening. It is an invisible disease compounded by stigma and ignorance on a global level. This pushes people into dark places of shame and silence. When you get a broken leg or you have diabetes, you see a doctor and sometimes you take medication. Whatever it takes to get better. When you have cancer, people grant you wishes and bring you dinner. They celebrate your little victories. People facing suicidal depression or bipolar disorder or anxiety deserve to navigate their illnesses with the same support, understanding and care."

Donating to me at <https://www.namiwalks.org/team/FCMI> is easy, fast and secure. Click on "Roster" to get to my name. Your donation directly supports the mission of NAMI, and it means a lot to me personally. Thank you for reading my story and Thank you for your support.