Board of Directors
Nominees &
Proposed Bylaws
Action on the Square 2020
The Nominating Subcommittee of the NAMI WI Board of Directors is pleased to present members with a number of candidates who are interested in serving on our Board of Directors for a 3 year term, 2020-2023. Please review their statements about their interests and reasons for wanting to serve NAMI Wisconsin and our Affiliates and members.

We’d also like to ask you to consider 2 bylaw changes which the Board of Directors believe will help us meet the needs of our growing organization.

Our Mission
The mission of NAMI Wisconsin is to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illness and to promote recovery.

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Board Nominations & Bylaw Updates

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We’d also like to ask you to consider 2 bylaw changes which the Board of Directors believe will help us meet the needs of our growing organization.

Mark Your Calendars!

NAMI Wisconsin 2020 Notable Dates

Apr 17 – 18
NAMI Wisconsin Annual Conference

May 7
Action on the Square

Oct 3
Healing Art Show

Oct 4 – 10
Mental Illness Awareness Week

Nov 7
Leadership Summit

Upcoming Training Deadlines

NAMI Peer-to-Peer
April 4-5
Elkhart Lake, WI
Deadline: March 4

NAMI WI Mental Health Chat
May 16
Eau Claire, WI
Deadline: April 15

Questions? Contact Megan
(608) 268-6000
megan@namiwisconsin.org

Photo by Aaron Burden
President’s Comments

Kay Jewell, MD, President, Board of Directors

Just yesterday, I was marveling at the snow piled up and considering the green and hope that April and Spring will bring. I was struck by how that contrasted with what I was experiencing at my desk: the CDC release of new data that shows what many of us suspect – the numbers who are dying by suicide is increasing; reinforcing the efforts of VA, SAMHSA, and the Governor to do a better job preventing suicide among veterans; the need for all of us to do more to prevent suicide. Closer to home, there’s the real-life experience of many of you – the loss of cherished members of our NAMI family, of honored advocates, of the child of a family friend. My attention turned again as I answered the call of a friend whose family member had just passed away. I resisted the urge to tell her “I’m sorry for your loss”, what people usually say. I remembered a recent blog that suggested we needed a better response – one that came from the heart and not the head, one that connected us with the real feelings of the other. I responded – “my heart feels for you”. And with that, my heart did feel and remember.

What followed was a different conversation. We talked about the shock, the mix of emotions that come, the feeling of a sudden ‘a hole in my heart’ – in the shape of the loved one, to borrow the words sung by Jewel. This hole doesn’t ever go away as some want us to believe – as the song says, it stays ‘like a treasure that travels with us down every road’. But it does change: with time and grieving, it feels less raw. The support of others can help. We can borrow their strength, courage and hope as we move forward and adjust to our new reality. But there will always be times when we’ll feel that ‘longing lonesome and deep’ for that person. Times when it’ll be a bitter and sweet longing – feeling the loss, missing the person – and feeling the good times, the memories, the laughter, the joys, the sharing.

When we hung up, I thought and felt more about the ‘holes in my heart’ - the people who have passed away. There’s a feeling, of loss of connection, a sadness, a little less joy in my life, a loneliness. As I think about my experience of a death in a Polish family, I realize there’s a wisdom in how different cultures deal with a death. We first surround the family with support, love, and ‘casseroles’. Then we focus on the spiritual needs of the person who’s passed and share the feeling of loss and the memories of our loved one. All the while, we’re renewing our connections, determined not to miss opportunities to appreciate those still in our lives or make a commitment to seek out new connections and friends.

This feeling of connection is important. Most of us are familiar with the idea that humans are wired for survival. We identify the ‘fight or flight’ instinct as a survival instinct but few realize there’s a second instinct necessary for survival – connection and community. The healthcare community has started to talk about the loss of connection – the increase in loneliness and social isolation - felt by the elderly, by millennials, adolescents and all ages. It seems there are fewer ways we can connect in our daily lives, fewer social events like potlucks or community events. In fact, loneliness and social isolation have been declared an epidemic that’s causing physical and mental health challenges.

My thoughts turned to those I’m no longer connected with: my cousin I used to laugh with whose confined to home and isolated; perhaps I could give her a call to chat. What about those in my community who are isolated? I’d missed a chance for Game Night but I’m glad I can still join NAMI friends in a bowling activity – maybe there’s someone who’d like to join in who needs a ride.

For those of you who’ve experienced the loss of a loved one – my heart feels for you and wishes for you connection with others as you move through your grief over the ‘hole in your heart’ to find light, love and hope shining through again. Let’s renew our commitment to improving care and the quality of those with living with mental health conditions and our families and friends, to prevent suicide and to find ways to connect with each other, especially those isolated and alone.
The Nominating Subcommittee of the NAMI WI Board of Directors is pleased to present members with a number of candidates who are interested in serving as on our Board of Directors for a 3 year term, 2020-2023. Please review their statements about their interests and reasons for wanting to serve NAMI Wisconsin and our Affiliates and members.

There are 3 ways you may vote for the candidates of your choice. The options are described on the Proxy Ballot enclosed in this issue of the IRIS. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Kay Jewell, President of the BOD (President@namiwisconsin.org) or Mary Kay Battaglia, Executive Director (Marykaybattaglia@namiwisconsin.org).

**Tanya Alexander** (Rice Lake)
I have been faced with mental illness throughout my entire life in both personal and professional. To have a better understanding and make a difference I put myself through college, late in life while still raising my six children. I completed a Bachelors of Psychology and Masters of Organizational Management at Ashford University; in addition I completed a second Masters of Psychology at University of the Rockies. I desire to bring my education, knowledge and lived experiences to the table and help many others as they journey through this thing called life. Mental illness does not need to define one’s life, and I firmly believe everyone can make a difference.

**Crystal M. H. Cook** (Green Bay)
I am interested in working with NAMI to improve the quality of life for people- and their families- who are living with mental illness. I believe the best way to do so is through education and advocacy. My background in education helps me turn goals into reality by giving people the knowledge and skills they need in order to advocate for changes in practice. My current experience as President of a secure transport company has put me in a position of influence when it comes to leading others who work with mental health providers and with patients, themselves. Many companies in secure transportation do not differentiate between behavioral health patients and other types of detainees. Under my direction, REDI Transports is leading the industry by making a commitment to doing so. Not only have we collaborated with our behavioral health partners to listen to and respond to their needs, we have also advised on legislation to ensure for the responsive, efficient, dependable, and informed transportation of our mental health patients. I am seeking a position on the board to continue advocating for those living with mental illness, not only in the professional work I do each day, but also to make a personal commitment to changing the stigma attached to mental illness and how others approach it.

**Lauren Keepers** (Milwaukee)
NAMI has an enormous reach that extends to national markets and local communities. You create opportunities to drive conversations about social stigmas associated with mental health. Your story has crossed paths with mine. I am a highly driven millennial with NYC professional experience in analyzing and marketing to millennials, and I want to further your cause by implementing campaign strategies that grow millennial engagement. Ultimately, I’m passionate. I have lost one of the most special human beings in my life to mental illness and I wish to devote my efforts to: public education, marketing and promoting your brand, to all of those individuals that share a similar narrative with my own. The best advice I have received in my life to date is, ‘Live with intent,’ which is why I wish to become part of the NAMI movement.

**Sita Diehl** (Madison)
Sita has been active with NAMI on the local, state and national level since joining in 1990. She served as Executive Director of NAMI Tennessee from 2004 to 2010, then joined the national staff as Director of State Policy and Advocacy. A social worker by background, Sita has authored numerous curricula and reports on mental health policy. Now retired to Madison, Sita is an active member of the NAMI Dane County Advocacy Committee and chairs the NAMI Wisconsin Public Policy and Advocacy Committee. Experience with loved ones brought her to NAMI, yet her passion for the NAMI mission is fueled by admiration for NAMI members who transform personal struggles with mental illness into help for other affected individuals and families. As a board member she will seek to strengthen our wonderful affiliates and improve opportunities and resources for all Wisconsinites who need mental health services.

*Board member nominations continued on next page.*
Dear NAMI Wisconsin members:

We'd like to ask you to consider 2 bylaw changes which the Board of Directors believe will help us meet the needs of our growing organization.

Proposed Amendments:
1. Amendment 1 – Recognition of Model B Affiliates in addition to Model A.
2. Amendment 2 - Addition of the option for the NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors to vote via email in between meetings for a limited set of circumstances.

The amendments listed have been approved by the NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors but require an affirmative vote by the majority of NAMI Wisconsin voting members to officially change the bylaws.

You can vote on these amendments:
1. In person at the NAMI Wisconsin Conference on April 17-18, 2020 in Elkhart Lake
2. Electronically by April 16
3. Via a proxy vote to a NAMI Wisconsin Board member (a paper proxy vote must be completed and returned to NAMI Wisconsin no later than April 13, 2020).

If you have any questions about the amendments, please feel free to contact me at President@namiwisconsin.org or our NAMI Wisconsin Executive Director, marykay@namiwisconsin.org, or call 608-268-6000. We deeply appreciate your continuing involvement in the vital work of NAMI Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Kay E. Jewell, MD    President
On behalf of the NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors

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**Kay Jewell** (Stevens Point)
I'm a peer, parent and family member. I'm committed to working with NAMI because it's helped me personally: I feel supported. It helps me continue to care for myself & provide support for my family members living with mental health conditions. I've been involved with NAMI since 2014 when I became a teacher for NAMI Basics. I also serve as a facilitator for my local Affiliate’s Peer Support group, am a teacher for NAMI Peer-2-Peer and NAMI Homefront and a state trainer for NAMI Basics and the NAMI Wisconsin Peer Support Group Facilitation. I see the incredible impact our programs have on people's lives and I feel honored to be part of it. I am a life-long advocate of the power that comes from working together through organizations. I believe NAMI Affiliates and the work we do address a missing piece, a gap, in our healthcare system: we play an important role in improving the quality of life and empowerment of individuals and families. As a board member, I would work to support all the incredible work being done and strive to expand it and bring our message to more people: ‘you are not alone’. Together, we make a difference!

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**James Weber** (Menomonee Falls)
James fell in love with NAMI and its mission a couple years ago at his very first NAMI Walks event. He is now on his own mission to join the NAMI Board of Directors and lead NAMI into an even more successful future. James is a dedicated individual who has board of directors experience along with plenty of skills in business, finance, marketing, fundraising, and strategy. He has come across many people with mental illnesses and has always wanted to help in any way possible. His goal is to raise awareness about the options and support that people have. James believes that people who battle with mental illness should have access and support from all angles. He is a director for the non-profit Germantown Soccer Club that provides the opportunity to play soccer to over 350 kids. He oversees the club’s growth and development in the community. He is also the Vice President of business development for a national real estate developing company, so he works daily with outreach, marketing, and growth strategy. James is interested in helping NAMI grow its footprint and wants to help with any aspect that is deemed most crucial for success.

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**Anna Weber** (Menomonee Falls)
Anna has a passion for the mental health field and is currently a doctoral student of clinical psychology at the Wisconsin School of Professional Psychology. She also works as a Behavioral Specialist at Roger’s Behavioral Health, where she floats to various units and works with patients with mood disorders, addictions, trauma, and anxiety disorders, among others. She has broad interests within the field, but also has a background working with underserved populations, including low socioeconomic status, first time offenders, and latin populations. She speaks fluent Spanish and excels in areas of organization, planning, and outreach. Anna also has personal experience with mental illness in herself and her family. She hopes to help ease the process of fighting mental illness for others by contributing her own strengths and experiences to NAMI Wisconsin. She is incredibly excited for the opportunity to serve on the NAMI Wisconsin Board and become an integral part of the movement to increase mental health awareness.
Proposed Bylaw Changes

Amendment 1:
Add “Model A or B”

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP
B. Local Affiliates: Model A or B

REASON FOR THE ADDITION:
There are 2 types of Affiliate Models which are recognized within NAMI: A and B. NAMI WI has been asked to consider recognizing Model B. The majority of Affiliates are Model A: independent entities carrying out all the necessary functions.

There is a second model, Model B, which has been used in two different situations, both of which are looking for limited operational responsibilities in order to focus almost exclusively on programming because of smaller numbers of leaders or other reasons. The first situation is an affiliate that is just starting out. The second is the Model A Affiliate that has decided Model B suits their needs better. Both situations require approval by NAMI Wisconsin.

What is Model B? To the outside world, they look very similar to the Model A with their own identify and official status as a NAMI Affiliate, local leadership, local name and official logo, membership, budgeting, local programming, and individualized menu of Affiliate activities. However, they are not independent, incorporated organizations. They have a Designated Affiliate Leader but do not have a Board of Directors. They are basically ‘satellite locations’ offering activities under NAMI WI. Their actions must fit within the guidelines and be consistent with the approved programming, advertising, fundraising and financial activities of NAMI Wisconsin. They operate under the auspices of NAMI WI (or another Affiliate): e.g. the website, insurance coverage, financial accounting and auditing. For example, funds earned are held as sub-accounts by NAMI Wisconsin, available for spending toward approved items. They would have a representative on the NAMI WI Model B Advisory Committee. Details of the Model B Affiliate are in the Operational Policies and Procedures Manual.

Amendment 2:
Add Article VII – Section 5 - Consent to Board of Directors Action

ARTICLE VII – DIRECTORS MEETINGS
SECTION 5 - CONSENT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACTION

If the Board of Directors of NAMI Wisconsin, acting without a meeting, shall severally or collectively consent in writing, either on paper or by e-mail, to any action to be taken by the directors, such consents shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of the directors at a meeting duly held. Any certificate in respect of action taken by the written consent of the directors shall state that such action was taken in accordance with this Bylaw and has the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of the directors at a meeting duly held.

REASON FOR ADDITION:
The bylaws currently allow the Board of Directors to make decisions in 3 ways: a regularly scheduled meeting, a Special Meeting of the full board which requires 7 days advance notice or for matters of greater urgency, the Executive Committee is empowered to act on behalf of the Board. These meetings may be held face-to-face and via electronic conferencing.

On occasion, a matter may present itself in which the bulk of the discussion has taken place at a Board meeting, however, a motion and vote were delayed pending a piece of information or it was overlooked and later found to be needed to proceed. In such cases, a motion may be proposed by the President for Board action on a Motion without a meeting, via the email/written vote. Approval would require a unanimous written consent by Board Members.

The decision to proceed with a written vote would consider the urgency of the matter, whether there is a need for additional discussion or consideration of alternatives, whether it would be better advised to call a Special Meeting of the Board or request Executive Committee deliberation and action, and whether the board members have indicated their position on the matter and availability to vote.

This is consistent with NAMI national bylaws. It’s been discussed and approved by the Board of Directors.
All current, dues-paying NAMI Wisconsin members are eligible to vote.

Please review the explanation of the proposed amendments to the bylaws which is included in this newsletter. Amendments to the bylaws require an affirmative vote of a majority of those members voting on the question.

If you are not attending the Annual Conference and Meeting, April 17-18, you may vote 1) using this ballot. Please mail this ballot to NAMI Wisconsin, 4233 Beltline Highway, Madison, WI 53711 by April 11, 2020. (or fax to 608-268-6000) or 2) electronically – surveymonkey. Electronic voting closes at 5 pm on Thursday, April 16th, 2020. (Annual Conference, April 17-18, 2020. Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake, WI).

PROXY STATEMENT

Amendment 1 – Add language “Model A or B” (Article I. B. Local Affiliates: Model A or B)
___I am in favor of proposed change to the NAMI Wisconsin Bylaws
___I am not in favor of this proposed change to the NAMI Wisconsin Bylaws

Amendment 2 - Addition of the option for the NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors to vote via email in between meetings for a limited set of circumstances. (Article VII. Section 5-Consent to Board of Directors Action)
___I am in favor of this proposed change to the NAMI Wisconsin Bylaws
___I am not in favor of this proposed change to the NAMI Wisconsin Bylaws

By providing signature and date, I verify that I am a current, dues-paying NAMI member and I authorize NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors to record my vote as noted above. Each vote must have a NAMI member’s signature and date.

______________________________                 _____________
Member Signature      Date

______________________________
Member – Printed Name

___I certify this is the only vote that I am submitting for bylaw changes.
NAMI Wisconsin, Inc.
2020 Board of Directors Proxy Ballot

NAMI Wisconsin member;

Below is a list of nominees who are interested in serving as members of the NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors. They are nominated to serve a 3 year term which would start April 2020 and end April 2023.

NAMI Wisconsin members are welcome to vote once.
If you are not attending the Annual Conference and Meeting, April 17-18, you may vote
1. Using this ballot. Please mail this ballot to NAMI Wisconsin, 4233 Beltline Highway, Madison, WI 53711 by April 11, 2020. (or fax it to 608-268-6000)

In-person voting at the Annual Conference, all-day Friday April 17 and Saturday morning April 18th until 10:30 am. (Annual Conference, April 17-18, 2020. Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake, WI)
Tallying of the votes will begin promptly at 10:30 AM on Saturday, April 18th. Election results will be shared during the Annual Meeting at 12:00 PM on Saturday, April 18th.

All current, dues-paying NAMI Wisconsin members are eligible to vote.
In accordance with NAMI Wisconsin bylaws, there are seven candidates to fill six vacant positions. A brief bio of all candidates' positions can be found as an insert in this newsletter.
Please only vote for six of the seven candidates listed below by placing an X by your choices.
(PS. If you vote for all seven, we will not be able to count your vote.)

_____Tanya Alexander
_____Sita Diehl
_____Lauren Keepers
_____James Weber
_____Crystal M.H. Cook
_____Kay Jewell, MD
_____Anna Weber

By providing signature and date, I verify that I am a current, dues-paying NAMI member and I authorize NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors to record my vote as noted above. Each vote must have a NAMI member’s signature and date.

__________________________________  _____________
Member Signature                     Date

__________________________________
Member – Printed Name

___I certify this is the only vote that I am submitting for Board of Directors.
Etiquette at gatherings claims the best option is to avoid talking religion or politics. NAMI and NAMI Wisconsin do a pretty good job of avoiding taking positions on these issues. What we do say, however, is that faith can be an important part of recovery. Your faith, whatever you define that to be, can provide you support when you most need it. We understand that a person’s faith can be an important part of recovery, hope and healing for those people affected by mental illness. We encourage our members to speak to their local religious groups and provide presentations and resources to them. Politics on the other hand, what can we say. It is just so interesting to see people who have a similar mission to improve mental health care, approach it in from such different angles. Let’s face it politics is a messy sport and we don’t pick a team. But what we do pick is legislation that we feel has an important impact on those living with a mental illness and their families. This spring the Wisconsin budget, legislation and bills have had an increased focus on mental health. (Hooray!) Our office has been very busy sitting in on meetings, voicing our thoughts and connecting with those who make decisions that affect our mission. There is so much more we could do and we need your help. We want you to vote and voice your opinion on issues that matter to mental health in Wisconsin. Here is how you can help:

- Add your email to the NAMI Wisconsin Action Alert, which keeps you up to date on current legislation, to be added contact Crystal at crystal@namiwisconsin.org, or our office 608-268-6000.
- Find out who your representatives are by visiting legis.wisconsin.gov. Tell your representative mental health issues are important to you.
- Be sure you are registered to vote. If you are not visit myvote.wi.gov (or call 608-285-2141)
- And most importantly, VOTE!!

I used to be a basketball coach and I always told my players; you can’t score if you don’t shoot. Voting is the same thing, so let’s VOTE for mental health.

ACTION on the SQUARE Thursday May 7, 2020
LEARN THE ISSUES | MEET YOUR LEGISLATORS | JOIN OUR VOICE!

Spread awareness about mental health, learn about current legislative issues, and tell your elected officials what people affected by mental illness need to thrive!

Anyone who cares deeply about mental health can attend Action on the Square! Learn about current issues from expert speakers. Receive tips for meeting with legislators. Remember, no advocacy experience required. When you pre-register for Action on the Square, NAMI Wisconsin will arrange meetings for you. The registration fee for this event is $15. This includes brunch, meetings with your legislators, and a rally on the Wisconsin State Capitol steps. If the fee poses a financial hardship for you, please let us know and we will work with you.

REGISTER TODAY! namiwisconsin.org/action-on-the-square
ACTION ON THE SQUARE is a day to spread awareness about mental health, learn about current legislative issues, and tell your elected officials what people affected by mental illness need to thrive! Anyone who cares deeply about mental health is welcome to attend - no previous advocacy experience required.

Deadline to register for Action on the Square is Friday, April 10th, 2020

**REGISTRATION FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>NAMI Affiliate:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organization or Business:</td>
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<td>Home/Voting Address:</td>
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- Circle meal preference: Regular, Vegetarian, Other Meal Restrictions:
- Special Accommodation Needs:
  - First time attendee
  - Affiliate leader
  - Professional (specify):
  - Consumer
  - State program trainer
  - Family member
  - Program leader
  - Other _____________________

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<tr>
<th>Action on the Square</th>
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<td>Action on the Square (Full Day)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donate to the Action on the Square Scholarship Fund (optional)</td>
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REGISTRATIONS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT PAYMENT:

- Enclosed is my check for $ ______________, payable to NAMI Wisconsin.
- Please bill my credit card for $ ______________
  - Visa
  - MasterCard
  - American Express

  Acct# __________________ Exp. Date ______/______

  Print name as it appears on card: ________________________________

  Signature: __________________________

Mail this form with payment to: NAMI Wisconsin, 4233 W. Beltline Hwy, Madison, WI 53711
Or FAX to: (608) 268-6004 (Payment by credit card required for FAX registrations)

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO NAMI WISCONSIN NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, APRIL 10th, 2020.
Election Season is Underway!

February 18th kicked off the first big event of election season: the Spring Primary. We have a long way to go until the November general election... and it’s important to vote in every election, big or small! Why? Because policy makers, whether they hold a seat in your hometown or in Washington, make decisions everyday related to the systems in which we operate in our communities. These include decisions about access to treatment services and programs, transportation, education and criminal justice reform. Here are some additional days to mark your calendars for now:

• April 7, 2020: Spring Election & Presidential Preference
• August 11, 2020: Partisan Primary
• November 3, 2020: General & Presidential Election

Tips to Help You Be Successful at the Polls:

• Make sure you are either registered in advance or have what you need to register yourself to vote on election day. This includes a proof of residence document.

• You must have an acceptable photo ID to vote. A free state ID is available from the Department of Motor Vehicles by calling 844-588-1069 or visiting wisconsin-dot.gov

• You have the right to request an accommodation if needed. Call the Disability Rights Wisconsin Vote Hotline at 844-347-8683.

• Check your ballot before you go. Research candidates so you can make an informed decision. Visit myvote.wi.gov to find out who's on it.

• Follow the Disability Vote Coalition on social media or e-mail them at info@disabilityvote.org

NAMI Wisconsin Joins Forces with the VA and SAMHSA to Address Veteran Suicide

In February, NAMI Wisconsin was invited to participate in the Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families. Mary Kay and Crystal met with other stakeholders for a two-day pre-site visit to conduct a “S.W.O.T” assessment which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They learned about current suicide trends, statistics, resources and service gaps. All of this was in preparation for a three-day visit to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Governor’s Policy Academy. Crystal will be joined by NAMI Wisconsin In Our Own Voice Trainer, Maria Hanson and 15 other Wisconsin stakeholders, to do an in-depth dive into the issues. They will spend their time there meeting with subject matter experts to develop an actionable plan to bring back to Wisconsin to combat veteran suicide. NAMI Wisconsin is honored to be a part of this important work and mission.

Policy Director Testifies on Bill Related to Emergency Detention Transports

A bill has been introduced in the legislature that would allow law enforcement to contract with third party transport vendors for purposes of emergency detention. NAMI Wisconsin recognizes that it is both traumatizing and stigmatizing to be handcuffed in the back of a cop car and a burdensome responsibility on law enforcement. We need to find better solutions but want them done right. We want to ensure the health, safety and dignity of all parties involved while having best practices and policies in place.

During a recent public hearing, Crystal testified in support of an amendment that would allow the Department of Health Services to explore best practices, standards and training that third-party vendors should undergo in order to be reimbursed by the State. Call your legislators to urge them to move this bill along!

Advocacy Ask:

“Hi my name is __________, I’m a member of NAMI __________ and a constituent from __________, I’m calling to express my support of SB 565/AB 633, the emergency transport bill, which would create better options for transporting someone in need of an emergency detention. I want to stress that during this process, you put the health and safety of people in crisis at the top of your priority list. I support the amendment put in place charging the Department of Health Services with establishing standards and best practices that will lower risks of harm for all involved. (If you have a personal story, share it) Thank you for your time. Can I count on your support? (If no, can I be a resource to you on mental health issues?)”

Find your Legislator at: https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/ or call 608-268-6000 and ask for Crystal.
Ask the Doctor

Joshua Babu, MD

“Internet Addiction”

The Internet has been immensely assistive in sharing information, enhancing communication, and improving the quality of many peoples’ lives through various efficiency enhancing mechanisms from being able to order products from the comfort of your own home to creating supportive cyberspace groups to which victims of persecution can flock to. Yet, it also brought into the world a new frontier for which pathological behaviors can take place in.

The fields of psychology and psychiatry are still in exploration and debate of what behaviors on the Internet would even qualify as a pathological behavior. Yet, while that debate rolls on, it’s unquestionable that the evolution of the Internet has brought forth a number of startling observations and highlighted various dangerous influences. There are too many to discuss in this article but I’ll try to touch on a few.

The Internet has various layers called the surface web, deep web, and the dark web. Each layer has its own defining characteristics. The deep web is where information that is securely guarded, like financial, medical, or organization specific information, is kept. The dark web is where illegal or extremely private communication is arranged. The surface web is where most people spend their time as they browse and manipulate easily accessible data and it is also the focus of this article.

The first point to consider is that the Internet has become the premier platform for the new drug of choice: unlimited entertainment, of any version you can think of. The Internet itself can be addicting, but really it’s the infinite stage for offering any number of addictive products and platforms for starting and continuing a myriad of addictive behaviors.

The average Internet user spends the majority of the time on the web surfing. He or she is surfing for new stimuli, for new sensations, for new experiences, whether it’s to play a game, read up on the latest celebrity gossip, find out whose changing their status updates from being in a relationship to being single, sending pictures, buying products, endorsing themselves or others, cyber-stalking, cyber-bullying, arguing on message-boards and chat rooms, and of course watching endless streams of porn. It is all entertainment, including violent forms of entertainment. In ancient times until just recently, spectators used to have to congregate to arenas to watch gladiators battle; now the Internet brings the arena to your home.

There’s a problem with this gluttony of entertainment. Our brains weren’t created to absorb so much data or be exposed to such a constant stream of enhancing entertainment. Dopamine, which popular culture has identified as the pleasure chemical, does many things in your body. It does modulate motivation as one of its functions. It doesn’t do dopamine justice to just say it mediates the pleasure response, but for the purpose of this article, we can use that concept and keep it simple. When exposed to constant influxes of excess dopamine, your brain receptors become gradually desensitized to dopamine and you need greater and greater intensities of stimuli to continue to feel “well and motivated”. So what happens? You have to spend greater and greater lengths of time on the Internet to search for these more intense, longer lasting, and novel experiences. This may take up increasing amounts of time that could have been spent studying, working, reading, creating, using your imagination, spending time with nature, conversing with friend, spending time with family, and practicing self-care.

While perhaps not as severe as a powerful illicit substance, when you’re not using the Internet, your brain goes into small periods of withdrawal from those dopamine surges, which may manifest with restlessness, irritability, inattention, insomnia, or even cognitive impairment. One of the worst effects may be reduction in ability to feel empathy as you get too used to pleasure and violence in all its forms.

We are just beginning to understand the neurological and neurochemical affects of the Internet. While we have programs from an early age to tell us about the risks of illicit drugs, there are not enough such programs educating people, especially parents and children, about the pitfalls of excessive Internet use without rules and monitoring.

Because all pathologies exist on a spectrum and it’s not easy to make a black and white comparison, what you need to focus on is to consider the consequences of your time on the Internet. Is it taking away from other important activities of your life or causing more serious consequences in your use of time, your finances, or your relationships. Addiction is a term to call unhealthy connection. All people need to bond, and if we can’t find healthy connections to bond to, we will of course find unhealthy ones. Be wary that the Internet is a never ending universe for it and when you spend too much time on its platform, it’s very possible to develop an addiction.

I end this article with strong encouragement for everyone to consider how the Internet has influenced your life. Are you the Master who uses it as any other tool in your life, or does it have a hold on you so that you adjust your life around it so that it is a constant and readily accessible drug?

Challenge yourself to take breaks away from the Internet and discover what you may find about the “real world” when you unplug yourself from the Internet “Matrix”.
National Eating Disorder Awareness Week  February 24 - March 1
The National Eating Disorders Association’s (NEDA’s) National Eating Disorders Awareness Week is the largest and best-known eating disorders outreach effort in the country. Through NEDAwareness Week 2020, NEDA aims to improve public understanding of eating disorders and their causes, dangers, and treatments and to empower everyone to reduce risk factors and join prevention efforts. They hope this year’s theme *Come as You Are: Hindsight is 20/20* offers the opportunity for all people to get involved. By sharing our stories of what we have learned as we go through our eating disorder and body acceptance journeys and how the greater community is affected, we offer the opportunity to continue the conversation and prioritize inclusivity.

Self-Injury Awareness Month  March
Self-Injury Awareness Month is a time to share resources and stories in an effort to shed light on this highly taboo and stigmatized topic. We use this month to reach out to those affected by self harm, raise awareness and connect individuals to treatment services. It is also important to ensure that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss self-injury prevention.

World Bipolar Day  March 30
The vision of WBD is to bring world awareness to bipolar disorders and to eliminate social stigma. Through international collaboration, the goal of World Bipolar Day is to bring the world population information about bipolar disorders that will educate and improve sensitivity towards the illness. Bipolar Disorder (also called manic-depressive illness) is a mental illness affecting up to 2% of the population worldwide. It represents a significant challenge to patients, their family members, health care workers, and our communities. While growing acceptance of bipolar disorder as a medical condition, like diabetes and heart disease, has taken hold in some parts of the world, unfortunately the stigma associated with the illness is a barrier to care and continues to impede recognition and effective treatment.

National Volunteer Week  April 19 - 25
We would like to give a big ‘Thank You!’ to all of our volunteers - our organization could not function without them. We are pleased to introduce our newest volunteer at the NAMI Wisconsin office.

“Hello! My name is Zhuanghan (Hannah) Dong, and I am excited to volunteer with NAMI Wisconsin. I am a senior majoring in psychology at UW-Madison. I am from China and transferred from a Chinese University to UW-Madison last year. I am passionate about mental health because I believe it is one of the most important things in my life. However, mental illness is very stigmatized in China. Some people I love who live with mental illness face stigma in their school or workplace. Besides that, I know many people do not know how to get support when they are in a mental health crisis. I want to make a difference. Therefore, I am grateful that I can be a part of NAMI Wisconsin and have the opportunity to help people suffering mental illness and their families. I am looking forward to getting more involved with NAMI Wisconsin and working with this nice and amazing team.”

Day of Silence  April 24
Day of Silence is a student-led national protest where folks take a vow of silence to highlight the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ people at school. A big part of the campaign is “breaking the silence.” This may come in the form of assemblies, rallies, events, or writing letters to decision-makers. This is an opportunity for LGBTQ students to end the day by asking for people to take action in making their schools more inclusive. Take part in the protest by taking a vow of silence to highlight the need for change.
NAMI Wisconsin's Annual Conference 2020 is a two-day event for leaders of the mental health world. This year's conference will be held April 17 and 18 at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, WI.

The purpose of the NAMI Wisconsin Annual Conference 2020 is to bring over 400 mental health advocates under one roof while spotlighting topics relevant to mental health and wellness. This year's conference theme, Growing Stronger Together, will focus on the strength of NAMI as a grassroots organization. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to celebrate the many unique connections grassroots organizations can create, while also learning how to use these connections to make the mental health system more collaborative. The event will once again host a large variety of audiences, including mental health providers, leaders, social workers, clinicians, government officials, criminal justice partners, consumers, and family members. Mental health advocates from all over the state are welcome to attend.

REGISTER TODAY! namiwisconsin.org/annual-conference/
REGISTRATION CLOSES APRIL 10.

Affiliate Networking Session

The Affiliate Networking Session event is open to any NAMI affiliate leader who is registered to attend the conference on April 17, 2020 at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. As you may know, this is a unique opportunity to connect and collaborate with other local affiliates from around the state.

This year’s Affiliate Networking Session will be held Friday, April 17th from 4:15-6:15pm. There will be games, drinks, light appetizers, and a whole lot of fun!

We are hoping to get an accurate headcount for this event so that we can fairly distribute drink tickets to each affiliate. The first 40 people to register will receive a free drink ticket to use during the networking session. If you are RSVPing for yourself, simply provide your name and affiliate. If you are registering for multiple people from your affiliate, please provide the names of everyone who plans to attend this session.

We hope to see you there! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact NAMI Wisconsin’s Communications & Events Coordinator, Ellie Thompson, at ellie@namiwisconsin.org

Please RSVP no later than Friday, April 3rd.
FEATURE YOUR EVENT
in our annual conference 2020 program

If you would like us to include a save-the-date for an important event at your affiliate to be featured in our 2020 Annual Conference’s program, please complete the following survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K39M5HD

Thank you for this opportunity to show off all of your hard work, and promote your event!
Deadline: Friday, March 13th

THANK YOU
to our Annual Conference 2020 sponsors
Help NAMI Wisconsin bring vital education programs to people affected by mental illness.

Yes, I’d like to join NAMI:  □ $5 Open Door Membership  □ $40 Regular Membership  □ $60 Household Membership

Yes, I’d like to renew my membership:  □ $5 Open Door Membership  □ $40 Regular Membership  □ $60 Household Membership

Yes, I want to support NAMI Wisconsin with the following gift:
□ $250  □ $100  □ $50  □ $25  □ Other $___________

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Be part of the movement that helps families find help and find hope.
88 cents of every dollar you give to NAMI Wisconsin goes directly to program expenses that support Wisconsin residents. Please consider making a gift to NAMI Wisconsin. Your support is tax-deductible and touches the lives of hundreds of families throughout Wisconsin.

Please consider making a generous gift today.