Annual Conference Canceled

Minority Mental Health Awareness Month
Thank you for following us on social media! We just passed the 3,000 likes milestone on Facebook and are grateful for your on-going support.

If you don’t follow or like us on social media yet, please check it out to receive updates on events, information on resources, and updates on advocacy efforts.

You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and linked in by searching for NAMI Wisconsin or searching for the username @NAMIWisconsin.

Membership Drive - September
We are currently in the process of planning a state-wide membership drive that will take place in September! Be on the lookout for more info.

Need Someone to Talk to?
Hopeline: Text ‘HOPELINE’ to 741741
Iris Place (warmline): (920) 815-3217
Monarch House: (715) 505-5641

Contact NAMI Wisconsin
(608) 268-6000
nami@namiwisconsin.org
www.namiwisconsin.org

OUR MISSION
The mission of NAMI Wisconsin is to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illness and to promote recovery.
NAMI released the following statement from CEO Daniel H. Gillison, Jr., regarding recent racist incidents across the country and their impact on mental health:

The effect of racism and racial trauma on mental health is real and cannot be ignored. The disparity in access to mental health care in communities of color cannot be ignored. The inequality and lack of cultural competency in mental health treatment cannot be ignored.

Our nation’s African American community is going through an extremely painful experience, pain that has been inflicted upon this community repeatedly throughout history and is magnified by mass media and repeated deaths. We stand with all the families, friends and communities who have lost loved ones senselessly due to racism. And, with more than 100,000 lives lost to the coronavirus pandemic - disproportionately from minority communities - these recent deaths add gasoline to the fire of injustice.

While there is much we need to do to address racism in our country, we must not forget the importance of mental health as we do so. Racism is a public health crisis.

As the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization, it is our responsibility to serve all. While as an organization we are still early in our intentional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journey and have much to do, we have renewed our commitment to our values. We continue to strive to deliver help and hope to all who need it.

NAMI stands in solidarity with everyone impacted across the country. You are not alone.

On June 17th, NAMI’s Board of Directors unanimously approved a new resolution condemning racism:

NAMI is strongly committed to the principle that all individuals, including communities of color and people with mental illness, should be treated with respect and dignity and deserve equitable health outcomes and full inclusion.

We must not simply condemn racism and call it a day. NAMI, in order to fulfill our mission, must be actively anti-racist. To that end, we must continue to fight to eliminate the mental health disparities perpetuated by racism and racial discrimination. We must continue to spread awareness about the negative psychological, social, educational and economic effects caused by racism. We must continue to work to provide culturally competent services to those experiencing a mental health condition and to those who love them.

But we also recognize that in order to change the outside world, we must begin within our own. We need to educate ourselves, acknowledge systemic racism and the role we play in it. We have to own where we have failed and recommit ourselves to do better. This is why we are hosting a Virtual Town Hall series about race and mental health. And it is why we are working to embed diversity, equity and inclusion throughout everything we do in our strategic plan.
From Our Executive Director’s Desk
Mary Kay Battaglia, Executive Director

Badger Bounce Forward

I’m so sick of 2020, and from everyone I talk to, I am not alone. It is a frustrating time and just downright exhausting. Canceled trips, canceled events, the same four walls, and I miss my people. To help us all cope with this time, Governor Evers has released a Badger Bounce Back plan to deal with the return to “normal” for our state. While I appreciate his vision and need to plan, I have different take on our world, let’s NOT Bounce “Back,” let’s Bounce Forward.

Let’s not go back to a time when Telehealth was not covered by insurance providers or Medicaid. One of the positive outcomes of this pandemic has been the waiver allowing Telehealth reimbursement. Our state office has reached out to insurance companies and ask to move forward and continue to reimburse for Telehealth indefinitely.

Let’s not go back to only “in person” support groups and classes. Several of our affiliates have worked hard to develop virtual support groups and classes, something I dreamed about but could not envision happening in our state any time soon, and now it’s not only happening but many want to continue this permanently. This forced development is an opportunity for us to expand our reach in the state and provide support to many that may not be able to join a support group or class without this virtual option.

Let’s not go back to marginalizing those without health insurance. Suddenly we saw a need to cover the cost of COVID-19 test for all citizens to benefit the public health. Let’s revisit health care for all as a positive public health policy that could increase production and decrease poverty. Health care should not be a privilege and should be available to all citizens. Our economy and job numbers are a mess, so let’s move forward and take advantage of this situation and join all other industrialized nations who provide basic health care.

Let’s not go back to ignoring the systemic racism and inequality to health care for people of color. Let’s move forward and address why, how and improve on the indefensible data reflected in the high number of deaths of African Americans in proportion to percent of the population. Not just for this pandemic but people of color are sicker and have a shorter life span overall. In 2015 a study by the National Academy of Medicine found that racial and ethnic minorities receive lower-quality health care than white people—even when insurance status, income, age, and severity of conditions are comparable.

Let’s not go back to “normal”. Join NAMI in asking your legislatures and leaders to Bounce Forward.

Let’s Bounce Forward to Better!
As we entered 2020, NAMI Wisconsin was getting ready for yet another amazing Annual Conference. The venue, programs and speakers were all set up to make it one of our best events to date. Then our entire world was quickly turned upside-down as the COVID-19 pandemic raced across the globe.

After thoughtful deliberation, NAMI Wisconsin made the difficult decision to move the 2020 Annual Conference from an in-person meeting to a condensed virtual experience. Recently, we surveyed our affiliates across the state and the response we received indicated many people were not comfortable with an in-person event this fall. Ultimately, our number one priority is the health and safety of all our attendees, staff, presenters, sponsors and exhibitors.

We are planning on rescheduling most of our presenters who were lined up for the 2020 conference to present at the 2021 conference which will take place April 23 & 24 in Pewaukee, Wisconsin at the Ingleside Hotel.

Because of these changing circumstances, we are offering a variety of options regarding your registration for the 2020 conference:

- **Option 1** - Your registration will automatically be transferred to the Annual Conference 2021.
- **Option 2** - You can request a full refund for your registration by emailing ellie@namiwisconsin.org.
- **Option 3** - You can request to donate a portion of your registration to be donated to NAMI Wisconsin to help us through these tough times by emailing ellie@namiwisconsin.org.

Our staff is currently working through details to support the transition to a condensed virtual conference. We will share updates via email, NAMI Wisconsin’s website, and social media platforms as more details become available.

Please let us know if which option you would prefer no later than July 24th, 2020. Thank you for your patience and resilience as we navigate through these uncertain times together.

**Healing Art Show Applications Open**

Each year, NAMI Wisconsin hosts the Healing Art Show as part of Mental Illness Awareness Week in October. The show features the works of local artists who experience mental illness, and creatively express themselves through various mediums of art.

The purpose of the Healing Art Show is to break down stigma surrounding mental illness. By showcasing the artistic works created by people with mental illness, we want to highlight the creative talents and personal strengths that far overshadow any mental illness.

We are excited to host our 14th Annual Healing Art Show at the Lakeside St. Coffee House. This beautiful coffee house includes great coffee, food, and a view overlooking Monona Bay!

To apply for the 14th Annual Healing Art Show, visit: [www.namiwisconsin.org/healing-art-show](http://www.namiwisconsin.org/healing-art-show)
Advocacy Updates

Crystal Hester, Public Policy & Advocacy Director

It’s been a busy month at NAMI Wisconsin as we wrapped up Action Online, Mental Health Awareness Month and navigated through a wonky pandemic time while trying to keep up with our service delivery. Here’s what we could use your help with:

1. Telehealth
This month, NAMI Wisconsin has taken up the issue of telehealth services. During COVID-19, telehealth has opened doors to individuals who otherwise would not receive treatment. We have heard of increases in attendance at appointments and more engagement in services. This is especially true for individuals who are isolated, lack access to transportation, live with social anxiety and depression or fear stigma of being seen in the community going to an in-person appointment.

We have been notified that telehealth will continue under Medicaid, but it is unclear what this service coverage will look like under private plans post-COVID-19. Though telehealth is not for everyone, NAMI Wisconsin asserts that the option be available and reimbursable for those that want to utilize it. That’s why we need to hear from you! Do you or a family member use telehealth services? What has been your experience? E-mail Crystal at crystal@namiwisconsin.org or call 608-268-6000.

2. Statewide 24/7/365 Warmline
NAMI Wisconsin is excited to team up with an initiative out of NAMI Fox Valley on exploring models for a statewide, 24/7/365 warmline. A warmline provides free information, referrals and support to those experiencing emotional distress. Currently, several agencies provide this but services vary along with times of operation. As we move forward with researching models, we want to hear from you! What do you feel would be the best warmline service for Wisconsinites? Please fill out the survey by June 24th: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P88VKJH

3. NAMI Smarts for Advocacy Train-the-Trainer
We are looking forward to an upcoming NAMI Smarts for Advocacy Train-the-Trainer which will take place on July 17th-18th. It will be co-facilitated by Sita Diehl and Crystal Hester. This is an under-utilized signature program in Wisconsin and we hope to get a good attendance from all regions of the state. This program will teach our leaders how to turn their stories of mental illness into effective advocacy tools and train others in local communities. Check out the training calendar for more information on how to get registered.

Casserole Cookbook

The NAMI Wisconsin Casserole Cookbook is coming soon! We have gathered almost 50 delicious recipes from NAMI Wisconsin Members in order to encourage families and friends to support people who are affected by mental illness. You can now pre-order our Casserole Cookbook at www.namiwisconsin.org/cookbook.

We would like to give a shout-out to our cookbook sponsor, Sassy Cow Creamery. Thank you for supporting those affected by mental illness! Learn more about Sassy Cow Creamery at: www.sassycowcreamery.com.
Wishing a happy retirement to our longest serving employee

We are delighted and disheartened to announce that our custodian, Dennis, is retiring. Dennis has been a valuable asset to NAMI Wisconsin and an enjoyable presence in the office for over 20 years. Dennis started working at NAMI Wisconsin in 1997. His favorite part of coming to work was getting exercise, working around nice people and making new friends. During his retirement, he is looking forward to playing lots of bingo, going fishing, and taking care of his pets.

It has always been a pleasure to work with Dennis. So, while we are saddened to see him go, we are confident that you will find happiness in retirement. We will miss Dennis dearly and wish him the very best. Dennis, please keep in touch, and visit often!

Color Therapy

Catherine Woelm, Peer Leadership Council

Have you ever noticed how being in a room painted a certain color can make you feel better? Or how looking through glasses with ‘fashion lenses’ can improve your mood? This phenomenon is the basis of Color Therapy.

The idea of color therapy—using color to improve physical and/or mental health—has been documented as far back as ancient Egypt, when practitioners used colored minerals, crystals, and painted sanctuaries for the treatment of various ailments. The idea evolved with Chromotherapy around 2000 BC, when sunlight and light filtered through colored screens to improve health.

Historically, cool colors such as blues, greens, and violets help achieve calm, balance, meditation. Warm colors such as reds, oranges, and yellows increase energy, productivity, and confidence.

In the modern world, these principals are used often in marketing campaigns and interior design. A fast-food restaurant will design in bold reds or yellows to encourage customers to feel energized, so they eat and leave, allowing for the restaurant to do more business in a day. An office building may incorporate shades of orange and yellow to give employees better focus, creativity, and logic, and thus increase productivity.

Meanwhile, those who frequent spas are familiar with the hues of green that promote a sense of balance and harmony. In our homes, the colors we decorate with are often those that give a feeling of comfort, safety, and wellness. Our favorite colors are those which give us the mental boost we need.

There are several companies that manufacture prescription and non-prescription glasses with colored lenses. A common example of this is yellow-lensed glasses. Yellow lenses are known to relieve eye strain due to blue light and are also seen to give wearers a feeling of increased energy, creativity, and even humor.

Studies have also shown the positive effects of muted colors to increase calming effects on children with severe autism, while bold primary colors help children with ADHD or Asperger’s Syndrome with focus.

Everything about color—from the clothes we wear to the paint on our walls—evokes a feeling. Confidence, calm, excitement, passion, balance; if you can feel it, there is a color to match it. And while color therapy is not a replacement for treatment by a doctor and/or therapist, it can be an effective and personal supplement to professional treatments.

References:
3. “Iris Tech Color Therapy Wheel”
4. “How Color Therapy Benefits People with Disabilities” By Nancy DeVault
5. “Color Therapy for Psychiatric Disorders” Medically reviewed by Harry Croft, MD
In May of 2008, the US House of Representatives announced July as Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. Bebe Moore Campbell was an author, advocate, co-founder of NAMI Urban Los Angeles and national spokesperson, who passed away in November 2006. She received NAMI’s 2003 Outstanding Media Award for Literature. Campbell advocated for mental health education and support among individuals of diverse communities. The resolution was sponsored by Rep. Albert Wynn [D-MD] and cosponsored by a large bipartisan group to achieve two goals:

1. Improve access to mental health treatment and services and promote public awareness of mental illness.
2. Name a month as the Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month to enhance public awareness of mental illness and mental illness among minorities.

Mental health conditions do not discriminate based on race, color, gender or identity. Anyone can experience the challenges of mental illness regardless of their background. However, background and identity can make access to mental health treatment much more difficult. National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month was established in 2008 to start changing this.

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. Taking on the challenges of mental health conditions, health coverage and the stigma of mental illness requires all of us. In many communities, these problems are increased by less access to care, cultural stigma and lower quality care.

We can all help ignite change against these disparities and fight stigma this Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. It simply starts with learning more about mental health and informing your community.

“Once my loved ones accepted the diagnosis, healing began for the entire family, but it took too long. It took years. Can’t we, as a nation, begin to speed up that process? We need a national campaign to destigmatize mental illness, especially one targeted toward African Americans...It’s not shameful to have a mental illness. Get treatment. Recovery is possible.”

–Bebe Moore Campbell, 2005

For more information, visit www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Minority-Mental-Health-Awareness-Month
Minority Mental Health Resources

Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM)
Group aimed at removing the barriers that Black people experience getting access to or staying connected with emotional health care and healing. They do this through education, training, advocacy and the creative arts. www.beam.community

Black Men Heal
Limited and selective free mental health service opportunities for Black men. blackmenheal.org

Black Mental Health Alliance - (410) 338-2642
Provides information and resources and a “Find a Therapist” locator to connect with a culturally competent mental health professional. www.blackmentalhealth.com

Black Mental Wellness
Provides access to evidence-based information and resources about mental health and behavioral health topics from a Black perspective, as well as training opportunities for students and professionals. www.blackmentalwellness.com

Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation
BLHF has launched the COVID-19 Free Virtual Therapy Support Campaign to raise money for mental health services provided by licensed clinicians in our network. Individuals with life-changing stressors and anxiety related to the coronavirus will have the cost for up to five (5) individual sessions defrayed on a first come, first serve basis until all funds are committed or exhausted. borislhensonfoundation.org

Melanin and Mental Health
Connects individuals with culturally competent clinicians committed to serving the mental health needs of Black & Latinx/Hispanic communities. Promotes the growth and healing of diverse communities through its website, online directory and events. www.melaninandmentalhealth.com

The National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
Promotes the mental health and well being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. www.naapimha.org

POC Online Classroom
Contains readings on the importance of self care, mental health care, and healing for people of color and within activist movements. www.poconlineclassroom.com/self-care/

Therapy for Black Girls
Online space dedicated to encouraging the mental wellness of Black women and girls. Offers listing of mental health professionals across the country who provide high quality, culturally competent services to Black women and girls, an informational podcast and an online support community. therapyforblackgirls.com

Therapy for Latinx
Therapy for Latinx uses the latest technology to make it as easy as possible for people to find therapists, life coaches, emergency mental health centers, and free/low costs community clinics. www.therapyforlatinx.com

The Trevor Project
The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25. thetrevorproject.org

The SIWE Project
Non-profit dedicated to promoting mental health awareness throughout the global Black community. thesiweproject.org

The Steve Fund
Organization focused on supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of young people of color. www.stevefund.org

We R Native
Comprehensive health resource for Native youth, by Native youth, providing content and stories about the topics that matter most to them. Promotes holistic health and positive growth in local communities. wernative.worldsecsuresystems.com/my-life/ my-mind/getting-help

Please note: The resources included here are not endorsed by NAMI, and NAMI is not responsible for the content of or service provided by any of these resources.
New Video for Kids!

We are thrilled to announce our brand new animated video, ‘Let’s Talk About Mental Illness!’ This is a fun and engaging video made for elementary age kids designed to start the conversation about mental illness. The video is available on our website and on YouTube. We have also created free downloadable worksheets and coloring sheets for you to work on with your children or class after watching the video.

Watch the video or download the free worksheets here: www.namiwisconsin.org/lets-talk-about-mental-illness

stigmafree Company Initiative

We have started planning a StigmaFree Company initiative to encourage Wisconsin businesses to pledge to have a StigmaFree workplace! Brands and companies have a crucial role to play in the mental health of their employees, customers and consumers as well as communities overall.

We need companies’ help to raise awareness that mental health conditions are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing—and that knowing the facts about mental illness can help reject stigmatizing stereotypes.

If you know of a business that might be interested in becoming StigmaFree and signing the StigmaFree pledge, please reach out to nami@namiwisconsin.org to get us connected.

Your NAMI Membership Information

The status of your NAMI Membership is listed above your name and address on the mailing label of The Iris. The expiration date of your membership is shown along with either Active or Lapsed. To renew your NAMI membership, please visit our website www.namiwisconsin.org/membership or mail the membership form in The Iris to our office. Memberships can also be renewed by calling our office at (608) 268-6000.

NAMI Wisconsin will be holding a membership drive in September. Here is a chance for our members to help spread the word about NAMI and encourage family and friends to become NAMI members. NAMI memberships are $5.00 for an Open Door Membership, $40.00 for an Individual Membership and $60.00 for a Household Membership. All memberships are valid for one year and include membership at the local, state and national levels. Our goal is to obtain 500 new NAMI members during this membership drive. You can help us obtain that goal. Prizes will be awarded to both the individual and NAMI affiliate who obtains the most memberships. Our new NAMI memberships will be celebrated in October during Mental Illness Awareness Week.

Please contact Gina if you have any questions (608) 258-6000 or gina@namiwisconsin.org
Stigma makes those who struggle with mental illness feel shame and fear they will be judged negatively for their struggle. Stigma induces the fear that negative judgment will ruin relationships, impair educational and career opportunities, and limit freedoms. While this is prevalent throughout all of mainstream society, this notion is many times amplified in minority populations. Mental illness, however, isn’t discriminatory; its affliction extends across the spectrum of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic boundaries.

Research has shown that in minority populations, mental illness stigma prohibits individuals from seeking out treatment. There are many nuances to this sub-cultural stigma, but I wanted to write about a very particular dynamic between familial ego and individual autonomy that tends to cause conflict in many minority communities. Family can be the greatest source of support, but sometimes they are also the source of the greatest stress or limitation. In many cultures, there is an overarching “family image” that affects what individual members do. Sentences like “Our family has never had that problem,” “No one in the family has ever behaved that way,” or “No one in the family lets that stop them” may be familiar phrases that individuals grow up hearing in minority communities.

Children may be pressured into careers that parents plan out for them. Wives may not be primary decision makers and are relegated to just housekeeping duties. The image of success, even if it’s a facade, is all that matters when comparing one family to another. When the success and failure of one individual is seen as a reflection of the whole family and the family’s status in a community, there is an immense pressure to suppress and hide any undesirable trait or perceived weakness.

To express one’s own autonomy is an act of defiance. Within the house, anything may be permitted behind closed doors to re-establish order. Verbal, emotional, perhaps even physical abuse may be used as a reminder that no individual is above the family’s reputation. It isn’t always with bad intentions, and often people may justify such actions with good intentions. However, individuals with mental illness may suffer further when they get harsh reprimand from those they should have been able to look to for help.

In this world where reputation is what matters most, those who struggle with mental illness are like flowers that are trying to find their place in the garden but are suffocated out by the majority culture. To have a mental illness like anxiety, depression, ADHD, OCD, or schizophrenia is almost an insult to the family. The notion that an individual isn’t making an active choice to have those struggles is hardly considered.

Being from a minority background myself, I can testify that no matter how dysfunctional a family may be or how much a person agonizes from internal struggles, it is not only often frowned upon to seek mental health treatment among minorities, but it may be actively discouraged. It’s not just ability to seek formal mental health treatment that’s limited, but even trying to seek basic validation or support from within or outside of the family through friends may be obstructed.

How can one help themselves when their culture, their community, their family tells them it’s not right to seek help?

To paraphrase J.K Rowling’s quote from Harry Potter, “It takes a great deal of courage to stand up to enemies, but even more to stand up to your family.”

This is the message I have in this article to all those who struggle with a mental illness and have grown up in a culture or family where seeking help is seen as a sign of weakness. Seeking help is not weakness, and in fact it may be one of the highest expressions of courage and valor. To have the courage to express vulnerability and to not allow your voice to be drowned out by the current of majority opinion may be the greatest challenge a person ever faces.

There may be consequences to speaking out, like families never reconciling or disowning a person who attempts to seek help. Sometimes one must escape from a truly toxic family or community for no one deserves to be oppressed.

When we are brave in this way, and show this to our kin, our communities, and our cultures, then we begin to liberate them from their own fears and bonds. You may feel alone, but there are truly so many people who struggle with mental illness. Remember, it’s that struggle that often promotes the greatest growth and development. Like a ripple spreading across a pond, it just takes one to start a transformational change. As more and more are freed from the tyranny of stigma, whether by society or by family, we join all the other broken notes to create a beautiful symphony.
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 $________
Name ___________________________________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State ___________ Zip __________
Phone: Home _________________________ Cell _________________________ Email _________________________
Please charge $_________ to my: □ Visa □ MasterCard
Acct # _________________________ Exp. Date ______/_______
Name on Card ________________________________ Signature _________________________________
Is your donation being made in memory or in honor of someone special? If so, please complete the following:
□ In memory of: ________________________________________________________________
□ In honor of: ________________________________________________________________
Address to which we should send recognition of honoree: ________________________________
Donors may be publically acknowledged. □ Please check here if you prefer your gift to remain anonymous.

Help 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.