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

Need Someone to Talk to?
Hopeline: Text ‘HOPELINE’ to 741741
Iris Place (warmline): (920) 815-3217
Monarch House: (715) 505-5641
NAMI Wisconsin: (608) 268-6000

Connect on Social Media
You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn by searching for NAMI Wisconsin or searching for the username @NAMIWisconsin.

Free Kids Stickers
Teachers, parents, childcare providers, and anyone passionate about mental health and mental illness can request free stickers (and watch our awesome kids video) at namiwisconsin.org/lets-talk-about-mental-illness

Physically distanced retirement party for our long-time custodian, Dennis. We will miss you!
President’s Comments

Kay Jewell, MD, President, NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors

Hello. It’s hard to believe it’s fall already and that we’ve been living with the COVID-19 pandemic over 5 months now. The pandemic has taken its toll in many ways. Some are able to ‘go with the flow’ – to bounce back, but not everyone is so lucky.

The psychological impact of a natural disaster usually takes about 3 months to ripple through the community affected. Only in this case, it isn’t a community hit by a hurricane. It’s the whole world and everyone around us. That’s why they’re saying the next pandemic will be mental health. It used to be said that 1 in 5 people are living with a mental health condition. Now, they say it’s 1 in 3 people. Help lines have experienced a surge in calls; domestic abuse has increased; reports are that 1 in 4 youth have considered suicide. Part of the increase in calls and distress is people we know from our classes and support groups, people who are struggling to regain their balance in this new chaotic, unstructured situation. The new people are people all around us: healthcare workers and first responders; the people in the grocery store and convenience store; people delivering mail and packages; factory workers; teachers; parents balancing work, homeschooling and caregiving; people struggling to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads; and students who’ve had their world turned upside down.

Here's where NAMI comes in. With our lived experience, our classes and support groups, we have already been filling the gap for people living with mental health conditions and their families. We’ve been providing information, support, and guidance on self-care and self-management, creating connections so we don’t feel so all alone – bringing the casserole dishes to those in need. Now, more of our neighbors need our help and support.

We’d like to speak up and tell our neighbors about NAMI, tell them to call their local Affiliate, invite them to our support groups and our classes. We’d like to let them know they’re not alone – we’re there for them with a casserole dish. But we don’t want it to be a hollow gesture. We don’t want to tell them to call to enroll in a class or attend support group when there isn’t enough room in their local class or the local Affiliate isn’t offering the class or support group they need. We need to be sure we have the volunteers to teach those classes and facilitate that support group.

The bottom-line is that the education and support that we can offer to our neighbors and friends depends on our most incredible resource – our volunteers. It’s simple math - more people need NAMI classes, groups and activities – and our Affiliates need more volunteers so someone will be there when they call. We need your help to get the word out - maybe you have some time you could volunteer – in "COVID-safe ways". Maybe you know someone who has some time or might be interested.

There’s plenty of ways volunteers help behind the scenes to make these classes and support groups happen! Here are some ideas: help with phone calls to update contact lists of churches, service organizations, and other groups in the area to send notices; creating flyers, distributing posters e.g. to food banks, COVID testing sites, hospital emergency rooms and Urgent Care centers, clinic waiting rooms that are open for on-site appointments, coffee shops, stores, lunchrooms of businesses working on-site; helping with newsletters (we still use the mail you know) and posting on social media.

At NAMI Wisconsin, we’re looking at ways to support the Affiliates to offer more classes and groups but it won’t matter if we don’t have enough volunteers on the frontline, working with our local Affiliates.

Please, help us find more volunteers so our Affiliates can offer casserole dishes and support to the 1 in 3 people who need the gifts we have to share with them.
MEMBERSHIP is a noun and defined as people who together make up a group or organization, belonging either individually or collectively.

As a long time employee of NAMI Wisconsin, one perplexing question we are asked is, ‘why should I be a member of NAMI Wisconsin?’ It is a unique membership to be a part of because the benefits are abstract and educational. My health club membership gives me access to exercise equipment, my Costco membership gives me access to a cheap bulk of toilet paper, and my Netflix membership gives me access to an unbelievable amount of TV entertainment.

But a non-profit membership is different. The larger the band of members, the louder we can advocate for something we all collectively care about. Our members offer up their own unique skills and voices to provide a unified force in the cause we all believe in, which for us is mental health. NAMI is the ultimate non-profit membership because we are grassroot driven. We have so many volunteers who offer up their skills in the form of support group leaders, classroom leaders, presenters, fundraisers, office assistance, walk planners, event organizers, advocacy voices, and support call responders.

Having more members allows NAMI Wisconsin to shout louder, find people with great skills, share more information through newsletters, action alerts, conferences, and social media posts, and feel the collection of a group with a similar set of concerns. And quite frankly, the larger our membership is in the state and in the local communities, the more likely we are to receive grants, donations, and sponsorships to support our voice and our programming. By simple being a member, you are a voice. Our membership numbers matter! We are sad to not be able to connect at our conference this year or many of our other events like the Walks, Gala’s, and Leadership Summit. Those events fill our souls with the brotherly and sisterly bond of our membership that others understand, others know my experience, I am not alone.

Help us grow and participate in our September Membership Drive. If each of you refers one new member to NAMI Wisconsin, we would double our membership! (See mom, that college degree comes in handy). Please see details and prizes for most referrals on the next page. Remember you are not alone!
THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

NAMI Wisconsin is part of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illness and to promote recovery. Every NAMI membership increases NAMI Wisconsin’s voice in the state legislature, in businesses, and in local communities around the state. 1 in 5 people will experience mental illness sometime in their life. The other 4 out of 5 will know a friend or family member living with a mental illness. Together we can provide hope for recovery and make a positive impact for all those affected by mental illness.

This September 2020 we are hosting our first ever membership drive!

This September, join NAMI Wisconsin and receive a gift, get newsletters, access discounts on events, and, most importantly, help those affected by mental illness! When you become a NAMI Member, you support us at the national, state, and local levels. A membership can be a one-time donation. 100% of your membership gift is tax deductible.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Help us grow deeper roots in Wisconsin by bringing new members. When you refer a person to become a new member at any level, you get one point. At the end of the month, you will be able to choose some awesome swag to redeem based on how many people you referred*. Plus, all new members will receive an exclusive gift in the mail when they sign up!

*While supplies last

HOW TO JOIN

Tell your friends to visit www.namiwisconsin.org/join to become a member. When they sign up, make sure they put your name as their referral so you get points! Everyone who joins in the month of September will get a free tote bag and complimentary registration to our virtual event September 29th, 2020.

GRAND PRIZES

The 3 members who get the most referral points will win one of our grand prizes:
1st Place (most referrals): free registration to our 2021 annual conference at the Ingleside Hotel (includes room) plus a NAMI Wisconsin swag bag!
2nd Place: Green Bay Packers Swag Bag
3rd Place: NAMI Wisconsin swag bag including a shirt, hoodie, mason jar tumbler, coffee cup, and more!

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Individual Membership: $40
Includes one person
Household Membership: $60
Covers anyone living in the same household
Open Door Membership: $5
For those with limited financial resources

NAMI Wisconsin
Upcoming Events

We are extremely committed to providing support, advocacy, and education throughout our communities. Check out these awesome events we have coming up and please join us!

**CRISIS RESPONSE MODELS WEBINAR**

Several models of mental health crisis response have been advocated for over the past number of years. Currently, there are several models around the country that have been successful in jail diversion, reduced number of arrests, decrease in officer time on call, and other successful outcomes.

In this webinar we will learn about the team programs in Colorado in rural and suburban settings. The seminar will also highlight the program in Milwaukee as an urban/large city team approach.

Register on our website at www.namiwaisconsin.org/crisis-response-webinar

**SEPTEMBER 17**

FREE ONLINE WEBINAR
PLEASE PRE-REGISTER

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**SEPTEMBER 29**

$10 ONLINE EVENT
PLEASE PRE-REGISTER

**GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER VIRTUAL EVENT**

NAMI Wisconsin is thrilled to announce our first ever virtual event which will take place this September 29th, 2020 from 10 AM - 3 PM. We will have a variety of experts who will present on diversity, crisis response, care giving, and more! Detailed information about our featured speakers is available on our website.

The cost of this virtual event is $10 for members or $15 for non-members. If you have limited financial resources, please reach out to ellie@namiwaisconsin.org to receive a scholarship.

Please register online at www.namiwaisconsin.org/virtual-event

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**HEALING ART SHOW**

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 highlight the creative talents and personal strengths that far overshadow any mental illness.

We encourage everyone in the area to safely visit the Lakeside St Coffee House during their regular business hours during the month of October to view the Healing Art Show.

**OCTOBER 2020**

LAKESIDE ST COFFEE HOUSE
402 W LAKESIDE ST,
MADISON, WI 53715
Light Up Your Health

Catherine Woelm, Peer Leadership Council

It’s not a new idea that sunlight gives us energy, makes us feel healthier, lightens our moods, eases anxiety. It can also treat certain skin conditions and neonatal jaundice. Modern inventions like UV-filtering light boxes has made light therapy better and safer than ever.

Classically called heliotherapy, the first known practices of light therapy began as religious worship by the ancient civilizations in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as Incan, Assyrian, and ancient German settlements. Ancient people participated in ceremonies to the sun gods as health-bringing deities. Writings from 1500 BCE India and 10th century China outline the benefits of a combination of herbs and sunlight for the treatment of non-pigmented skin conditions. In 1903, Niels Finsen won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his development of an artificial light used to treat lupus vulgaris and smallpox lesions.

Medical uses for light therapy have been practiced for millennia, and the positive effects of improved skin on depressive conditions did not go unnoticed. In the late 20th century, studies out of Europe showed the curative effects of artificial light boxes for Seasonal Affective Disorder. Further studies in the United States and Europe were released over the next ten years promoting light therapy—also known as phototherapy—for non-seasonal depression, sleep disorders, jet lag, and anxiety, but also warned that it could be triggering for those with Bipolar Disorder or Borderline Personality Disorder. Light 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:
1. “Medical Radiation Biology”, Springfield 1957 By F. Ellinger
2. “How Finsen’s light cured lupus vulgaris”. By Moller, Kirsten Iversen; Kongshoj, Brian; Philipsen, Peter Alshede; Thomsen, Vibeke Ostergaard; Wulf, Hans Christian
5. “Bright light therapy for depression: A review of its effects on chronobiology and the autonomic nervous system” By Mark A. Oldham and Domenic A. Ciraulo

Spreading Positivity & Awareness

In honor of Minority Mental Health Awareness Month (July 2020) our staff decided to paint a mural on our building to spread positivity and awareness. Although mental illness affects everyone, not everyone has the same access to treatment and quality of care. To watch a timelapse video of the mural coming to life, please visit our website at www.namiwisconsin.org/mural
Stacey Mohr-Johannsen Returns to NAMI Wisconsin
Hello everyone! I am beyond excited to be back as part of the NAMI Wisconsin team. My name is Stacey Mohr-Johannsen and I am proud to be NAMI Wisconsin's new Associate Director. I had the pleasure of meeting many of you when I was hired in January of 2015 as the CIT/CIP Program Director. For the past 3 years, I have been working for a fellow statewide nonprofit organization doing community outreach, volunteer management and development. I feel at home being back with NAMI, and am ready to get back to my mental health roots and meet all of you!

For those of you whom I have not yet had the opportunity to meet, I have a background in nonprofit leadership, program development, event planning and volunteer management. I love making connections with people and hearing their stories. I received my BA from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in Communication and Non-Profit Management. I have had the opportunity to work for some amazing organizations such as United Way Dane County, Lions Eye Bank of Wisconsin, my own event planning business and of course, NAMI Wisconsin.

I have lived in Madison for 6 years with my now husband, Kris. I enjoy gardening, hiking, refurbishing furniture, spending time outdoors, cooking with my husband for friends and family and reading. We recently adopted 2 tabby cats who came to us all the way from Alabama. Moose and Minnow are a 1 year old brother sister pair, who keep us energized and laughing constantly.

I look forward to connecting with each and every one of you, getting to know you and working to strengthen your NAMI chapter. You are the boots on the ground that meet the needs of our community state-wide and I am excited to support all the amazing things that each and every one of you accomplish.

Meet our New Custodian
We are excited to welcome Jim to our NAMI Wisconsin family! Jim is a Madison Native and enjoys listening to music, going to car shows, flea markets, and garage sales in his free time. His favorite movies are Westerns and his favorite food is hamburgers. He is excited to work for NAMI Wisconsin because he likes helping people. Welcome, Jim!
Are You Ready for the November 2020 Election???

NAMI recently announced the re-launch of #Vote4MentalHealth for the 2020 elections. National will be releasing a ton of information in the weeks ahead, so please stay tuned for additional ways to get engaged. In the meantime, it’s the perfect time to hop on over to nami.org to take the pledge to #Vote4MentalHealth – and encourage your friends and family to do the same! When a person takes the pledge, they will receive registration and voting reminders for their state.

Also, save the date for National Voter Registration Day taking place on September 22nd. This is a nonpartisan civic holiday that celebrates our democracy and involves thousands of volunteers, nonprofit organizations, businesses, schools, libraries, election officials, and more from all over the country. NAMI is partnering with National Voter Registration Day to make sure that no one misses the opportunity to #Vote4MentalHealth due to a registration problem.

The upcoming November 3rd Presidential election will surely be one for the history books. Your vote is your contribution to our democracy and the millions of Americans who live with or love someone with mental illness. We’re encouraging all NAMI Wisconsin members to vote in every election, vote early and vote absentee to avoid missing out on this important event. You can find everything you need to vote by visiting myvote.wi.gov or by calling NAMI Wisconsin at 608-268-6000 or e-mailing Crystal at crystal@namiwisconsin.org.

Finally, I want to challenge you to just ONE more task. After you’ve registered to vote and mailed in your absentee ballot, look to your inner circle and pledge to help THREE more people vote who might have difficulty. Think about these barriers they might face:

- If voting in person, do they have a ride to the polls or know the location?
- Do they have an acceptable voting ID?
- Do they need a special accommodation due to disability?

YOU can be the person who helps another participate in their democracy. If each and every NAMI member votes and pledges to help three others vote, we’ll see tremendous results. Remember, elections are not won by thousands or even hundreds of votes but tiny margins. In a nutshell, each and every vote counts. YOUR vote counts!

We Need Your Advocacy to Save Our U.S. Postal Service

This election we are facing an additional challenge. Recently, the USPS has been under threat of losing essential funding to continue their operations as usual. This would come in the form of removal of blue boxes, elimination of overtime and the removal of mail sorting equipment, resulting in delayed mail. In response, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation to protect timely mail delivery and provide $25 billion in funding to the Postal Service. We need to push this legislation the final mile. The USPS is not only essential to mailing absentee ballots but for millions of Americans who receive their psychiatric medication by mail.

Call your members of Congress and let them know you support the “Delivering for America Act”. Visit congress.gov to find who represents you or call 608-268-6000 or email crystal@namiwisconsin.org.
Affiliate Spotlight
NAMI Douglas

As the newest affiliate in Wisconsin, NAMI Douglas County established their corporate resolution on September 15, 2015 & held their Kick-Off Meeting on October 19, 2016. Douglas County WI population is only 43,150 people with most of the county being very rural. Being a rural area, NAMI Douglas County members have limited access to internet & transportation; however, the largest challenge NAMI Douglas faces every day is bordering Minnesota where services are readily available & reimbursement rates are much higher. This difference does not allow for the Douglas County community to compete with Minnesota’s higher rates & salaries, so Douglas County is consistently losing services & providers in the community or cannot recruit providers.

NAMI Douglas County is all volunteer ran from the board of directors to presenters & facilitators. NAMI Douglas County is currently providing a Peer Support Group (both in-person & virtual at the exact same time), a virtual Family Support Group, & In Our Own Voice Presentations at this time. They will be offering Peer-to-Peer & Mental Health Chat once the pandemic allows. Most of the programs are offered at the local hospital in Superior where the NAMI office can be found. NAMI Douglas not only has a partnership with the hospital but also has a seat at the table for the Douglas County Mental Health Coordinated Community Response Group.

NAMI Douglas County has held several unique events, presentations, & fundraisers such as: free yoga for members, Gratitude for Pets at the Douglas County Humane Society events; presentations include: Historical Trauma, Racial Oppression and Mental Health, Veteran’s Mental Health; & fundraising events include a silent auction & Culver’s.

All of NAMI Douglas County events are open to their members (29 regular/open door + 4 Household) & the public free of charge. One key that has helped NAMI Douglas County be success is the great relationships the board members have with other organizations and the Superior Police Department. Some goals NAMI Douglas County has is to bring CIT Training to NW Wisconsin & to expand into Bayfield & eventually Ashland Counties.

If you want to nominate your affiliate for the spotlight, please contact Stacey Mohr-Johannsen at stacey@namiwisconsin.org.

Photo descriptions from top to bottom:
The top photo is the Peer Support Group quarterly outing (i.e. mini golf photo) from left to right is Nicole and Gale.
The Culver’s photo is Carol who volunteered to pass out food at our fundraiser.
The third photo is Chrissy and Brenda doing an IOOV presentation at UW Superior.
Ask the Doctor

Tony Thrasher, D.O. DFAPA, Medical Director – Crisis Services, Milwaukee County

“They’re crazy!” “You’re being psychotic!” “I’m tired of you acting so mental!” “They can’t help themselves, they’re manic and out of control…”

Unfortunately, these phrases are something I hear every week... often multiple times. While I understand that we want individuals to learn about mental illness and use medical terms to diminish stigma, the above mentioned phrases continue to paint individuals in a negative light... and do not fully explain the symptom at hand... the feeling of agitation.

Pardon me, I’m a little ahead of myself. As a matter of introduction, my name is Tony Thrasher, and I am the medical director of Crisis Services at Milwaukee County. While my main scope of practice is as a psychiatrist, most of my daily work is as a manager/leader of a bevy of services focused on assisting individuals in crisis. As I like to summarize it, we look to help those having one of their worst days...

As such, I am VERY thankful to the NAMI leadership for allowing me to submit a column on a very important topic... agitation.

The word agitation is well known; however, I am not sure that most individuals recognize it for what it is... a term describing a specific symptom that is a medical emergency. As such, I often look to educate others on the need to not only respect/recognize this symptom, but also to learn how to handle, assess, and treat this agitation to decrease the individual's discomfort and suffering!

An important aspect of agitation to call out is that it is just a symptom... it can be caused by a myriad of factors. For instance, you can see individuals dealing with agitation due to substance use, medical illness, environmental influence, or psychosocial factors. Hence, while you "may" see agitation as a result of an exacerbation of mental illness, that is not always the etiology.

In my years of working in the crisis setting, I would argue that some of the most debilitating cases of agitation were often noted in those with no prior mental illness but simply having one of the worst days of their life... or feeling overcome by an onslaught of social changes and/or pressures.

The good news about working with agitation is that despite the multiple different causes... it can be treated with respect and empathy by basic skills and interventions. I will not get deep in the weeds on the aspect of the evidence base (if you have interest, you can google our national group's data on this known as Project BETA); however, I do want to call out the aspects that I feel encompass basic principles and the connection to patient centered processes and psychological first aid.

The main tenet to keep in your mind is that those who are experiencing agitation are not having a good time. This is not volitional, nor is it something that individuals find useful. Hence, having respect and patience when trying to assist is of the greatest import. Additionally, it is useful to remember that many individuals feeling agitated are NOT used to this... it is unusual and very scary. Hence, it is important to approach all such settings with respect and a focus on what the person needs... not what we think they need!

This may be the most important part of working with individuals suffering from agitation. Appreciating how anxiety provoking it must be to feel "out of control" can really help us center our efforts on getting them what they need at that time. Very often it is information or basic needs (think food, water, shelter, etc... as you would see in Maslow’s Hierarchy).

The key is to approach this with urgency (as it is an emergency) without automatically attributing it to a mental illness and/or the “fault” of the individual dealing with the agitation. Understanding the rationale behind the agitated behavior is the eventual goal; however, there is immediate need to handle the symptom with respect, caring, and the humility to be transparent about what you can do (and what you cannot do). By handling the scenario in this manner, you can not only diminish the agitation but also enable the person affected to become more resilient and knowledgeable in ways to handle these episodes (if they were to recur).

I truly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this important topic with all of you. If you have any future interest in this topic (or others), please feel free to contact me by either email or phone in my signature below. Until then, I hope you all are staying safe and maintaining optimism in these unusual (and difficult) times.

All the best...

Tony Thrasher, D.O. DFAPA
Medical Director – Crisis Services, Milwaukee County
President Elect – American Association of Emergency Psychiatry (AAEP)
tony.thrasher@milwaukeecountwi.gov
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 publicly acknowledged. □ Please check here if you prefer your gift to remain anonymous.

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.