



NAMI SPOTLIGHT

The National
Alliance on
Mental Illness
Seattle

SUMMER 2017

802 NW 70th Street
Seattle, WA 98117
206-783-9264
www.namisseattle.org



MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY: WHAT'S MEMBERSHIP GOT TO DO WITH IT?

From the Executive Director's Desk

Why should you be a NAMI member? Your membership shows Legislators and funders how many of our community members are dedicated to improving mental health care, and how many of us are directly impacted by mental health conditions. **The advocacy of NAMI members like you is more important than ever.**

Last week, efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which would have included stripping Medicaid coverage and millions of people losing access to mental health services, failed in the Senate. While our healthcare system has significant room for improvement as a whole, undoing the insurance protections in the ACA would cause significant harm to people living with mental illness.

Already, even with the hard-won protections under the ACA, many Americans with mental illnesses are incarcerated, homeless, or otherwise slipping through the cracks because they don't have access to needed services and supports. We need members like you to keep up the fight for adequate care and make your voice heard!

What have we accomplished so far? NAMI members have had a big advocacy impact on the national level recently.

[Cont'd on p. 2]

Contents

- 2** Advocacy
Accomplishments & NAMI Smarts
- 3** Mental Health in
College: My Experience as a
Resident Advisor
- 4** Upcoming Events
- 6** Volunteer Central
- 7** Introducing: Roadmap!

Our Mission: *To address the unmet mental health needs within our community through support, referral, education, and outreach.*

Our Staff

Executive Director
Ashley Fontaine, MSW

**Development &
Operations Manager**

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NAMI Smarts for Advocacy is an advocacy training program that helps people living with mental illness, friends and family members transform their passion and lived experience into grassroots advocacy.

See p. 2 for details!

NAMI Smarts for Advocacy is designed as a series of three 1-2 hour workshops or modules or as a single full-day training that develop the following skills:

- Telling a compelling story that is inspiring and makes an “ask” in 90 seconds
- Writing an effective email, making an elevator speech and making an impactful phone call
- Orchestrating a successful meeting with an elected official

The unique step-by-step, skill-building design of NAMI Smarts is effective with a wide range of participants, including those who are new to advocacy as well as individuals with years of experience.

Participants routinely share that they’ve never been able to condense their story or made a clear “ask,” but with NAMI Smarts, they are now able to.

Lobbyists who represent NAMI State Organizations or mental health coalitions also love this program—they see participants come out confident and able to share their story in a way that moves policymakers.

The first ever NAMI Smarts teacher training is being offered by NAMI Washington, October 13-15, 2017. Volunteers who attend this training will become NAMI Smarts teachers who lead future NAMI Smarts sessions about advocacy for other NAMI members!

[Applications are available online.](#)

Applications due: October 6, 2017.

MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY: ACCOMPLISHMENTS [Cont’d from cover]

1) NAMI’s advocacy has been instrumental in expanding First Episode Psychosis (FEP) programs across the country, leading to a doubling of federal funding for FEP programs. NAMI has been a true catalyst for change: with NIH we’ve helped grow early psychosis programs from a handful of programs in four states to 114 programs across nearly every state in just a few years.

2) NAMI’s advocacy also played a key role in the passage of mental health reform legislation in 2016 as part of the 21st Century Cures Act. NAMI sent over 100,000 emails to Congress and helped deliver 230,000 petition signatures, and worked with congressional staff to ensure that the act included key provisions to elevate the federal role in addressing the mental health crisis in America, including provisions that:

- Support local initiatives to divert people with mental illness from incarceration into treatment
- Increase crisis services and track inpatient psychiatric beds
- Provide training on the proper implementation of HIPAA
- Increase the number of mental health professionals

3) NAMI leads the way in fighting for alternatives to incarceration, implementing Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) programs for police and other first responders. We don’t hesitate to get involved in cases that may not be popular, but reflect the worst abuses that occur when people with mental illnesses don’t get the help they need, including efforts to end the use of solitary confinement and the death penalty for people with mental illness.

4) NAMI has successfully advocated for research at NIMH on housing and mental health services. At a time when other programs were seeing budget cuts in 2017’s fiscal year, we saw funding:

- Increase by \$53.5 million for NIMH
- Increase by \$51 million for SAMHSA, including a \$30 million increase for the mental health block grant program,
- Increase by \$133 million for McKinney-Vento Homeless Act programs, including \$10 million for new Section 8 vouchers for people with disabilities, including mental illness.

These advocacy accomplishments aren’t possible without members like you. Join or renew your membership today at nami.org/join and help keep the advocacy momentum going!



Ashley Fontaine, MSW
Executive Director

MENTAL HEALTH IN COLLEGE: MY EXPERIENCE AS A RESIDENT ADVISOR

By Tory White

College is often seen as being a time of wild fun and freedom. Many often think of college as being the best experience of their life, but it is often also one of the most challenging. Nowadays, rates of mental health issues among college students is on the rise. According to a study by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA in 2014, the proportion of students who said they felt frequently depressed rose to 9.5% since the previous year and this rate continues to rise.

I have been a Resident Adviser for two years and have seen students struggle with mental health crises. It is all too common for a student to have their first panic attack in college, or to have their first diagnosis of a mental illness. The reason is because their symptoms go unnoticed for years because not enough schools, teachers, or parents know the signs of a mental illness. Also, when students leave for college, they often leave their main form of social support and the pressures and expectations to balance classes, jobs, and relationships can be overwhelming. A big life change like college is more than enough to trigger an underlying mental illness.

75% of all mental health conditions begin before age 24.
College years are critical for understanding and talking about mental health!

One resident of mine particularly embodies this story. Jenny* grew up on a tropical island with all her relatives. Before coming to college, she often was outside in the sun playing sports with her family. Then when she moved to Seattle, the lack of sun, the distance from her family, and the overall cultural differences took a toll on her mental health and triggered panic attacks. She already had healthy coping skills, but the lifestyle change was enough to uncover an underlying mental illness. Today, she is finding help through our school's counseling services and is taking medication to regulate her anxiety, but Jenny's story is an all too common one among college students.

*name has been changed

Starting the Conversation: College and Mental Health

NAMI created a special toolkit and video series aimed at helping college-bound students and their families talk about mental health.

Key takeaways include:

- *Mental health conditions are common.* One in five young adults will experience a mental health condition during their college years. When facing a mental illness, students should know they are not alone.
- *There are warning signs.* Parents and students should learn how to recognize the warning signs of mental health conditions and act. Being informed can save lives.
- *Whom to talk to and when to seek help.* Students should be aware of resources and care options on and off campus and should not hesitate to ask for help.
- *How to understand the laws and make a plan.* Learn about health privacy laws and restrictions on sharing sensitive information with families. Having a support system makes it easier for students to overcome mental health challenges.

Get the video and toolkit at nami.org/collegeguide

MENTAL HEALTH IN COLLEGE [CONT'D]

From my experiences, the best advice I can give to a college student is to find support—whether that be in the form of a club, friends, school counseling services or a Resident Adviser. However, it is important to know that this rise in mental health issues is not as much an individual problem as it is a societal problem. Schools often do not have adequate resources to support their students, there is not enough mental health awareness in general to diagnose symptoms or prevent the onset of mental illnesses, and students are often expected to succeed on their own without adequate preparation.

Moving forward, I believe that there needs to be more education on mental health awareness in schools. Educational programs like NAMI's Ending the Silence presentations are essential to bringing awareness but colleges must also be committed to incorporating education within all their programs. As a Resident Adviser, I have devoted myself to helping residents cope and learn about their own mental health challenges, but I hope that one day, I am not the only one expected to support students' mental health.



Tory serves as a Resident Advisor at Seattle Pacific University and was a NAMI Seattle intern in 2016-2017.

Tuesday, August 8 **Tuesday, September 12** **Monthly Meet & Greet**

8:30am - 9:30am

NAMI Seattle's monthly Meet & Greets take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at NAMI Seattle's office in Ballard. All interested community members are invited to join us each month for a brief overview of NAMI Seattle's programs and resources, a tour of our office, and the opportunity to meet staff, volunteers, and NAMI members. Tea and coffee are provided. All are welcome; RSVP's required. Please email Katie or call us at (206) 783-9264 to reserve a spot.

Tuesday, August 15 **Personal Support: Why it Works Sometimes and Not Others**

7pm-9pm

Educational Forum with NAMI Eastside and speaker Stephen Magladry
Evergreen Health Medical Center
12303 NE 130th Lane, Kirkland, WA 98034

Hear about Stephen's personal support journey and what he has learned. Learn more and register at nami-eastside.org

Monday, September 11 **Get to Know NAMI: BINGO NIGHT!** **5:30pm-8:30pm**

Lagunitas Brewing Company, 1550 NW 49th St.

Join us for this year's community building, get-to-know-NAMI event! Meet the local NAMI team, learn more about our programs and the incredible volunteers who make them happen, and have fun playing Bingo with like-minded mental health advocates. Snacks will be provided, and beverages are available for purchase.

Suggested donation: \$5

September 15th-17th

NAMI Washington State Conference

Red Lion Hotel in Olympia

Join us at the 2017 NAMI Washington state conference, where we will explore the theme *The Challenge of Change: Promise and Progress in Mental Health.*



NAMI Washington State Conference
NAMI Washington

Early Bird rates end August 15!

Visit www.namiwa.org for more details.

REGISTER NOW

NAMI Seattle has education scholarships available for people who live in King County. For more information and an application, visit namiseattle.org/scholarship-application

SAVE THE DATE

Depressed Cake Shop



DEPRESSED CAKE SHOP



SATURDAY, OCT 7TH, 2017 • 11AM TO 2PM
OPTIMISM BREWING • 1158 BROADWAY

MOST VALUABLE VOLUNTEER

This Edition's MVV: Amabel Narvaez

You recently returned to volunteering with the In Our Own Voice program; how does it feel to be back in that public speaking role? Were you nervous?

Public speaking can make me nervous at times, but I have been practicing on this skill for the past couple years with the help of Toastmasters. Learning to face my fears is easier when I know that I can do so. Gradually, I have build my confidence and ease with an audience. I majored in Communication in college, so public speaking isn't a foreign concept for me.

Your previous volunteer work contributed to you becoming employed as a peer specialist. What skills do you feel you gained from volunteering that helped you in that role?

I have gained many skills as a volunteer, including: advocacy, sharing my story, educating others, providing resources, mentorship and helping others see more than the dark days.

What would you say is your favorite part, or the most fulfilling part of participating in In Our Own Voice presentations?

The most fulfilling part of being a presenter with IOOV is that I can share what has worked for me amidst my despair and solitude. Walking alongside others and encouraging them, reminding them they are not alone, sharing tears and triumphs with and alongside peers are all what make this such a powerful program. IOOV has helped me to heal from my wounds and become a part of a rich, caring community. The relationships that have come from IOOV are a valuable part of my recovery.

“In Our Own Voice has helped me to heal from my wounds and become part of a rich, caring community.”



Amabel

NAMI SEATTLE MEMORIAL & TRIBUTE FUND

In Memory of Barry Sears

Michal Nortness

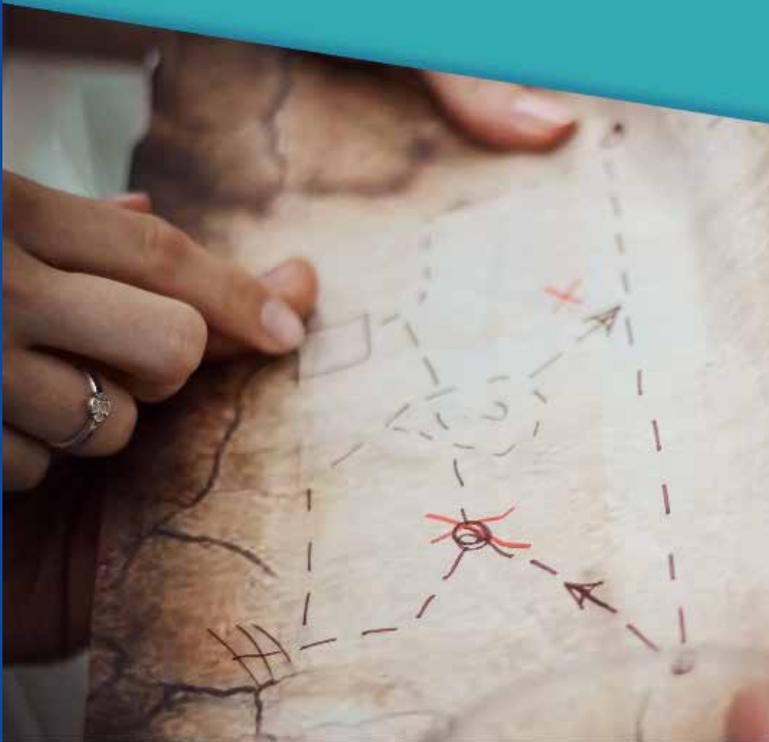
In Memory of Lucy Giles

Michael & Elizabeth Spring

Available Now!

ROADMAP TO MENTAL HEALTH

Navigating the System in Puget Sound



 **NAMI** Seattle
National Alliance on Mental Illness

It's finally here. The resource book you've been waiting for!

In late 2015 we stopped offering the "Connections" book that many of you had used for years, so that we could fully update it. As is often the case, this was a much larger undertaking than we anticipated and turned into a completely new guidebook. After almost 2 years of work, our new guide is live and in color. We named it Roadmap to reflect the ways that we frequently hear people talk about NAMI and the help they find within our doors.

This "roadmap" will give families and individuals with mental health conditions help and hope for living in a world affected by mental illness, from an overview of symptoms to navigating the health system in the Seattle area and Puget Sound. People in recovery who live with mental illness and their families can be an influential force that inspire their community, fight stigma, and transform the state of mental health care. This roadmap is for anyone trying to get their bearings in the land of mental health services and support.

Pricing: All prices include shipping and sales tax!

Print Copy: \$25 | Ebook Only: \$10

Ready to place your order? Contact Aislin Percival for assistance.

(206) 783-9264 | aislin@namiseattle.org

Ask us about multi-copy orders!

You can buy your ebook of Roadmap right now at www.lulu.com.

ISBN: 978-1-387-13845-6

OFFICE HOURS

The NAMI Seattle office is staffed 9am–5pm Monday–Thursday with evening Helpline hours on Wednesdays from 5pm–7pm. Summer hours vary from July 15th – September 1st.

Callers to our Helpline 206-783-9264 will reach a staff member, intern or volunteer who will offer supportive resources and referrals.

FIND US ONLINE

www.namiseattle.org
For support group calendars, class information, scholarship & volunteer applications



Join NAMI Seattle for **BINGO Night!**

A FUN-FILLED COMMUNITY EVENT

WHERE:

Lagunitas Brewing Company
1550 NW 49th St.
Seattle, WA 98107

WHEN:

September 11, 2017
5:30-8:30 PM

WHAT:

Learn more about how NAMI Seattle helps all those impacted by mental illness, meet the local NAMI team, and enjoy a night of Bingo.

\$5 requested donation
Snacks Provided and Beverages available for purchase
namiseattle.org