



GET INVOLVED . . . NEW PRESENTERS NEEDED!!!!

We are seeking individuals interested in receiving training to offer the programs below. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact the office by phone or email.

ALL APPLICANTS MUST MEET PRESENTER CRITERIA IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED.

NAMI Basics

NAMI Basics is a free, 6-session education program for parents, guardians and other family members who provide care for youth age 22 or younger who are experiencing mental health symptoms.

NAMI Basics is offered in a group setting so you can connect with other people in person.

You'll learn the facts about mental health conditions and how best to support your child at home, at school and when they're getting medical care.

The **course is taught by a trained team with lived experience**—they know what you're going through because they've been there.

NAMI Ending the Silence

NAMI Ending the Silence is a one-hour presentation that helps audience members learn about the warning signs of mental health conditions and what steps to take if you or a loved one are showing symptoms of a mental health condition.

There are **three** variations of ETS program; one designed for **students**, another for **school staff** and a third for **family members**.

The **lead presenter** is either a **family member or person with a mental health condition and in recovery** who shares impactful data regarding warning signs, facts and statistics.

The **second presenter** is a **young adult (18-35) with a mental health condition and also in recovery**, who shares personal experiences about their journey to cope with their mental health challenges and how it led them to find a path to recovery.



A Letter from the President . . . And a Fun Picture too!

Dear NAMI Supporter:

As I approach the last six months of my last term of being President of NAMI Luzerne-Wyoming Counties, I look back over the many years and can't help but think how much our organization has grown. I think about the many great people I have met and worked with, their hard work and sacrifice helped our organization to accomplish bigger and better goals.

As you can see by the list of events and trainings for 2018, included in this newsletter one can see how active and involved our organization is. We are continually expanding and growing our services. Just like any other organization we are always on the lookout for individuals that can help NAMI Luzerne-Wyoming Counties become more successful. There is always a need for Family Support and Connection facilitators, Family to Family teachers, Peer to Peer teachers, and In Our Own Voice presenters.

Also, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the great support from our Board of Directors; Vice-President Joseph Fedak, Treasurer Cathy Policare, Secretary Emilia Policare, Jeff Romey, and Audrey Gozdiskowski.

Lastly, I am most indebted to our Executive Director Magen Washewski. Since joining our organization, Magen has become the motor that keeps all the parts moving smoothly. Her tireless efforts have made NAMI Luzerne-Wyoming Counties a stand out advocacy, education and support resource for families and individuals affected by mental illness.

Thank you to all our members that have supported us through the years. They are the backbone of our organization. If you are not a member, please consider joining. We are always looking for individuals to help us accomplish our mission.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at our 18th Annual Walk.

Warmest Regards,

Paul Radzavicz
President, NAMI Luzerne-Wyoming Counties

What is to be of the Pennsylvania AOT Bill???

Back in late October, Governor Tom Wolf signed H.B. 1233 (now Act 106 of 2018) into law after it passed unanimously in both the House and Senate. The Act addresses Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) and changes involuntary outpatient treatment standard for people with serious mental illness. Often, these individuals are greatly in need of treatment for their mental illness but, suffer from anosognosia and lack the insight to realize treatment is needed. The new standard allows for intervention prior to the person decompensating to the point of being a danger to themselves or others and takes into consideration the individual's history of involuntary inpatient commitments and past acts of violence to self or others.

The one thing not included in the bill that made several mental health organizations call for Governor Wolf to veto it was that it does not include any additional funding. Many organizations believe that additional funding would be necessary to implement the Act, however, we can look to a few other states to see that this is not necessarily true. Both Kendra's Law in New York and Laura's Law in California have produced some positive numbers regarding AOT's success.

Since New York enacted Kendra's Law, it has been the subject of multiple studies. These studies have consistently found that the program helps the mentally ill and that those in it say it helps them get well and stay well. Studies found it reduced homelessness (74%); reduced suicide attempts (55%); reduced substance abuse (48%); reduced physical harm to others (47%); reduced property destruction (43%); reduced hospitalization (77%); reduced arrests (83%); reduced incarceration (87%).

In California, Nevada County found that after implementing Laura's Law: hospitalization was reduced 46%; incarceration reduced 65%; homelessness reduced 61%; emergency Contacts reduced 44%; saved of \$1.81-\$2.52 for every dollar spent as result of reducing incarceration, arrest, and hospitalization. Now there are 17 participating counties. These examples illustrate that by applying AOT counties could save money in other areas and increase the standard of living for those with a serious mental illness at the same time.

An amendment was proposed by Senator Lisa Baker to emphasize the voluntary participation of county mental health agencies if the bill was approved. Baker's amendment also streamlined language used in other PA Department of Human Services requirements, redefining a mental health professional and compelling treatment plans be approved by a psychiatrist or a licensed clinical psychologist.

The need for AOT will be shown by establishing evidence that the person will benefit from AOT as manifested by evidence of behavior that indicates the following:

- the person is unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision, based on a clinical determination;
- the person has a history of lack of voluntary adherence to treatment for mental illness;
- as a result of the person's mental illness, he or she is unlikely to voluntarily participate in necessary treatment; and
- based on the person's treatment history and current behavior, he or she is in need of treatment in order to prevent a relapse or deterioration that would likely result in substantial risk of serious harm to self or others.

A person who meets only the AOT criteria as outlined above will not be subject to involuntary inpatient hospitalization and would be a good candidate for AOT. This would then provide the person the opportunity to remain in the community and follow the "least restrictive care" which Pennsylvania law supports. This standard will be based on a medical determination of whether a seriously mentally ill individual needs and can benefit from assisted outpatient treatment to survive safely in the community. The standard will also take into consideration an individual's history of involuntary inpatient commitments and acts of violence to self or others.

Many family members of individuals living with mental illness have supported this bill as it provides a practical, less laborious route to get their loved one's care.

Will the AOT bill prove to be successful in Pennsylvania? The answer to that is yet to be seen, as it is not yet known if the law will be utilized by counties. With so many individuals with serious mental illness in need it seems like a viable alternative to produce results.



UPCOMING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & EVENTS

NAMI Keystone's Children's Mental Health Conference in Pittsburgh on March 8th

NAMI Connection and Family Support meetings at the NAMI office at 6:00pm March 11th & 25th

(held the 2nd & 4th Mondays of each month)

Family to Family Class starts March 20th at 6:00pm at NAMI office

Crisis Intervention Team annual statewide meeting

in State College on March 26th

Trauma 103: Recognizing Vicarious & Secondary Trauma for Caregivers (2 Sessions to choose from) on March 26th 9:30am – 11:30am or 1:00pm – 3:00 pm at the Woodlands

Screening of the film Suicide: The Ripple Effect sponsored by Luzerne-Wyoming SOC

on April 4th at the F.M. Kirby Center

doors open at 5:00pm, show begins at 6:00pm

Event is Free

19th Annual NAMI Mental Health Walk & Recovery Fair on May 19th

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE ABOVE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT THE NAMI OFFICE



2018 List of Services/Programs Conducted by NAMI L/W

- * Two Crisis Intervention Team trainings were offered, resulting in 44 police officers and first responders trained on how to better approach an individual experiencing a mental health crisis over the course of the 40 hour week.
- * Six Youth Mental Health First Aid classes taught, reaching approximately 80 teachers, community leaders and other adults who work with youth.
- * Lead an informational session and roundtable discussion with Senator Lisa Baker and her staff about effectively de-escalating encounters with symptomatic individuals and discussing best practices regarding treatment.
- * Six presentations were delivered to local college classes. Members of our affiliate who live with mental illness shared their personal stories about their lived experience. This was followed by family members who have a loved one with a mental illness sharing their perspective. Each class also received information on NAMI and other services available through community agencies.
- * Provided a personalized training for 32 librarians providing information and statistics on mental illness. Participants also learned some basic techniques to apply when encountering someone who is symptomatic in order to apply effective communication strategies.
- * Attended 4 legislative events to establish relationships with elected officials and the community.
- * Held 48 NAMI Connection & Family Support meetings open to all members of the community.
- * Held 26 NAMI Connection Support meetings at the local VA Hospital for a specified group of veterans.
- * Conducted a training at a local personal care home on best practices when interacting with an individual that is symptomatic. Employees also learned the correct procedures to apply when attempting to get a resident additional resources.
- * Held our 18th annual Recovery Walk & Mental Health Fair with approximately 300 people in attendance, many members of the mental health community.
- * Held our annual Candlelight Vigil to bring attention to Mental Illness Awareness Week and honor the CRRC with the Lester Verano Advocacy Award.
- * Provided 2 film screenings of "The Valley" (a film focusing on suicide) and invited all members of our community to attend for free. Screenings were held at the F.M. Kirby Center in Wilkes-Barre and the Dietrich Theatre in Tunkhannock.
- * We actively attend monthly Suicide Prevention meetings with other agencies, schools and government officials in attendance, to explore the best ways to reduce suicide in our community.
- * Attend our county government's System of Care initiative meetings and work to achieve common goals to provide effective treatment for members we serve.
- * Actively participate in monthly local and regional Community Support Program meetings, a coalition of mental health consumers, family members and professionals working to help adults with serious mental illnesses and co-occurring disorders live successfully in the community.
- * NAMI members serve on the Advisory Boards for the ACT/FACT team as well as our CRRC.
- * Sent 4 NAMI members to the NAMI Keystone PA State Conference.
- * Attended a training on Disarming the Suicidal Mind.
- * Several NAMI members attended trainings regarding best practices of Trauma Informed Care
- * Attended the CIT State Conference to learn about new components to adopt when offering future trainings.
- * Attended the NAMI national Executive Director Leadership Exchange in Arlington, VA to share successes and new programs, etc.
- * Set up NAMI resource tables at 20 community events; several school district events and at a re-entry fair at SCI Retreat for inmates preparing to re-enter society.