

NAMI Smarts for Advocacy

Hearts & Minds: *Advocacy Skills*

Agenda

- Why advocate?
- Tips for meeting legislators
- Demo: Legislative meeting & debrief
- Tips: Telling Your Story
- Demo: Advocacy story & debrief
- Write your own story
- Practice your story
- NAMI Mass legislative priorities
- Call to action

Why Advocate?

Because every American who experiences mental illness deserves the opportunity for recovery

**Yet, many who could benefit
don't get
mental health care.**

And without mental health care, America pays a high price in...

- School failure
- Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Criminalization
- Suicide

Why Advocate?

- **Politics is personal**
 - Legislators serve their constituents
 - Respond best to people they know

Why Advocate?

- **Legislators vote on laws & the budget that determine...**
 - Who can get
 - What care
 - For how long
 - At what cost

Why Advocate?

- **You can make a powerful case**
- **Our 'ask' will...**
 - Save lives
 - AND help the state budget

In-person meetings...

**Help you build a
relationship**

**But, some meetings
make a stronger
impression
than others**

Tip #1

Know your issue

Tip #2
**Know
your legislator**

Tip #3
Plan
your meeting

Tip #4

Make an “ask”

With our tips in mind, let's get started...

- Listen to our sample meeting
- Notice the roles people play
- Notice where you hear the “tips” in action

What made the meeting work?

- Find your '*Checklist for Meeting Your Policymaker*'
- What did you see during the demo?

The Briefing Sheet

- ✓ **Know your issue**
 - Describe the problem
 - Identify a solution
 - Make your “ask”
 - **Good to know:** Key players and where the action is

The Backgrounder

✓ Know your elected official

- How long in office?
- What committees?
- What is their background?
- Do you have anything in common?
- What are their key issues?

Meeting Roles

- ✓ **Plan your meeting**
 - The “lead”
 - The “messenger”
 - The “storyteller”

Your story is advocacy

GOLD

Real stories change hearts & minds

And build support for mental health

Tip #1

**Keep your story brief,
Just the highlights**

Tip #2

Paint the picture

Tip #3

**Motivate with
hope and recovery**

Tip #4

Make an “ask”

With our tips in mind...

- Listen to Howard's story**
- Notice your reactions**

Let's look at what makes our sample story work...

- Look at Howard's story

- Compare it with your 'Seven Steps Checklist'

Write your own story...

- Use your ‘Story Practice Sheet’
- Refer to your ‘Seven Steps Checklist’ and Howard’s story

Practice sharing your story...

- **Turn to your neighbor**
- **Take turns telling your stories**
 - 2 minutes each...or less
- **Give/receive constructive feedback**
 - One thing that would make the story even stronger

Congratulations!

What did you learn?

Where will you use your story?

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NAMI Mass Priorities

Support Creation of the Center of Excellence

Senate Bill 2320 would create a statewide, grassroots resource that will promote de-escalation skills among police departments.

The need for this resource is urgent and clear

- Police training and practices are widely inconsistent across the state – 83% of departments in MA have no specialized de-escalation capability
- In Massachusetts, 50% of inmates receive mental health services; many of these arrests are for minor, “quality of life” offenses
- Without appropriate training, police interactions can escalate quickly, especially when mental health or substance use issues are involved

What is Crisis Intervention Training?

A model for community policing that brings together law enforcement, community organizations and health providers, and individuals with lived experience and their families to improve responses to people in crisis

- De-escalation techniques
- Recognition of the signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use disorders
- Referral to appropriate resources and treatment

What is De-Escalation?

An essential tool for law enforcement to enhance safety and appropriate treatment of citizens

- *Words, approach, body language, empathy, assessment skills, and officer safety tactics*
- *Diffuses potentially violent encounters and helps people access appropriate community resources*

The Center of Excellence Will:

- *Serve as a clearinghouse of best practices in crisis response and de-escalation*
- *Provide 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trainings*
- *Foster partnerships between police and community organizations*
- *Provide technical assistance to adapt police policies and procedures*
- *support a culture of police as guardians rather than warriors.*

NAMI MA

***“Voter Voice”
Advocacy Tool***

***Connects You
Quickly And Easily
To Your
Legislator***

Action Alert

NAMI Mass budget amendment (#1011)- We Still Have Time

Dear NAMI members and friends: Six Senators joined Senator Lewis to sponsor Amendment #1011 to support the work of NAMI Mass' Criminal Justice Diversion Project. The six Senators are: Eldridge, Forry, Flanagan, Brownsberger, Joyce and Creem. If you're... [\[+\] more](#)

Compose Your Message

Recipients

- State Senator

Message

Subject

Body

My name is (insert your name) and I live in (insert your town) at (insert your address).

I'm contacting you because there is a budget amendment that I would like you to sign on to. It's Budget amendment #1011 and it's being sponsored by Senator Lewis. This amendment will support the work of NAMI Mass' Criminal Justice Diversion Program to train police departments and first responders about mental illness and substance use disorders.

NAMI has been working with dozens of police departments all over Massachusetts for the past 4 years, and this amendment will help spread the trainings to more

Remaining: 9,163

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**We value your
feedback**

**Please turn in your
evaluation form**