

Demo: Meeting Your Policymaker (Two Constituents)



Meeting Stage 1: Make a connection

Introductions

Senator Walker: “Good morning, everyone. Thank you for coming.”

John (Lead): (shakes hand) “Hello, Senator. I’m John Adams from Spring Valley. We’re members of NAMI Springville, part of America’s largest grassroots mental health organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

We really appreciate your taking the time to meet with us—we know you’re very busy.”

Jenny (Storyteller): (shakes hand) “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Senator. I’m Jenny Jones from Springville.”

Senator Walker: “It’s a pleasure to have you here. I know NAMI; you’ve always done a great job bringing up mental health issues.”

Show appreciation

John (Lead): “Senator Walker, before we talk about some important issues affecting your constituents who live with mental illness, we’d like you to know that we appreciate your many years of service in our legislature.”

Senator Walker: “Thank you, I’ve spent twelve years in public office, now.”

Jenny (Storyteller): “We also appreciate that, as a doctor, you value the health of your constituents and have provided important leadership on the Medicaid Health Plan and health care issues in our state.”

Senator Walker: “Well, I’ve seen too many people in emergency rooms with issues that could have been prevented for pennies, including a lot of people who needed mental health care.”

Issue and position

John (Lead): “I’m glad you mentioned that, Senator. We’re here because we want to urge you to support mental health services in HB 39, the mental health budget.”

Meeting Stage 2: Deliver your message

The need or problem

John (Lead): “More families than ever are seeking help from our mental health centers. But with budget cuts, people can’t get the mental health services they need.”

Senator Walker: “I’ve *always* been a supporter of mental health; I was a co-sponsor on NAMI’s parity bill. But, it’s going to be an extremely tight budget this year. There are serious revenue shortfalls and we’re still figuring out where we can find savings. We’ve got to get spending under control.”

Talking points

John (Lead): “We understand, Senator. It’s going to be challenging, but the people of our state deserve the opportunity to be productive and healthy. To have that opportunity, they need access to mental health care.

Also, if we don’t protect mental health services, it’s going to cost us more in other places.

When our children can’t get help for mental health conditions, they fall behind in school and families struggle.

When adults can’t get treatment, costs shift to jails, emergency rooms and hospitals.”

Senator Walker: “Isn’t that the truth. Like that kid involved in that police shooting—they’re saying he has a mental illness. I can’t believe those parents of his didn’t do something before a tragedy happened.”

Story

Jenny (Storyteller): “Yes, there’s a lot of speculation around that. I just wish the media would talk about stories of recovery, like mine, instead of focusing on sensational news.

I’m here because my life is affected by mental illness. My son, Andy, lives with bipolar disorder and I can tell you that treatment can make the difference between despair and recovery. Today, Andy’s living on his own, working as an artist and making me proud. I never thought I’d see him experience this kind of recovery.

But, it wasn’t always that way. Before he got the treatment he needs, I saw him in the back of police cars and held him in my arms after a suicide attempt. No child should have to go through this.”

Senator Walker: “I really appreciate your story, Jenny, and I’m so happy to hear your son is doing well. Is Andy showing his art anywhere?”

Talking points

Jenny (Storyteller): “Yes, a gallery is representing him. But, what I’m worried about is that there are thousands of others in our state just like my son, except most don’t get the help they need.

More than one in ten youth and about one in seventeen adults lives with a serious mental illness, so it's more common than most people think. Many of our returning service men and women are experiencing mental illness, too."

What will help others

Jenny (Storyteller): "We need more mental health services, not fewer. It's an investment in health and productivity. If people can get the right care at the right time, they can be successful, like my son."

The "ask"

John (Lead): "The people of our state need your vote to protect mental health care. Can we count on your support of HB 39, Senator?"

Senator Walker (standing): "You've both made some excellent points and I'll keep them in mind. I know how important mental health services are and I'll think about this as we're working on the budget."

Meeting Stage 3: Close on a positive note

Say thank you

John (Lead): (shakes hand) "Thank you so much, Senator Walker. We appreciate you taking the time to hear about our issues."

Provide information

Jenny (Storyteller): "Thank you for meeting with us, Senator. We know your time is limited, so we'd like to leave you with this packet that contains a fact sheet and NAMI's other legislative priorities. We hope we can count on your support for them."

Offer to be a resource

John (Lead): "Please know that we'd welcome the opportunity to be a resource to you in the future. We'd also like to follow up and see how you intend to vote on our issues."

Senator Walker: "Certainly. Please give my staff your contact information before you leave so they can get hold of you."

Make a request

Jenny (Storyteller): (shakes hand) "Thank you, Senator. If you have time, we would be honored if you would have your picture taken with us for our newsletter."

Senator Walker: "I think I can take a moment for a picture. And please tell Andy "hello" for me, will you?"

Jenny (Storyteller): "Of course, Senator. Thank you. That will make his day."

Checklist for Meeting Your Policymaker



	Prep for success
	Know your issue. Identify your issue, describe the problem, your talking points, your story, the solution and your “ask.” Use a briefing sheet to organize info.
	Know your policymaker. Read your policymaker’s bio and press releases or newsletter. Find out what committees they are on and their interests.
	Plan your meeting. If meeting as part of a group, identify roles and coordinate what you will say. A group of two is often the most effective.
	Use person-first language. Emphasize the person, not the illness (e.g., person living with schizophrenia). Avoid negative terms like “suffering.” Use positive concepts, like recovery, to promote empathy.
	Manage spin. Don’t get caught up in side issues. Practice bringing the focus back to where it belongs—on people living with mental illness.
	Expect resistance. Don’t argue. Anticipate challenging comments and questions and practice positive responses. Use facts to support your statements, if possible.
	Stage 1 of Meeting: Make a connection
✓	Introduce yourself
	Address your policymaker by their elected title. Add their last name, if you like.
	Give your name and city or town. Include your organization. We encourage you to describe yourself as “a member of [NAMI State Org or NAMI Affiliate], part of America’s largest grassroots mental health organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.”
✓	Show appreciation
	Thank your policymaker for his or her time.
	Option: Mention something positive your policymaker has done. This can be his or her length of service, leadership on an issue or a previous vote, for example.
	Option: Touch on a shared interest or connection.
✓	State your issue and position
	Describe your issue. Indicate the position or action you would like your policymaker to take.

	Stage 2 of Meeting: Deliver your message
✓	What is the need or problem?
	Mention the problem or need you want addressed. Transition to the challenge(s) faced by people living with mental illness.
✓	Add talking points
	Make your points. Talk concisely about the impact of the issue or bill and/or why the bill is needed.
✓	Tell your story
	Share your story. Describe how you are affected by mental illness. Briefly add highlights of your story that are relevant to the issue.
✓	What will help others?
	Propose a solution. Let your policymaker know what will help address the need or problem you described.
✓	Make your “ask”
	Ask your policymaker if you can count on their support (or opposition). Be specific about the action or position you want them to take. Include a bill number, if possible.
✓	Optional: Repeat for additional issues
	Describe your next issue. Repeat the process of giving talking points, describing the need or problem, the solution and your “ask.” Focus on no more than three issues in a meeting.
	Stage 3 of Meeting: Close on a positive note
✓	Say thank you
	Thank your policymaker. Let your policymaker know you appreciate their time and attention.
✓	Optional: Provide information
	Leave a fact sheet. If possible, provide a fact sheet, legislative packet or summary of your issue(s) or bill(s). Ask for support on your other issues, if applicable. Also, provide information on your organization and its programs.
✓	Optional: Offer to be a resource
	Be helpful. Let your policymaker know you are willing to serve as a resource on mental health issues.

✓	Optional: Make a request
	Request a picture or extend an invitation. Ask your policymaker to pose for a group photo or ask him/her to visit a local program or event, like the NAMI Walk.
	Follow up
	Send a thank you note. A hand-written thank you note is not only polite, it will leave a positive impression and allows you to <i>repeat your ask</i> .
	Check back regarding position. Write, call or email a polite inquiry a week or two after your meeting.
	If applicable: Follow through on a request. If your policymaker asks for addition information, follow up immediately. If you do not have the answer, ask NAMI or your NAMI State Organization for assistance.


The Briefing Sheet



A "briefing sheet" is a tool to prep for meetings with policymakers; it is not appropriate to leave behind. Provide elected officials or staff with separate fact sheets or materials outlining legislative priorities.

The issue	The "ask"	The need or problem, talking points and solution	Committee and sponsors
<p>House Bill 39 (mental health budget)</p>	<p>Vote to protect mental health services in HB 39</p>	<p>The need or problem: More individuals and families than ever are seeking help from our mental health centers. But with budget cuts, people can't get the mental health services they need.</p>	<p>Joint Ways & Means Committee Co-Chair Sen. Johnson Co-Chair Rep. Mark</p> <p>Human Services Subcommittee Co-Chair Sen. Greenly Co-Chair Rep Henry</p> <p>No sponsor—agency budget bill</p>
		<p>Talking Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People deserve the opportunity to be productive and healthy. To have that opportunity, they need access to care. • When children can't get help for mental health conditions, they often fall behind in school and families struggle. • When adults can't get treatment, costs shift to jails, emergency rooms and hospitals. • More than one in ten youth and about one in seventeen adults live with a serious mental illness, so it's common. • Thousands of men and women who've served our country experience mental illness. • When people get the right care at the right time, they can be successful and experience recovery. • Mental health care is an investment in health and productivity. 	
		<p>The solution (what will help): Preserving mental health funding will ensure that mental health services are there when people need them.</p>	

The Backgrounder

Elected official	Committee assignments
 <p>Senator David Walker, M.D. D-Spring Valley First elected to Senate in 2004 Deputy Majority Leader</p>	<p>Ways & Means Co-Chair, Ways & Means Subcommittee on Human Services</p>
Contact info	Notes
<p>900 Court St NE, S-205 Salem, OR 97301 Phone (503) 555-5555 Email sen.dwalker@somewhere.state.us Website www.walker4ever.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong proponent of expansion of health care coverage • Concerned about reigning in health care costs
Personal info	Bio
<p>Marital Status: Married to April Residence: Spring Valley, Oregon Occupation: Doctor Previous Political Experience: Oregon House of Representatives, 2000-2004 Education: BA, Oregon State University, 1969 DO, College of Medicine, Richmond, Virginia, 1973 Birthdate: August 2, 1946 Religion: Protestant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlisted in the US Army and served one tour of duty in Vietnam • Attended medical school at the College of Medicine • In private practice in rural Spring Valley for the last 30 years • Former Chief of Medicine at Deep Valley Medical Center • Served three terms on the Spring Valley School Board • Governor's Quality in Education Task Force • Appointed to the Health Services Commission in 1989, which was instrumental in designing the Oregon Health Plan.

Where do you see potential areas of connection or shared interest?

Do you see or know of any potential concerns or areas of resistance to your issue?

Meeting Roles



Before your group meeting, determine what role each participant will play. Note: Role descriptions are suggestions; refer to your Meeting Your Policymaker checklist and make sure a participant is identified for each part you expect to cover.

Role descriptions	
<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduces self or the group - Introduces issue and position - Makes the "ask" - Closes the meeting 	<p>Messenger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gives talking points - Describes the need or problem - Describes the solution - Gives legislative packet at meeting close
	<p>Storyteller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adds highlights of personal story or local perspective of issue's impact
Size of meeting	Division of roles
One-on-one meeting	You will take on all three roles above.
Two-on-one meeting (two constituents and policymaker)	One person in your group will take on two of the roles; the other person will take on one role.
Three-on-one meeting (three constituents and policymaker)	Each person in your group will take on one of the roles above.
Group of four or more	<p>Three people in the group should take on one role each. Other participants should serve as "eyes and ears" during the meeting.</p> <p>Note: If there are two or three issues to discuss, participants may switch roles for second and third issue, if desired.</p>

Meeting Script



Instructions: Fill in information indicated by brackets. **Focus on the introduction, showing appreciation, your talking points and your story.** If you have time, you may restate other parts of the script in your own words.

Group meeting instructions: Plan what you will each say *in your selected roles*. Determine how you will signal each other or what you will say to transition from one person and stage of the meeting to another.

Issue and position: Protect mental health services in HB 39	
Stage 1 of Meeting: Make a connection	
Role	Script: Introduce yourself Fill in information indicated by brackets.
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	Welcome--thank you for coming to see me. I always like to see my constituents.
Lead	Hello, Senator. I'm [your name] and I'm a constituent from [town or city you live in]. I'm a member of [NAMI State Org or NAMI Affiliate], part of America's largest grassroots mental health organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.
Optional: If another participant	Hello, Senator. I'm [your name] and I'm from [town or city you live in].
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	It's a pleasure to have you here. I know NAMI--your organization does a great job of bringing up mental health issues.

Role	Script: Show appreciation Fill in information indicated by brackets.
Lead	[In two or three sentences, thank your policymaker for his/her time. Show appreciation for something your policymaker has done. Or, touch on a shared interest or connection. Tip: Use your backgrounder.]
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	I certainly appreciate your comments. So, tell me what brings you to my office today.
Role	Script: Issue and position
Lead	Senator, I'm here because I want to urge you to protect mental health services in HB 39, the mental health budget.
Stage 2 of Meeting: Deliver your message	
Role	Script: The need or problem
Messenger	More families than ever are seeking help from our mental health centers. But with budget cuts, people can't get the mental health services they need.

Role	Script: Talking points Fill in information indicated by brackets.
Messenger	<p>[Provide a series of brief talking points. Use points from the Briefing Sheet or use your fact sheet to create your own.]</p>
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	<p>I've always been a supporter of mental health. But, it's going to be an extremely tight budget this year. There are serious revenue shortfalls and we're still figuring out where we can find savings. We've got to get spending under control.</p>

Role	Script: Add your story Fill in information indicated by brackets.
Storyteller	<p>Senator, your support would mean a lot. [Describe how you are affected by mental illness. Add highlights of your story that are relevant to the issue.]</p>
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	<p>Thank you for sharing your story. It is stories like yours that help illustrate the need for mental health care. Unfortunately, it is going to be a difficult year to find resources.</p>
Role	Script: What will help others (the solution)
Messenger	<p>Preserving mental health funding will mean that mental health services are there when people need them. It's an investment in health and productivity.</p>

Role	Script: Make your “ask”
Lead	The people of our state need your vote to protect mental health care. Can we count on your support of HB 39, Senator?
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	You’ve made some excellent points today and I’ll keep them in mind as we’re working on the budget. I know how important mental health services are.
Stage 3 of Meeting: Close on a positive note	
Role	Script: Say thank you
Lead	Thank you so much, Senator Walker. I appreciate you taking the time to hear about NAMI’s issues.
Optional: If another participant	Thank you for meeting with us today, Senator Walker. We appreciate it.
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	It was a pleasure to meet with you.
Role	Script: Provide information
Messenger	I’d like to leave you with this fact sheet for your files and a copy of our brochure. We have programs that offer support for individuals and families who are living with mental illness.

Role	Script: Offer to be a resource
Lead	I'd also like you to know that NAMI would be happy to serve as a resource to you on mental health issues in the future.
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	Certainly. Please give my staff your contact information before you leave so we can get hold of you.
Role	Script: Make a request
Storyteller	Senator, if you have time, I would be honored if you would have your picture taken for our newsletter.
Policymaker (Sen. Walker)	Of course, I'd be happy to take a picture. Thank you, again, for meeting with me.

Constructive Feedback Form for Two-On-One Meeting

In the space below each scale, identify where the **meeting was strong** or what would **strengthen the meeting**. Note: Feedback sheet includes only selected parts of a meeting with a policymaker.

Stage 1 of Meeting: Make a connection				
Introductions				
1	2	3	4	5
Could be strengthened		Works fine		Very strong
Show appreciation				
1	2	3	4	5
Stage 2 of Meeting: Deliver your message				
The need or problem				
1	2	3	4	5
Talking points				
1	2	3	4	5
Your story				
1	2	3	4	5
Make your "ask"				
1	2	3	4	5
Stage 3 of Meeting: Close on a positive note				
Make a request				
1	2	3	4	5

Sample Thank You Note



[Date]

Greeting

Dear Senator Walker:

Thank you

Thank you so much for meeting with me on May 30th to discuss the state mental health budget. As I mentioned in our meeting, access to mental health treatment makes a tremendous difference.

Request

I hope I can count on your support to preserve mental health services in HB 39.

Supporting detail

These services provide treatment and the opportunity for recovery for over 137,000 adults and 39,000 youth in Oregon who live with serious mental health conditions.

Thank you

Thank you for your attention to mental health funding.

Closing

Sincerely,

John Adams, President
NAMI Springville
5555 SW Green St.
Springville, OR 97999
(555) 555-5555
jadams@namispringville.org

Checklist for Thank You



✓	Greeting
	The greeting should include the elected title of an official and his or her last name.
✓	Thank you
	Thank your elected official for the opportunity to meet with you or your group. Include a few brief details of who you are, the issue(s) you discussed and on what date.
✓	Request
	Politely restate your key “ask” or request for action or position. If known, add specific bill number.
✓	(Optional): Supporting detail
	Add or repeat a fact, data, detail or talking point that supports your position.
✓	(Optional): Invitation
	If you like, extend an invitation to attend your NAMIWalk, visit a Connection support group, local program, etc.
✓	Thank you
	Thank your elected official for his or her work on behalf of constituents who live with mental illness.
✓	Closing
	Respectful closing (e.g. Sincerely), signature (if mailed) and contact information. Include your printed name, organization, address, phone number and email address.



The Briefing Sheet Template

Finding information

- Consult your NAMI State Organization for the information you need. If information is not available, consider the following sources:
- Look up the bill on your legislature’s website for information on committee assignment and sponsors or call the legislature’s information line.
- Consider using NAMI fact sheets on the web at www.nami.org or other reputable sources for facts to use in talking points.
- Your “ask” should be in alignment with NAMI’s policy platform at www.nami.org and your NAMI State Organization’s position.

The issue	The “ask”	The need or problem, talking points and solution	Committee and sponsors
		The need or problem:	
		Talking Points:	
		The solution (what will help):	



The Backgrounder Template

For basic information:

- Go to www.nami.org/advocacy, enter your zip code
- Click on your state policymaker's name
- Click on the Bio tab for basic information
- Click on the Committee tab for info about committees
- Click on the Contact tab for a link to policymaker's website

Options for more information:

- Visit your policymaker's website for more information
- Visit www.votesmart.org/officials
- Google your policymaker's name

Elected official	Committee assignments
Contact info	Notes
Personal info	Bio

Meeting Script Template



Instructions: Identify your issue and position. Plan **what you will say** in the "Script" portion of the template below.

Group meeting instructions: Plan what you will each say *in your selected roles*. Determine how you will signal each other or what you will say to transition from one person and stage of the meeting to another.

Issue and position:	
Stage 1 of Meeting: Make a connection	
Role	Script: Introduce yourself Address your policymaker by their elected title. Add their last name, if you like. Give your name and city or town. Include your organization. We encourage you to describe yourself as "a member of [NAMI State Org or NAMI Affiliate], part of America's largest grassroots mental health organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness."
Lead	
Optional: If other participant(s)	

Role	Script: Show appreciation In two or three sentences, thank your policymaker for his/her time. Show appreciation for something your policymaker has done. Or, touch on a shared interest or connection. Tip: Use your backgrounder.
Lead	
Role	Script: Issue and position Describe your issue. Indicate the position or action you would like your policymaker to take.
Lead	
Stage 2 of Meeting: Deliver your message	
Role	Script: The need or problem Mention the problem or need you want addressed. Transition to the challenge(s) faced by people living with mental illness.
Messenger	

Role	Script: Talking points Make your points. Talk concisely about the impact of the issue or bill and/or why the bill is needed. Use points from your Briefing Sheet, if possible.
Messenger	

Role	Script: Add your story Describe how you are affected by mental illness. Add highlights of your story that are relevant to the issue.
Storyteller	
Role	Script: What will help others Propose a solution. Let your policymaker know what will help address the need or problem you described.
Messenger	

Role	Script: Make your “ask” Ask your policymaker if you can count on their support (or opposition). Be specific about the action or position you want them to take. Include a bill number, if possible.
Lead	
Stage 3 of Meeting: Close on a positive note	
Role	Script: Say thank you Thank your policymaker. Let your policymaker know you appreciate their time and attention. If you like, mention that you will be following up.
Lead	
Optional: If other participant(s)	

Role	(Optional) Script: Provide information Leave a fact sheet. If possible, provide a fact sheet, legislative packet or summary of your issue(s) or bill(s). Ask for support on your other issues, if applicable. Also, provide information on your organization and its programs.
Messenger	
Role	(Optional) Script: Offer to be a resource Be helpful. Let your policymaker know you are willing to serve as a resource on mental health issues.
Lead	
Role	(Optional) Script: Make a request Request a picture or extend an invitation. Ask your policymaker to pose for a group photo or ask him/her to visit a local program or event, like the NAMI Walk.
Storyteller	

fact sheet about mental illness

Mental illness touches everyone...

You probably know somebody who is affected.

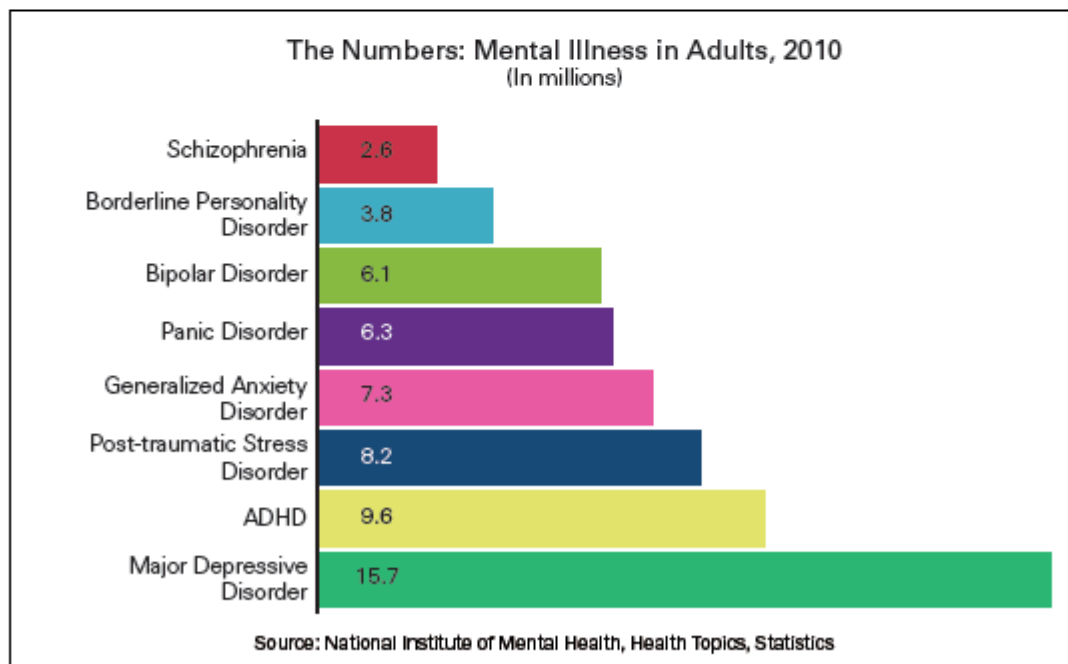
1 in 4 adults experience a mental health problem in any given year.

1 in 17 adults lives with a serious mental illness like major depression, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.

1 in 10 youth lives with a mental health condition that interferes with their day-to-day lives.

Mental illness is a leading cause of disability in the U.S.¹

- ▶ Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year.²
- ▶ Mood disorders such as depression are the third most common cause of hospitalization for youth and for adults ages 18-44.³
- ▶ Youth and adults living with serious mental illness are more likely to be confined to jails and juvenile facilities, often as a result of untreated mental illness.^{4,5}



Guide to Finding Facts

Fact sheets and other information are downloadable from NAMI at www.nami.org/stateadvocacy and www.nami.org/elections.

Searching the Web sites of other organizations and agencies can also be very helpful. Here is a sampling of some good websites or publications:

Children's Mental Health

National Business Group on Health

An Employer's Guide to Child and Adolescent Mental Health

http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pdfs/CAMH_Guide_LoRes.pdf

NAMI's Child and Adolescent Action Center

<http://www.nami.org/caac>

National Center for Children in Poverty (children's mental health)

<http://www.nccp.org/>

(Select Publications—by topic—children's mental health)

National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (juvenile justice)

Blueprint for Change: A Comprehensive Model for the Identification and Treatment of Youth with Mental Health Needs in Contact with the Juvenile Justice System

<http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/148>

Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project

<http://consensusproject.org/>

Reentry Policy Council

<http://reentrypolicy.org/>

Economic and Health Impacts

National Business Group on Health

An Employer's Guide to Behavioral Health Services

http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pdfs/fullreport_behavioralHealthservices.pdf

The Milken Institute

The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease (State Fact Sheets)

http://www.chronicdiseaseimpact.com/state_pdfs/StateFactSheets.pdf

Housing

Corporation for Supportive Housing

www.csh.org

National Alliance to End Homelessness

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

Technical Assistance Collaborative

<http://www.tacinc.org>

Finding Facts Continued

Medicaid and the Uninsured

Kaiser Foundation on Medicaid and the Uninsured

www.kff.org

Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts

<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/>

Research and Statistics

National Institute of Mental Health Science News

www.nimh.nih.gov/science-news/index.shtml

National Institute of Mental Health

Statistics (select tabs on prevalence, cost, disability and suicide)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/statistics/index.shtml>

State Mental Health Revenue and Expenditures

NRI Inc. (National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute)

http://www.nri-inc.org/projects/Profiles/Prior_RE.cfm

Suicide

America Association of Suicidology

<http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools>

Basic Strategies for Shaping the Dialogue



1.	Use person-first language
	<p>Emphasize the person, not the illness. Avoid terms like “suffering.” Use positive concepts, like recovery, to promote empathy.</p> <p>Example: Use “people [or person] living with mental illness,” rather than “the mentally ill, people with brain disorders, or people suffering with mental illness.”</p>
2.	Manage spin
	<p>Don’t take the bait. Avoid getting trapped in other issues. Practice bringing the focus back to where it belongs—on people living with mental illness.</p>
3.	Expect resistance
	<p>Provide facts. Present relevant facts as a way to help inform opinions.</p> <p>A negative opinion: Supportive housing is too expensive.</p> <p>Using a fact in response: Supportive housing significantly reduces shelter use, hospitalization and involvement with the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Don’t argue. Anticipate challenging comments and questions and practice positive responses. Start by acknowledging the concern.</p> <p>A concern: We have to balance the budget and we’re not going to raise taxes. Everything, including mental health, needs to take its share of cuts.</p> <p>Sample responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know the budget is tight, but when children and adults get the right mental health care at the right time, they get better and stand a real chance of leading independent and productive lives. • I understand that these are tough economic times, but mental illness doesn’t go away in bad times. In fact, more people than ever need help. Services should be there when they are needed the most. It’s an investment that stabilizes families, businesses and communities. • I know that tough times require tough choices, but children and adults who live with serious mental illness rely on Medicaid and public mental health programs for treatment and supports. Budget cuts pull the rug out from them. Stable funding is needed to provide services that maintain recovery. Mental health is the last place we should cut.

Common Greetings



The following are common greetings that will help you properly address elected officials.

Official	Address	Greeting for Letter or Email
Governor	The Honorable (Full Name) Governor of (State) (Office Address)	Dear Governor (Last Name)
State Senator	The Honorable (Full Name) (Office Address)	Dear Senator (Last Name)
State Representative	The Honorable (Full Name) (Office Address)	Dear Representative (Last Name)
State Assemblyman	The Honorable (Full Name) (Office Address)	Dear Assemblyman or Assemblywoman (Last Name)
U.S. Senator	The Honorable (Full Name) United States Senate (Senate Office Building) Washington, D.C. (zip)	Dear Senator (Last Name)
U.S. Representative	The Honorable (Full Name) House of Representatives (House Office Building) Washington, D.C. (zip)	Dear Representative or Congressman or Congresswoman

How to Contact Elected Officials



The following are several options for contact information for elected officials.

✓	NAMI Website
	<p>Take advantage of NAMI’s Legislative Action Center.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to www.nami.org/advocacy • Enter your zip code under “Find your elected officials” to get links to phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses for your state and federal officials.
✓	Web Search
	<p>Search the Web for your state’s legislature or general assembly. When there, find out how to get to contact pages or a Find Your Legislator page.</p> <p>Note your policymakers’ contact information in an easy-to-find place, like next to your phone or computer. Put your policymakers’ email addresses into your email contacts.</p>
✓	Legislative Guides
	<p>Some legislatures print handy legislative guides with maps, pictures of policymakers, contact info, and useful information. Where available, these are often free or very reasonably priced and a “trade secret” of lobbyists.</p>

My Commitment



Today, I learned and practiced how to advocate effectively with elected officials.
Now, I commit to act.

In the next 48 hours, I will:

*“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment
before starting to improve the world.”—Anne Frank*

In the next week, I will:

“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.” —William James

Over the next three months, I will:

*“Knowing is not enough; we must apply.
Willing is not enough; we must do.” —Goethe*

NAMI Smarts for Advocacy

Meeting Your Policymaker Evaluation

Trainer's Name: _____ Date of Training: _____

Location of Training (City & State): _____

My Name (optional, but preferred): _____

1. Overall, my **knowledge and skill level** in meeting with my policymaker is...

Before the training: (Circle your rating)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Some Good Excellent

After the training: (Circle your rating)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Some Good Excellent

2. Overall, my level of **confidence** in meeting with my policymaker is...

Before the training: (Circle your rating)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Some Good Excellent

After the training: (Circle your rating)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Some Good Excellent

3. What did you learn that was most meaningful or helpful to you today?

4. Where do you plan to use what you learned and practiced? Or, what will you do differently as a result of this training?

5. What comments, if any, do you have about this training?

6. NAMI seeks to support the entire community. To help us track how we are doing and for funding purposes, please *check all that apply*.

I am:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial
- Other: _____

- Person living with a mental illness
- Family of adult living with a mental illness
- Parent or legal guardian of minor-aged child living with a mental illness
- Mental health service provider, including peer provider
- Other mental health advocate
- Military service member, veteran or military family member
- Other: _____