

What We're Working on Now

Students: It's #OKtoTalk about Mental Health

Prior to the pandemic, youth and young adult suicide was already at a record high. It is the second leading cause of death for ages 10 to 34. The situation is so serious that the Illinois legislature has mandated publicly funded colleges and universities increase access to counseling services and use NAMI programs for outreach efforts. A National Council on Disability Study reports: "Strong mental and behavioral health supports on campus can improve the academic performance of students and increase their resilience and ability to handle stress, with reduced suicide rates, substance abuse, and eating disorders."

NAMI GMV offers tips to succeed in school and start a conversation about mental health. Warning signs are shared as well as national and local crisis hotlines. We also offer several community education programs as an outreach tool. "Ending the Silence" presentations share a young adult's journey towards recovery, work to break the social stigma to talk about



NAMI volunteer education instructor Bettina Williams recently presented at Scott Community College. Academic Advisor LaNette Turner, MS, hosted a Black Student Union informational event.

mental health and encourage others to ask for help.

NAMI GMV Mental Health Early Action on Campus Project is made possible by:

- The artists of Bere'skin Gallery & Art Academy, Bettendorf, in loving memory of Conner and the students they serve
- Theisen's More for Your Community grants program
- The Moline Foundation and Rock Island Community Foundation

Improvements to Find NAMI Easier

Thanks to an update of our website and social media channels, more people are finding us "organically." This initiative is part of enhancing people, programs and technology for our evolving virtual world. Our virtual sites are designed now to attract people based on frequently-used mental health search terms.

Since January, www.namigmv.org website has seen a 51 percent increase in users including a significant increase in females ages 18 to 24 and 25 to 34. Our YouTube Channel is currently ranked #1 in the search term "support group for families with mental illness" by an independent ranking organization. NAMI Volunteer educator and support group leader Brian Klinge is featured.

The "Re-establishing NAMI's Front Door" Project is made possible by grants from: Regional Development Authority, Quad Cities Community Foundation, Eastern Iowa Mental Health Region and NAMI national COVID recovery.

Here's a No-Cost Way to Support NAMI GMV.

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel.

We need 100 subscribers by the Holidays to be able to have a customized web address. Please watch and "share" a video, and then "subscribe" to NAMI Greater Mississippi Valley on YouTube. You can find our channel at <https://bit.ly/2YeQpwU>.



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Board Strategic Goals & Work in Progress

The board is completing Year 3 of a three-year strategic plan. 2021 Highlights include:

Goal 1. Provide individuals living with a mental health condition and their families NAMI evidence-based and other nationally-developed education and support programs designed to improve the quality of their lives. These are provided at no cost to participants.

- **Find Additional and more effective methods to market NAMI and its services.** Working with Twin States Technology and social media and web analytics consultants, the NAMI GMV online sites are now tailored for real-world language and search terms used by people looking for help. New videos feature NAMI volunteers who encourage others to reach out for help.
- **Identify, retain and train volunteer teachers and facilitators.** Our front door program, a 90-minute Family & Friends was retooled for virtual environments. Intercultural training was offered to NAMI staff and volunteers to better prepare to work with diverse community members. Quarterly education and support leadership meetings were held to update volunteers on changes to the local mental health care system.
- **Increase impact of education programs and support groups.** A quarterly questionnaire for support group participants is launching in October. Education program participant data has been aggregated and analyzed to make continued quality improvements.

Goal 2: Raise public awareness of mental illness and its impact on lives and advocate for improving the lives of those affected.

- **Increase public awareness about what NAMI does.** A United Way grant will help fund several community education seminars to diverse community members. A NAMI national pilot program administered by NAMI Illinois will fund a revised “Sharing Hope” program designed specifically for the African American community.

Thoughtful Memories of Our Volunteers



June 25 – Michael Freda, former NAMI GMV Board President. Michael was retired as Operations Director, UnityPoint Health Robert Young Center. He is survived by his wife Karen and stepchildren Melissa and Greg.



August 29 – Reverend Jacque McCoy, former NAMI educator. Jacque was a family advocate with Salvation Army, Muscatine. She is survived by her husband Ricky and five children.

NAMIWalks was Virtual and In Person

In 2020, NAMI GMV experienced a significant drop in income as COVID disrupted our major fundraiser and grant cycles. We were fortunate to receive federal funds and local foundation support to help us through this time.

So, it is important that the Quad Cities' largest mental health advocacy event and fundraiser in 2021 be a success. Many volunteers backed by our new Development Manager Christina McNamara-Schmidt made it happen. While the actual numbers of walkers are down from pre-COVID, we enjoyed engaging with 84 teams and 722 registrants. NAMIWalks will raise 21.6 percent more funds than our original \$120,000 goal. 100 percent of proceeds stay here in the Quad Cities region to support our free education and support programs.

There's still time to donate. Our fundraising site www.namiwalks.org/greatermississippivalley is open through November 16.

St. Ambrose University is the top team fundraiser with \$5,700.



▲ *Linda Lewis is the top individual fundraiser with \$4,220.*



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About Us

NAMI GMV is a 42-year old affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots organization dedicated to building better lives for individuals living with a mental health condition and their families.

NAMI offers nationally-developed evidence-based education programs proven to help families move through trauma. These programs are delivered by trained volunteers with lived mental illness experience. NAMI does not offer counseling or social services. Rather, it focuses on education, advocacy, and support. We serve residents of eastern Iowa and western Illinois. Funds raised here – stay here – for local programs. IRS ID #42-1188963

We call it *the NAMI effect.*

Every time you offer your hand to pick someone up.

Every time you share your strength and ability to persevere.

Every time you offer support and understanding to a family who is caring for a loved one.

The NAMI effect grows.

Hope starts with *you.*
Become a member.

