



Shared Interests Worksheet

Fill in the chart with potential groups who are affected by your issue (we'll be using medication access as an example).

Before you begin, take a moment to brainstorm groups by asking yourself:

“Who is impacted by persons or families living with mental illness?”

“Why might they be interested in access to mental health medications—what’s ‘in it’ for them?”

List the potential partner groups in the lines below. Identify their interest or potential motivation for being involved in your issue.

Optional advanced step: Rate the general level of the group’s interest (low, medium, or high) in your issue relative to their other issues or their main mission. Next, rate the level of influence (low, medium, or high) you believe they have with the officials or legislators who will be acting on your issue. (Use this step to prioritize partners or to help determine how to best involve them.)

Potential Partner Group	Motivation or Interest in Issue	Level of Interest (Low, Med, High)	Level of Influence (Low, Med, High)



Checklist for Partners

Ideas for In-Kind or Other Resources:

- Strategic advice or brainstorming ideas
- Assistance from lobbyist
- Key information regarding elected officials, pending actions, opinions
- Data for fact sheets
- Media lists for press releases
- Staff for assistance with Day at Capitol
- Marketing or assistance with graphics
- Meeting space
- Copies (color, black and white, colored paper)
- Pins or stickers
- Transportation for consumers to attend legislative meetings or hearings

Organization: Key Contact	Sign-On Support*	Email Alerts*	Legislative Meetings*	Testimony & Hearings*	In-Kind & Other
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Willing to sign-on to letter, statement, etc.

*Point person willing to receive and distribute your email alerts

*Willing to attend hearings and/or provide written or oral testimony

*Willing to arrange and/or attend meetings with key legislators



Example: Approaching a Potential Partner Organization

When advocating, it can be very helpful to have the support of a range of organizations. Approaching another organization as a potential partner is best done when one is prepared:

1. Know your issue and message. Be clear about your issue, what you are trying to achieve, and why.
2. Align your issue with the other organization's goals. What is your shared interest? How does your issue help accomplish one of their goals?
3. Know what actions and timelines are pending or coming up with your issue.
4. Provide facts or information on your issue.
5. Make your "ask." What would you like from this partner? What are they willing and able to contribute? Be flexible in your expectations.

Here is an example of how an advocate might approach a potential partner organization:

Mary: "Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me. NAMI has great respect for your union and for the hard work of teachers every day in the classroom. We haven't had the opportunity to work together before, so I should start by telling you a little about NAMI. We are an organization of individuals living with serious mental illness and their families. We do advocacy and education on mental illness. We have 10 affiliates around the state and about 4,000 members.

We wanted to meet with you today to discuss House Bill 56, which will prohibit teachers from discussing a child's mental health condition with parents. We know that teachers need the freedom to communicate any of their concerns with parents.

Are you familiar with the bill?"

Angela: "We've heard about it."

Mary: "What are your thoughts?"

Angela: "We don't agree with it. This will impose more requirements on teachers and make them afraid to talk honestly with parents. Everyone says they want teachers and parents to be partners, but then there is legislation like this."

Mary: "We couldn't agree more and want to work with you to defeat this bill. Would you be interesting in joining other organizations in signing a letter to legislators opposing the bill? We thought that would be a good first step in setting forth the reasons for our opposition."

Angela: "Yes, we'd be interested in doing that. We'll have to run it by our Policy Committee, but I think it's a strong possibility that we could sign on."

Mary: "Who in your organization would be the point person for next steps regarding signing on to the letter?"

Angela: “Please send it to me. I’ll make sure you have my email address.”

Mary: “In the coming weeks, we will be organizing a campaign against this bill at the legislature. Would the union be interested in the campaign? Could you see yourself playing a role in this?”

Angela: “We have other legislative priorities for our visits and calls, but we could likely play a supportive role.”

Mary: “Would you add this issue to your leave behind materials, even if it is not the first issue? Could you provide some in kind support – meeting space, copying, etc. Do you have an email list that we could use to find teachers who might want to speak out?”

Angela: “If we get approval to support this issue, we could add this to our leave-behind packet. And, yes, we could definitely help out with copying. I can’t share our email list, but if you send me alerts, we can include them in our legislative alerts to membership.”

Mary: “Thank you so much for meeting with me and for supporting this topic. I look forward to building a partnership on this issue and exploring other issues in the future. I know your members are impacted by mental illness in their own lives and in the lives of the children and youth they teach—and in families. I think there is a lot we have in common in terms of goals. Again, thank you so much for your support.”

Mental Health Advocacy Agencies

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

202-467-5730

Consumer Health Coalition

(412) 456-1877

Mission is to inspire a consumer movement to enhance access to quality, affordable health care in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Anyone who is uninsured or underinsured, including low-income children, families, people with disabilities and seniors should be referred to CHC.

Disabilities Rights Network/Pennsylvania Protection and Advocacy (PP&A)

1-800-692-7443 (intake) www.ppainc.org

Legal consultation and representation for negotiations, administrative hearings, and court proceedings. Education about the legal rights for persons with disabilities. Agency responsible for providing protection and advocacy services for people with disabilities.

Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA)

Phone: 717-364-3280 info@paproviders.org

Peer Support and Advocacy Network (PSAN)

(412) 227-0402

Information regarding consumer drop in centers, consumer support groups, peer specialists and Warm Line service.

Allegheny County WarmLine

1-866-661-9276(WARM) Answers 2 p.m. – 10 pm. Peer support line.

Pennsylvania Health Law Project

1-800-274-3258 www.phlp.org

Promotes access to consumer-directed health services for persons with disabilities. Is able to give legal advice on Medicaid and other health issues.

Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association

717-564-4930 1-800-887-6422 pmhca@pmhca.org



Local Contact Information

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All NAMI Pennsylvania and other state NAMI affiliates can be found on the National NAMI website at www.nami.org.

