

ADVOCACY TOOL KIT

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania



the power to ignite change
a personal call to action

10th Annual Education Conference

Pittsburgh Airport Marriott
April 23-24, 2010

Adapted from NAMI's Smarts & Hearts Advocacy Training



Advocacy Tool Kit

Section 1

Issue Specific Messages &
Talking Points

Section 2

Tell Your Own Story

Section 3

Finding Partners: Power of
Collaboration

Section 4

Effective Legislative Outreach

Section 5

Effective Media Outreach

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Southwestern Pennsylvania



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Welcome from Sharon A. Miller, *Director of Education and Community Relations*

We welcome all attendees to our NAMI 10th Annual Education Conference and invite you to consider lending *your* voice to ours as we advocate in these times wrought with change and uncertainty.

Advocacy is the act of influencing outcomes; in supporting a cause; and in making one's voice heard. Advocacy by an individual or by a like minded collective group normally aims to influence public-policy, access, quality and funding decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions; it may be motivated from personal, moral, ethical or faith-based principles.

Today our advocacy efforts contribute to democracy in many ways by:

- Giving a voice to our mental health community
- Mobilizing citizens to participate in the democratic process
- Assisting in the development of better mental health public policy
- Ensuring the accountability to citizens by government and other institutions

NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania Develops Advocacy Tool Kit

We are pleased to distribute our newly developed Advocacy Tool Kits during this our 10th annual education conference. The tool kit is designed to assist each of us in our advocacy efforts by providing tips and strategies to increase our confidence and effectiveness in having our voices truly heard. The contents of the tool kit are categorized to increase skills in developing specific messages and talking points; telling your own story (as there is nothing more persuasive); finding partners through the power of collaboration; and engaging in effective legislative outreach and effective media outreach.

The Advocacy Tool Kit, in binder form, is designed to be fluid work - one that can be added to and expanded upon and NAMI Southwestern PA will continue to provide updates to this work. We trust that you will find the contents useful in your advocacy efforts and we thank you for your collective partnership.

Today as we celebrate ongoing advocacy efforts in collaboration with others in our mental health community, we do so striving to increase our impact on policymakers and legislators. We invite you to consider joining our newly re-organized and re-energized Public Policy Committee. Look for upcoming technology enhancements to the legislative affairs page on our website that will provide members with analysis and immediate contact to legislators and members of Congress. And we continue to expand our membership in our Email Action Alert recipient list. Through our collective efforts, we aim to have a positive impact on the development, funding and availability of recovery-oriented treatment and supports throughout our communities.

We invite all within our mental health community to consider lending *your* voice to ours in our advocacy efforts. Contact me at (412) 366-3788 or smiller@namiswa.org to learn about the many ways you can become involved.