

"Life Interrupted"

Family stories of Shock, Acceptance, Recovery,
Transformation and Hope

November 20, 2008

"Life Interrupted" (LI) is a Family Speakers program developed by NAMI New Hampshire. Our trained LI presenters have successfully spoken to numerous groups and organizations around our state, often partnering with *In Our Own Voice* speakers to bring both perspectives to audiences. The LI Presenter training is now being offered to NAMI organizations across the country.

Program Description

NAMI organizations all over the country have an army of volunteers and board members that if trained, have the ability to tell their story.

"Life Interrupted" was developed to provide families a way to educate their communities about mental illness recovery. Sharing a personal story has been proven effective in educating the public about mental illness and addressing the barriers of stigma. **NAMI organizations all over the country have an army of volunteers and board members that if trained, have the ability to tell their story** to their communities and to special groups such as law enforcement, legislators, teachers and students.

Today when NAMI members are often unable to give financially they can give of their time by speaking up. Although with good intentions, often times, however, families tell stories that are long and complex without a clear focus or without considering the audience interests. Learning about the Life Interrupted training model **NAMI volunteers and board members will develop effective messages so that their stories are powerful, structured, and educate the public about mental illness and reduce stigma.**

Using personal stories to educate Legislators-

Elected officials need anecdotal local stories to make the statistics related to a particular initiative come alive. Such communications form the backbone of high quality grassroots actions opposed to actions like pre-printed postcards and petitions that focus on being counted in a legislative office without attempting to establish a substantive exchange with your lawmakers. If you use your personal knowledge correctly you can make elected officials connect through the heart rather than the head- that commitment tends to be more lasting.

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This program enables NAMI volunteers to use their experiences to change the attitudes and open the minds of all members of their community. It helps to spread the message that everyone has the ability to help promote recovery, resiliency and wellness for those diagnosed with a mental illness.

The Goals of the “Life Interrupted” Family Perspective Presentation

- To help audiences understand the family perspective on dealing with mental illness.
- To reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and to demonstrate that family recovery is possible.
- To encourage hope for families that are affected by mental illness.
- To educate communities about NAMI, its philosophy, and the services and benefits it provides to families.
- To build resiliency in families and promote their recovery journeys

Life Interrupted Presenter Training Includes:

- 8 hours of face-to-face training (provided in 2 four-hour sessions) can be delivered on site or as interactive web-based training.
- A Presenter Training Manual
- Following the training, 2 hours of technical assistance per site through phone or e-mail consultation
- Audience Presentation Evaluation forms (optional)
- A maximum of 8 presenters are trained at one time. The class size is limited to improve the interaction among participants.

Training Outline

Part I- Part one of the two-part training focuses on the key steps to composing and presenting a family story these include:

1. Creating the Outline

2. Presenter’s Personal Introduction

The information needed to start the connection with the audience

3. Presenting NAMI (State Affiliate Name), what it is and what it does

4. The Presenter’s connection to NAMI (State Affiliate Name)

5. Presenter’s Personal Story: The Core of LI

Family are taught to tell their stories that illustrate the impact of mental illness on an individual, family and a community; these stories also illustrate the family recovery journey, provide a message of hope and connect with people who have lived in isolation with mental illness.

....these stories also illustrate the family recovery journey, provide a message of hope and connect with people who have lived with mental illness in isolation.

Presenters are taught effective ways to present their frustrations and grief without blame and to address issues of stigma.

- 6. Positive Presentations**
- 7. Basic communication skills**
- 8. Speaker Tips**
- 9. Stories should include**
- 10. How to tell the story**
- 11. Writing a core story outline**
- 12. Putting it all together**

Part II- Part two of the two-part training focuses on the important messages to be shared within a presentation; the most effective ways to deliver a presentation and respond to the audience. These include:

- 1. Participants present their story**
- 2. Important Messages about Mental Illness**
 - Transitioning to important messages
 - Core Message for all Audiences
 - Specific Messages for Specific Audiences
- 3. Facts about NAMI (State Affiliate Name)**
- 4. Responding to Problems and Questions**
 - The difficult question? Advice or not?
- 5. Important Considerations**
- 6. Scheduling Life Interrupted Presentations**
 - Who to present to?
 - Procedure for scheduling a presentation
- 7. Discussion and Questions**
- 8. Evaluations and Certificate**

About the Trainer

Annette Carbonneau is employed by NAMI NH as the Community and Volunteer Developer and is the developer and trainer for Life Interrupted. She brings to this position her lifelong experience as both a parent and a child of someone with a mental illness.

Training Cost

\$350.00 per person. This is a one-time fee.

Life Interrupted Evaluation Process

As an additional service NAMI NH will provide analysis and reports of evaluation data collected at your site. Using a NAMI NH developed evaluation instrument, data collected and entered by the presenter is sent to NAMI NH. NAMI NH aggregates, analyzes and reports on the effectiveness of the presentations on a biannual basis to the State Affiliate's identified person.

Evaluation Process Cost

\$400.00 Per Year (2 reports /year)

Training Schedule

**Presenters
are taught
effective
ways to tell
their stories
to varied
audiences in
a compelling
way without
blame.**

The 8 hour training consists of two 4-hour sessions. Time is scheduled between sessions for participants to complete their draft presentation.

Scheduled Training Dates

Spring 2009- March 7th and 14th

Individual sites may schedule alternate dates if they have at least 6 participants. Registration is required.

For additional information or to register for a training please contact Annette Carbonneau at NAMI NH, 603-225-5359 x 25 or Acarbonneau@naminh.org.

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