

## **NAMI NH Semi Annual Affiliate Teacher Meeting 4-12-08**

Attending the meeting: Rick Sherman, Ellen Malloy, Reid Cooper, Diane Cyr, Nancy Adams, Rebecca Lawrence, Donna Stamper, Janet Lowell, Tena Ewing, Geri Foucher, Robyn Moses- Harney, Al Bouchard, Jan Bouchard, Pam Burns, Norma Smith, Ed Kirby, Sue Allen, Rita Moyer, Annette Carbonneau, Mike Cohen.

The meeting began with introductions. Each person was asked to find someone in the room that they did not know or know well and ask them their name, where they live, what they do for NAMI NH and something that no one knew about them. We heard very interesting things about everyone!!

Sue Allen was introduced as the newest addition to the NAMI NH staff as the Family and Community Support Specialist. Sue has a history with NAMI NH and co-leads the Manchester parent support group. Sue discussed her role of providing time limited one on one support to families in need. Her goal is to work to connect families with resources and NAMI NH local affiliates. Sue will also be working to build new NAMI NH groups in communities that do not have one.

Following introductions, Mike Cohen Executive Director of NAMI NH spoke to the group thanking them for the work they do and providing updates on NAMI NH programs. Some of the initiatives discussed were:

- Membership grant from NAMI National that will help NAMI NH to reach and educate providers. Both mental health and health care providers from across the state were surveyed to learn what they know and think of NAMI NH and its programs. This information will provide the basis for a marketing program directed at both providers and families in need. Affiliate members have had input to this process throughout the last year. Currently we are looking to contract a Marketing firm to work with us on developing marketing materials. The goal is to increase the membership of local affiliates and thereby increase the membership and growth of NAMI NH.
- The Life Interrupted Family speakers have begun to give presentations around the state. We currently have 9 speakers that have been trained to tell their own story and help inform groups and organizations about mental illness and NAMI NH.
- Legislative Forums have been held around the state this Spring with amazing success. The goal was to hold 10 forums to help educate our local legislators about the need for access to quality mental health care. To date 6 forums have been held with 2 more scheduled. The NAMI NH Legislative luncheon that was held in February was also very successful and 56 legislators have signed on to participate in a mental health caucus.

Mike then held a discussion with participants on Peer support. Both Manchester and Nashua talked about peer support initiatives in their areas and their hopes to build on

those opportunities. Mike explained the current peer support system is funded through the State and there are some politics to be contended with to build additional peer support systems. Most agreed that this was an area that needed change and improvement and would like to pursue some of the other options such as Club Houses and Peer support and educational groups.

A presentation was made on Volunteers, why do people volunteer, and how do we engage volunteers? Participants completed a survey form that asked them these questions. (Attached please find the compiled answers.) We then discussed “what’s in it for them”? What motivates people to volunteer? And why is it so hard to ask them? Often we don’t realize that by asking we are being inclusive and often people are very flattered to be asked even if they cannot participate. The following were ideas the group had when asking someone to volunteer:

- Don’t be pushy
- Explain the personal value of participating
- Ask about a specific role and provide a clear explanation
- Provide an end point
- Share your passion for the project or for volunteering with NAMI NH
- Ask them to help you, to join you
- Assure continual support
- Provide them with an “out”
- Model for them, set an example
- Make a note of the “sparklers” in your groups
- Acknowledge participation and accomplishment
- Highlight the value of their contribution
- Praise and encourage
- Accept if they do not want to participate, do not be discouraged

The 2 greatest reasons we don’t like to “Ask”

- The fear of hearing “no”
- Feeling like a failure if they don’t stay engaged.

Participants were all given small plants to take home, these plants represent the growth of the organization that cannot happen with out our dedicated and passionate volunteers!

Following lunch there was more discussion about the current Information and Referral forms and questions regarding confidentiality, how much information to ask for and needing to ask permission to have someone from the NAMI NH office follow up. Because of some confusion over the Information and Referral services that are offered, Claudia Ferber ( who was unable to attend because of illness) will be providing some additional information to help clarify the process and need for the forms.

The following is input taken off the meeting evaluation forms, we will take these suggestions into consideration when planning our future meetings.

**What was most beneficial about the meeting-** Mental health commission and membership updates, conversation about Peer support with Mike Cohen, NAMI NH program updates, volunteer presentation.

**Future requests for meetings-** Program overviews, please post a meeting agenda, overview of the state mental health system from the top to the bottom, speaker on mental health research, children's issues, DHHS presenting on what their roles is in the mental health system and their projects, a mini fair with representatives from all the NAMI NH projects available to say what they do, Ken Norton on crisis intervention,

**Future Discussion subjects-** The results of the Life Interrupted evaluations, strategies for increasing consistent membership, peer support, how NH is addressing returning Vets and their families, Club house project, siblings support group, getting health care providers interested and involved, VA, school, speakers and resources to supplement caring and sharing at support groups,

Thank you to all who attended!!