

Multi-Cultural Outreach Inclusion Grant: Lessons Learned

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Jacqueline A. Lukitsch
Executive Director
NAMI St. Louis
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Outline

- What We Did: Church Outreach Presentation -- “You Are Not Alone” Powerpoint
- Lessons Learned
- Moving Forward

What We Did

- “You Are Not Alone” PowerPoint targeted at African-American congregations
- Created by NAMI Family Members
- One member is married to someone in St. Louis who serves at a high level in the MO Lutheran Synod
- Typical presentation was 4-6 hours long
- Experts on certain topics were asked to present
- Usually, lunch and refreshments were served
- Out of 10 projected presentations, we were only able to do half

Lessons Learned—Choosing the Right Partner

- We relied too heavily on one person in one faith to secure presentations at churches
- When this person's resources were tapped, we struggled to get other churches to invite us to present
- When we did get a presentation scheduled, it was usually for much less time (1-2 hours)
- We realize we chose the wrong partner



Lessons Learned—Understand Your Target Audience

- Our target audience was the African-American community
- However, it was not this population who created the presentation or had input into it
- We simply adapted a presentation that was meant for a Christian community (and did not do this well)
- The African-American community, by and large, is not ready for a full-blown, 4-6 hour NAMI presentation
- We needed to consult them first

Lessons Learned—NAMI Programs do not serve low-income population well

- There is a faction within NAMI that absolutely believes that NAMI programs/services are culturally competent and serves all, no matter what culture
- In my experience as a NAMI ED for past 5 years – this is absolutely not true – family members of people affected by mental illness who I would categorize as “low-income” are not served well if at all
- People prefer one-on-one contact
- Usually, they need to start the conversation with something other than mental illness (i.e. need for basic necessities, transportation, etc.)



Lessons Learned: Executive needs to take a lead role

- As Executive Director, I tend to want to rely on my staff to do most of the work
- With multi-cultural outreach, I learned that I need to take the lead in making this a priority; in pushing for more resources; and in communicating to my board
- I realized that I was waiting for someone else to take this on – this is too big of an issue to leave for anyone other than the top person or board leadership



Moving Forward

- Make multi-cultural outreach a priority in NAMI St. Louis Strategic Plan
- Use my authority as NAMI Leader to push this issue
- Start a conversation with the Executive Directors Group to make multi-cultural outreach a priority
- Identify local leaders who will assist me in this effort either through board membership or other partnering roles



NAMI St. Louis Contact Information

Jacqueline A. Lukitsch, Executive Director
Alliance on Mental Illness-NAMI St. Louis

134 W. Madison
St. Louis, MO 63122

314-966-4670

jackie@namistl.org