Supporting NAMI on Campus Clubs and Leaders

TIPS FOR NAMI STATE ORGANIZATIONS AND NAMI AFFILIATES

NAMI on Campus clubs provide valuable opportunities for NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates to broaden their reach and expand their efforts. There are many collaborative initiatives you can work on together that are fun, inspiring and mutually beneficial.

Additionally, supporting these emerging student leaders means supporting the future leaders of NAMI. Research shows that the causes young adults get involved in are the causes they support for the rest of their lives. It is important to engage them now with the important work you do. NAMI on Campus leaders provide great excitement, energy and talent and will undoubtedly amaze you with their dedication to the NAMI cause.

This tip sheet provides examples of how you can support existing NAMI on Campus clubs that you may wish to explore but are *not required to do*. Your level of support will depend on the staff and resources you have available to dedicate to this. If a student has approached you expressing interest in starting a NAMI on Campus club, please see our tip sheet on Starting NAMI on Campus Clubs and The Endorsement Process.

Below are some examples on how NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates can support existing NAMI on Campus clubs. Let NAMI on Campus leaders know what support you are willing and able to offer so everyone is on the same page.

- ☐ Engage them with what you are doing. Add NAMI on Campus leaders to your newsletters, e-groups and other mailing lists. Invite them to your hill visits, events, parties, meetings and programs. Let them know about volunteer and internship opportunities available at your office. Make sure they feel welcomed and that you value their participation with NAMI. Stay in regular contact with them and ask them how you can help. They will undoubtedly return the favor.
- ☐ Provide information. NAMI on Campus leaders may not always know about all the mental health issues or have any information they can readily share with their peers. Offer to share any resources with them that you have in your office, including fact sheets, booklets and referral lists. Let them know about any resources that exist around their campus. Consider using what you have available to assemble a resource guide specifically for college students that they can use. Provide your input on where their clubs can make the biggest impact and the issues that matter most.
- ☐ Connect them to experts. Connect NAMI on Campus leaders with experts in the community who they may want to network with or contact to serve as guest speakers for a club meeting or campus event. Let them know who exists in the community who can support their efforts and provide valuable insights.
- ☐ Share supplies. If you have extra notebooks, pens, pencils, letterhead paper or any other materials, consider donating them to NAMI on Campus clubs. Often they are starting from scratch and may be in need of supplies. Consider also offering office space where students can meet or host events.

- Acknowledge their efforts. Highlight the efforts of NAMI on Campus leaders by showcasing them on your website, in your publications or presenting them with an award. Attend their events and meetings to show your support. Offer to be a reference or write letters of recommendations for them to use.
- Invite them to write blogs and articles. Ask NAMI on Campus leaders to write articles for your publications or to submit blogs for your website. They can provide very useful content for you to use. In turn, they will value the opportunity to get published and share their story.
- Offer leadership positions. Ask NAMI on Campus leaders to serve on your board or other advisory groups. This will give them great leadership and real-world experiences while providing your organization with new perspectives, inputs and ideas. Think of creative ways you can give them leadership roles within your NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate. You may want to create an internship for them to do to gain work experience.
- Involve them with your state conference. Offer scholarships to have NAMI on Campus leaders attend your state conference. Better yet, consider seeing if any of them would like to present at your conference on topics they feel are important. NAMI on Campus leaders can serve as conference presenters, attendees or volunteers for your conference.
- Offer training. NAMI on Campus club leaders need to know about mental health issues, how to advocate effectively, how to fundraise, how to run discussion groups, what to do in a crisis, how to address conflict and how to develop strong leadership skills. If you offer training that can benefit these students, consider inviting them to attend. If you have any expertise on topics you think students would be interested in, ask if they would like you to present on these topics so they can benefit from your knowledge and experience. Consider also training them in NAMI's signature programs.
- Help bring NAMI signature programs to campus. Work with NAMI on Campus leaders to bring NAMI support groups and signature programs, including NAMI Connection, Peer-to-Peer and In Our Own Voice, to campus communities. NAMI on Campus leaders should be able to find and reserve space on campus for these programs and promote the programs to the campus community. This will provide a whole new audience for your programs while also giving clubs something valuable they can offer to support students. Be sure to make any necessary adaptations so the programs are more appropriate for young adults. Consider training NAMI on Campus leaders in these programs so they can serve as the facilitators and speakers. Training will give them new skills and experiences while providing your NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate with more trained young adults and volunteers who can engage others.
- Host a NAMIWalks or NAMIBikes on campus. Many students participate in fundraising events that are held on campuses. Partner with NAMI on Campus leaders to bring NAMIWalks and NAMIBikes to their campus. This will increase the visibility of the events and fundraising opportunities. If you are unable to host the events on a campus, at least ask students to assemble walk and bike teams for your NAMIWalks and NAMIBikes in the community and think of creative ways to engage them in the events. This can include creating promotional materials specifically for them.
- Help with funding. If you happen to have extra funding, consider offering NAMI on Campus clubs donations, grants or scholarships to support their efforts. You can also host joint fundraising events with NAMI on Campus clubs. Although NAMI on Campus leaders will have funding streams available to them at their school, it may take time before they are familiar with how to successful raise funds. Every cent counts.
- Help with sustainability. You may want to explore how you can help sustain clubs if, after club officers graduate, there are no new students to lead the club right away.