

LIAISON REPORT FY19 – October, 2019

AGENCY: NAMI Central Iowa (NAMICI)

LIAISON: Matt Soderstrum

“NAMICI supports people affected by mental illnesses, educates the public about mental health issues, and advocates for people affected by mental illnesses.” <http://www.namici.org/>

1. Need for Program. *Describe who the target population is and whether their numbers are increasing or decreasing. Indicate the source of this information. Also, indicate how the program/service is different and how it is similar to others and what would happen if the program/service ceased to exist. List the priorities established by ASSET Funders, which the programming addresses.*

There is a continuing and large need for the services provided by NAMICI

1. Direct support to those living with mental illness.
 - a. Service is through the NAMI Mental Health Wellness Center, approximately 6-7 people in attendance each day. FY19 hours were M-F 1:00-4:00pm. In FY20 new hours: open M, T, Th & Sat. 12-4pm. This provides a solid base of community, support and activity for people living with mental illness in our community. A total of 110 Unduplicated Story County individuals were impacted by the Wellness Center in FY19.
 - b. NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group, a peer-support group, approximately 14 people regularly attend. This group meets every Thursday from 2:00 – 3:30pm.
 - c. NAMI Peer-to-Peer Class – this is a ten-week class that is offered twice a year (NAMI Recently changed this to an 8-week course)
2. Support to families who have a family member living with mental illness.
 - a. Regular NAMI Family-to-Family course that lasts 12 weeks. This free educational course is offered to families twice a year.
 - b. NAMI Family Support group for Story County meets once per month, typically the 4th Thursday from 7:00-8:30pm. Typically about 10-12 attend. NAMI Family Support Groups also meet monthly in Hardin and Jasper counties.
 - c. NAMICI Emergency Loan program: Small loans can be taken out by those with a onetime financial need. The amounts and the uses of these loan monies fluctuate from year to year. An individual must have a mental illness and be working actively with a case manager/provider to qualify for this zero % interest loan.
 - d. The 2018-2020 Vision Action Plan is to encourage people to become NAMI trained and certified for all core programs as NAMICI expands into the 11-county mental health region. With trained facilitators and leaders in all 11-counties, we could provide these much needed supports.
3. Advocacy and public education on mental illness.
 - a. Monthly education event. Attendance ranges from 20-80 depending on topic. This typically meets at the Ames Public Library. NAMICI has also been offering Lunch & Learns which has provided an additional opportunity to reach the public and professionals on mental health topics. In FY19 304 individuals attended these events.
 - b. NAMICI brings mental health concerns to the attention of local, state, and federal legislators and supports legislation that promotes the welfare of those living with mental illness.
 - c. Executive Director and certified speakers present at public events.
 - d. Executive Director works with local law-enforcement agencies. NAMI Central Iowa is working in collaboration with CICS, Ames PD, ISU PD and the Story County Attorney's Office to offer Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training for law officers in our Region. A class was held November 5-9, 2018 and June 10-14, 2019.

4. NAMI on Campus was started in 2016. Currently they have a monthly meeting and are a recognized club at Iowa State. 10-15 individuals typically attend these meetings. They are also connected to other NAMI campus groups to share ideas and network. In FY19 they reached 1,014 ISU students through on-campus activities. The purpose is to address mental health issues on Iowa State's campus by:
 - a. Raising mental health awareness
 - b. Educating the campus community
 - c. Promoting services and support
 - d. Advocating for mental health issues

Funder priorities

- 1) United Way: Health. Children, youth, and adults have access to needed mental health care
- 2) ISU Student Government: Services that provide prevention and treatment for mental health, both group and individual care.
- 3) Story County: Safety, health and well-being; Accessible medical services; Prevention and early intervention services; Mental health care
- 4) City of Ames: Meet mental health and chemical dependency needs
- 5) Central Iowa Community Services (Mental Health/Disability Service): Treatment designed to improve a person's condition and Recovery services.

2. Program Strengths. *Pick two to four factors that contribute most importantly to the program/service outcomes. Do not list everything that is satisfactory. We will assume that things not mentioned are okay. For each strength describe some supporting evidence.*

- NAMICI Mental Health Wellness Center provides strong support for individuals to feel accepted, safe, understood, connected and receive support as they set goals in their mental health recovery. People who attend rely on the Wellness Center.
- NAMI has a strong reputation throughout the country. NAMI is looked at as the trusted source in the mental health community. NAMI provides evidence-based programs throughout 49 states.
- Education and support groups provide critical community support for families who are often isolated while caring for a family member with mental illness. The NAMI Family-to-Family program is going well with a waiting list of those who desire to attend future classes. All of NAMICI's education classes and support groups are free of any fees to an individual or family served.
- The organization has accomplished a lot at the NAMICI Mental Health Wellness Center, Story county and throughout the region with a very limited staff (a combined total of 100 hours worked by paid staff per week).

3. Program Weaknesses. *Select factors that detract most from the program/service achieving its outcomes. Present details as described above. Recommendations for reducing these weaknesses should follow the discussion of each weakness.*

Challenges

- Continuing to make people aware of the NAMI goal, vision, services and programs.
- All NAMI programs and services are led by someone with a lived experience with mental illness. Because of stigma about mental health, many are not comfortable openly sharing their journey with mental illness and thus, it is difficult to find people to train and become certified volunteers to facilitate or teach NAMI programs and groups.
- NAMI Central Iowa has limited staff and their executive director can get spread pretty thin. Volunteers are crucial to programs and services, however, not reliable. Additional staff will be needed in order to sustain the growth of NAMICI.

Areas of opportunity/growth

- Continue to increase services to ISU students. NAMI on Campus is very active and are doing great things. They hope to impact more people affected by mental health issues as well as provide ways for all students to advocate and be trained in what to do with a mental health crisis.
- Expand much needed children's mental health services to the Middle and High schools with the NAMI Ending the Silence program. This program is available to staff, students and families in schools, youth organizations, churches, etc. Story county has many opportunities for this program.
- Provide a support group for parents of children and tweens with mental health issues could be helpful.
- NAMICI moved into a new facility this past year and with that comes an opportunity to impact even more individuals and families.

4. Financial Outlook. *Current funding concerns should be described. In addition, the assessment of the program's plan to cope with shrinking resources should be given.*

NAMI Central Iowa is very dependent on ASSET for funding. NAMI at the national level and at the state level (NAMI Iowa) do not fund their affiliate programs. However, NAMICI must give a portion of our membership dues and our NAMI Walks fundraising monies back to NAMI national and NAMI Iowa. NAMI does seek small grants and outside funding as needed, but this is somewhat limited. They receive a significant amount of donations, but these donations are very unpredictable and at times, donors think their money is coming to NAMI Central Iowa if they click the DONATE page on the NAMI national or NAMI Iowa webpage, because they failed to access the correct page for their county. It is important for them to have a dependable source of income.

5. Internal Management Practices. *Summarize your assessment of the management of the agency, and the role of the Board. If there are deficiencies, details should be provided. Conclude with recommendations when appropriate.*

Board meets regularly and is highly engaged and active. A strategic plan is designed and implemented by the Board every two years. The Board is active in fundraising and in community outreach.

6. Agency Suggestions/Comments. *Make note of any suggestions, comments or questions agencies may have with regard to the ASSET process, budget forms and or anything else that relates to the process.*

Angela Tharp has been the Executive Director since this past July. While she is new to the position, she is excited about the future impact NAMICI can have for Story county and our mental health region.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT:

1. NAMI plays a steady and consistent role for individuals and families struggling with mental health issues.
2. NAMI Central Iowa has a dedicated group of staff and volunteers and a very engaged Board.
3. NAMI Central Iowa seems to be effectively using the resources entrusted to them.
4. NAMI Central Iowa plays a vital role for those affected by mental health issues.