

How to Develop a NAMIWALK Committee

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Most of us aren't good at everything. Teams or Committees were invented for just this reason. You may want to form a team whose purpose is to involve your community in the NAMIWalk effort. **In case you don't want to go it alone...here are our top tips for creating a NAMIWalks Committee in your town.**

- 1) **Identify four or five jobs related to the NAMIWalk.** You might want:
 - Someone to recruit NAMIWalk team captains
 - Someone to organize a kickoff lunch or appreciation event for the team captains
 - Someone to organize publicity related to the NAMIWalk
 - Someone to solicit corporate or business sponsors or other donations
 - Someone good at keeping meetings on track and making sure minutes and reminders are sent
- 2) **Now think about who might fill those various roles.** Possible sources are:
 - NAMI members
 - Family to Family or Peer to Peer participants
 - High visibility community members who may or may not be involved with NAMI
 - People whose job allows them interact with those who are impacted by mental illness. This might be teachers, pastors, medical personnel, etc.
 - Retired and looking for a great cause!
 - Business leaders who have a person in their family with a mental illness
 - Be sure to include people willing to be in the background as "workhorses". They are often quiet but powerful members of a work team.
- 3) **Figure out when the committee's first meeting will be.** Set a date and time and call your list of people to invite them. Let them know that you are calling because they seem like a good fit. No one wants to think they are being asked because you can't think of anyone else who would be willing. It's a compliment to be asked! When you call, be prepared with your pitch. Why are you calling, what is NAMI and the NAMIWalk, and what are you asking in terms of a time commitment?
- 4) **At the first meeting lay out the cause.** "We participate in the NAMIWalk because it brings money and awareness to not only the state NAMI organization but also to our local NAMI organization. We want life to be better in our hometown for individuals with mental illness (and their family and friends). Here's how the NAMIWalk makes that happen." You will have folks who want to support you but don't want to be on a committee. That's fine. They can support your effort by making their own donation, giving you ideas about whom else to contact in town, being a team captain, etc.
- 5) **At the first meeting define the various jobs you have identified and a timeline.** Ask people what they are interested in doing...but don't be afraid to say directly "Mary, I thought you would make a great meeting facilitator." Again, this is a compliment.

Really – the overarching job of the committee is to:

- a) Decide what your community wants to do involving the walk
 - b) Galvanize your efforts
 - c) Create a timeline for what you want to do
- 6) **Leave with a plan** for the next meeting including who will either bring or send out minutes. If possible, avoid reminder calls/notes.