



Days on the Hill 2021

How to talk with your legislator

Before the meeting

- After the meeting is scheduled, email any statistics, news articles, or policy papers to the legislator, if available.
- Pick one person to serve as the spokesperson; pick one or two others to be the storytellers
- Select one or two bills to discuss from the list of NAMI Tennessee legislative priorities.
- Have one or two people tell a personal story relating to pending legislation and why its passage will help individuals/families affected by mental illness. Personal stories should be one minute each.
*** If you don't relate to any of the bills, you can discuss the stigma around mental illness and that the Tennessee Legislature needs to make behavioral health policies funding a priority to help individuals and families in our state.*

During the meeting

- Introduce yourself to the lawmaker, indicate if you live in his/her district, identify your role with mental illness (peer, caregiver, treatment provide, etc.)
- Explain that you're taking part in NAMI Tennessee's Days on the Hill through March 10.
- State that we're asking for three things: funding for Crisis Intervention Team training for law enforcement officers; mental health insurance coverage parity; expansion of TennCare.
- Briefly explain why the bills are important and how they would help peers/families
- Offer NAMI as a resource for the legislator's constituents.
- Thank the legislator for his/her time.

After the meeting

- Contact Alisa LaPolt if the legislator has any questions that you couldn't answer
- Also contact Alisa if the legislator requests follow-up information (alapolt@namitn.org)
- Feel free to follow up with the legislator via email with more information about your personal story around mental illness
- Write or send a thank you note.

Let us know how the meeting went!

Send an email or record a video message and send to alapolt@namitn.org. We'll share during our next Days on the Hill session on Feb. 23!