



Building an Action Center

One person can have a profound effect on another. And two people...well, two people can work miracles. They can change a whole town. They can change the world.

*Diane Froloy and Andrew Schneider
Northern Exposure, Cicely, 1992*



Building a Movement

- Educate
- Organize
- Activate

Educate

- People are not ready to be advocates the moment a diagnosis is made
- People need to understand mental illness first, be comfortable with the issues, be able to talk about it, be able to tell their story
- All of NAMI's Education classes and support groups are a breeding ground for legislative advocates

***The need for change bulldozed a road down
the center of my mind.***

Maya Angelou

Educate

- Need to envision something better – hopeful
 - Mental health system isn't broken; it was never built
- Maintain spirit of enthusiasm and militancy
- Don't assume people know how to advocate

They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

Andy Warhol

Educate

- Conduct trainings on the Legislative Process
- Conduct trainings on how to call elected officials
- Keep people informed of what is happening
- Educate candidates and legislators
 - Letters on each topic, personal stories, fast facts, town halls, tours, house parties

For me, words are a form of action, capable of influencing change.

Ingrid Bengis

We are a Movement



*The true meaning of life is to plant trees
under whose shade
you do not expect to sit*

Organize

- Coalition - MHLN
- Discuss issues before session –birds don't fly into the wind
- Create a booklet with all the issues
- Don't prioritize
- Know what trains are leaving the station
- Know what others are working on
- Speak with one voice

Organize

- Know who will make the decision, which committees, etc.
- On big bills, develop a legislative strategy – including a media strategy

Organize

- Identify members by legislative districts
- Let members who their elected official is, what committee they serve on, how to contact him or her, and what the big issues are

Activate

- What action is needed
- By when
- From whom
- Background information
- Talking points (3)
- NAMI member & personal connection
- Who to call/e-mail and #/address

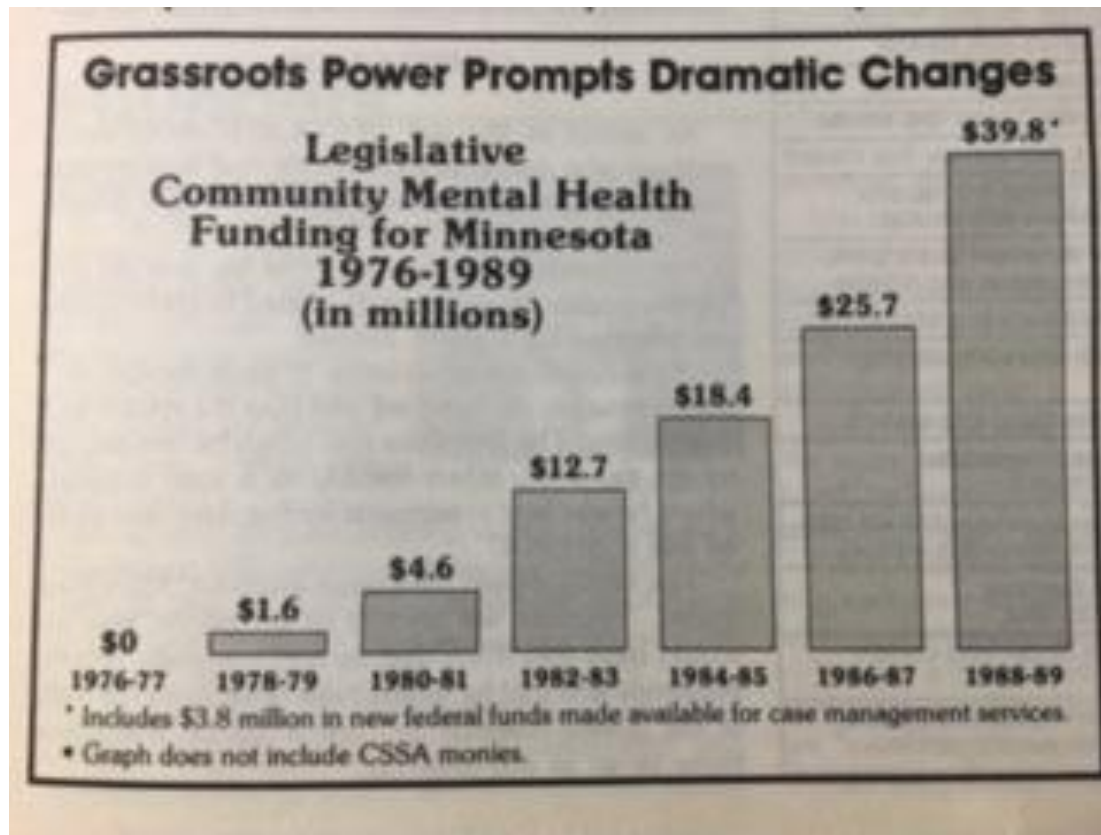
Activate

- Develop a system to track bills and issues
- Write letters when appropriate
- Testify – make sure “real” voices are heard
- Meet with key legislators
- Hold rallies, Day on the Hill
- Use the media – editorial boards

It's Never Over

- Let members know what happened – always need one success story
- Send thank you notes to elected officials
- Publicize in your newsletter
- Do legislators get your newsletter?
- Continue to work between sessions

Building the Mental Health System



Building the Mental Health System

- **1990 – 2000 – 6+M**
- **2001** - Mental Health Act - \$33 M in new funding for crisis housing, housing, commitment act changes, discharge planning for prisoners, suicide prevention, police training
- **2002** – First state in country to require teachers to have continuing education on mental illnesses

Building the Mental Health System

- **2006 & 2007** - MN MHAG Initiative – \$34 M in new funding, model MH benefit set: ARMHS, ACT, CTSS, Crisis Teams; School-linked grants, Respite Care, CBHH, supportive housing, peer specialists, culturally specific providers, MH screening in jails
- **2013** - Children's Mental Health Initiative Over \$10M - School linked grants increased 100%, study workforce shortages, funding for crisis teams, rate increases, add children's services to MA, family peer specialists

Building the Mental Health System

- **2015** – largest increase in funding in state’s history! Around \$50M
 - Mental health crisis services, \$8.57 M
 - Respite care \$847,000
 - First Episode, \$260,000
 - PRTF for children & adolescents, 150 beds and contract beds
 - Behavioral health homes
 - Study youth crisis beds

Building the Mental Health System

- **2015 Session**

- Telemedicine parity for payment
- 15 more beds at Anoka
- MI&D commitment reviews at least every three years
- Excellence in Mental Health Act
- Housing with supports \$4.654, \$6 M for next biennium
- Bridges \$2.5 M a year
- Expand ACT teams & Forensic ACT
- IPS employment \$1 M

Building the Mental Health System

- **2015 Session**

- Expand residency slots by 4 & training programs
- Expand rural loan forgiveness programs
- Suicide prevention 54% increase (\$449,000), data issue & funding to increase Txt4Life
- Protected transport/NEMT

Building the Mental Health System

- **2016 Session**

- Funding for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)
- Criteria for crisis housing fund was changed
- Increased funding for School-Linked Mental Health funds
- Funding for state operated programs, Quarterly report to the legislature on beds and staffing
- Teachers will now be required to have one hour of their continuing education be focused on suicide prevention

How to Have Success

- Building a Coalition
- Working closely with Departments
- Educating legislators and our members
- Working with the media, press conferences
- Thanking people when it's over
 - Notes, letters to the editor, parties







Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

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