



NAMI Indiana Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity September 30, 2016

Mental illness impacts people of any age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, or identity. One in five adults and one in ten children live with a mental illness¹. Mental illnesses are biological, treatment and supports work, and recovery is possible.

Being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) is not a mental illness. A variety of societal factors including stigma, discrimination, prejudice, abuse, harassment, victimization, social exclusion, and family rejection cause disproportionality and disparities in the LGBTQ community. Studies show LGBTQ individuals are two and a half times more likely than their peers to experience mental illness². In particular, LGBTQ adults are more likely to report panic and anxiety disorders, depression, and substance use. LGBTQ youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth³. Research indicates that fear of discrimination and stigma prevents many LGBTQ individuals from seeking medical care. Those who do seek health care report experiencing cultural insensitivity, poor quality of care, high levels of stigma, and denial of services.

NAMI Indiana champions justice, respect, and equality for all people impacted by mental illness. Through education, advocacy, and support we are eliminating the pervasive stigma of mental illness, affecting positive change, and increasing public and professional understanding of mental illness. NAMI Indiana supports LGBTQ-affirming therapy, treatment, and support groups. Together, we welcome and celebrate all identities in our work.

¹ Any Mental Illness (AMI) Among Adults. (n.d.). Retrieved October 23, 2015, from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-mental-illness-ami-among-adults.shtml>.

² Mental Health Issues for GLBT People. Retrieved April 24, 2016 from <http://www.namihelps.org/assets/PDFs/fact-sheets/General/GLBT-Mental-Health-Issues.pdf>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "LGBT Youth - Experiences with Violence." Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>.