NAMI Lexington's Participation Station
Response to the COVID19 Pandemic

1. Is your proposal still viable for implementation as originally submitted?
   Yes

2. Please detail any modifications you will be making to the original submission in order to comply with the new service delivery requirements in the COVID19 environment? (i.e. social distancing, capacity requirements, group event restrictions, etc.)

On March 15th, 2020, Participation Station closed its doors to on-site participants. Realizing that our program was set up for some of the most vulnerable citizens of our community we immediately began looking for ways to reach out in any way possible to our participants. The following changes were made.

A. Prior to closing our participants voluntarily provided up to date contact information so that we could do outreach.

B. We utilized volunteers to make sanitized "Wellness Bags" which had items such as puzzles, pill minders, some toiletries and journaling notebook which were distributed to our most at risk participant, while maintaining social distancing. Front porch drop-offs with in-yard conversations.

C. We purchased an upgraded Zoom Account and explored Participation Station's most popular groups and moved them to the Zoom Platform. We made sure the Zoom groups were set up in a way that the participant only had to click or tap a link and they would be automatically allowed into the room as most of our population is technologically challenged. During the months of April, May, and June 2020, we averaged 37 people a day which accounted for over 3000 attendances and 3186 hours of direct contact time. (Zoom gives us great access to data!)

D. We expanded our Warmline hours by 4 hours/day to allow folks a number they can call when they just need someone to talk to, or to hear another live human voice. We have seen a pattern of callers that have been outside our regular callers to the service.

E. Our System Navigators make regular outreach calls to participants including our most vulnerable and have been providing navigation services to help them problem solve issues that have popped up during the pandemic. Assistance has included handling stimulus check problems, arranging absentee voting concerns, dealing with the usual crisis situations that pop up, assisting with virtual appointments with their therapists and prescribers, and setting up transportation through Wheels, etc.

F. We regularly host Double Trouble in Recovery Support groups online via both Zoom and Facebook Live for our folks with co-occurring Mental Health/Substance Use disorders. This is in addition to our other regular support groups that remain in place on Zoom.

G. Our Peer Specialist gave an outreach "in Our Own Voice" Zoom talk to approximately 300 UK Medical students from different sites across the state.

H. All services to Fayette Mental Health Court program participants continue to be provided.

I. We changed our statewide Consumer Conference and Peer Excellence Awards Ceremony from in person at the Clarion Hotel on Newtown Pike to a Spring Series of eight Zoom Webinars which were attended by 478 people.

J. We are watching news for re-opening of the Senior Citizen's Center as our cue to begin re-opening Participation Station and anticipate serving in-person participants at a reduced Capacity and following all guidelines related to PPE, Social Distancing, etc. We plan to continue providing virtual programming when we resume in-person services to offset the reduction in capacity and reduced in-person hours.

3. Will these new modifications increase or decrease your proposed budget? Please detail any increases or decreases to your proposed budget including additional costs and/or other secured funding.

   No – we will re-allocate funds as needed but believe we can offset additional expenses for technology, PPE, cleaning supplies and services with savings related to reduced capacity.

   We remain very concerned about our folks who not only remain vulnerable from their serious behavioral health issues (both mental health and substance use) but also have serious health issues including a large number with diabetes from their medications. Many of our folks need supports to take care of their physical health issues and struggle with accessing much of the technology that is available to them. For these reasons it is critical for us to maintain this current level of services and provide these much-needed supports.

Best regards,

Phill Gunning

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