

Charita Cole Brown

I was diagnosed with bipolar I disorder as a twenty-one-year-old college student. After many years spent denying my diagnosis, I learned personal advocacy skills—a process I have recounted in my published memoir. Finding necessary resources and working on my natural and spiritual health, I have lived in recovery for more than twenty-five years.

As a NAMI member affiliated with the Metro Baltimore chapter, I have trained as an In Our Voice presenter and a Primary Physician's trainer. I also facilitate Peer-to-Peer training, I Will Listen and Ending the Silence presentations. I have completed NAMI Smarts for Advocacy, through which I have learned how to craft a succinct story about my experience with mental health care and how to draft impactful emails and then make connections with legislators by phone and in person.

In every venture, I draw upon my academic background as a graduate of both Wesleyan University (BA in English) and Towson University (MAT in Early Childhood Education.)

I currently serve on the NAMI Board of Directors as a member of the Executive Committee and the Board Development & Nominating Committee. As a staunch believer in NAMI MD's mission, I would be honored to continue serving our organization as a member of the NAMI MD Board of Directors for a second term beginning in October 2021.

Rebecca German

I am humbled and honored to introduce myself to you today as a nominee to the Board of Directors of NAMI Maryland. I am pursuing this position for two main reasons--one, because NAMI's mission resonates with me on a deep level, and two, because I believe that my voice on the Board would have a significant positive impact for those whom NAMI Maryland serves and represents, including you. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly elaborate on who I am as a candidate and why you can trust me with your vote.

When it comes to mental health, I speak from multiple perspectives. First and foremost, I am among the one in five adults in Maryland diagnosed with major depressive disorder, a condition which I have lived with for much of my life. Second, I have long been a supporter of immediate family members and close friends who are deeply impacted by their own mental health conditions. Third, I am a licensed social worker with a range of experiences in the mental health field, including research, program development and evaluation, and direct clinical service. Last but not least, I have served as a volunteer for NAMI Metro Baltimore for the past two and a half years, both as a facilitator for Connection Recovery Support Groups and as a presenter for Ending the Silence and other educational programs.

My personal and professional experiences, not to mention my commitment to NAMI, uniquely qualify me for a position on the Board. Individually, each of these perspectives is relevant and beneficial to the work of the Board. Collectively, they are of utmost value. Given my background, skillset, and enthusiasm, I stand to be an active, valuable contributor to the Board and in turn to advocate for increased awareness, reduced stigma, and improved accessibility and quality of services and supports at the local and state level.

Stuart TenHoor

I now stand for a second 3-year term on the NAMI MD Board of Directors. My strong commitment to our work motivates me to further our mission of mental health for all. I love one of the trending phrases: it's ok to not be ok. Since joining the Board in 2018, I have added my voice in service to our cause as someone who's lived with bipolar illness for 30 years and seen the frequently crippling impact of mental illness on members of my greater family and many Marylanders.

My goal is to help affirm the Board's mission to provide useful resources for the many who suffer from, or with, mental health challenges. I hope our efforts help all to talk and act more openly despite facing the shame and stigma so often part of this chronic disease. I am particularly passionate in helping those with undiagnosed mental illness who frequently suffer from substance abuse and, way too often, suicide.

I have run my own Maryland/DC centric lawyer-focused Executive Search firm for nearly 20 years. I am a graduate of Alma College (Alma, MI) and the William & Mary Law School. My personnel and legal experience help add additional, nuanced talent to the NAMI Board. In my stint with the Board, I have helped raise nearly \$10,000 through NAMI Walks and other contributions and connections—and this money couldn't go to a better cause!

Samantha Zipp Dowd, LGPC

Samantha Zipp Dowd is a Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor at Insight Wellness, a group private practice in Lutherville-Timonium. Her area of specialty and expertise is female and maternal mental health and she has a special interest in helping adult women through times of transition. In this practice Samantha provides individual therapy and volunteers with Postpartum Support International facilitating a group for individuals who have experience Pregnancy and Infant Loss. This is a second career for her, and she joined the practice upon gaining licensure in 2020, after a 20+ year career as a non-profit executive. In 2020 she also joined the Adjunct Faculty for Towson University and the University of Baltimore where she teaches year-round in the Psychology Department. Samantha graduated from The University of Arizona with degrees in Psychology, Business Management and Entrepreneurship and earned her Master's in Clinical Counseling Psychology from Loyola University Maryland. Currently living with Generalized Anxiety Disorder, she is a two-time survivor of Postpartum Anxiety and understands the importance of mental health and the need to erase the stigma surrounding mental illness. Many members of her family have been diagnosed with mental health conditions and she is an outspoken advocate for people to get the help that they need and deserve. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family, including her two children ages 9 and 6, reading, cooking and doing yoga.