



*IN'S AND OUT'S OF
FACILITATING A
VIRTUAL SUPPORT
GROUP*



Mary Kay Battaglia

Executive Director – NAMI Wisconsin



Facilitators

Vivian Flanagan

- Vivian joined NAMI Fox Valley in 2017 after taking the 12 week Family to Family class. The many challenges she and her husband were facing as they dealt with their son's mental illness drew them to seek education and support from the NAMI organization. Presently, Vivian serves as the Family Program Coordinator for NAMI Fox Valley. She holds a degree in Human Growth and Development from UWGB with a teaching certification in ECE and grades K-6. Vivian, who taught 4K for 30 years in the Kaukauna School District, began as a volunteer receptionist for NAMI Fox Valley before joining the staff and continues to fill that role one morning per week. She has also been trained to facilitate Family Support Groups. In addition, her training includes Mental Health Chat, a presentation for school age children. Her responsibilities as Family Program Coordinator include organizing and scheduling the Family-2-Family, NAMI Basics, Familia-2-Familia
- and NAMI and Friends education classes. She also oversees the Family and Parent/Caregiver Support Groups. Her responsibilities also include offering support to family members in person, email or by phone. To keep her facilitators informed and to recognize the work they do as volunteers, Vivian, plans quarterly dinner meetings bringing in speakers and providing pertinent updates about NAMI Fox Valley.
- Vivian enjoys walking, yoga and spending time with friends. Her favorite activity is following the academic and athletic pursuits of her 6 grandchildren.
- NAMI, through years of challenges, helped my family navigate the roller coaster rides that mental illness presented to us. That is why I work here. My desire is that my experiences will give others hope.

Facilitators

Vicki Rivera



- Vicki Rivera joined NAMI Fox Valley's staff in 2016 after completing their Peer Specialist Training. She started her career as a Peer Companion at Iris Place-a program of NAMI Fox Valley and progressed to her current role as Peer Program Coordinator.
- In this role, Vicki Rivera is responsible for all peer education and support groups. Having a close working relationship with Vivian Flanagan helps in the success of NAMI Fox Valley's family and peer programs.
- Vicki holds a Bachelor of Science in both Psychology and Human Services from Upper Iowa University and certified in LGBTQ Mental Health from the University of Milwaukee.
- She and her wife Lydia, have four adult children and teenage son along with her granddaughter. In her spare time, Vicki enjoys gardening and walking her three dogs, Kenda, Pepper, and Sammie.



Starting out

1. Registration of Participants
2. Collect Emergency Contact Information
3. Meet and greet for those uncomfortable with virtual platform



The Beginning

1. Co-facilitators should show up 30 minutes early, check in, connect
2. Allow participants to join early and visit
3. Co-facilitators take roles
 1. One is the tech person
 2. One is taking time to “warm the room” and “set the tone”
4. Start the group on time
 1. Mute all the participants in the beginning and then they can unmute to speak
 2. Cover group guidelines and announcements



The Meeting

1. Meet participants where they are
2. Sharing is happening at good level
3. Role of the co-facilitators
 1. Watch the room
 2. Move the conversation
 3. Check in with those not engaging
 4. Keep to the guidelines
 5. Chat with co-facilitators (chat or text) on issues of concern



Closure

1. End with a wrap up
 1. Warm and fuzzy
 2. Positive future Question
 3. Other options, poem, positive saying, breathing, etc
2. Follow-up, stay online and check in with co-facilitator
 1. Use this time to discuss what went well, what did not
 2. Need to reach out with any participants
 3. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done!



Other Ideas

1. Connecting with Co-facilitators between meetings
2. Ability to provide support group to people who would not receive these services
3. Potential future online support groups



*Thank
You!!*
