

James Filipczak
Howard County Mental Health Authority
8930 Stanford Boulevard
Columbia, MD 21045

Dear Jim,

I am interested in serving on the Howard County Health Department's new Behavioral Health Advisory Board.

My work with NAMI brings a knowledge of both mental health and community services in Howard County. Additionally, as Executive Director of NAMI Howard County for eight years I worked very closely with the Board of Directors on strategic planning, fund raising, public policy, budgets and outreach.

As a former teacher and guidance counselor I am particularly interested in helping parents and schools understand the importance of early identification and intervention of children and teens who could be experiencing mental health issues. Consequently, I chose to be a volunteer representative to the Mental Health Advisory Committee for Howard County Public Schools for five years after I retired from NAMI. Chairperson, Dr. Cynthia Schulmeyer can attest to my commitment to advocating for children and adults who have mental health issues.

I look forward to continuing my advocacy on behalf of people living with mental illness as a member of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Helsel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "S" and "H".

Susan Helsel

Susan R. Helsel

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), Howard County, 2004-2012

- Provided support and resources to people affected by serious mental illness.
- Currently represents NAMI as a volunteer to advocate for children with emotional and behavioral issues on two Howard County Public Schools committees: the *Mental Health Task Force* and the *Connection Center*.
- Presented information sessions about mental illness and NAMI to community groups, police, hospital staff, faith leaders, and educators (including the Counseling and Career Services staff at Howard Community College).
- Tripled membership, programs, and budget of the organization.

High School Guidance Counselor, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, 1980-2000

- Provided educational, career, and personal/social guidance and support to 300-400 students in grades 9-12 annually.
- Co-developed and implemented a school wide crisis intervention plan.
- Presented information to large groups of parents, students and teachers on graduation requirements, high school orientation, college admissions, and suicide prevention.
- Department Chair and spokesperson for the guidance department of 4-6 counselors, 1988-2000.

Teacher of Mathematics, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, 1970-1980

- Managed classrooms of students in grades 9-12.
- Taught Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry and general mathematics.

PROFESSIONAL AND SPECIFIC SKILLS RELATED TO THIS POSITION

- Familiar with mental health resources and community agencies.
- Educated and advocated on behalf of people living with mental illness.
- Understands and respects confidentiality.
- Listens well and facilitates solutions.
- Follows through on commitments and communication.
- Communicates clearly and concisely both orally and in writing.
- Organizes and completes paperwork and projects efficiently and effectively.
- Experienced in crisis and suicide prevention and intervention with high school students and adults with serious mental illness.

EDUCATION

- Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania, 1970, B.S. in Mathematics Education
- Towson State University, Towson, Maryland, 1977, M.A. in Psychology/Guidance and Counseling
- 13 additional graduate credits in behavioral science and education courses at Johns Hopkins University

REFERENCES: available on request