



WHERE DOES NAMI STAND ON THAT?

Setting NAMI Policy Positions and Priorities

NAMICON Alliance Day
NAMI National Government Relations,
Policy & Advocacy Team
May 24, 2023

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how NAMI develops public policy positions and prioritizes issues
2. Learn how to provide input and feedback into policy positions
3. Gain insight into how policy positions impact your work and how the levels of the Alliance work together to advance policy

Who We Are



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Our Nonpartisan Approach

NAMI takes positions on policy, not politics, political parties or politicians, and we collectively work to influence policy to improve the lives of people affected by mental illness.

NAMI's north star: Will a policy help people with mental health conditions?

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NAMI National's Role



Advocacy Across the Alliance



NAMI National

- Develop public policy positions for the Alliance
- Lead on all federal advocacy for the Alliance, incl. developing federal policy priorities
- Manage, train and grow advocacy network and mobilize advocates on federal issues
- Support NSONAs in their advocacy efforts

NAMI State Orgs

- Develop state policy priorities
- Lead on all state advocacy efforts
- Train advocates and mobilize advocates on state issues
- Support NAMI National in advancing federal priorities

NAMI Affiliates

- Develop local policy priorities
- Lead on all local advocacy efforts
- Support NAMI National and NAMI State Organization in advancing federal/state priorities

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About NAMI's Policy Positions

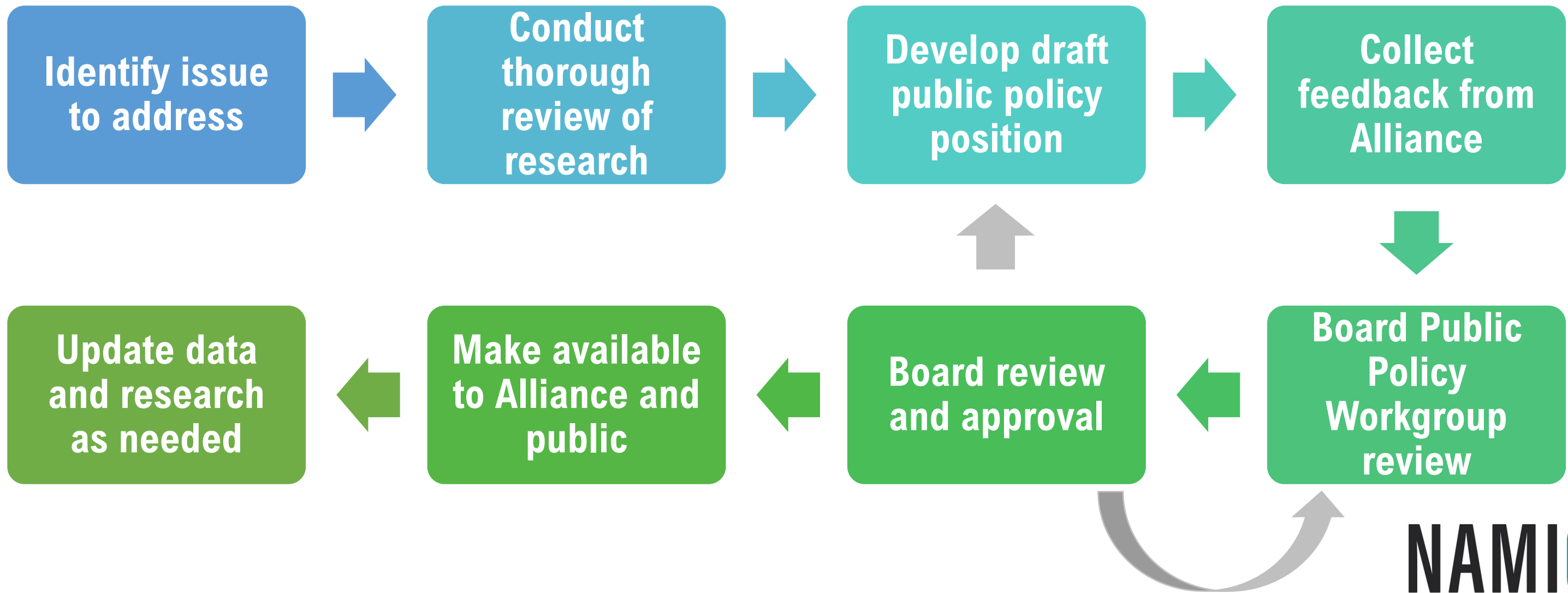


- NAMI National's Board approves all policy positions
- Positions are informed by feedback from the Alliance
- The positions, once approved, apply to all levels of the Alliance
- The Alliance's actions must align with those positions
- These positions *do not* dictate any NSO/NAs policy priorities

A screenshot of the NAMI website's 'Policy Priorities' page. The page features a teal header with the title 'Policy Priorities' and a background image of a group of people. Below the header is a navigation menu with expandable sections: 'Advocacy' (expanded), 'Policy Priorities', 'Improving Health', 'Responding to Crises', 'Supporting Community Inclusion and Non-Discrimination', and 'Stopping Harmful Practices'. The 'Advocacy' section is further divided into 'Advocate for Change' and 'NAMI Advocacy Actions'. To the right, there is a 'Jump To:' section with links to 'Improving Health', 'Responding to Crises', 'Community Inclusion and Non-Discrimination', and 'Stopping Harmful Practices'. Below this, a paragraph explains that public policy impacts people with mental illness in various ways, and a bulleted list outlines NAMI's beliefs: all people with mental health conditions deserve accessible, affordable, and comprehensive health care; all people with mental health conditions deserve access to supports that promote wellness; all people with mental health conditions who are incarcerated deserve access to quality mental health treatment; and public policies and practices should promote greater awareness and early identification of mental health conditions.



How are positions developed?





Key Policy Areas Addressed

Improving Health

- Medicaid Expansion
- Medicaid: IMD Exclusion
- Medications: Step Therapy
- Mental Health Parity
- Mental Health Treatment while Incarcerated

Responding to Crises

- Crisis Response
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders
- Psychiatric Advanced Directives

**Note: These are only a sampling of positions in each category.*

Supporting Community Inclusion & Non-Discrimination

- Community-Based Competency Restoration
- Mental Health Inequities (LBGTI/Racial Discrimination)
- Re-entry Post Incarceration
- Social Determinants of Health: Employment

Stopping Harmful Practices

- Conversion Therapy
- Police Use of Force
- Solitary Confinement



What does it look like?

Mental Health Parity

Where We Stand

NAMI believes that health insurance should provide comprehensive mental health and substance use disorder coverage without arbitrary limits on treatment. NAMI supports establishment and enforcement of laws and policies that ensure parity between mental health and physical health services in all forms of insurance coverage.

- Where we stand – board position (evergreen)
- Why we care
- How we talk about it
- What we've done

Mental Health Parity
NAMI Public Policy Position



Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that health insurance should provide comprehensive mental health and substance use disorder coverage without arbitrary limits on treatment. NAMI supports establishment and enforcement of laws and policies that ensure parity between mental health and physical health services in all forms of insurance coverage.

mental health insurance to provide comprehensive mental health services. Yet, too often, mental health care is not covered at the same level as medical services, leading to a more level playing field to treat mental and physical health conditions alike.

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mental health and substance use disorder coverage at the same level as medical services, leading to a more level playing field to treat mental and physical health conditions alike.

Still, disparities in mental health coverage remain. Some forms of insurance are allowed to place limitations on mental health coverage (for example MHPAEA does not apply to Medicare, certain state Medicaid programs, Veterans Administration or short-term limited duration health plans). The federal laws do not require parity in reimbursement rates and consequently, results in barriers to access as people cannot find in-network mental health care providers. Enforcing mental health parity is complex partly because a patchwork of federal and state entities are responsible for enforcement and the onus is largely on consumers to file individual claims of discrimination. NAMI strongly supports efforts to address these issues and achieve mental health parity in all forms of health coverage.

In 1996, the Mental Health Parity Act (MHPA) was the first federal law to create parity standards, but only for annual and lifetime dollar limits. In 2008, Congress passed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) requiring comprehensive standards for equitable coverage of mental health and substance use disorder treatment and coverage of medical/surgical treatment. The 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA) further expanded the reach of the parity laws by requiring most health plans cover mental health and substance use disorder care and expanding the scope of MHPAEA to reach most small group and individual markets. Additionally, states have enacted parity legislation to expand protections and/or improve compliance and enforcement of the federal laws. These efforts have helped create

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities

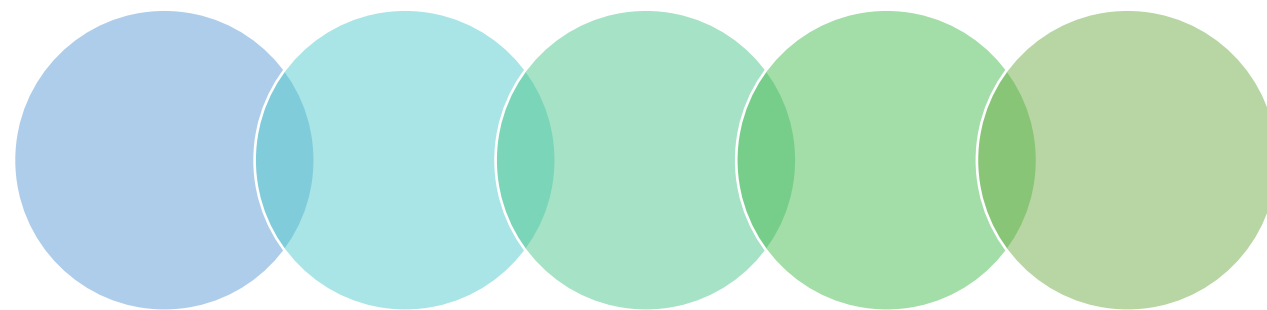
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How does NAMI convert our positions into action?

What shapes NAMI's advocacy priorities?

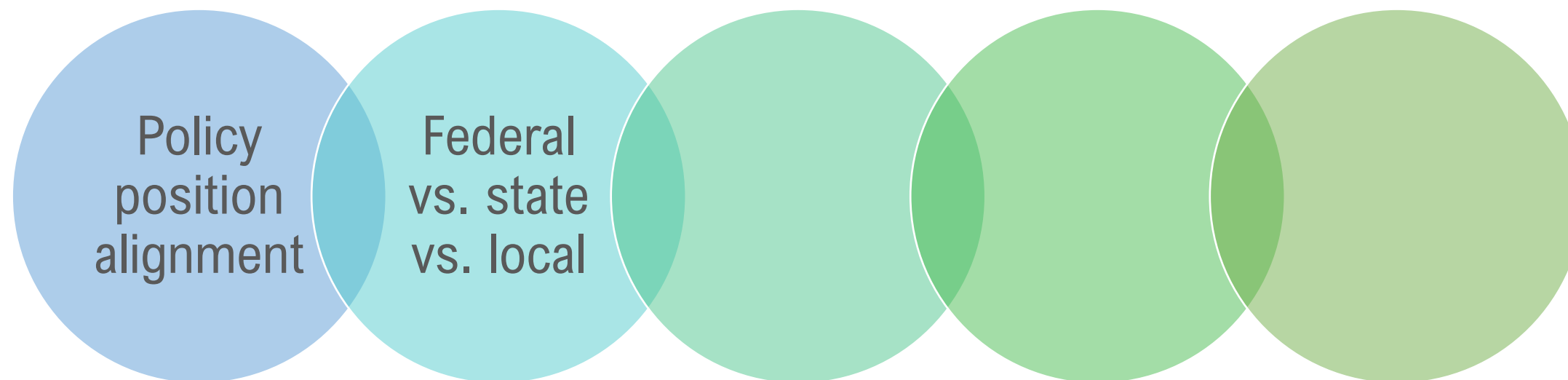


- Does NAMI have an established policy position that provides guidance on the issue?
- Which level of the NAMI Alliance should take the lead?
- What's the political landscape? Is there opportunity or urgent need?
- Does NAMI's voice have the ability to influence the conversation?
- Is it core to our mission?



Key Considerations: What level of NAMI Alliance?

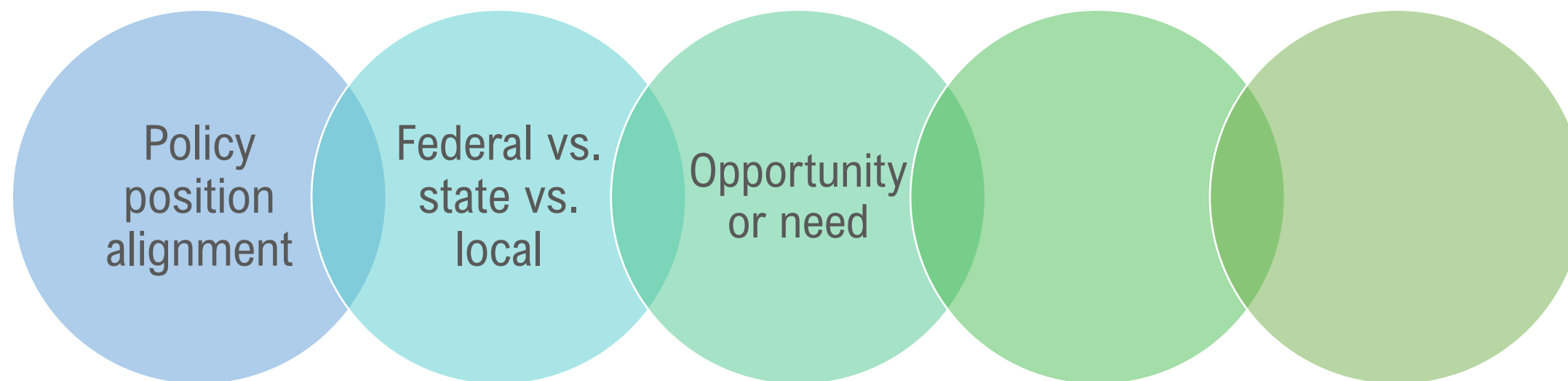
- NAMI National is the Alliance's voice at federal level
- NSOs are the voice at the state level
- Affiliates are the voice at the local level



Key Considerations: What is the opportunity or urgency?



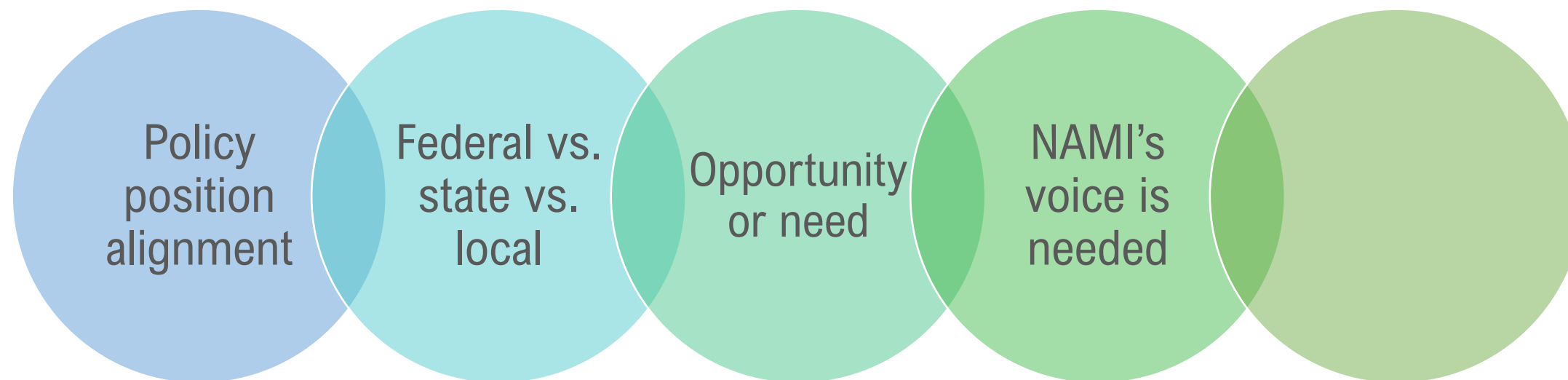
- Is this an issue that is coming up in the current political debate?
- Is there an issue that is harmful to our community that needs to be stopped?
- Is there a strategic opportunity to include an issue we care about in an existing conversation?



Key Considerations: What level of influence can we have?

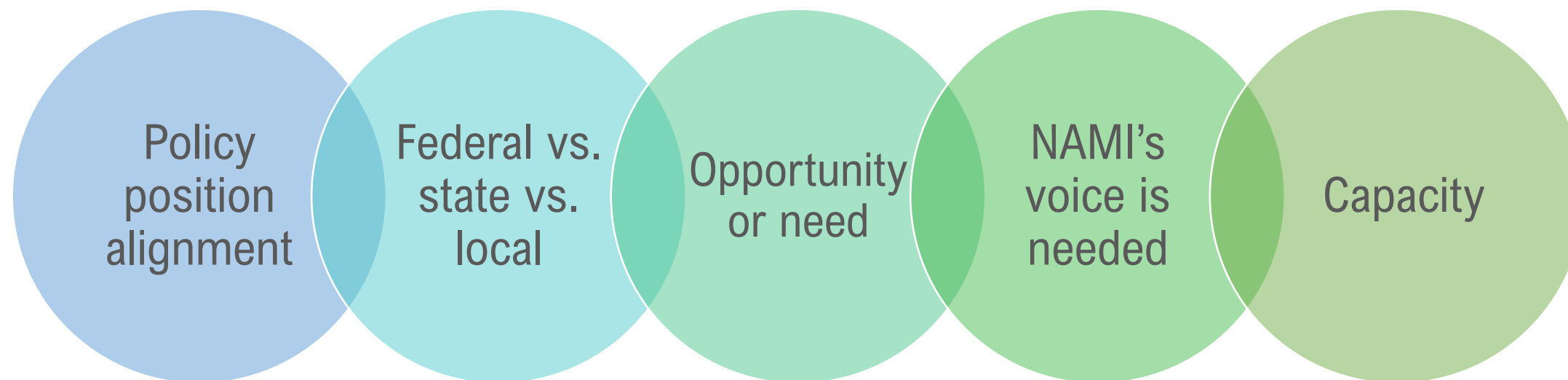


- What's the role of lived experience in the conversation?
- Is this an issue that uniquely or significantly impacts people with mental health conditions/their loved ones?
- If we don't push the issue, will anyone else?



Key Considerations: What is our capacity?

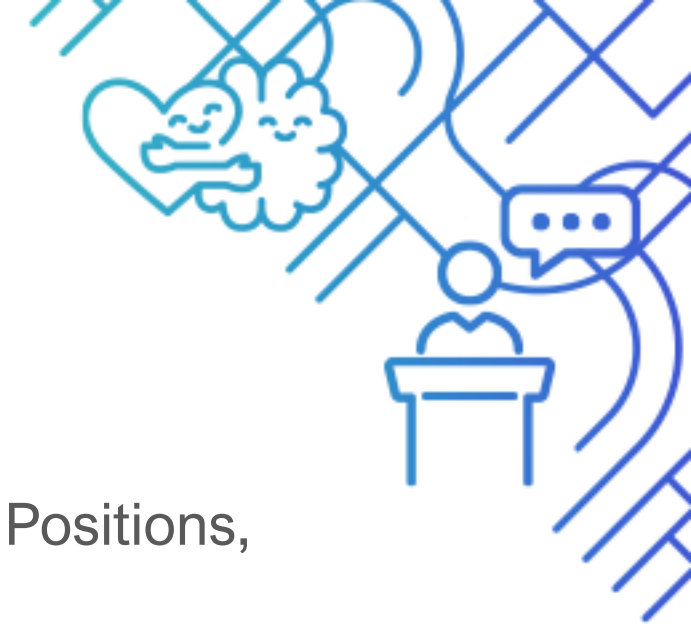
- Is it core to NAMI's mission?
- What is going to have the biggest impact?
- What's the tradeoff?



**What does this
mean for *you*?**

What does this mean for me?

- Do I have to engage on every position?
- What if I have an idea for a position?
- How do I figure out if a proposal in my community aligns with NAMI's position?
- What if I disagree with NAMI's stance on a position?
- What if I want to act on an issue? (see Roles one pager)
- Consider surveying your members/communities to help determine your NAMI's policy priorities



Tools You Can Use

- [NAMI.org Advocacy Hub](#): Landing page where you can find NAMI's Action Center, Policy Positions, Advocacy Actions, Public Policy Publications, and more.
- [NAMI Policy Positions](#): One-page fact sheets stating where NAMI stands on key issues impacting people with mental health conditions.
- [Action Center](#): Where NAMI advocates can take action on federal advocacy campaigns and share their stories.
- [Federal Bills NAMI Supports](#): A list of all federal legislation that NAMI has endorsed for the current Congress (housed within our Action Center).
- [Advocacy Actions](#): NAMI's recent letters to federal leaders, submitted comments, testimony and other public policy recommendations.
- **Advocacy Twitter**: Follow us [@NAMIAdvocacy](#)

Contact Us

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