



Partnering in Mental Health Support: A Partnership Between the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center and NAMI Minnesota

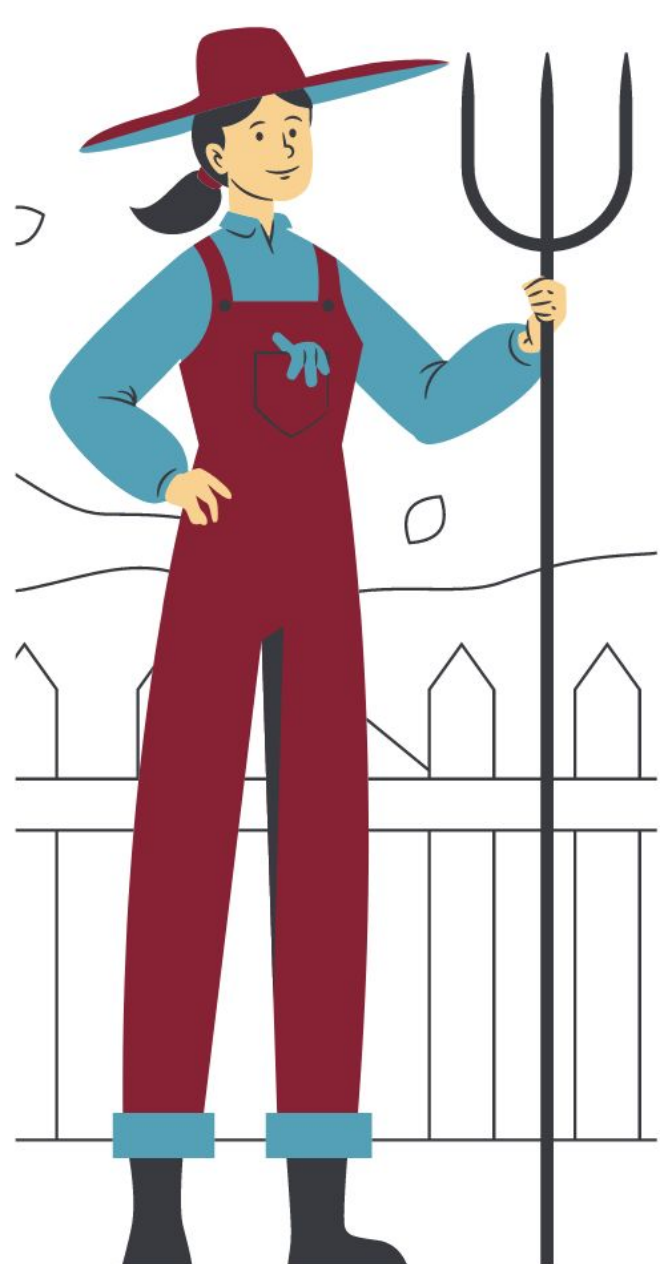
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Background: In response to concerns about stress, depression, and suicide in agricultural communities, the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) partnered with NAMI Minnesota to conduct QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training in this population.

Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) is one of eleven Centers of Excellence in Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education, and Prevention funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) throughout the United States.

NAMI Minnesota is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families.

PROGRAM MODEL



This program uses a unique model where the QPR suicide prevention trainings are conducted by members of agricultural communities for agricultural communities.

“There was such a sense of community in the room. You could ‘feel’ the isolation breaking down.”

Hayley McHale, Health and Wellness Programs Coordinator, NAMI MN

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This program worked to change the public perception in agricultural communities that seeking help is a sign of weakness. It equips community members with the **knowledge and skills** to identify key warning signs, increase help-seeking behavior, and respond to mental health crises.

KEY OUTCOMES

With UMASH funding, NAMI Minnesota facilitated **30 QPR Suicide Prevention trainings** in agricultural communities, reaching over **800 people**.

Agricultural communities have become a priority population within NAMI Minnesota. They will continue offering QPR training even after the UMASH funding concludes.

TIMELINE

2018

UMASH Annual Forum

This UMASH-hosted forum “Building Resilient Agricultural Communities” on June 20, 2018 gathered diverse stakeholders to foster conversations, generate ideas, and build partnerships to respond to the needs of the agricultural community. This NAMI Minnesota’s partnership project was then funded through UMASH’s Emerging Issues program.

2019

Partnerships are formed & leveraged

NAMI Minnesota and UMASH worked to build foundational relationships in order to enter agricultural communities. Working with key stakeholders like Land O’Lakes and local NAMI affiliates, almost 300 participants were trained in four parts of the state. This allowed the program’s capacity to increase as each trained community member can teach additional classes.

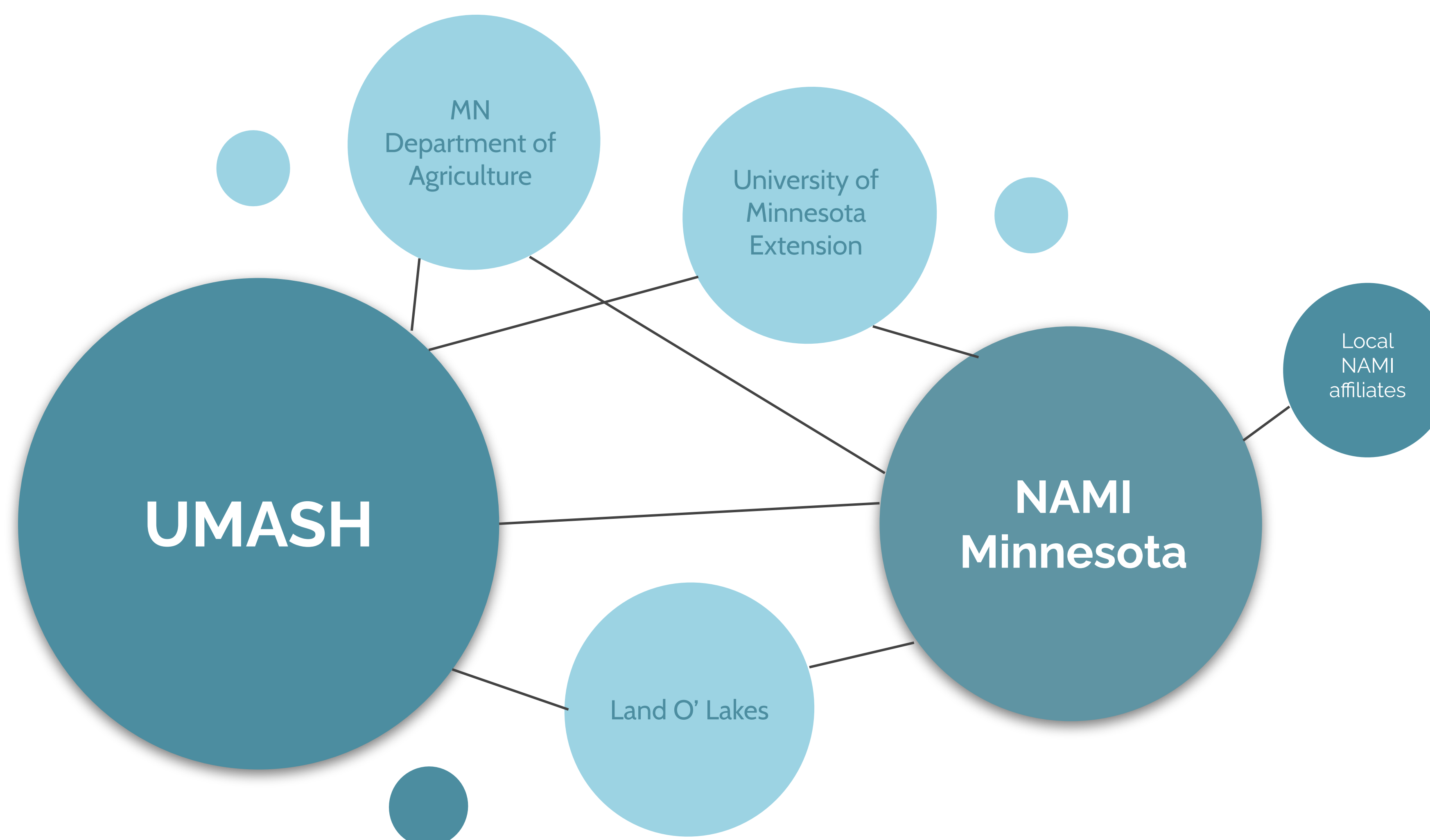
2020

Over 800 participants reached in person & online

NAMI Minnesota held 30 QPR trainings and 2 Mental Health First Aid classes. Adapting to the the COVID-19 pandemic, some of these trainings were held online. Participants reported improvements in awareness, perceived skills, and preparedness relating to mental health crises.

PARTNERSHIPS FORMED

The initial partnership between UMASH and NAMI Minnesota facilitated connections with other key stakeholders, some pictured below. For example, NAMI Minnesota connected with their local NAMI affiliates. This was essential because local organizations know their unique communities and how best to reach their members.



PARTNERSHIPS LEVERAGED

NAMI Minnesota leveraged partnerships to meet their goals and objectives. **Relationship-building** was key to understanding the unique needs of the communities they wished to serve.

In 2018-2019, a partnership with Land O’ Lakes led to successfully training 240 individuals in QPR. In 2020, MN NAMI participated in the virtual UMASH Expo, reaching over 700 people with mental health and stress resources, including their QPR trainings.

These relationships allowed NAMI Minnesota and others representing the interests of agricultural communities to **“have a seat at the table”** at statewide coalitions and task forces on mental health.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NAMI Minnesota quickly adapted their programming to an online format, addressing the increased need for suicide response and building connections as new stressors arose for the farming community. **Both in-person and online settings were successful in different ways.**

→ **In-person**, a sense of community was built as the presenter was usually known by participants. The presenter led with both suicide prevention content knowledge and relevant lived experiences. During the sessions, **support systems developed organically, feelings of isolation decreased, and many participants followed up** with presenters and other participants after the session concluded.

→ **Online**, more people were able to attend sessions from many areas of the state. Participants were **more comfortable, as it was less intimidating to tune in from the safety of their own home**. These sessions still successfully build a sense of community but in a more expansive way, as people could connect with others all over the state going through similar similar stressors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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