

Kelly Gunning has a master's degree in Community Psychology and has worked the past 12 years for NAMI Lexington: starting as a full time volunteer, she is currently the Director of Advocacy and Public Policy. During this tenure she has also served as an onsite advocate at Eastern State Hospital. Kelly has worked in the mental health field since 1988. She worked for the Indian Health Service and was one of the first non-Native persons hired by Doyon Native Corporation in Alaska where she worked for the Regional Center for Alcohol and Other Addictions during the bulk of her early career. While she was completing her education, she always felt it was pertinent to volunteer and/or simultaneously work in the field to more completely understand and experience the plethora of issues involved in delivering wrap-around social services in a variety of community mental health settings, including desolate and isolated Alaskan Bush communities. Kelly has been Executive Director at NAMI Lexington since 2004 and currently serves as the Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs for the organization. In March 2002, her 24 year old son was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. It could be said that she prepared her whole life for that diagnosis. In 2012 it was with great honor that Kelly received "The Governor's Dignity of Humanity Award" from the Ky. Medical News for her work in advocating for the replacement of the 200 year old Eastern State Hospital.