

Resources

After a Suicide: Recommendations for Religious Services & Other Public Memorial Observances. This is an excellent booklet that you can download for free. Google it!

American Psychiatric Association Foundation publishes *Mental Health: A Guide for Faith Leaders*, a booklet with concrete, practical, thorough information about what mental illness is, what to look for, how to assess the need for intervention, how to make a referral, etc. They also describe common mental illnesses and treatments. They also have the information in a handy one-page Quick Reference Guide. Find it online.

Caring Clergy Project
Sponsored by the Interfaith Network on Mental Illness
Brief videos with practical tips for clergy on recognizing signs and symptoms of mental illnesses, making referrals, and offering care after a suicide. They also have links to other resources for Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist faiths.
www.caringclergyproject.org

Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) Credential is a state-level certification for those who provide peer support to others with mental illnesses. A person with the CRSS credential uses unique insights gained through their own personal recovery experience. If you need support, find a CRSS near you. Or for those who have made good progress on their recovery journey and are looking to make a contribution out of their lived experience of mental illness, the CRSS credential provides a great way to help others. Go to www.dhs.state.il.us and look for the Recovery Services page.

Faith, Hope and Recovery. A local organization that works with faith communities to equip leaders and educate groups as they address mental health issues. Services include group support, consultation and connection and community building.
www.faithhoperecovery.org

Illinois Warm Line. 866-359-7953. Caring listeners provide emotional support, referrals, information on community resources and mental health and substance use recovery education. Available Monday—Friday, 9 am to 5 pm.

Interfaith Mental Health Coalition connects faith leaders across Chicagoland with mental health resources. Regional clusters of congregations and interested individuals gather for education, awareness, advocacy and linkage to services. Get on their email list to receive regular resources and information. www.interfaithmhc.org

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it does build mental health literacy, helping the public identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness. There is a separate class for people working with youth. Find classes in your area at www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org.

NAMI National Alliance on Mental Illness. If you or someone in your family or congregation is experiencing a mental illness, NAMI is one of the best sources of support, education and advocacy that you can find. Practical, free, supportive services. www.namiillinois.org

NAMIFaithNet is an information resource and network for clergy and people of faith from all faith traditions. The goal is to encourage the development of welcoming and spiritually nourishing environments in every place of worship.
www.nami.org/NAMifaithnet

Pathways to Promise compiles resources that help faith leaders and congregations offer support and care for people with mental health conditions and their families. Of particular note are the booklets on establishing a mental health ministry or Companioning program. www.pathways2promise.org

Advocate Congregational Health Partnerships
3075 Highland Parkway, Downers Grove, IL
630-929-6108 / www.faihealthtransformation.org



Faith and Mental Health

Recovery is Possible!

Let's start by making the hopeful claim that recovery from a mental illness is possible. For some people, recovery is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability. For others, recovery means the reduction or complete remission of symptoms.

Regardless, mental health advocates encourage us to reinforce that with treatment and support, people experiencing mental illnesses can feel better. This is a really important message because mental illness is often accompanied by feelings of despair. Research tells us that having hope significantly improves a person's resilience and ability to recover.

As people of faith, hope is at the core of what we believe and teach. We are often first responders and long-term caregivers for people with mental

health conditions. Tapping into the teachings of hope and love that are part of our traditions is a powerful part of the healing process for someone experiencing a mental health condition.

Mental illness cuts across income, race, neighborhood, religion and age. It is also one of the most stigmatized health issues and is not sufficiently funded and supported in our network of services.

The resources in this booklet are provided to help you as a leader in your faith community support and advocate for people with mental health conditions and their families. Your role is critical in making hope for recovery a reality.

What is Recovery?

There are four dimensions that support a life in recovery from a mental illness:

Health: Overcoming or managing one's disease(s) as well as living in a physically and emotionally healthy way;

Home: A stable and safe place to live;

Purpose: Meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income and resources to participate in society;

Community: Relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.



Advocate Health Care

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Person First Language

How we talk about each other shapes the way we think about each other. Often we unwittingly dehumanize people experiencing mental health conditions by referring to them as a condition or a symptom. For example, we may say, "Susan is bipolar." Instead, say, "Susan has bipolar disease."

General Rules by Which to Speak, Write, Respect and Empower

Having vs. Being Having an illness and being an illness are notably different. When "I have bipolar illness," I recognize that this is an aspect of myself, like "I have brown eyes." When "I am bipolar," I take on the identity of being bipolar. It becomes me and I become it. When we talk about an individual as separate from their mental health condition, we recognize the person first, and we acknowledge the person's power to overcome that condition and live a full life separate from it.

Singular vs. Plural Mental illnesses are diverse. There are many types of them. To say that people have mental illness (singular), misses the breadth and diversity of the nature of the mental illnesses. Instead of saying "the mentally ill," say "people who live with mental illnesses."

Adapted from materials prepared by Nanette Larson, Deputy Director/Ambassador for Wellness & Recovery for the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health

AVOID CARELESS LANGUAGE!

Watch out for how these terms slip into your language:

Challenged	Crazy
Demented	Lunatic
Psycho	Schizo
Special	Challenged
Sufferer	Victim
Not Normal	Normal

While we don't mean any harm, it can be hurtful to hear these

Companioning

Companioning" is a model that faith communities can use to organize support for members or neighbors in the community who are experiencing a mental illness. Companioning builds on five simple practices that are part of what we already do together as people of faith:

- 1. Hospitality.** Creating a free, friendly, safe, sacred space.
Seek to establish a space that is sacred in the personal sense.
- 2. Neighboring.** Sharing common time and space, beginning as human beings.
The soul thrives, not in isolation but in community.
- 3. Side by Side.** Looking out at the world together, honoring each other's unique gifts and perspectives.
The aim is not to fix things; it is simply to be together, to be present. A way of sharing the world together.
- 4. Listening.** Listen carefully, in community and over time, to hear especially the language of the soul and the story of hope and wholeness in each of us.
It is an incredible gift to listen.
- 5. Accompaniment.** Accompany one another, both in practice and in spirit on a healing journey, so that together, we experience recovery and grow toward wellness.
It is an act of faith, an outward sign of our belief that we are never alone.



To learn more about the practices, go to www.mentalhealthchaplaincy.org. The Interfaith Mental Health Coalition offers Companioning workshops in the metropolitan Chicago area. www.interfaithmhc.org.

Ways to Provide Support

People in faith communities provide support to people in need all the time. We express care in simple acts of kindness and through highly organized systems of support. Caring for people living with mental illnesses and their families is no different! Here are some ideas, but think about what your congregation is already doing and build on that for support around mental illnesses.



- Say the words! Talk about mental illnesses just as you would any other physical disease.
- Visit in the hospital or at home.
- Offer prayers for people with mental illnesses and their families during religious services.
- Phone or send cards or letters.
- Listen and give moral support.
- Offer to shop for food or take a meal.
- Offer help with transportation (to appointments, to attend religious services).
- Offer help with childcare.
- Encourage networking with community support or advocacy groups.
- Create Support Teams that can offer practical and spiritual care during a crisis or for ongoing care.

WRAP Wellness Recovery Action Plan

WRAP is a comprehensive, personalized, strength-based plan that has been proven to help people experiencing a mental illness get well and stay well. It helps them practice the things that keep them steady, identify triggers that create stress, see when they are starting to have a setback and know what to do in a crisis.

The 8 or 10 week WRAP courses are free and taught by trained WRAP facilitators. WRAP classes are offered frequently across the state, including refreshers. To find classes being offered in your area, go to www.illinoismentalhealthcollaborative.com.

Find more information about WRAP at www.mentalhealthrecovery.org.

QPR Question, Persuade, Refer

QPR is an easy to learn three-step process to help someone who may be considering suicide. Like CPR or the Heimlich Maneuver, QPR is a set of simple skills that can save lives.

QPR consists of three life-saving skills:

- **Question...**a person about suicide
- **Persuade...**the person to get help
- **Refer...**the person to the appropriate resource

Even though it's easy to learn, QPR requires training. Learn more about how to get trained and how to bring QPR training to your house of worship at www.qprinstitute.com.