OUR CHURCH HOME IS A PLACE OF REFUGE & HEALING

One in 4 people who seek guidance for their mental illness do so from a clergy member.

Religion benefits mental health in an abundance of ways:

- Increases social support and sense of belonging
- Promotes personal development towards greater meaning in life
- Aids and strengthens to cope with challenges
- Committing to prayer may help to reduce negative thoughts and experiences

We all have known a friend or family member with a mental illness, or mental disorder, or maybe even we ourselves have experienced a mental health challenge-even if we might not know it. Since **1 in 5 US adults lives with a diagnosable mental health condition**, it is likely that people in your congregation deal with mental health and substance use challenges daily. Accessing and receiving culturally appropriate and quality care can be difficult. In fact, in the Black community, 1 in 3 who need mental health care receives it.

It is important to help guide those seeking mental health care to a healthcare professional.

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

— Galatians 6:9

TEXAS FACTS

Texas ranked **second in adult prevalence of mental illness, and 50th in mental health workforce availability**. In Texas, more than half (59.6%) of adults living with a mental illness do not receive treatment.

WHY IS MENTAL HEALTH EQUITY IMPORTANT?

- Stigma keeps people from seeking professional help or speaking with their pastor or other members of their church
- We must create a judgment free environment that will allow members, friends, and the community to feel accepted and welcome
- Let's foster a church home where people can get care easily

Our goal is to become a **WISE** (**W**elcoming, **I**nclusive, **S**upportive, and **E**ngaged) **congregation for mental health**.

PRACTICE IN YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY

WELCOME:

- Show that mental health is accepted and important by creating "Mental Health Ministry" badges
- Welcome people by their name and do not define individuals by diagnosis or label people with illness
- Lead with an open mind and compassion

INCLUDE:

- Actively include people with lived experience of mental illness in the work of the Mental Health Ministry
- Use inclusive language about mental health conditions
- Celebrate Mental Health Sunday (the third Sunday in May)

SUPPORT:

- Create a community mental health resource list to share with members, friends, and visitors
- Start a Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health and create a safe place to share stories, including resources for where to go
- Offer to pray with them and for them

ENGAGE:

- Promote mental health with physical health and join in advocacy for the congregation and larger community

The **Community Health Equity Alliance** seeks to advance solutions to mental health care that are scalable, sustainable, and increase opportunity for equitable impact.

PLAN

- Normalize mental health challenges by teaching individuals that they are not alone
- Include God in recovery by expressing that God loves all, regardless of their state of health mental, physical, and spiritual
- Struggling with mental health does not mean that you do not have faith
- Establish a mental health covenant with church leadership where no one is stigmatized, ostracized, or turned away

Local Warmline: 713-970-4483 (M to F, 9a 5p) or message https://survey.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6KZhn0W9iZFcmG2

Harris Center 24 hour Crisis Line: 713-970-7000, press 1

Harris Center 24 hour Text Line: 832-479-2135

National Suicide Prevention 24 hour Lifeline: 800-273-8255

GENERAL RESOURCES

Interfaith Network for Mental Health: www.inmi.us

Mental Health Ministries: www.mentalhealthministries.net

Mental Health America BIPOC Mental Health: https://www.mhanational.org/bipoc mental health

NAMI FaithNet: https://www.nami.org/Get Involved/NAMI FaithNet

NAMI Sharing Hope: https://www.nami.org/Support Education/Mental Health Education/NAMI Sharing Hope Mental Wellness in the Black Community

Pathways to Promise: www.pathways2promise.org

United Church of Christ Mental Health Network: www.mhn ucc.org