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*edited by  
Florence Kraft*



**Educational Resources available for  
May,  
Mental Health Month**

Mental health organizations have educational resources available during May which is Mental Health Month. It is not too soon to begin planning to utilize these resources to heighten awareness about mental health. These resources can be used during May; during Mental Illness Awareness Week, which is the first week of October; or at a time of the year that is appropriate for your faith community.

Pathways to Promise has bulletin inserts using quotations from the Bible and appropriate graphics to assist congregations in reaching out to people who have mental illness and their families. A packet containing 100 bulletin inserts (25 each of four inserts based on *Matthew 25:35; Hebrews 13:1-2; John 15:12* and *Micah 6:8* is available for \$8.00. Other bulletin inserts, available at \$2.00 per packet of 25, include: *Rabbi, Who Sinned?* (myths and realities about mental illness); *Children and Mental Disorders* (myths and facts); and *Putting the Pieces Together* (correcting the myths of mental health and aging) which is available in Christian and Jewish versions.

A planning guide to customize mental health month activities with different messages and activities is available from the National Mental Health Association, the organization that originally identified May as mental health month. Contact: NMHA, 1021 Prince St., Alexandria, VA 22314; 703/684-7722. Web site is <[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)>.



**A Word from the Chair :**

It seems to me we have entered a new era in regards to the mass media and mental illness. As I write, the movie "A Beautiful Mind" has opened in theaters, and the Hallmark Hall of Fame is doing "My Sister's Keeper" on TV. To mention but one radio program, the PBS series, "The Secret Life of the Brain" is including something about schizophrenia in the segment "The Teenage Brain." That these quality programs will help bring about better understanding is something to celebrate.

Because our readers are primarily among faith groups, I would mention an area which has all too little good news; mental illness in the clergy family. Yes, a friend of mine has moved to a new parish and found understanding of his wife's illness. Yet, there is also the recent call from a hospital chaplain seeking help for a pastor whose illness has outlasted all benefits. This person is now homeless and in the hospital again. Can we not do better for our clergy?! This concern will be on the agenda of the April meeting of the Pathways Board. Your prayers are needed.

# Membership Update

The Board and staff are grateful to those of you who have become members of Pathways. Without this monetary support we could not continue. The individuals who have joined are too numerous to list. However we would like to share with you the faith groups, congregations, organizations and agencies that have joined Pathways since we last published a Newsletter.

## National Religious Bodies and Organizations

Episcopal Mental Illness Network

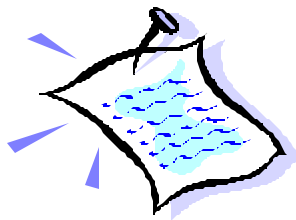
## Congregations, Groups and Agencies

St. Dymphna Society Foundation, Chicago, IL

Fresh Start Bible Church, St. Louis, MO

Transfiguration Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing, MI



## It's time to renew!!

Pathways to Promise operates on a calendar-year basis; now is the time to review your membership for 2002. As we go to press, the financial situation of Pathways mirrors that of Spring 2000 when the Board voted to discontinue our work. An outpouring of support from organizations and individuals kept that from happening. Now comes the real test. Was that a one-time windfall or will our readers continue to support the work of Pathways through annual membership?

To become a new or continuing member of Pathways, please complete the membership form below.

## 2002 Pathways to Promise Membership Form

*All categories of membership include the benefit of a subscription to the Pathways to Promise Newsletter*

Please check **ONE** of the following membership categories

- Individual - \$20                       Congregation - \$50                       Other Local Group/Agency - \$50
- Regional Body or Chapter of an Organization - \$150                       National Religious Body - \$300\*
- Other National Organization/Agency - \$300\*                       Individual Honorary/Lifetime Membership - \$500

*\*Current Bylaws provide membership in this category includes a seat on the Pathways Board of Representatives.*

Additional Contributions to Pathways are welcome and tax deductible

\$\_\_\_ Gift to Pathways      \$\_\_\_ Gift to Pathways in Honor or in Memory of\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

F a i t h      G r o u p ,      C o n g r e g a t i o n      o r  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **Pathways to Promise** and send membership form to: Pathways to Promise, 5400 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, MO 63139.



### In Memoriam

Memorial contributions have been made to Pathways to Promise in memory of the following people.

#### In memory of:

Richard Anshien (from Carol Anshien)  
 Albert E. Olson (from Gail A. Olson)  
 Robert Jeff Redfearn (from Bruce Murphy)



### Mark Your Calendar

**March 15 - Kresge Academic Center, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC:** "Disability Convocation: Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors in Seminary Communities." Sponsored by Washington Theological Consortium, Wesley Theological Center, and National Organization on Disability. For more information, contact Lorraine Thal, Convocation Coordinator, (202) 293-5960 or <[religion@nod.org](mailto:religion@nod.org)>.

**April 19-21 - Holiday Inn Select, Orlando, FL:** "Expanding the Horizons - The Sky is Not the Limit!" 2002 Conference of the Christian Council on Persons with Disabilities. Co-sponsor of the conference is Friendship Ministries. The conference will offer 27 workshops on a wide variety of disability ministry issues. For more information contact Jim Hukill . Email: [jim@eleos.org](mailto:jim@eleos.org); Phone: 407-228-8343 or the Christian Council on Persons with Disabilities, 7120 W. Dove Court, Milwaukee, WI 53223-2766.

**May 6 - Alexandria, VA:** "A Dialogue with Seminaries: Preparing Pastors and Other Caregivers to Respond to the Needs of Persons and Families Struggling with Mental Illness." This one-day event, sponsored by the Virginia Interfaith Committee on Mental Illness Ministries, will bring together clergy, community service providers, persons with mental illnesses, family members and others. For information go to <[www.vaumc.org/gm/micom.htm](http://www.vaumc.org/gm/micom.htm)> on the Web and click "special events" or contact Carolyn Nelson at 540-663-2522 or <[jnelson@crosslink.net](mailto:jnelson@crosslink.net)>.

**June 5-8 - Washington, DC:** National Mental Health Association Annual Conference "Prevention, Resilience and Recovery: United for Mental Health" will explore strategies for promoting mental health and recovery from mental illness with special focus on post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders.

**June 26-30 - Cincinnati, OH:** NAMI 2002 Annual Convention, "Building Communities of Hope." Central theme will be exploring how to build strong communities of hope for people with mental illnesses and the people who love them. The Convention will feature a tract on the challenges of and practical methods for reaching out through the faith community to those affected by mental illness. For more information visit the NAMI web site <[www.nami.org/convention02](http://www.nami.org/convention02)>.



### Calendar now on web site

Our Web maven, Alan Harris, has added a calendar feature to the Pathways Web site which promises to be a most helpful feature. From the home page you can click directly to the calendar. The Web will enable Pathways to give up-to-date notice about events relating to mental illness. If you wish to have upcoming events added to the calendar, please send all the details to <[pathways2promise.org](http://pathways2promise.org)> We encourage you to submit news of local as well as national and regional events.

### *On the Web: More Sites*

The September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States have changed America forever. Nowhere is this more evident than in the emotional and mental health impact on people. Recognizing this, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has added a special "page" to their web site. Go to: <[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)> and click on the "Helping America Heal" icon.

On August 15, 2001 the National Institute for Healthcare Research became the International Center for the Integration of Health and Spirituality. Their new web site is <[www.icihs.org](http://www.icihs.org)>.

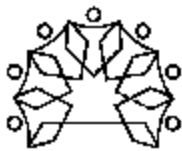
The World Federation for Mental Health has a World Mental Health Day planning kit for 2002 which will be available by April. There will be material to help promote the year-long campaign on "The Effects of Trauma and Violence on Children." Web Site is <[www.wfmh.org](http://www.wfmh.org)>.

The National Organization on Disability; Religion and Disability Program can plan conferences, develop funding strategies, participate in the Accessible Congregations Campaign or locate religious leaders who have disabilities. Visit <[www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org)> and click on RELIGION.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation supplies vast information on Children's Health through its "Kids Count Data Book Online" available at: <[www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc2001](http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc2001)>

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has released *Forgotten Policy: An Examination of Mental Health in the U.S.* This report surveys the barriers to access and utilization of mental health and substance abuse services, and summarizes the financing and coordination of mental health services. To order, visit <[www.wkff.org](http://www.wkff.org)>.

National Mental Health Association's Web site at <[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)> has updates on important policy issues and timely reports on federal and state advocacy efforts.



## NETWORK NEWS

**The Presbyterian Church (USA) Serious Mental Illness Network (PSMIN) Leadership Team** met in Louisville in January, joining other PCUSA network leaders in a Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association event to plan activities during 2002.

Regional representatives of PSMIN plan workshops to teach advocacy skills; persons attending will be equipped to hold similar workshops in their own geographic areas. Several PCUSA mental illness ministry resource materials are in the process of being revised, with the assistance of PSMIN, to include updated and new information. Two members of the PSMIN Leadership Team, Rev. Bob Butziger and Dr. Beth Baxter, will make a presentation on mental illness to the National Ministries Division at the PCUSA General Assembly in June. Contact persons for this network are: Chair Brenda Gales, (770) 929-8322 or

<galesb@bellsouth.net>; Vice-Chair Bob Butziger, (505)294-1517 or <mbutziger@cs.com>; Newsletter Editor Flo Kraft (217) 243-9717 or <[flokraft@email.msn.com](mailto:flokraft@email.msn.com)>

**Lutheran Network on Mental Illness:** In October 2001, LNMI/BD held its sixth annual observance of an All Lutheran Candlelighting for Mental Illness, in recognition of Mental Illness Awareness Week. All Lutheran congregations are asked to light a candle and say a prayer on behalf of persons with mental illness and their families. A special bulletin is made available.

The LNMI/BD Board met September 7-8 in Chicago for extensive work on long-range planning. The Board plans to work with Parish Nurses on mental illness education within the congregations. LNMI/BD will present exhibits at the ELCA and LCMS 2002 conventions. Board Member Linda Preus will speak to these groups. Contact for LNMI is: Lisa Cleaver, Director, Ministry with Persons with Handicapping Conditions, Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8765 West Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631; 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2692; FAX is 773/380-3707; e-mail is <lcleaver@elca.org>.

**United Methodist Mental Illness Network:** The General Board of Church and Society continues to promote the concept of "Caring Communities", <[www.umc-gbcs.org/caring\\_communities.htm](http://www.umc-gbcs.org/caring_communities.htm)> in which congregations undertake a study, approve a covenant statement, and extend a welcome to persons with mental illness and their families. In addition, GBCS in collaboration with the Universal Health Care Action Network <[www.uhcan.org](http://www.uhcan.org)> is promoting April 2002 as Health Care Justice Month and encouraging congregations to select a weekend to observe a Health Care Justice Sabbath in which health care issues, including mental illness issues, can be highlighted. A Health Care Justice Sabbath can also lay the groundwork for a May is Mental Health Month observance.

In the Baltimore-Washington Conference in January, "Leadership Days" were held in three cities. Among the 72 available workshops, "Crisis and Hope in Mental Illness: How Can the Church Respond?" was presented by members of the subcommittee on Ministry to Persons with Mental Illness and their Families. In addition, Rev. Jackson Day led workshops on Health Care Sabbaths and also on "Trauma Survivors in the Congregation".

In Oklahoma, Barbara Schneeberg presented a workshop on Welcoming Disabilities, including mental illness, at a Tulsa District Leadership event organized around the theme

of Becoming Welcoming Congregations.

In Virginia, Margaret Ann Holt has spearheaded a successful effort to have the course curriculum on "Creating a Caring Community with Persons with Mental Illnesses" offered in July 2002 in Lake Junaluska, NC at the Southeast Jurisdictional United Methodist Church Lay Speaking Ministries School. She writes, "This means that all of the course curriculum and resource materials will be sent to the 18 United Methodist Church Conferences who are members of the South Eastern Jurisdiction so that those Conferences can teach the course at their Lay Speaking Ministries School." Virginia is only one of the 18 member conferences. Margaret Ann has also led plans for a "Dialogue with Seminaries" scheduled for May 6, 2002 and focusing on what theological seminaries are doing to prepare students for ministry with persons with mental illness.

In San Diego, Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder carried the Olympic torch "to shine light on the stigma associated with mental illness". She also provided a workshop on Understanding Depression at the International United Methodist Clergywomen's Consultation in San Diego. She reports an overwhelming response with people from all over the country who want to address this issue. She also has submitted a proposal to the California Pacific Annual Conference to work with churches to begin the process of establishing Caring Communities.

Marge Bond reports that the Desert/Southwest Conference focused its February 4 Pastor's School in Phoenix, AZ on the topic "Mental Illness, the Church and the Community." Featured speaker on "Understanding Depression" was David Cutler, MD, Professor of Community Psychiatry at Oregon Health Science University in Portland. Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder was also a speaker and workshop leader.

United Methodists are working closely with NAMI in several parts of the country. In Indiana, NAMI-Indianapolis' Faith Communities Education Committee is sponsoring a Mental Illness Ministry Conference on May 2, 9:00 - 3:00 at North United Methodist Church, 3808 N. Meridian St. for clergy, youth ministers, Christian Education Directors, Parish Nurses, Stephen's Ministry workers, and interested lay leaders. The featured speaker is Dr. Jay Fawver, Psychiatrist, Associate Prof. Of Clinical Psychiatry, IU School of Medicine, and active Christian layman

**National Conference of Viet Nam Veteran Ministers:** The Pastoral Care for Trauma Survivors project continues. Rev. Michele Balamani, a pastoral counselor and member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church has joined the authors of the proposed trauma curriculum for clergy. Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington has approved a summer school 2002 course on "Pastoral Care for Trauma Survivors in the Congregation" which will use the draft curriculum and be taught by Rev. Jackson Day, NCNVM Executive Director, and Elizabeth Vermilyea, Director of Training at Sidran Traumatic Stress Institute.

Contact for the Methodist and Viet Nam Veteran Ministers networks is Rev. Jackson Day, Program Director for Health and Wholeness, GBCS, United Methodist Church, 100 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002; 202/488-5608; FAX [202] 488-5663; <[Jday@UMC-GBCS.org](mailto:Jday@UMC-GBCS.org)>.

**Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Department of Jewish Family Concerns:** The UAHC is the largest of North America's Jewish movements. At the recent UAHC biennial convention in Boston, the movement passed a comprehensive resolution on Mental Health issues. Part of the resolution called for increasing congregation's awareness of the issue. The UAHC's Department of Jewish Concerns has begun to implement that task. A two year project is contemplated. First, will be the publication of a major study guide on Judaism and issues related to mental health. A look at texts, sample programs, sermons, prayers, meditations and rituals as well as resources. This is planned for completion by fall of 02. That will be followed by a series of pilot workshops, based in congregations, to raise awareness and reduce stigma regarding issues of mental health. The goal is to explore how synagogues can be caring and sacred communities to individuals and families dealing with mental health concerns.

Contact for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Department of Jewish Family Concerns is Rabbi Richard Address, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Department of Jewish Family Concerns, 633 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., 7<sup>th</sup> floor, New York, NY 10017-6778; (212)650-4294; FAX (212)650-4239; <[rfauahc@aol.com](mailto:rfauahc@aol.com)>

**The United Church of Christ Mental Illness Network:** The Mental Illness Network, U.C.C. is planning a second national "gathering" for Board members and friends at the national offices in Cleveland. Tentative dates are June 18-20 or June 25-27. (See the Pathways Web Calendar.) One of the topics will be training of Key People to be advocates

and resource people in their respective regions/Conferences. It is hoped that the new table-top display units will be available. It is planned that these units will be mailable and adaptable to local needs.

A representative of the Network is to be a participant at a December Association/Conference staff meeting of who deal with clergy placement. The goal is to deal with the mental illness and other disability issues that arise in clergy families, especially as they relate to placement.



Contact persons for this network are: Robert Dell, 414 East Pleasant Avenue, Sandwich, IL 60548; 815/786-6341; e-mail <BOB.DELL@ecunet.org> or Bryan Crousore, Pastor, Peace UCC, P.O. Box 19, Hartsburg, MO 65039; 573/657-9414; e-mail <crousore@ecunet.org>.

Harold G. Koenig, M.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Internal Medicine at Duke University Medical Center, has been awarded a contract to research two kinds of faith-based organizations: (1) FBOs that provide direct mental health services and (2) FBOs that provide education and resources to assist faith communities in meeting the needs of persons with mental illness. The purpose of the project is to identify organizations that may serve as models or assist in the planning of the Faith-based and Communities Initiative promoted by the current Bush Administration. If your organization would like to participate in this effort, contact Dr. Koenig at Box 3400, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC 27710. Phone: 919-681-6633 or by e-mail at <koenig@geri.duke.edu>.



This book review was written by Martha E. Stokes, Director, Commission on Disabilities, Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

*A Christian View of Mental Illness: Understanding and Response* by Crystal Horning, MS, NCC, MMA Mental

Illness Consultant. Published by Mennonite Mutual Aid. Order for \$5.95 plus shipping from Carol Miller at 1-800-348-7468, ext 269 or on-line at <[www.mma-online.org/resources](http://www.mma-online.org/resources)> All too often books and materials that are supposed to help people better understand a particular subject are written with more than enough jargon, scientific and medical terminology to make us close the cover after the first few paragraphs. Much too often the human side of the subject matter is forgotten. This is not the case with Crystal Horning's *A Christian View of Mental Illness: Understanding and Response*.

In this wonderfully readable booklet, we are introduced to real people, including the author, who are successfully living with mental illness. The glimpses into their personal lives are uplifting as well as educational. Their stories add great relevance to the sections of the booklet that define and look at the causes of mental illness. The author also discusses the role of faith in helping individuals, their families and caregivers walk through the journey of mental illness. Our Christian response must be a change in attitude, provision of supportive care, education, advocacy, and interaction. The booklet includes a list of national organizations and resources as well as an extensive bibliography of books across a wide range of interest areas.

I knew from the first paragraph of the section on the impact of mental illness that I would appreciate Ms. Horning's writings. She notes that people affected or impacted by mental illness need pastors and church families who respond with empathy and understanding no matter how great the challenge. As Ms. Horning states, "They need Jesus with skin on." What a tremendous statement! If we are to be the example of Jesus' love and model the teachings of Christ in our world, then we are to be "Jesus with skin on." That one statement encompasses our total Christian response to not only individuals with mental illness and their families, but to ALL God's people.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Crystal has served faithfully for several years as a member of the Board of Pathways to Promise.*



From Jerry L. Van Marter, Presbyterian News Service, Louisville, KY: A new book - *A Place Called Acceptance*:

*Ministry with Families of Children with Disabilities* - by Kathleen Deyer Bolduc challenges congregations to become communities of welcome for families of children living with physical, mental or behavioral disabilities.

Bolduc's earlier book, *His Name is Joel: Searching for God in a Son's Disability*, chronicled her spiritual journey as the parent of a son with mental retardation and autism. Both books were published by Bridge Resources, an imprint of Congregational Ministries Publishing in Louisville.

In *A Place Called Acceptance*, Bolduc maintains that the church must be the place where children with disabilities and their families will be loved and embraced just as they are and not by the world's standards of physical attributes and accomplishments. The book lists countless ideas, projects and resources to help church leaders lead a ministry that combines compassion with practical assistance. To order *A Place Called Acceptance*, call 1-800-524-2612 and ask for item #095652. Cost is \$7.95

#### **New Resources from the Mennonite Central Committee:**

*Early Psychosis: What Families and Friends Need to Know*, British Columbia Schizophrenia Society, 2001. This 37-page booklet is a handbook for families and friends looking for answers when a young person experiences psychosis, a medical condition where a person is out of touch with reality. Explains warning signs, symptoms, where to look for help and gives ideas helpful for recovery.

*Reaching Out* - This 22-minute video produced by the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society is geared to youth and people working with youth. It stresses the importance of recognizing schizophrenia in its early stages and getting help quickly. Youth leaders, parents and youth would benefit by viewing this video.

*Light for All* is a collection of worship materials in booklet form that can help congregations become more welcoming of people with mental illness or other disabilities. This 40-page booklet is a practical, helpful resource for congregations searching for ways to become more inclusive.

*Unholy Ghost: Writers on Depression* William Morrow, (\$23) edited by Nell Casey with an introduction by Kay Jamison. A collection of elegantly written stories of depression and living with a depressed person. Along with

individual accounts by notables such as William Styron, it includes companion pieces of a husband and wife and a sister and sister.

*Brave New Brain: Conquering Mental Illness in the Era of the Genome* by Nancy Andreasen, Oxford University Press; 2001. Each of four major categories of mental illness: schizophrenia, mood disorder, dementia, and anxiety disorders is treated in a concrete way with narrative based on patients' experiences. Dr. Andreasen, the Andrew W. Woods Chair of Psychiatry at the University of Iowa College of Medicine, and a leader in the field of brain anatomy and imaging, provides a clear discussion of neuroanatomy, brain systems, molecular structure, the genome, and even discussions of future trends in science. Dr. Andreasen presents the challenges of understanding and treating mental illness from a client's point of view. She brings out the fundamental issues of the major disorders and helps readers recognize both symptoms and consequences of the disorders in the context of the day-to-day struggles they bring.

*The Bipolar Child: The Definitive and Reassuring Guide to Childhood's Most Misunderstood Disorder* by Demitri Papolos and Janice Papolos, Broadway Books; 1999. Well known for their works on depression, the authors have turned their attention to the less recognized bipolar disorder in children. As its title suggests, the book is both definitive and reassuring. It includes family stories, discussions about the emotional upheavals of living, and ways in which parents and children can more effectively cope.

The National Mental Health Association has released a new advocacy primer designed to help advocates bring about mental health policy changes. The new booklet, *Influencing Your State Legislature*, outlines the basics of how to lobby members of state legislatures to transform behavioral health policy goals into state law and to prevent harmful legislation from becoming law. The book includes four case studies detailing successful advocacy efforts and provides samples of legislative alerts, testimony and letters to the editor. \$5.00 Phone: 1-800-969-6642.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is committed to research. The NIMH *Constituency Outreach and Education Program*, initiated two years ago, is playing an important part in efforts to communicate to numerous and diverse audiences what this research means and how its results can change people's lives. Outreach Partners in every state, together with organizations making up the Education Network, are working with NIMH to deliver the

message of hope - that because of knowledge gained through research, most people who have mental illness can be effectively treated. Learn who are these partners in your state, what information they have to share, and how you can cooperate on mutual goals.

## Spiritual Community

by Rabbi Miriam Senturia  
Advisory Board, FaithNet

The book of Genesis explains that the first human being was created in the image of God. According to this teaching, we are all manifestations of the divine, the sacred. As long as people living with mental illness are in exile from their spiritual communities, an aspect of God, an aspect of the sacred, is in exile too.

The presence of God cannot fully dwell in a spiritual community that has no place for people with mental illness; a spiritual community cannot be whole when part of the community is absent or invisible. So there is actually a mutual need for healing. Both people living with mental illness and their spiritual communities need healing - healing in the sense of moving toward wholeness.

The time has come for spiritual communities to invite this aspect of God to come back home, to invite those living with mental illness back into the community. The time has come for spiritual leaders and communities to say that we are here for those suffering from mental illness, that we care enough to make the effort to make a place for them, a place in our communities and in our hearts. Then the mutual healing can begin.

The good news is that spiritual leaders and communities can make a tremendous difference in the lives of people living with mental illness and their loved ones. Support from caring individuals can be very healing. Support from a caring community can lead to an even deeper healing. The people I have come to know who are living with mental illness have the same essential longings as those of most people.

They long to feel themselves "at home" and welcome, to feel a sense of belonging. They long to feel connected to their community, to all creation, to all sentient beings, to God and to their essential self. They long to feel that they are truly accepted as they are: they long to feel whole.

There are two main differences that I have seen in the essential longings of people living with mental illness. One is that their longings may be more intense, because of their spiritual and emotional pain. The other is that the barrier of the stigma wall makes it harder for them to ask for support (just to show up takes such courage!), and harder for their community to truly welcome them, to provide the support that they seek.

So how might a spiritual community begin to be a more welcoming place for people living with mental illness? Begin by making a commitment to lower the stigma wall, to counter the guilt/shame/isolation experienced by people living with mental illness.

But how? Show up (even though you don't know what to do or say)! Remember that "caring presence" is healing! And that the family of a person with mental illness needs support, too!

Remember that education lowers the stigma wall, takes away fear based on misinformation. Most people, including spiritual leaders know very little about mental illness - but they can learn! (Through sermons/talks, articles in newsletters, classes, etc.)

A support group for family members also gives a clear signal that a community knows that people are suffering from mental illness in their families, that the community cares about their suffering, and that there is a place for them in the community.

I hope you will agree that spiritual leadership and spiritual community involvement does not happen only in the context of religion. My belief is that it generally grows from the seeds of intention and is cultivated through ongoing effort. Which means that any individual has the potential to exercise spiritual leadership, and any community has the potential to become a spiritual community.

Ultimately, it is up to each of us to decide how we choose to respond to the suffering of those who live with mental illness, who so far are mostly living in silence, in secrecy, in shame, in isolation.

For the sake of all our mothers and daughters, our fathers and sons, our sisters and brothers, and we ourselves who suffer from mental illness, I hope that we will choose to open our hearts and to ask our communities to open theirs as well. I hope that we will choose to advocate in our communities for becoming a sanctuary, a dwelling place, a

place where those living with mental illness can feel at home and welcome, because we care enough to make the effort to be a welcoming place for them - a place where they can feel accepted and whole, because we have learned to see their wholeness. I hope that we will choose to invite these holy exiles to come home. Then the healing can truly begin....for all of us.

*Editor's Note: This article is composed of excerpts from a lecture by Rabbi Senturia at a Spirituality and Mental Illness Conference jointly sponsored by NAMI Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Department of Mental Health, April 7, 2000. FaithNet Advisory Board members Maxine Pearce and Gunnar Christiansen, M.D. also participated in this all-day conference in Santa Rosa, CA which was attended by over 300 people.*