



Organizing a Mental Health Team

Pathways to Promise Institute

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A Mental Health Team in the Congregation:

- Provides a framework for mental health ministry including Companionship
- Serve as contact people for individuals and families seeking help
- Provide leadership in creating a caring congregation
- Organizes training and educational opportunities, and equips people for ministry

Five Areas of Concern (one framework for consideration)

1. Children's mental health
2. Trauma
3. Serious mental illness
4. Alcohol and substance use
5. Issues of aging, such as dementia

Mental Health Guides – One or More for Each Area of Concern

- Introduce and share descriptions to the congregation
- Explain what guides can do
 - Dedicated to understanding the area of concern
 - Willing to listen and share information, resources

Getting Started in the Local Congregation:

- Find collaborators and kindred spirits with a passion for mental health ministry (they have often experienced mental health issues – themselves or in their family)
- Obtain materials, including the Organizing a Mental Health Team booklet from Pathways to Promise (www.pathways2promise.org)
- Talk with pastoral staff or clergy about where a mental health team might fit in your faith community and express a desire to be connected to the existing organizational structure
- Research and introduce yourself to local mental health agencies and advocacy groups (e.g., NAMI, consumer mutual help organizations)
- Conduct surveys or interviews with congregation members to obtain their input on what they think is needed in the local congregation
- Arrange for educational events
- Starting a Companionship Ministry team often is a good vehicle through which to eventually establish a congregation-based mental health team