



WEEKEND OF FAITH

Friday May 20, 2016 – Sunday May 22, 2016

RESOURCE KIT FOR CLERGY



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Dear Faith Leader:

Thank you for participating in the first ever citywide **Mental Health Weekend of Faith on May 20-22, 2016**. This new and unprecedented engagement with communities of faith on the subject of mental health is an important part of **Thrive NYC**, the recently announced **Mental Health Roadmap for All**. You will be joining Faith Leaders of many cultures and traditions to raise awareness about mental health among people of faith all across the City.

Mental health is a deeply personal issue, and when people are ready to seek help, they often turn to the people with whom they are closest, both emotionally and geographically. As a Faith Leader, you are probably the one many people turn to when suffering from mental distress. We are offering this Resource Kit to help you participate effectively in the Weekend of Faith initiative.

The Resource Kit includes **talking points** to help you frame your message to the faith community, **fact sheets** about mental health in children and adults, **statistics** about mental health and **tips** on how to help someone with mental illness find appropriate help. This resource kit also includes **clergy self-care resources** to help you take care of yourself, even as you minister to the spiritual needs of others.

City staff will conduct conference calls to help prepare participating Faith Leaders for the Weekend, and will also reach out to you afterwards to learn about your experience.

Wednesday May 4, 2016 from 3:00-4:00pm:

Use Dial-in number: [1-866-213-1863](tel:1-866-213-1863) | Enter Participant Code: 1500188

Wednesday May 11, 2016 from 2:00-3:00pm (In Spanish):

Use Dial-in number: [1-866-213-1863](tel:1-866-213-1863) | Enter Participant Code: 1500188

Tuesday May 17, 2016 from 4:00-5:00pm:

Use Dial-in number: [1-866-213-1863](tel:1-866-213-1863) | Enter Participant Code: 1500188

Please RSVP by reaching out to us at faithweekend@health.nyc.gov or by calling the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Faith Based Initiatives at [347-396-4176](tel:347-396-4176).

Thank you again for participating in the Mental Health Weekend of Faith!

First Lady Chirlane I. McCray



KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. What Is Mental Health?

- Mental health is not just the absence of mental illness or a substance use disorder; it includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. It supports overall physical health, as well social and interpersonal relationships, education and active employment.
- Mental illness describes certain symptoms that compromise our mental health, and that usually cause disability or interfere with functioning well. Not all stresses on our mental health are a defined illness. Over the course of your life, if you experience mental illness or face threats to your mental health, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Substance use disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically and functionally significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.
- Mental illness is common but [help is available](#). Mental illness is treatable, and is often preventable, and mental health can be promoted and supported..

2. Mental Health and Mental Illness Affect Us All:

- Mental illness touches almost every family, in every neighborhood, in every borough. One in five adult New Yorkers experiences a mental health challenge in any given year. It affects not only the individual, but that person's family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. It affects us all.
- Major depressive disorder is the single greatest source of disability related to any illness, including physical illness such as cancer or diabetes, in NYC. At any given time over half a million adult New Yorkers are estimated to have depression, yet less than 40% report receiving care for it.
- 8% of NYC public high school students report attempting suicide. 73,000 New York City public high school students report feeling sad or hopeless each month.
- Consequences of substance use disorders are among the leading causes of premature death in every neighborhood in New York City, and are a leading cause of years lived with disability. In 2014, there were 797 unintentional drug overdose deaths in NYC, outnumbering

Approximately 1,800 deaths and 70,000 emergency room visits a year in NYC are related to alcohol misuse. In 2011, there were nearly 7,000 alcohol-related emergency room visits among New Yorkers under age 21.

- People who begin drinking before age 21 increase their risk of developing alcohol use disorders.
- 41% of NYC adults with a serious mental illness said they needed treatment at some point in the past year but did not receive it or delayed getting it.

3. Mental Health Problems are Treatable:

- If you have, or believe you may have, a mental health problem or substance use disorder, it can be hard to know what help you need. A trusted health care provider can often guide you as to whether more professional help is needed, as can some free resources, such as 1800-LIFENET.
- But it is almost always helpful to also talk about these issues with others—when it comes to making decisions about care, recovering from a mental illness, and maintaining mental health, especially in the face of stresses or challenges.
- Having a good support system and engaging with trustworthy people are key elements to successfully talking about your own mental health or substance misuse, such as a parent, family member, teacher, faith leader, health care provider or other trusted individual. Some of the best support comes from people you know who:
 - Give good advice when you want and ask for it; assists you in taking action that will help.
 - Like, respect, and trust you and who you like, respect, and trust, too.
 - Allow you the space to change, grow, make decisions, and even make mistakes
 - Listen to you and shares with you, both the good and bad times.
 - Respect your need for confidentiality so you can tell them anything.
 - Lets you freely express your feelings and emotions without judging, teasing, or criticizing.
 - Work with you to figure out what to do the next time a difficult situation comes up.
 - Have your best interest in mind.
- Faith communities are rich sources of such social support, including bringing together people who have similar backgrounds or faced similar challenges.. These kind of peer support relationships can positively affect individual recovery because:
 - People who have common life experiences have a unique ability to help each other based on a shared history and a deep understanding that may go beyond what exists in other relationships.

- People offer their experiences, strengths, and hopes to peers, which allows for natural evolution of personal growth, wellness promotion, and recovery.
- Peers can be very supportive since they have “been there” and serve as living examples that individuals can and do recover from mental health problems.
- Peers also serve as advocates and support others who may experience discrimination and prejudice.
- You may want to start or join a self-help or peer support group. National organizations across the country have peer support networks and peer advocates.

4. Mental Health Myths and Facts

(Source: <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/myths-facts/index.html>)

Myth: Mental health problems don't affect me.

Fact: Mental health problems are actually very common. In 2014, about:

- One in five American adults experienced a mental health issue.
- One in 10 young people experienced a period of major depression.
- One in 12 Americans aged 12 or older had a substance use disorder
- One in 25 Americans lived with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. It accounts for the loss of more than 41,000 American lives each year, more than double the number of lives lost to homicide. [Learn more about mental health problems.](#)

Myth: Children don't experience mental health or substance use disorder problems.

Fact: Even very young children may show early warning signs of mental health concerns. These mental health or substance use problems are often clinically diagnosable, and can be a product of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors.

- It has been estimated that half of all mental health and substance use disorders show first signs before a person turns 14 years old, and three quarters of mental health disorders begin before age 24.
- Unfortunately, less than 20% of children and adolescents with diagnosable mental health problems receive the treatment they need. Early mental health support can help a child before problems interfere with other developmental needs, and have a marked impact on lifelong outcomes.

Myth: People with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable.

Fact: The vast majority of people with mental health problems are no more likely to be violent than anyone else. Most people with mental illness are not violent and only 3%-5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness. **In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violence than the general population.**

Myth: People with mental health needs, even those who are managing their mental illness, cannot tolerate the stress of holding down a job.

Fact: People with mental health problems have the potential to be just as productive as other employees. Employers who hire people with mental health problems report good attendance and punctuality as well as motivation, good work, and job tenure on par with or greater than other employees.

When employees with mental health problems receive effective treatment, it can result in:

- Lower total medical costs.
 - Increased productivity.
 - Lower absenteeism.
 - Decreased disability costs.
-

Myth: Personality weakness or character flaws cause mental illness and substance use disorders. People struggling with these issues can snap out of it if they try hard enough.

Fact: Mental illness and substance use disorders have nothing to do with being lazy or weak.

Many factors contribute including:

- Biological factors, such as genes, physical illness, injury, or brain chemistry.
 - Life experiences, such as trauma or a history of abuse.
 - Social stressors, such as bullying
 - Family history of mental health problems.
-

Myth: There is no hope for people with mental health illness or substance use disorder. Once a friend or family member develops mental illness, he or she will never recover.

Fact: Studies show that people with mental illness or substance use disorder get better and many recover completely. Recovery refers to the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities. There are more treatments, services, and community support systems than ever before, and they work. Substance use disorders should be treated as chronic illnesses, which may require longer term treatment.



Myth: Therapy and self-help are a waste of time. Why bother when you can just take a pill?

Fact: Treatment for mental health problems varies depending on the individual and could include medication, therapy, improved social ties and support, or all of the above..

Myth: I can't do anything for a person with a mental health problem.

Fact: Friends and loved ones can make a big difference. Only 44% of adults with diagnosable mental health problems and less than 20% of children and adolescents receive needed treatment. Friends and family can be important influences to help someone get the treatment and services they need by:

- Reaching out and letting them know you are available to help.
 - [Helping them access mental health services.](#)
 - Learning and sharing the facts about mental health, especially if you hear something that isn't true.
 - Receiving training in Mental Health First Aid with NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
 - Treating them with respect, just as you would anyone else.
 - Refusing to define them by their diagnosis or using labels such as "crazy."
-

Myth: Prevention doesn't work. It is impossible to prevent mental illnesses.

Fact: There are many things that can be done to prevent mental illness, and to promote mental health health—from addressing many of the social determinants that are threats to mental health (such as poverty, racism, economic insecurity), to building social ties and communities, as well as individual emotional strengths especially early in life. Intervening early with pregnant women at risk for depression can prevent maternal depression and its costs to both the mother and her child. Acting early with parents also helps us act early for their children. Evidence shows that providing parents with preventive interventions for mental illness reduces the risk of their child developing a mental disorder and psychological symptoms later in life by 40%. Early identification of developmental delays and disabilities in young children through timely screening is important to ensure the necessary supports are offered to support children's physical as well as mental health.



Early and more consistent treatment and supports for very serious mental illness such as schizophrenia can also significantly prevent more severe deterioration, and better recovery. The chances that children, youth, and young adults will develop mental health problems can be reduced by promoting the social-emotional well-being of children and youth. Starting early in this way leads to:

- Better educational outcomes.
- Lower crime rates.
- Stronger economies.
- Lower health care costs.
- Improved quality of life.
- Increased lifespan.
- Improved family life.



SUGGESTED USE OF RESOURCE KIT:

We suggest that you use pointers from each of the four key themes to construct your talking points. For example:

Opening: May is National Mental Health Month and this weekend is the first ever citywide Mental Health Weekend of Faith. We are joining hundreds of other congregations across the city to bring awareness to the important topic of mental health.

From First Theme (What is Mental Health?):

- Mental health is not just the absence of mental illness or substance use disorders*; it includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

*Note: the language used to talk about substance use disorders has changed over the years. “Substance abuse,” “substance dependence,” and “addict” are no longer considered appropriate terms of use. Instead, use “substance use disorder,” “addiction”, and “person who uses drugs.”

From Second Theme (Mental Health Affects Us All):

- Mental illness and substance misuse touches every family, in every neighborhood, in every borough. One in five adult New Yorkers experiences a mental health challenge in any given year. It affects not only the individual, but that person’s family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. It affects us all.
- Major depressive disorder is the single greatest source of disability in NYC.⁷ At any given time over half a million adult New Yorkers are estimated to have depression, yet less than 40% report receiving care for it.
- 8% of NYC public high school students report attempting suicide. 73,000 New York City public high school students report feeling persistently sad or hopeless in the past year.
- Unintentional drug overdose deaths outnumber both homicide and motor vehicle fatalities.
- 41% of NYC adults with a serious mental illness said they needed treatment at some point in the past year but did not receive it or delayed getting it.

From Third Theme (Mental Health Problems are Treatable):

- If you have, or believe you may have, a mental health problem, it can be helpful to talk about these issues with others. It can be scary to reach out for help, but it is often the first step to helping you heal, grow, and recover.
- Having a good support system and engaging with trustworthy people are key elements to successfully talking about your own mental health.
- Find someone—such as a parent, family member, teacher, faith leader, health care provider or other trusted individual.
- Also make sure you discuss with your primary care provider or licensed professional.
- Visit Thrive NYC website to use its locator and other resources.

From Fourth Theme (Mental Health Myths and Facts):

Myth: I can't do anything for a person with a mental health problem.

Fact: Friends and loved ones can make a big difference. Parents/caregivers play an essential role in their child's mental health. Parents/caregivers should build strong relationships with their young children. The degree to which a young child feels safe seeking comfort from a parent and exploring the world freely, which is known as "secure attachment," is a strong predictor of lifetime mental health, especially when the child has been exposed to adverse events. When children are older, if parents notice that their child seems to be down in the dumps, stressed, or having a bad day — but doesn't feel like talking — parents should initiate an activity to do together, they could take a walk, watch a movie, shoot some hoops, or bake some cookies. Parents of older children and teenagers should pay attention and reach out when their child experiences difficult situations, such as a break-up, a fight in school, or a divorce. Older children and teenagers may need extra support or help understanding how to work through it.

Only 44% of adults with diagnosable mental health problems and less than 20% of children and adolescents receive needed treatment. Friends and family can be important influences to help someone get the treatment and services they need by:

- Reaching out and letting them know you are available to help.
- [Helping them access mental health services.](#)
- Learning and sharing the facts about mental health, especially if you hear something that isn't true. Mental illness and substance use disorders are not moral failings.
- Receiving training in Mental Health First Aid with NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- Treating them with respect, just as you would anyone else.
- Refusing to define them by their diagnosis or using labels such as "crazy."



Closing: We are all affected by mental health and we can all do something to improve mental health. Consider receiving free training in Mental Health First Aid from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Visit nyc.gov/mentalhealth to learn more and get connected to Thrive NYC – A Roadmap for Mental Health for All.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Clergy Self-Care Guide

Entering into ministry is considered widely as a spiritual calling. As pillars of civic life in the community, faith leaders serve in several key capacities: trusted spiritual leader, counselor, and adviser. However, members of the clergy are often faced with challenges that can have a significant impact on one's overall health and wellness over time. In an effort to address these challenges, we have included a list of self-care recommendations that we invite you to review.

Self-care practices are essential tools that address many of these challenges directly, and we hope that they prove helpful.

Self-Care Tips¹:

- **Create Boundaries**
 - Developing relationships that are outside of the congregation may help to increase work-life balance, and reduce stress.
- **Exercise and Diet**
 - Physical health is a vital aspect of mental health. Ensuring that time is devoted to exercise and eating well each day can significantly improve one's quality of life.
- **Check-ups**
 - Scheduling routine medical screenings is an essential part of ensuring overall health and wellness. This includes both physical health screenings as well as mental health screening.
- **Sleep**
 - Ensuring that adequate sleep is had each night will help to improve overall health and wellness.
- **Personal Time**
 - Setting aside time throughout the year for vacation can help to promote self-care and improve work-life balance.
- **Recognize the Indicators**
 - Secondary trauma is often experienced by many members of the clergy, and yet is often unnoticed and unaddressed. Talking with a clergy group, mental health professional, or both, can help to identify some of the steps needed to addressing trauma.

¹ *Mental Health: A Guide for Faith Leaders*, American Psychological Association, 2016.

Sermon Guide

Opening: May is National Mental Health Month and this weekend is the first ever citywide Mental Health Weekend of Faith. We are joining hundreds of other congregations across the city to bring awareness to the important topic of mental health.

Define mental health: Includes not only the absence of mental illness, but the presence of emotional, psychological, and social wellness. It's important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Mental illness is common: 1 out of 5 adult New Yorkers experiences a mental health challenge per year—every family and neighborhood is affected. Depression is the most common: over half a million adult New Yorkers are estimated to have depression, yet less than 40% report receiving care for it. 8% of NYC public high school students report attempting suicide, 73,000 report feeling persistently sad or hopeless in the past year. Unintentional drug overdose deaths outnumber both homicide and motor vehicle fatalities.

Mental health problems are treatable: Reaching out for help can be hard, but it is the first step to healing and treating mental health problems. Having a good support system is essential and ensures no one needs to suffer alone from mental health problems. Find someone—such as a parent, family member, teacher, faith leader, health care

provider who give good advice, respects your confidentiality and doesn't judge you. This person can help you figure out how to get support and what to do when a difficult situation comes up. Peer support groups for mental illness can be important for healing. You can also start a group. Visit Thrive NYC website to use the locator.

We can work together to address many common misconceptions about mental illness: Some myths include that *a person with a mental illness can't be healed; or therapy is a waste of time; or personality issues create mental illness.* Read the resource kit to share the facts.

Closing: As a faith community we can take action to help each other—to support recovery for those with mental illness, and to provide the tools that promote mental health. And individually I urge you to take action to help yourself if you are in need. But each of us can also take action to be ready to help and be there for others. Examples include free mental health first aid training; visit www.nyc.gov/mentalhealth to learn more and get connected to Thrive NYC – A Roadmap for Mental Health for All