

Faith and Health Partnerships



Pages 1-2

Our Approach: Loving Communities are Healthy Communities

Pages 3-4

Join us in this work

Page 5-6

Do We Have the Courage to Love?

Page 7

Healing Congregations:
Nurturing Love, Life, and Hope in a
Hurting World

Page 8

March 16 Webinar:
Compassion, Prevention, and
Healing for Addiction

Pages 9-10

Ways to get involved

Welcome, friends! Through this new publication, we provide a little background on the work we do and invite you to come alongside us to build loving, healthy communities.

Health programs, education, and access to care play big roles in people's health and wellbeing. But what makes the biggest difference is whether they have justice, connection, hope, trust, belonging, spiritual vitality in their neighborhood—all the things we teach and practice in our faith communities.

This work is big. But we can do it together—as Companions. Learn how on the following pages.

OUR APPROACH

Loving Communities are Healthy Communities

Life can hurt. We all have experiences of sorrow, struggle, and pain that are part of our stories.

Research shows how our bodies take these experiences in and how they shape our brains, hormonal systems, and genetic functioning. These experiences influence the way we experience the world, how we relate to other people, how we understand who God is.



Love can heal. Literally. Positive, caring relationships are the most powerful remedy that science knows for buffering the effects of difficult experiences. Loving relationships rewire our brains and stabilize our stress hormones. Feeling like we belong and can safely contribute to the world expands our spiritual window. This is true for us as individuals, but also for congregations and for communities.

Loving communities are healthy communities. Advocate Health's approach to faith and health partnerships is rooted in this simple yet powerful truth that when people live in supportive, just, connected environments, they are healthier.

continued on page 2

OUR APPROACH

Our work is to come alongside people of faith in the communities we serve and lean in together to build loving communities.



One of the ways we do this is through our leadership on trauma-informed, healing-centered care. We don't ask faith communities to start a new program or ministry. We ask our faith partners to bring and strengthen what they are already doing:

- Do you have a visiting-the-sick program, such as Bikur Cholim, deacons, or Stephen Ministry? We can help your visitors build skills for providing healing-centered care.
- Do you have a youth program? We can work with your youth leaders to apply trauma-informed principles and build protective factors.
- Do you wrestle with the stress of your role as a faith leader? Our clergy support programs provide a place for you to get in touch with your own resilience as you acknowledge and touch places of hurt in your own life.
- Do you have programs that reach people who are hungry, unhoused, on the margins? We can teach you not just how to provide a service, but how to Companion people on their journey.

[Contact us to learn more.](#)

Faith and Health Partnerships

JOIN US IN THIS WORK

We invite you into this work of creating healthy, loving communities – in your congregation, community, and other settings.

Learn how you and your members can accompany one another with compassion, boundaries, and mutuality by taking **Companionship training**.



Explore how hurt impacts us and how faith, love and hope can heal by completing the **Trauma, Faith, and Resilience course**.

Discover key mental health issues and proven approaches for intervening when someone is in a crisis by completing the evidence-based **Mental Health First Aid**.

Become better equipped to notice signs of mental distress and confidently respond to those in crisis by completing the three above workshops in a learning cohort. You will receive a Companionship certificate and become eligible for a microgrant to support program development in your congregation. **Learn more about the Listen. Love. Connect. Faith and Health Companionship Certification Program.**
Check out a story about someone who has participated.

Do you wrestle with stress of your role as a faith leader? Join other clergy for a circle for learning, mutual support, and spiritual renewal, with monthly check-ins for ongoing support. **Learn more about our clergy support groups.**

Do you know members of your congregation or community who may be lonely? Connect them with **Let's Get Together**, an evidence-informed program that helps people who may be lonely learn how to build healthy social connections.

JOIN US IN THIS WORK

Would you and your members like to learn how to manage your blood pressure and use spiritual practices to stay calm and manage stress? **Contact us** to learn more about **Heart and Soul**, a hypertension prevention and management program that uses spiritual practices to attend to the ways stress can impact our blood pressure.

Learn how to meet the mental health needs of your congregation through free **Mental Health Consultation and Education services**. Our Faith and Mental Health Specialist can assist you in managing mental/behavioral issues within your congregation, offer education and training, and more.

Take an in-depth learning journey into Restorative Justice practices as foundational for healing-centered care through our **Healing-Centered Learning Communities**.

Consider your own story, ideas about God, and ways of practicing your faith that create love, life, and hope. Download **Healing Congregations: Nurturing Love, Life and Hope in a Hurting World** for free and use it for Bible study, sermon preparation, leader training, personal devotions, etc.



Learn how we can partner with you on these initiatives.

- Illinois residents, contact Amy McNicholas at amy.mcnicholas@aah.org
- Wisconsin residents, contact Anya Gordon at anya.gordon@aah.org

[Access interest form for all trainings and support groups.](#)

Do We Have the Courage to Love?



One of the most common measures of the health of a community is infant mortality—the percentage of babies who die before their first birthday. As with many other health conditions, African Americans have the highest infant mortality rates in the country. Black babies die at three times the rate of white babies, even when the mother is well-educated and financially secure.

Researchers are increasingly clear that, even though Black women may have access to quality prenatal care, good nutrition, and self-care practices, the stress of racism and experiences of discrimination take a real toll on their bodies and affect the health and the well-being of their babies.

Advocate Health Care, along with several collaborative partners, received a grant from the City of Chicago to help organizations provide trauma-informed, healing-centered care to mothers and pregnant people to help buffer that toxic stress.

We call our project **Courage to Love**, based on a report from a National Commission on Infant Mortality, which found that inequities in birth outcomes are a relational issue and solutions must be based on the ways in which we treat each other.

Continued on next page.

DO WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO LOVE?

The report notes, “The paradigm to which the Commission has turned is that of relationality, an evolving field of study known in the physical sciences as systems theory, in political science as social capital, in behavioral science as social cohesion, and in theological discourse as love.”



When a national policy thinktank names love as a critical health intervention, that’s something to pay attention to!

Over the next two years, we will be convening Healing-Centered Learning Communities - groups of faith and organizational leaders who will complete 36 hours of training, so they can go back to share and build these practices in their own organizations.

Using the principles and practices from the Restorative Justice Movement, participants will build awareness and skills for nurturing positive connections with each other and with the people they serve.

There is no cost to participate in the Learning Communities. Participants may receive a stipend for participating if they are eligible through their organization.

If you would like to send a team from your congregation or organization to the Learning Community, **find out more here**. At this time, because the project is funded by the City of Chicago, participants must live or work in Chicago, but if you are in a different location, contact us and there are other ways we can work together.

We look forward to working and learning together to keep pregnant people, their partners, and babies thriving!

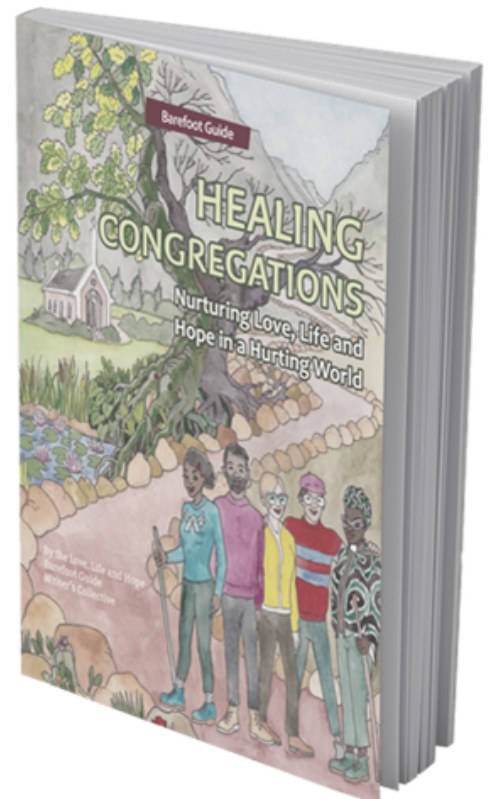
Healing Congregations: Nurturing Love, Life, and Hope in a Hurting World

Adversity, hurt, and human struggle are experiences that are part of all our lives. And so are love, life, and hope. When we know more about how these experiences link to our bodies, our communication patterns, our responses to stress, etc., we can start to see the dynamics and act in more healthy, life-giving ways with each other, our community and society.

This practical resource for pastors and lay leaders explores how faith communities can be healing-centered places of care for their members and communities.

Written collectively and integrating real stories of suffering, grace and healing, this resource doesn't provide easy answers, but invites the reader's own questions and yearnings into a conversation to discover their own wisdom and pathway to love, life and hope.

While it was written for Christian communities, people of all faiths will recognize the themes in their own traditions.



Download your free copy of [Healing Congregations here.](#)

Compassion, Prevention, and Healing for Addiction

March 16, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Sponsored by the Chicagoland Trauma Informed Congregations Network

Dr. Beth Fishman, Program Manager for Addiction Services for JCFS Chicago, and Rabbi Dr. Rob Jury from Congregation Anshe Tikvah will discuss addiction treatment approaches from the Jewish perspective.

Beth will present from the social service agency perspective, showcasing community education and support services and professional training activities.

Rob will share his experiences in providing clinical services, especially the development of faith-based treatment programming and issues within behavioral health chaplaincy.



[Register here](#)

GET INVOLVED

Join the Chicagoland Trauma Informed Congregations Network

You are invited to join the Chicagoland Trauma Informed Congregations Network. We are an interfaith table that brings together faith-rooted organizations and others that are interested in using our collective wisdom to respond to the call to facilitate and deepen the role of faith communities in recognizing and creating “safe and brave spaces” that support the healing of trauma experienced by individuals and communities. The Network is not a direct service provider, but a vehicle for education, skills transfer and connection of the intersection of faith, trauma and restorative justice.



Learn more about our work.

Join the mailing list.

GET INVOLVED

Join the Milwaukee Faith Community Collaborative Partnership



CITY OF MILWAUKEE
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Are you a faith leader who would like to get involved in restorative justice work? Or work to help reduce risk of violence in your community?

Join the Faith Community Collaborative Partnership of the Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention (OVP).

The Partnership allows members within the faith community to support OVP's mission, which includes providing strategic direction and oversight for City efforts to reduce risk of violence throughout Milwaukee. The Office of Violence Prevention relies on partnerships with the faith community to make Milwaukee a safe place to live, work, and play.

Contact Vaynesia Kendrick to learn more and get involved:
[**vnewma@milwaukee.gov**](mailto:vnewma@milwaukee.gov)

**COPING WITH GRIEF
AND TRAUMA**

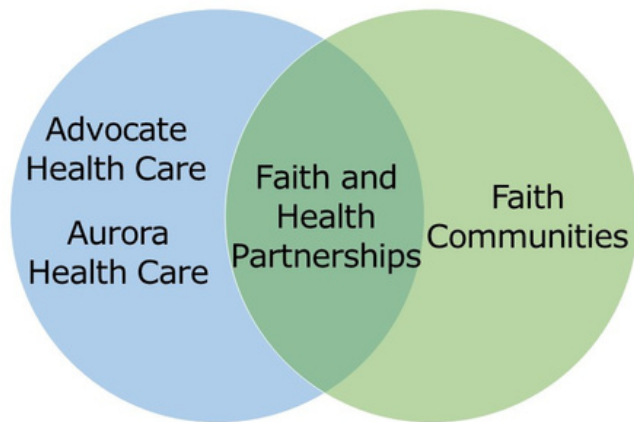
OVP FAITH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Download OVP Faith Community Partnership's
Coping with Grief and Trauma rack card

ABOUT US

Faith and Health Partnerships

We work side-by-side with faith communities to promote health equity by mobilizing the transforming power of social connectedness and spiritual wisdom.



Our core belief: Drawing on the wisdom of our religious traditions and the best social and public health science, we believe that positive, mutual relationships and the intentional practice of faith are at the heart of what creates equitable health and well-being for individuals, congregations and communities.

We blend the strengths of Advocate Health Care and Aurora Health Care with the strengths of your congregation to improve the health of those in your community.

[Join our Illinois mailing list](#)

[Join our Wisconsin mailing list](#)