

Bringing Mental Health to the Forefront: Tips for Faith Leaders

Talking openly about mental health in your house of worship can play an important role in destigmatizing the topic and creating a welcoming and affirming space for those living with mental health conditions.

Among the ways faith leaders can bring mental health to the forefront:

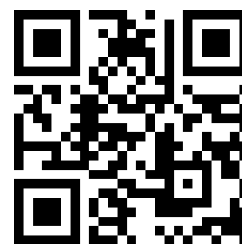
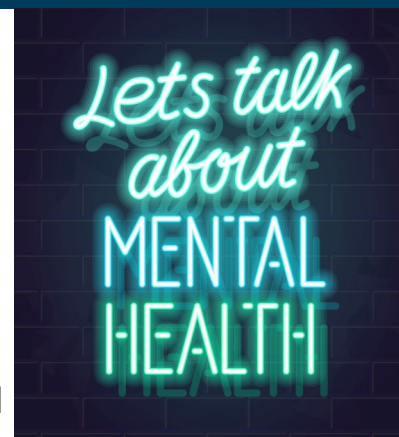
- Preach about mental health, including the [facts and common myths](#). [Read one pastor's story](#).
- Incorporate specific prayers for those living with mental illness into prayers at worship services.
- Include information about mental health in church bulletins or newsletters.
- Invite local mental health experts—including those who have experienced mental illness—to speak with your congregation .
- Support the development of a [trauma-informed community](#).
- Organize meetings, dinners, or other gatherings for members of your congregation or community to have conversations about mental health.

To promote acceptance of those with mental health issues:

- Talk about your own mental health openly.
- Be an example of taking good care of your mental health by making mental wellness a priority in your personal life.
- Be inclusive. Mental health affects all of us.
- Foster opportunities to build connections with individuals and families dealing with mental health challenges through trust and acceptance.
- Foster safe and supportive environments for people to openly talk about mental health, stress, trauma, and related issues.
- Ask, “What happened?” instead of, “What's wrong?” when [talking with a friend](#) in need.
- Encourage and express empathy in your family, congregation, and community. Convey a message of nonviolence, acceptance, and compassion.

Resources:

- [Quick Reference on Mental Health for Faith Leaders](#)
- [Mental Health Guide for Faith Leaders](#)
- [Creating Community Connections for Mental Health](#)



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