

Creating Parish-Based Mental Health Ministry

Steps for Formation:

1. Talk with your pastor and parish leadership team re: Mental Health Ministry. Use Hope and Healing to ground Mental Health Ministry both theologically and pastorally.
2. Organize core team for establishing Mental Health Ministry (Staff and volunteers? All volunteer? All staff?)
3. Study as a Core Team to ground yourself in Theological Framework, Catholic Identity, and Pastoral Ministry: **Hope & Healing: A Pastoral Letter from Bishops of California on Mental Health and Caring for those Suffering from Mental Illness.**
4. Review what is in place now: Current process when someone comes to parish/school/staff person with mental health concern. This process would include current training of staff, definition of the scope of practice, and current referral system for counseling outside of scope of practice of ordained and lay staff.
5. Brainstorm mission and vision for ministry (parish, school, deanery, diocese; certain groups i.e. parents, teens, & elders; those bereaved by suicide; support group for those affected by mental illness; parish staff, including ordained and lay)
6. Write mission and vision statement.
7. Set regular meeting date and time for Mental Health Ministry team
8. Ensure written action plans follow each meeting within 48 hours of meeting.
9. Create plan for implementing Mental Health Ministry (suggest 3-year plan; first year plan is most developed and the next two years' plan will flow from Year One.)
10. Establish budget for Mental Health Ministry and include in the Plan.
11. Join Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers and use this national network for ministry ideas and colleagues.
12. Pray as if it all depends on you. Work as if it all depends on God. (St. Ignatius)

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St. Francis of Assisi Parish
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