April 30, 2020

Dear West Palm Beach and Palm Beach County Faith Leaders:

Annually, the City of West Palm Beach passes a proclamation declaring May as Mental Health Awareness & Trauma Informed Care month. This national effort began in 1949 by Mental Health America, and again this year, Palm Beach County, many municipalities, and organizations joined this movement. Locally, this proclamation was primarily sponsored by Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures, BeWellPBC and Healthier Delray Beach.

Now more than ever given the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to be addressing mental health and well-being is exacerbated given the loss of employment, increased demand for basic needs, and social isolation.

We recognize that 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 5 youth live with a mental health condition, and that over 50% of them do not receive necessary, timely mental health treatment. In addition, twenty-six percent of children will witness or experience a traumatic event before age 4. Early access to quality mental health services is very important, and faith leaders can have a vital role to play in this.

The City of West Palm Beach partners with many local and national initiatives to support our community. As part of this month's focus, we are partnering with Cities Thrive and the local faith community for the 4th Annual Mental Health Weekend of Faith May 15th through 17th. Throughout this weekend, clergy of all faiths in Palm Beach County are encouraged to use the enclosed toolkit where you will find talking points to help frame meaningful messages around mental health and well-being, and encourage congregants to seek help whenever needed.

In addition, we encourage you to learn more about the *Get Your Green On* campaign at www.GetYourGreenOn.org, wear GREEN on May 21st, and use #GYGO2020 and #GetYourGreenOn when posting pictures that day- or anytime during the month. Also, attached is a listing of some local and national resources that are available for residents to learn more about mental health. Let us all be brave enough to have a conversation about mental health!

Sincerely,

Mayor Keith A. James
City of West Palm Beach

Kevin Jones
Coordinator of Community Initiatives
City of West Palm Beach

Seth B. Bernstein, Psy.D., CAP
Psychologist & Exec. Vice President
United Way of Palm Beach County

May 2020 is Mental Health Awareness & Trauma Informed Care Month
In Palm Beach County
Mental Health Weekend of Faith- Community Resources

211 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast: Call "211" helpline 24/7, or text 898211 (www.211palmbeach.org)

Alpert Jewish Family & Children's Service: (561) 684-1991 (www.jfcsonline.com)

Center for Child Counseling: (561) 244-9499 (www.centerforchildcounseling.org)

Community Partners of South Florida: (561) 841-3500 (www.cp-cto.org)

Mental Health America of Palm Beach County: (561) 801-HELP (www.mhapbc.org)

National Alliance on Mental Illness- Palm Beach County: (561) 588-3477 (www.namipbc.org)

PBC Youth Services Department/Youth & Family Counseling: (561) 242-5714
(http://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/Pages/Contact.aspx)

So. County Mental Health Center (Mobile Response): (561) 495-0522 (www.southcountymentalhealth.org)

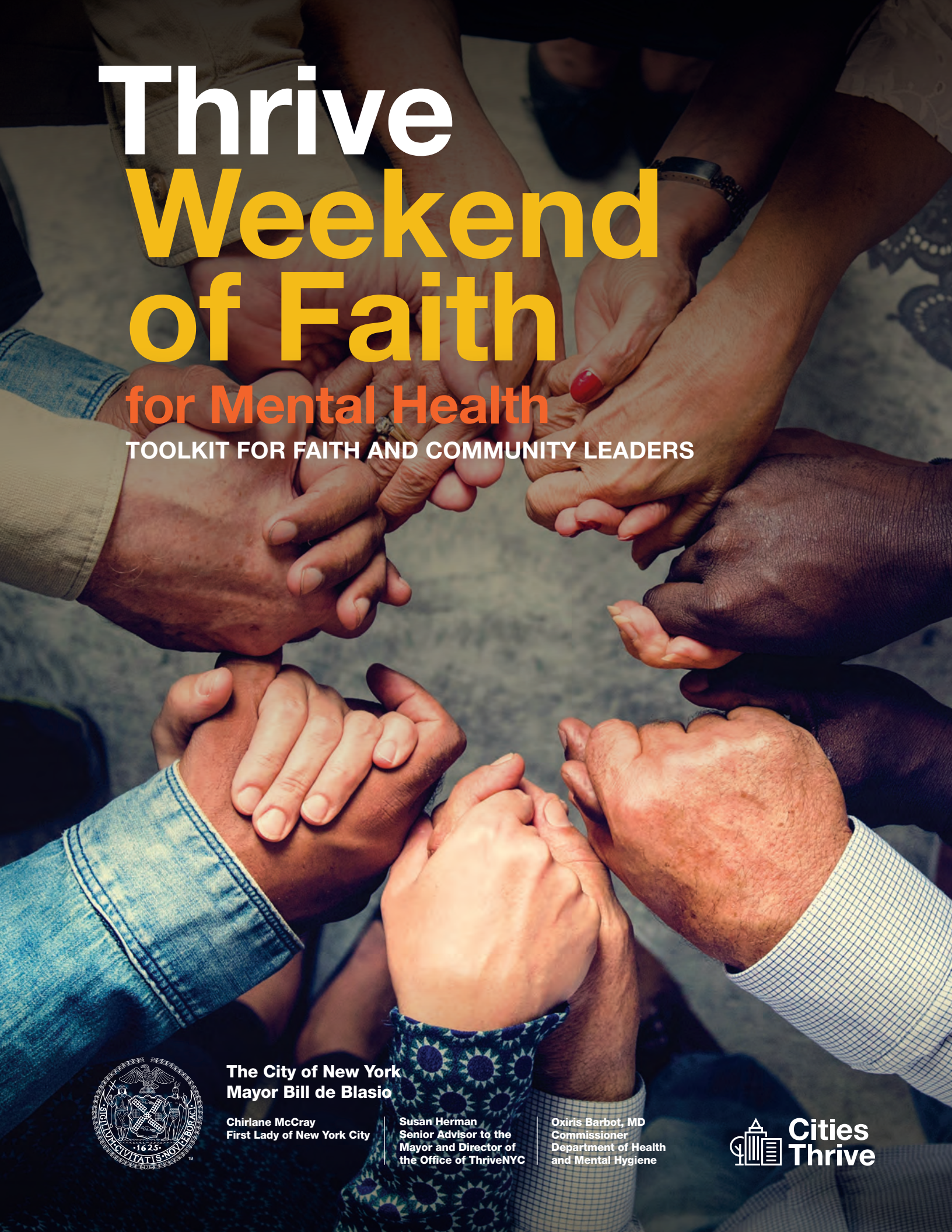
The Lord's Place: (561) 494-0125 (www.thelordsplace.org)

If you know someone in a mental health crisis and is in danger of hurting themself or someone else, call 911 and ask for a Crisis Intervention Team trained officer, if available. If there is not an emergency, call 211 for assistance.

Tips on what you can do this month:

- Use the enclosed *Thrive- Weekend of Faith for Mental Health* national resource kit for faith leaders to prepare your sermon May 15th through 17th
- Review the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's Prayer Guide at https://theactionalliance.org/sites/default/files/weekend_of_prayer_2019.pdf
- Encourage all congregants to wear GREEN during the Weekend of Faith events and during worship services, and post pictures on social media during the Get Your Green On campaign (see below)
- Have someone provide a personal testimony and/or invite a mental health professional to speak with your congregants
- Host a mental health resource fair (even virtually) for your faith community
- Light up your congregation with GREEN lights during the month of May
- Assist a friend, family member, fellow congregant, neighbor or co-worker in getting help
- Attend/host a local Mental Health First Aid training (www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs)
- Hold a community conversation around the topic of mental health and well-being
- Support the Get Your Green On campaign on May 21st (www.GetYourGreenOn.org); Use #GetYourGreenOn and #GYGO2020 when posting pictures.

Disclaimer: This list is not exhaustive of the services available in the community.



Thrive Weekend of Faith for Mental Health

TOOLKIT FOR FAITH AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

The City of New York
Mayor Bill de Blasio

Chirlane McCray
First Lady of New York City

Susan Herman
Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Director of the Office of ThriveNYC

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Cities Thrive

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This toolkit and the contents therein represent a collection of resources, including religious resources, for faith and community leaders participating in the Weekend of Faith for Mental Health. This document does not, in any way, serve as an endorsement or disapproval of any faith tradition by any NYC government agency mentioned therein.

Message from the First Lady of New York City



Dear Community Leader,

Thank you for joining our fourth annual Thrive Weekend of Faith! I am so grateful for your support, partnership and leadership.

The 2019 Thrive Weekend of Faith will focus on stress and depression, two common and serious health challenges that affect all families and communities, especially the most vulnerable among us.

This is a difficult time for many Americans. Many struggle every day to make ends meet. Many cope with the demands of raising children in uncertain times, and the cost and challenges of caring for elderly family members. For many families, health care and prescription drug prices present a significant burden.

All of this pressure takes a tremendous emotional toll on people and their ability to live, love, work and learn. When stress becomes overwhelming, it can trigger underlying depression and other more serious conditions. That's why it's more important than ever that people learn how to address stress and depression in a healthy way — for themselves and for the people they care about.

As clergy and community leaders, you are uniquely positioned to educate people about these challenges. You can encourage people to seek help when they need it and promote resources available in your communities. You can also ensure that you are taking good care of yourselves. Working with people in need can be extremely fulfilling, but also challenging and draining. Prioritizing self-care is essential to effectively continue this work.

Through the Thrive Weekend of Faith, we hope you can stimulate important conversations in your congregations. This toolkit was created to help you engage your congregations and communities about what it means to be healthy and whole. During the Weekend of Faith, and all year long, this toolkit can also serve as a resource to connect people to the care they need.

Thank you again for joining us in this important work. Mental health is one of the greatest social justice and public health challenges of the 21st century, and we cannot turn the tide without your leadership.

Sincerely,

Chirlane McCray

Chirlane McCray, First Lady of New York City

Promote Mental Health During the Weekend of Faith and Beyond

Step one: Craft your mental health message

As part of the Weekend of Faith for Mental Health, we join thousands of communities across the country to raise awareness about mental health, with a special focus on stress and depression.

We recommend messages that:

Emphasize the importance of community support:

Communities play a key role in addressing stress and depression. Provide an informed and nonjudgmental space to support those who struggle as well as their friends and families. Talk openly about these challenges to reduce stigma and connect people to the care they need.

Address common misconceptions:

There are many myths about stress and depression, including: if you don't have symptoms, you don't have stress; asking someone if they are suicidal will increase the likelihood of suicide; children aren't affected by stress; and depression is a character failing. These are myths. Share the facts.

Highlight the importance of seeking help:

Reaching out can be hard, but it is the first step to getting help. If someone is experiencing stress or depression, encourage them to take advantage of professional support. Help and support might include talk therapy, counseling, medication, lifestyle changes (including physical activity), or a combination of the above.

Encourage action:

Mental health is important for everyone. Get trained in Mental Health First Aid. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health challenge, see a mental health professional or call, text or chat with NYC Well. You can also join or create a support group. Create space in your community to discuss the barriers that hold us back. Together, we can overcome these challenges.

Step two: Connect your message to your community

No matter your faith tradition, you can always draw inspiration from it and:

- Speak of your own challenges and journey
- Reference local examples of strength and resiliency
- Invite mental health organizations to discuss the importance of fighting stigma
- Ask mental health professionals to demystify mental health care
- Highlight stories of healing and recovery

If you don't have symptoms, you don't have stress.

MYTH

FACT

Everyone experiences stress differently. There can be physical and/or psychological symptoms. Many people who experience chronic stress get used to the symptoms and may no longer recognize they are in distress.

Christians can find examples in the Bible that teach believers to be stewards to each other:

- "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
- "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)
- "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in; I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Matthew 25:35-36)

Muslims can find strength and understanding in the Quran and Hadith:

- "Indeed, after hardship there is ease" (94:6) – Surah Ash-Sharh
- "So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief (94:5) And that it is He who makes one laugh and weep" (53: 43)
- Usamah ibn Shuraik narrated: "... 'O Allah's Messenger! Should we seek medical treatment for our illnesses?' He replied: 'Yes, you should seek medical treatment, because Allah, the Exalted, has let no disease exist without providing for its cure, except for one ailment, namely, old age'." (Tirmidhi)

Jews are empowered by scripture and philosophy:

- "Take heed to thyself and take care of your lives." (Deuteronomy 4:9)
- "When the patient is overpowered by imagination, prolonged meditation and avoidance of social contact (which they never exhibited before), or when one avoids pleasant experiences which were in him before, the physician should do nothing before he improves the soul by removing the extreme emotions." (Maimonides)

Sikhs can find inspiration within Gurbani that addresses illnesses of the mind caused by both external and internal experiences:

- "The men and women staggered like the warriors writhing after falling during a fight in the battlefield. There was uproar throughout the city and the elephants and horses also began to fall, being worries, what type of sport has been played by the divine? Thinking about this, the men and women remained under depression (289-852)."
- "The physician was called in; he touched my arm and felt my pulse. The foolish physician did not know that the pain was in the mind (1279-1)."
- "If the mind becomes balanced and detached, and comes to dwell in its own true home, imbued in the truth of the divine, then it enjoys the essence of supreme spiritual wisdom, and shall never feel hunger again (20-18)."

Buddhists can find many specific references from the Dalai Lama:

- "Taking a realistic view and cultivating a proper motivation can also shield you against feelings of fear and anxiety. If you develop a pure and sincere motivation, if you are motivated by a wish to help on the basis of kindness, compassion, and respect, then you can carry on any kind of work, in any field, and function more effectively with less fear or worry, not being afraid of what others think or whether you ultimately will be successful in reaching your goal. Even if you fail to achieve your goal, you can feel good about having made the effort. But with a bad motivation, people can praise you or you can achieve goals, but you still will not be happy."

Hindu leaders discuss acts of service in the journey for peace:

"The best form of service is to uplift someone's state of mind." Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

"Cultivate peace first in the garden of your heart by removing the weeds of lust, hatred, greed, selfishness, and jealousy. Then only you can manifest it externally. Then only, those who come in contact with you, will be benefited by your vibrations of peace and harmony." Swami Sivananda



Step three: Share the facts

Stress is an individual's response to challenging life events. Everyone experiences stress, and everyone manages and copes with stress differently. Some people may experience physical symptoms (for example, upset stomach or headaches). Others may experience emotional or psychological symptoms (for example, irritability or sadness). Many people experience both. If unmanaged, stress can lead to mental health problems, such as depression, PTSD and substance use disorders, as well as physical health problems, including heart disease and high blood pressure.

There are three different types of stress — basic, cumulative and traumatic stress. Basic stress is the stress we may experience when getting cranky children ready for school, sitting in traffic or giving a presentation at work. Cumulative stress occurs when we experience multiple stressors at the same time or are constantly exposed to one or more stressors over time. Examples include experiencing economic instability or discrimination, feeling unsafe and living with chronic disease. Traumatic stress can occur after one or more events that threaten the life or well-being of an individual or community. Events that can trigger traumatic stress include violent attacks, natural disasters or the sudden loss of a loved one.

Members of groups who are discriminated against because of their skin color, language, ethnicity, religion or sexual identity may experience high levels of chronic stress known as minority stress. Additionally, hate speech and hate crimes, threats to civil rights and policies that tear families apart all lead to severe stress, and can lead to trauma and depression.

Depression is an illness that affects your mood, body, behavior and mind. You may be experiencing depression if, for two weeks or more, it's hard for you to take care of things at home or work, or you lose interest in activities you used to enjoy. Depression can range from changes in sleeping and eating patterns, irritability, isolation from others, changes in memory, physical aches and pains to thoughts of death or suicide.

Although depression and stress can affect anyone, they do not affect all Americans equally. Experiences of discrimination and stressful living environments are related to poorer mental health outcomes, including higher incidences of depression.

MYTH

Depression is a character weakness or moral failing.

FACT

Depression is unrelated to an individual's character or morals. It is common, treatable condition that can range from mild to severe. Depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental and psychological factors.

Suicide is the result of many events rather than a single event. Depression and severe stress increase the risk of suicide, as do substance use and other mental illnesses. Learn to recognize the warning signs that someone may be considering suicide:

- Talking about suicide or death
- Social isolation or withdrawal
- Extreme hopelessness
- Giving away possessions or getting affairs in order
- Increased drug or alcohol use

If you suspect someone may be considering suicide, ask them if they are thinking about dying or taking their own life. Be supportive, but direct. Asking someone if they are suicidal will not make someone suicidal. Keep these goals in mind as you talk with someone in distress:

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies
- If you think someone is in immediate danger, always call 911

Recovery is a process through which individuals improve their health and wellness. When it comes to recovery from depression and stress, it's important to keep in mind that there is no single path or set length of treatment time for everyone.

As a faith leader, you can bring together people who are seeking support – whether they are individuals with mental illness, or their friends and family members. These kinds of support groups and relationships promote recovery. People who have common lived experiences have a unique ability to help each other.

Most importantly, you can express confidence in a person's strength to take steps toward healing. You have the tools to help them address their challenges when they are ready.

MYTH

Asking someone if they are having thoughts of suicide will "put the idea in their head" or increase the likelihood of a suicide attempt.

FACT

Asking someone about suicide will not make them more likely to kill themselves. Asking may save their life. Here is how you can ask: "It sounds like you have been feeling really down for a while now. I care about you and am concerned about your safety. Have you had any thoughts about ending your life?" If you think someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

Step 4: Promote mental health beyond this weekend

Encourage ongoing learning. Learn more about mental illness and provide opportunities for your congregation to learn. Consider organizing workshops or lectures and invite local mental health professionals or individuals with lived experience to present or lead.

Develop a list of community resources. Consider developing your own list of local resources to add to those in the Toolkit. Reach out to mental health clinics in your area and learn about the types of services they provide. Having a referral on hand can increase the likelihood people will follow up with care.

Foster an informed, welcoming and nonjudgmental space where your community members feel safe and supported. As a leader, you already support others through difficult times. Stress and depression are no different than other challenges individuals face. Provide support to individuals and families with a mental illness as you do for individuals and families experiencing a physical illness.

Build support systems. For those struggling with depression or anxiety, encourage them to seek help from a health care provider as well as support from a trusted individuals such as parents, family members, teachers or others. Remind them that some of the best support comes from trusted people who will:

- Help them take action or figure out what to do in a challenging situation.
- Allow them the space to change, grow, make decisions and even make mistakes.
- Respect their confidentiality.
- Let them express their feelings without judgment or teasing.

Host Mental Health First Aid training. This training will help your community members learn to listen without judgment and help someone in distress until they can get the professional care they may need.

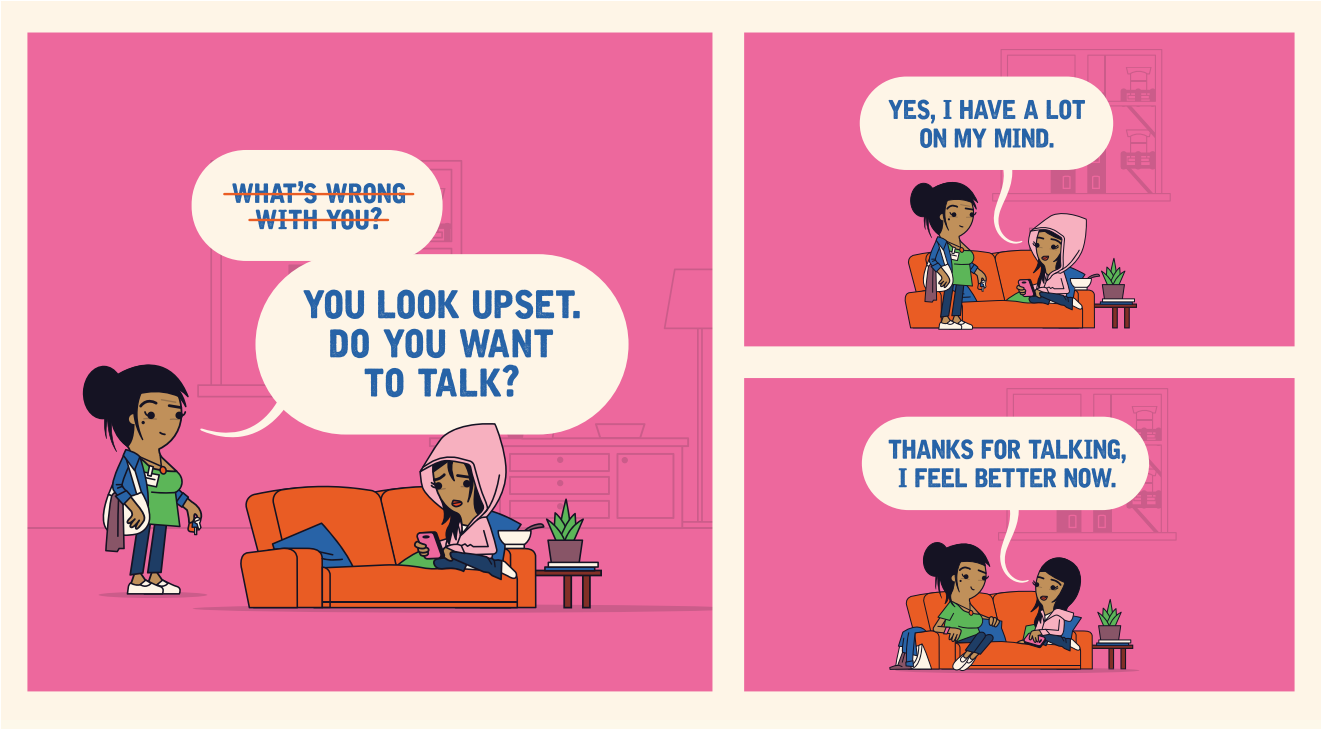
Tips and Resources

Practice and promote self-care

Self-care means taking care of our physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual health so that we can continue to effectively help others. Self-care is essential for faith leaders and their communities. Create a self-care plan that includes these activities, and revisit it frequently:

- Set boundaries: Limits are healthy and beneficial for you and others.
- Take care of your physical health: Eat nutritious and healthy foods, be physically active, have restful and regular sleeping habits, and see your doctor regularly.
- Engage in activities that bring you joy: Listen to music, read a book, or watch a movie.
- Incorporate relaxation and mindfulness activities into your day: Practice deep breathing and meditation.
- Build and nurture relationships and connections: Spend time with family and friends, connect with religious or spiritual connections, and check in with those who know you best. Listen when they say you seem overwhelmed.

Mental Health First Aid helps you learn how to support your loved ones who are struggling.



Social Media Guide

Share your participation to help us build stronger communities and encourage others to join us in minimizing the stigma around mental health. Can we count on you to help us spread the word? Follow the steps below.

Step 1: Take a picture of you or your congregation during the Thrive Weekend of Faith!

Step 2: Use the hashtag #ThriveNYC to make sure you're joining the conversation.

Step 3: Don't forget to tag @NYCFirstLady and NYC government leaders in your posts.

Step 4: Share your thoughts on WHY participation is important to YOU and your community.

Below are some examples of posts you can use on your social media accounts:

We're proud to join over 2,000 houses of worship around the country in dedicating our sermons to the importance of mental health and wellness with our communities. #ThriveNYC

Stress and depression are not just challenges in [community name], they are in EVERY community. No more silence, no more shame — let's talk about it. #ThriveNYC

Mental illness affects EVERY community — even ours. That's why this weekend we're opening up the first of many conversations about stress and depression. #ThriveNYC

We need to support our brothers and sisters facing challenges with mental health. No more silence, no more shame — let's talk about it. #ThriveNYC

As with any other disease, no one should face mental health challenges alone. No more shame, no more stigma — it's time to heal our community. #ThriveNYC

We're joining communities from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico for the Annual Weekend for Mental Health to fight the stigma around mental health and addiction in our own community. Speaking openly about mental health is important not just to our community, but ALL communities. One in five Americans experience a mental health challenge every year. Breaking down barriers to treatment, decreasing stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction, and supporting our brothers and sisters is of vital importance. Together we can overcome these challenges. #ThriveNYC.



National Resource Guide

Crisis and Access Lines:

Talk to someone who can help right now. Get connected with further treatment and resources if needed.

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- Veteran's Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255
- Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990

Online Resources:

Mental Health America:

America's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness.

- mentalhealthamerica.net

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Free Mobile Apps:

Mental health and addiction resources right on your mobile phone or tablet.

- store.samhsa.gov/apps/

KidsHealth.org:

Information and resources on physical, emotional and behavioral health topics with separate sections for parents, kids and teens.

- Kidshealth.org

Child Mind Institute:

Resources for families on children's mental health problems.

- Childmind.org

Mental Health First Aid:

This course will give you the tools you need to respond to and help someone experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

- nyc.gov/mhfa

Additional Support Groups:

Connect with others who are dealing with the same issues in a safe, nonjudgmental space. Peer support groups can help people feel less alone and more understood.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Support Groups

- nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-Family- Support-Group

Fight Stigma

- nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/October-2018/Overcoming-Stigma

Find Other Support Groups

- findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/link-focSelfGP

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

- dbsalliance.org

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

- adaa.org

Thrive NYC

nyc.gov/thrivenyc

#ThriveNYC

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