

# Church on the Corner: Mental Health



*The report has been prepared for:  
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January 2020




## ■ Process

Research Services works with clients to determine the purpose of the work, who should be surveyed, and timeline.

- Preliminary meetings were held with Mental Health Initiative (MHI) staff leadership to discuss the work
- Five surveys were designed
- Research Services supplied mid council, church leaders, and members contacts
- MHI provided the seminary contacts
- Surveys were approved by MHI leadership
- Surveys were sent to ministers in September
- Surveys were sent to mid council leaders, church leaders seminaries, and church members in October
- Links to all surveys were on the MHI website
- The survey process included an invitation to participate, two reminders, and an immediate thank you upon completion of the survey
- Surveys closed on November 1 for mid council leaders, church leaders, church members, and seminaries
- The ministers survey closed on November 15



# Key Findings



42% of church leaders say that their church is equipped to welcome individuals with significant mental health issues into the daily life of the church. The top-ranked barrier to having mental health ministries is “not knowing how to respond to an individual who is showing sign of a mental health condition.”

43% of church leaders' medical insurance through their church includes mental health coverage. 17% of respondents' churches do not provide medical insurance at all.

17% of church leaders report their church sponsoring an event on mental health. 35% of church leaders report their church maintaining a directory of mental health resources. Of these, almost half say that this directory is updated annually and 72% say it is available to all members of the congregation.

Less than 12% of church leaders are aware of mental health resources available to congregations, mid councils, and seminaries.

# Think about the various activities in this church over the last 12 to 18 months. This church...

N=427

**60%**

Provides space to a community support group such as AA or Compassionate Friends

**51%**

Provides support or prayer groups for individuals or loved ones facing mental health concerns

**44%**

Provides support following a traumatic event (natural disaster, mass shooting, hate crime)

**43%**

Engages in ministry with individuals "who are both homeless and who have a mental illness"

**39%**

Advocates for and with people with mental illness and their families

**35%**

Had a sermon or worship service that either focused on or included issues of mental health/mental illness

**32%**

Advocates on issues related to mental health in the community

**29%**

Provides opportunities to learn about mental health/mental illness



The following statements focus on the interest, ability, and engagement in current mental health ministries of congregations in this church.

This church is:

N=476

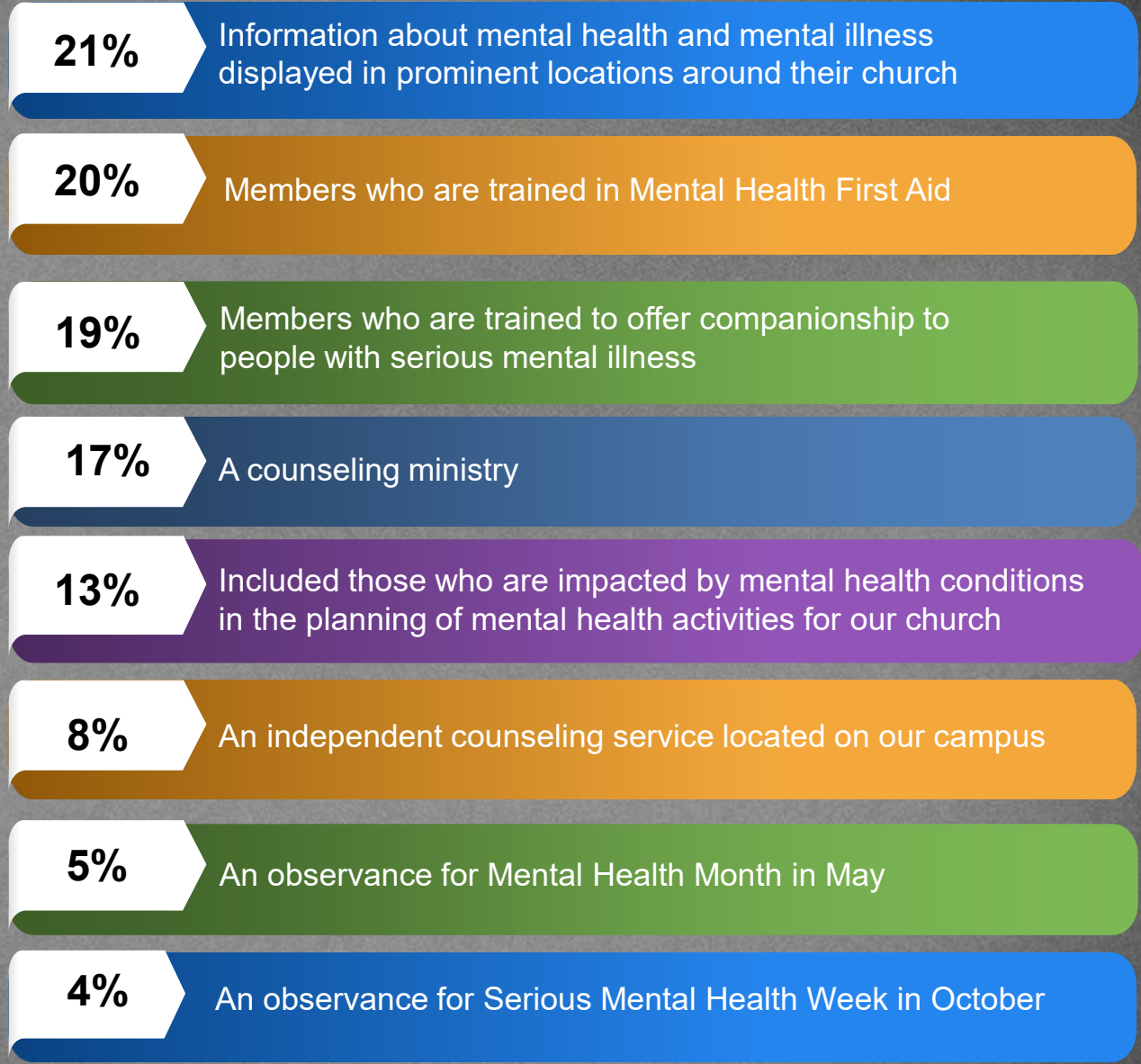
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Moderately Agree	Extremely Agree
Interested in learning more about mental health	2%	7%	36%	<b>41%</b>	13%
Equipped to engage in a mental health ministry	12%	26%	<b>31%</b>	28%	2%
Engaged in some form of a mental health ministry	15%	19%	27%	<b>32%</b>	7%

# What information and services are available at churches?

N=474

## This church has...

**48%**  
of leaders report  
*"None of these"*  
services being  
available at their  
church



# Rank the barriers to mental health ministries in this church

N=383

**#1**

*Not knowing how to respond to an individual who is showing signs of a mental health condition*

*followed by ...*

**#2**

Lack of knowledge about mental health issues

**#3**

Lack of time

**#4**

Myths, misunderstandings, or stereotypes about mental illness

**#5**

Fear of mental illness

**#6**

Lack of interest



# Which of the following services are available in the city or county where this church is located?

N=479

93%

Counseling programs and services

90%

Addiction treatment programs

81%

Crisis mental health services

76%

Services for children and youth

75%

Veteran services

67%

Inpatient mental health treatment

61%

Day treatment programs

61%

Transitional housing for individuals and/or families

60%

Services for those who have mental illness and are homeless

3%

None of the above

Almost all church leaders report having some type of mental health services in the town or county in which they live.



# Ranked barriers to adequate mental health and mental health treatment and services in the community according to church leaders

N=367

1

Individuals may not know that they are eligible for services

2

Information about services is not widely shared

3

Limited access to resources

4

Inadequate transportation systems to get to a from services

5

Lack of mental health professionals

6

No free or low-cost treatment

7

Limited treatment options

# Which of the following could be an indicator of mental health concerns or mental illness?

N=471

# 92%

correctly identified  
all the listed  
indicators as  
forms of mental  
illness

99%

- Inability to cope with daily problems
- Delusions, paranoia, hallucinations
- Excessive fears or worries, extreme feelings of guilt
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Excessive anger, hostility, violence
- Unrelenting sadness or low mood
- Trouble understanding and relating to situations and people

98%

- Feeling insignificant or worthless
- Suicidal thinking
- Confused thinking

97%

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Significant tiredness, low energy, problems sleeping

96%

- Major changes in eating habits

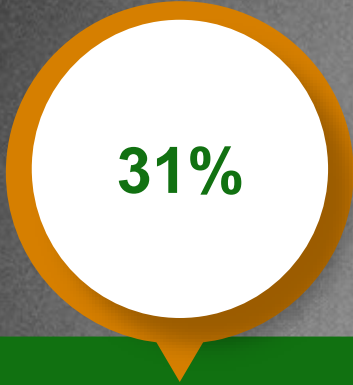
94%

- Sex drive change

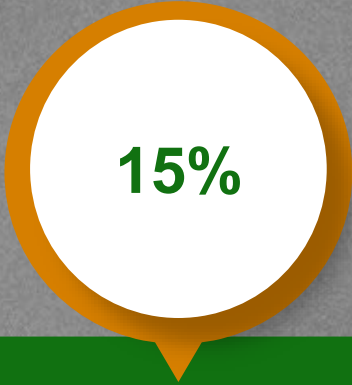


# Have you or your community personally experienced a large-scale act of violence?

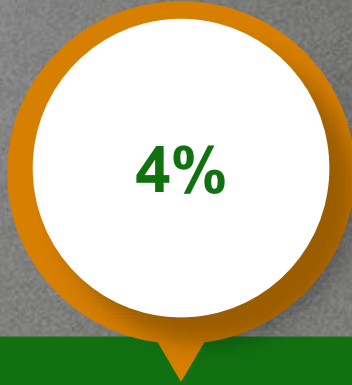
N=470



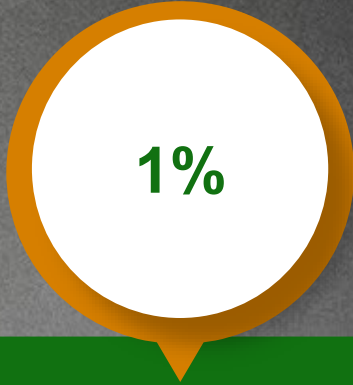
A violent act occurred in this community



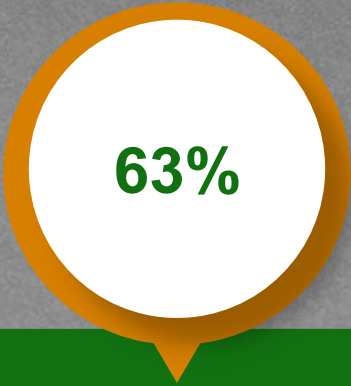
I know people who were harmed



Members of my family were harmed



I was harmed



None of the above

# Are the following statements true or false?

Church leaders express a great understanding of stigmas and inaccurate statements around mental health and mental illness concerns.

N=468

**99%**

Respondents disagree that mental illness is a moral failing.

**99%**

Respondents disagree that mental illness normally improves on its own.

**99%**

Respondents disagree that mental illness is a sign of weakness.

**94%**

Respondents agree that anyone can have mental illness

**81%**

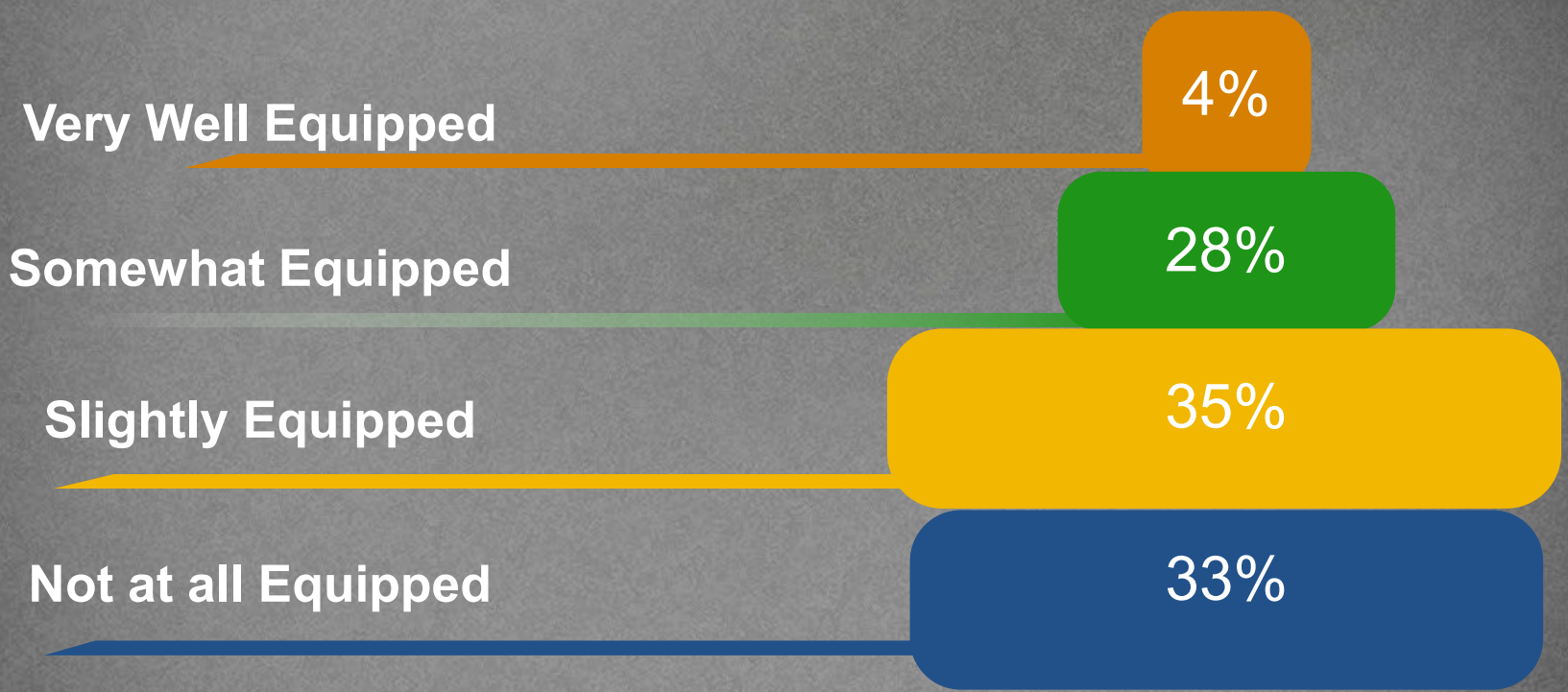
Respondents disagree that mental illness can be cured through prayer.





# How well equipped is this church to respond to its ministers who are facing mental health challenges?

N=443



# According to church leaders, this church...

N=446

	Not at all True	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Very True
Is open to calling ministers who have a history of mental illness	27%	<b>39%</b>	26%	8%
Has a process in place to assist ministers who are facing mental health challenges	<b>58%</b>	24%	12%	5%
Provides access to confidential counseling for its ministers	<b>39%</b>	17%	22%	22%
Provides access to confidential counseling for its ministers' families	<b>41%</b>	19%	23%	17%
Takes preventive measures to help maintain the mental health of its ministers	29%	<b>34%</b>	25%	12%



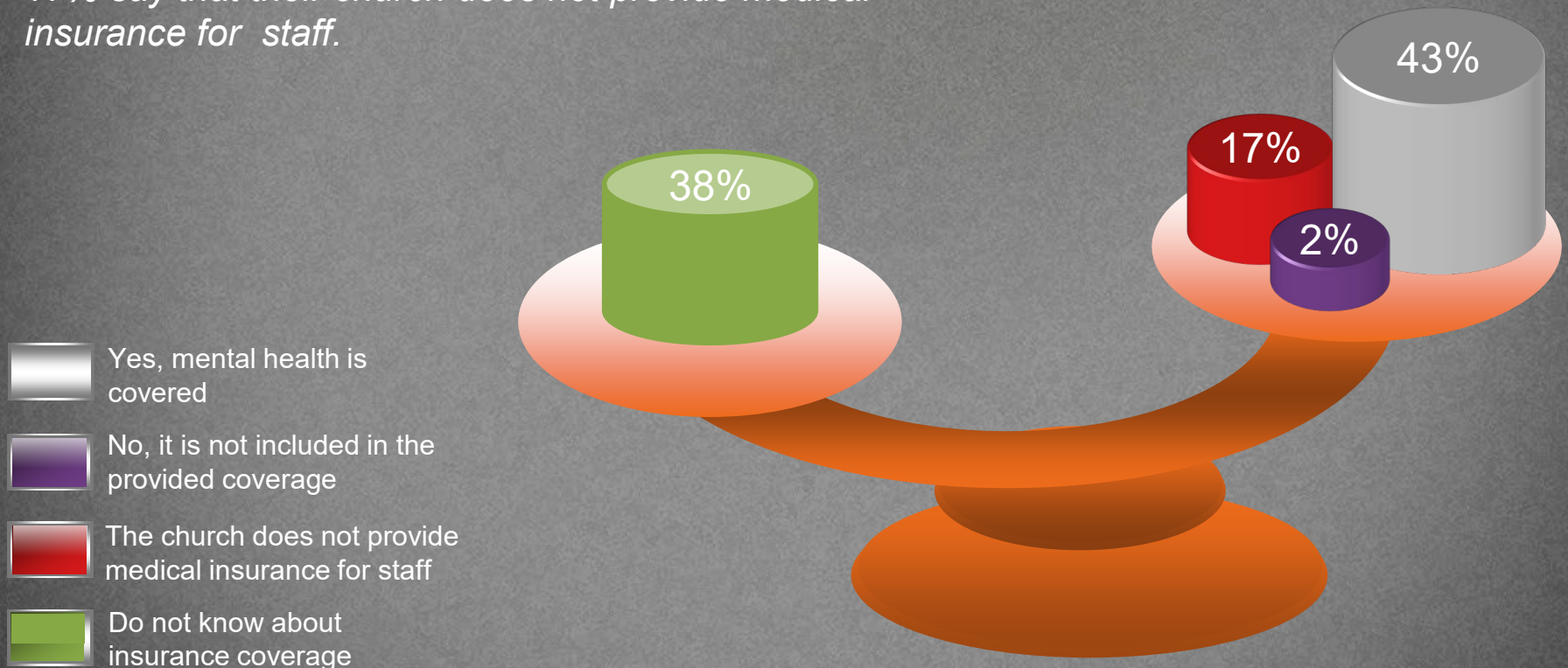
# Does your church's medical insurance include mental health and mental illness coverage for its staff?





N=465

*43% of church leaders say yes, their church's medical insurance provides mental health coverage.*

*38% do not know if mental health coverage is provided.*

*17% say that their church does not provide medical insurance for staff.*

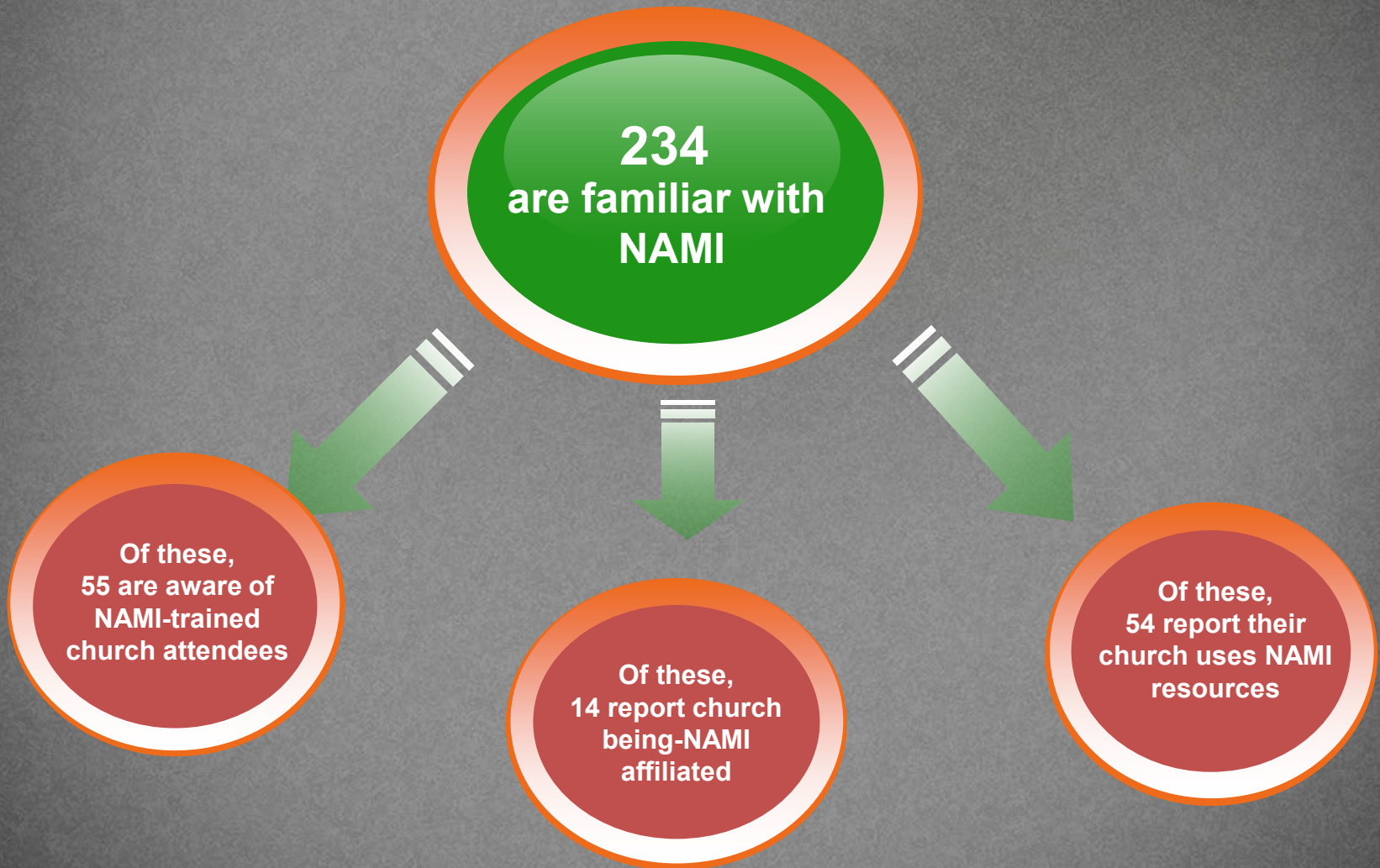


-  Yes, mental health is covered
-  No, it is not included in the provided coverage
-  The church does not provide medical insurance for staff
-  Do not know about insurance coverage

# Are you familiar with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)?

Church leaders are...

N=465

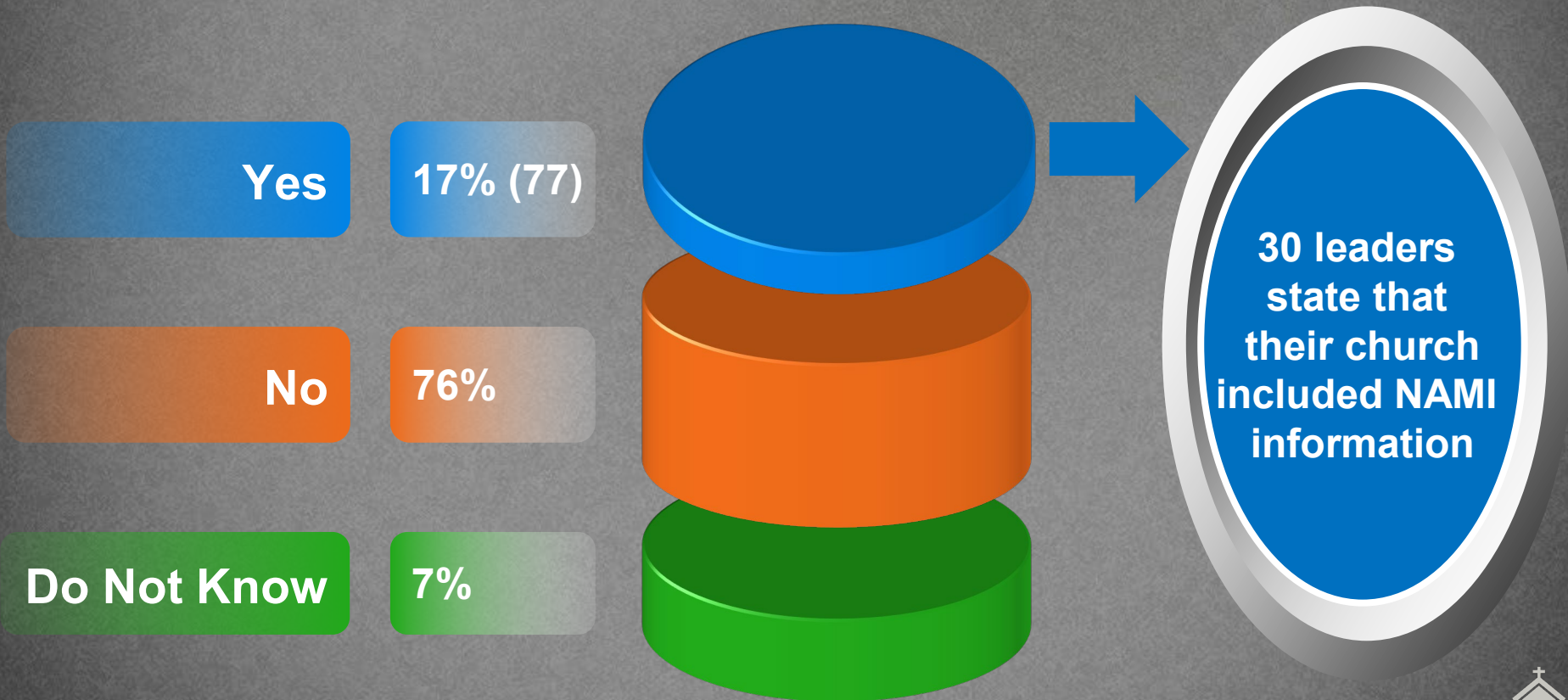




In the past 18 months,  
has your church sponsored an event or training session about mental health?

N=465

*17% of church leaders report their church sponsored an event or training session on mental health. Of this 17% of church leaders, 40% of those report their sessions have included NAMI information.*





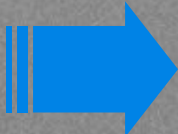
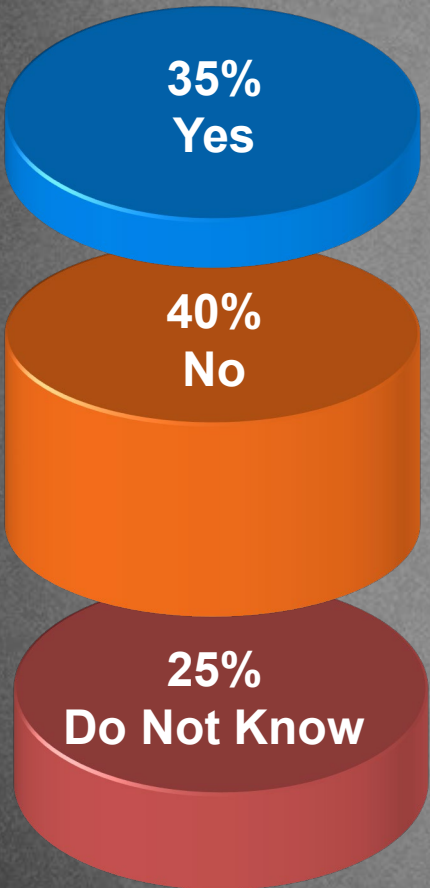
# Have the ministers or other staff of this church expressed the need for additional training so that they...

N=463

	No	Yes	Do not know
Better recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness	<b>49%</b>	19%	32%
Make better referrals to mental health professionals	<b>44%</b>	22%	34%
Know how to use mental health first aid when someone is expressing suicide feelings, showing signs of serious mental illness, or misusing substances	<b>41%</b>	25%	34%
Are better equipped to respond pastorally to traumatic events in the church or community	<b>37%</b>	31%	32%

# Does your church maintain a directory of mental health resources?

40% (N=456) of church leaders say that their church does *not* maintain a directory of mental health resources. Of the 35% that do maintain a directory, 42% update the directory annually and 72% make the directories available to members of the congregation.



*Of those who state that this church maintains a directory...*

	Yes	No	Do Not Know
Updated annually	<b>42%</b>	26%	32%
Not at the church, but there is one on the presbytery or synod website	9%	29%	<b>62%</b>
Available to all members of this congregation	<b>72%</b>	14%	14%

9%

That the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly has set aside \$250,000 for the purpose of funding grants that empower congregations, mid councils, and seminaries to expand or initiate mental health ministries

11%

PC(USA) resource, *Comfort My People Policy Paper on Serious Mental Illness and Study Guide*

10%

PC(USA) resource, Mental Health Ministry website:  
[www.pcusa.org/mental health](http://www.pcusa.org/mental%20health)





The average respondent is white, between 56-75, and is politically, socially, and theologically moderate.

### Race

90% White  
3% Black  
2% Hispanic  
5% Other

### Age

24% 26-55  
30% 56-65  
37% 66-75  
9% Over 75

### Political Issues

4% Very Conservative  
22% Conservative  
32% MODERATE  
29% Liberal  
11% Very Liberal

### Social Issues

2% Very Conservative  
14% Conservative  
33% MODERATE  
30% Liberal  
20% Very Liberal

### Theological Issues

3% Very Conservative  
18% Conservative  
38% MODERATE  
28% Liberal  
11% Very Liberal