Person in the Pew: Mental Health

The report has been prepared for:

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Research Services

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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
Half of members (54%) do not identify any listed mental health information, services, or resources as being available at their church. Almost all members identify services available in the town or community in which their church is located.

Nearly half (49%) of members would say that their church is “not” or “probably not” equipped to welcome individuals with significant mental health issues into the daily life of the church and only 4% say that their church is “very well equipped” to respond to its ministers who are facing mental health challenges.

Almost all members (97%) know or have known someone with mental illness or mental health concerns. Members also have an abundant understanding of the warning signs of mental illness, and can identify myths about mental illness as false.

Most members (90%) are not aware of funds, information or resources available to churches for mental health ministries. Half of members (43%) are not aware of any information or directories maintained by their church. Almost half of members are not aware of their church’s minister(s) or staff expressing the need for additional mental health training to aid the church or community.
Think about the various activities in this church over the last 12 to 18 months. This church…

- **60%**: Provides space to a community support group such as AA or Compassionate Friends
- **43%**: Provides support or prayer groups for individuals or loved ones facing mental health concerns
- **43%**: Engages in ministry with individuals who are both homeless and who have a mental illness
- **40%**: Provides support following a traumatic event (natural disaster, mass shooting, hate crime)

- **31%**: Advocates for and with people with mental illness and their families
- **30%**: Had a sermon or worship service that either focused on or included issues of mental health/mental illness
- **27%**: Provides opportunities to learn about mental health/mental illness
- **24%**: Advocates on issues related to mental health in the community
The following statements focus on the interest, ability, and engagement in current mental health ministries of congregations in this church.

My church is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree nor Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested in learning more about mental health</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipped to engage in a mental health ministry</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged in some form of a mental health ministry</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My church has...

- **18%** Members trained in Mental Health First Aid
- **16%** A counseling ministry
- **15%** Members who are trained to offer companionship to people with serious mental illness
- **15%** Information about mental health and mental illness displayed in prominent locations around their church
- **10%** Includes those who are impacted by mental health conditions in the planning of mental health activities
- **5%** An observance for Mental Health Month in May
- **5%** An independent counseling service located on our campus
- **2%** An observance for Serious Mental Health Week in October

54% of members report “None of these” services being available at their church
Rank the barriers to mental health ministries in your church

N=701

# 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
Would you say that your church is equipped to welcome individuals with significant mental health issues into the daily life of the church?

442 (49%) of members would say “no” or “probably not”

*Only two church leaders responded to this question on Church on the Corner survey, not giving enough information for comparison or reporting.*
Almost all members report having some type of mental health services in the town or county in which they live.
Members ranked seven barriers to adequate community-based mental health treatment and services. 

# 1 Information about services is not widely shared

followed by ...

# 2 Individuals may not know that they are eligible for services
# 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

N=701
Do members know the any indicators of mental health concerns or mental illness?

Yes, they do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99%</td>
<td>Delusions, paranoia, hallucinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excessive anger, hostility, violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unrelenting sadness or low mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inability to cope with daily problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>Confused thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excessive fears or worries, extreme feelings of guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol or drug abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suicidal thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling insignificant or worthless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trouble understanding and relating to situations or people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>Major changes in eating habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>Withdrawal from friends and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant tiredness, low energy, problems sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Sex drive change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89% correctly identified all the listed indicators as forms of mental illness.
Almost everyone knows someone with mental illness or mental health concerns. N=882

- 82% Been depressed for an extended period of time
- 81% Been addicted to drugs or alcohol
- 75% Lived with chronic or ongoing mental health conditions that affects their daily life
- 68% Had a difficult time recovering from a loss
- 64% Contemplated suicide
- 52% Been diagnosed with PTSD
- 48% Died by suicide
- 41% Had a psychotic break

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A violent act occurred in this community: 35%
I know people who were harmed: 16%
Members of my family were harmed: 3%
I was harmed: 1%
None of the above: 59%

N=880
What do members say about the stigmas surrounding mental health and mental illness concern?

N=876

- **Disagree that mental illness is a moral failing, a sign of weakness, or that it improves on its own.**
  - 99%

- **Agree that mental illness can happen to anyone.**
  - 96%

- **Disagree that mental illness can be cured through prayer.**
  - 86%
How well equipped is your church...

to respond to its ministers who are facing mental health challenges?

N=823

- Very Well Equipped: 4%
- Somewhat Equipped: 26%
- Slightly Equipped: 35%
- Not at all Equipped: 36%
### How true each of the statements are for your church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Not at all True</th>
<th>Slightly True</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is open to calling ministers who have a history of mental illness</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a process in place to assist ministers who are facing mental health challenges</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides access to confidential counseling for its ministers</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides access to confidential counseling for its ministers’ families</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes preventive measures to help maintain the mental health of its ministers</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A majority of members do not know if their church’s medical insurance provides mental health and mental illness coverage for its staff. 19% of members say their church either does not provide medical insurance for staff or that mental health coverage is not included.
51% (436) of members report being familiar with NAMI. Of those, 26% (113) are aware of individuals within their church who have been trained by NAMI. 10% (44) report that their church is affiliated with NAMI and 25% (109) report their church uses NAMI resources.
Have ministers or other staff expressed the need for additional training so that they can:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Area</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Do Not Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make better referrals to mental health professionals</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to use mental health first aid when someone is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expressing suicide feelings, showing signs of serious mental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illness, or misusing substances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are better equipped to respond pastorally to traumatic events</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the church or community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=845
Does your church maintain a directory of mental health resources?

43% of members do not know if their church maintains a directory of local or regional mental health resources. Of the 26% that are aware of a directory, most do not know details about it.

Of those who state that their church maintains a directory...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do Not Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Updated annually</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at the church, but there is one on the presbytery or synod website</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available to all members of this congregation</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Few respondents are aware of the mental health resources that are available to their church.

The 223rd 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.

10%  
PC(USA) resource, *Comfort My People Policy Paper on Serious Mental Illness and Study Guide*

11%  
PC(USA) resource, Mental Health Ministry website: www.pcusa.org/mental health
The average respondent is white, 56 - 75 years old, and is politically, socially, and theologically moderate.

### 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

### Race
- 93% White
- 2% Black
- 5% Other

### Age
- 24% 18-55
- 30% 56-65
- 32% 66-75
- 14% Over 75