

Ministry

to People with Mental Illness and their Families



Surveys estimate that during a one-year period in the U.S., **22 to 23 percent** of adults, or **44 million people**, have diagnosable mental disorders and approximately **10.2 million** adults have *co-occurring* mental health disorders:

- 19%** of the adult U.S. population has a mental disorder
- 6%** have addictive disorders
- 3%** have both mental and addictive disorders

The best estimates* (one-year prevalence rates) of mental illness:

- 16.4%** Anxiety disorders
- 5.3%** Depression
- 1.3%** Schizophrenia
- 1.1%** Bipolar

*1999 Surgeon General's report on mental health. Full report available at surgeongeneral.gov



Ministry Goal

Our pastors and congregations will be gateways to reaching out and accepting people with mental illness into their midst. Our vision is that families living with mental illness/brain disorders are full participants in the life and ministry of the church.

Opportunities and Challenges

Individuals who have mental disorders and their families have long been concerned about being stigmatized. Stereotyping, embarrassment, isolation, avoidance, even fear are common. Religious beliefs about serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, clinical depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders also are extremely diverse and complex.

Numerous studies agree that clergy and the church are the most common sources of help for people in psychological distress. In times of mental and emotional crisis, the response of clergy and laity to people in distress is crucial. It can be supportive and helpful or it can be hurtful, even disastrous.

Resources

Members of the LCMS Disability Ministry Task Force for ministry to individuals with mental illness and brain disorders and their families recommend these resources. This list is not an exhaustive accounting, nor are all resources necessarily endorsed by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

LCMS Resources

- › *I Trust When Dark My Road: A Lutheran View of Depression*. This 100-page book offers a rare glimpse into one LCMS pastor's personal journey through depression while remaining reliant upon God's grace. To download, go to: lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=726&docid=721.
- › LCMS Michigan District Commission on Mental Illness. Links to resources, including a manual on mental illness. Visit michigandistrict.org. Search mental illness.
- › *Clergy Mental Health and the Doctrine of Justification* by Robert D. Preus. To download, go to: lcms.org/documentlibrary.
- › “You Are Not Alone” presentation by the Rev. Daniel Preus. A video-based seminar for congregations to use in developing ministry with and to people with mental illness and their families. Produced by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Watch at video.lcms.org or visit lcms.org/socialissues/disability

Other Resources

- › The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers information, referral and education to assist people with mental illnesses and their families and friends, mental health professionals and the general public. NAMI educates all people about severe and persistent mental illnesses to eliminate stigma and promote access to integrated systems of care, education and rehabilitation. Visit nami.org.
- › *Christian Counseling 3rd Edition: Revised and Updated* by Gary R. Collins. This is a proven guide for pastoral counseling. Written with clarity and sensitivity, this volume builds on biblical foundations and the best resources of professional psychology. This book contains 768 pages of resource written for the non-psychologist who wants an excellent survey of basic information.
- › The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website provides researched information on mental illnesses; such as depression and anxiety disorders. Visit nimh.nih.
- › Chosen Families exists to help families with disabilities become fully included in the body of Christ. The organization's mission is to provide resources, connections and encouragement to families with hidden disabilities and to educate and provide resources to religious leaders as they minister to families with these needs. Visit chosenfamilies.org.
- › Mental Health Ministries mentalhealthministries.net
- › Choices in Recovery ChoicesInRecovery.com
- › "MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness" is a multi-platform media project produced by PBS that explores severe mental illness in America. mindsontheedge.org
- › “Mental Health First Aid” is an 8-hour course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. It also presents an overview of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions. mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/faq