Putting the Pieces Together

Becoming a People of Welcome & Support to People with Mental Health Challenges
Mental Health Challenges Are…

- A biological, medical disorder.
- Not the person’s fault.
- Not a respecter of persons.
- Cause of other challenges.
- A casserole-less condition.
Why We Should Care

- All of us are created in the image of God and have worth.
- Genesis 1:26-7.
Why We Should Care

- We are called to be compassionate, rejoice in hope,
- care for the needs of others,
- and weep with those who weep…
- Romans 12:9-15
Resolution Calls the Church

- To strive to become a people of welcome and support to all God’s children despite their mental health status.
Seriousness of Problem

- Suicide is the 10\textsuperscript{th} leading cause of death in adults.
- Suicide is the 2\textsuperscript{nd} leading cause of death in young people 15-24.

- National Association on Mental Illness
Seriousness of Problem

- 1 in 5 adults experience a mental health challenge in any given year.
- 1 in 5 teenagers experience a severe mental health challenge.

- National Institute on Mental Health
Seriousness of Problem

- Loved ones and caregivers of people who have a mental health challenge are also affected and need support;
Seriousness of Problem

- 1 in 2 people with a mental health challenge will not receive treatment.

- National Institute on Mental Health
Recovery Is Probable
with Treatment & Support

With appropriate treatment and support,
70-90% of people
with serious mental health challenge
have significant reduction of symptoms
and improved quality of life.

- National Alliance on Mental Illness
Recovery Is Probable with Treatment & Support

Each person needs to be treated as if they can recover.
Recovery Is

Journey not a destination
Deeply personal, unique process
fueled by hope and
built on one’s strengths and abilities

Way of living
a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life
even with limitations caused by the illness
Recovery Is

- Development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of their mental health challenge.

Development of an identity apart from their challenge.
Goal of Recovery

“The goal of the recovery process is NOT to become normal...
Goal of Recovery

“The goal is to become the unique, awesome, never to be repeated human being that we are called to be.”
You cannot predict who will recover by

How long a person has been ill.

How serious their condition is.

When their illness began.
The ONLY predictor of recovery

HOPE
Clergy, not mental health professionals, are the most common source of help sought in times of psychological distress.

- Baylor University Study
Disciples’ Resolution Calls Church Leaders

- to become more knowledgeable
- so they can fight stigma,
- be supportive of recovery,
- and provide information about
  - mental health, recovery
- and available resources for treatment.
Disciples’ Resolution
Calls the Church

to encourage and enable
  the education of church leaders
  by putting on its website and in print
  information about these things
  in order that people affected,
  their loved ones, and caregivers experience welcome, support & recovery.
UCC’s Resolution

- Calls churches to be WISE churches:
  - Welcoming
  - Inclusive
  - Supportive
  - Engaged
Hope

- Believe in our capacity to change & grow.
- Have high expectations.
- Allow us to dream.
- Hold hope for us when we can’t hope.
Empowerment

- Encourage action.
- Encourage education.
- Encourage us to meet others in recovery.
- Point out our smallest successes.
Self-Determination

- Collaborate with us in planning.
- Allow us to make mistakes.
- Help, but don’t do for us what we can do ourselves.
Meaningful Role

- Encourage us to believe we are “much more than that”.

- Encourage us to find our niche in the community.
Churches Can Inform Members

Mental health challenges and what causes them.
Recovery is possible with treatment & support.
How to be supportive of recovery.
How to access the local mental health system.
Local support groups or the one at church.
Churches Can

Pray for us and our families every Sunday.
Have a Mental Health Sunday.
Have church leaders share their own experience with a mental health challenge.
Have an “In Our Own Voice” presentation by NAMI.
Please Remember

We are more than our mental health challenge!