



National
Benevolent
Association

CALLED TOGETHER | CALLED TO CARE

Mental Health
Initiative

Vision and Goals

- Cultivate a welcoming, educated, and inclusive church by countering stigma of mental illness and raising awareness of mental health
- Provide resources and educational support for Disciples congregations, clergy, seminarians, and community members
- Collaborate and connect with existing ministries, organizations, and initiatives
- Encourage the sustainability and innovation of mental health ministries in congregations, regions, and the general church

Get Involved!



*Mental Health Affinity Group Members,
September 2015*

*Rev. Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick, Director of Connect Ministries
Angela Whitenhill, LCSW, M.Div., Mental Health Initiative Manager*

Resources

- Find webinars, blogs, news, events, and more at: nbacares.org/mental-health

Stay in Touch

- Complete the inquiry form at nbacares.org/mental-health to join our Facebook group and sign up for our monthly eNewsletter

Mental Health Affinity Group

The Mental Health Affinity Group (MHAG) aims to support ministries of the church in becoming adept at identifying and addressing issues related to mental health and congregational life. Two areas of focus are:

- Liturgy and Theology: Emphasis will be put on gathering, creating, and inspiring mental health-focused liturgical resources and theological reflections for congregational worship and education.
- Mental Health and Justice: MHAG aims to address issues of injustice related to mental health services and policies through an advocacy team that will work in collaboration with other NBA Affinity Groups pursuing justice work.

Georgia Mental Health Initiative

In partnership, NBA and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia are providing education, support, and infrastructure development focused on mental health and wellness ministry for regional leadership, clergy, and congregations through the Georgia Mental Health and Congregational Care Initiative – a 2-year pilot program.

"I want to establish deeper connections between clergy across the region as we talk about issues that impact our lives, ministry, church, and society. Mental health should be a part of that discussion. My heart is filled with great expectation for the lives and ministries that will be changed through this shared work."

*Rev. Denise Bell, Regional Minister,
Christian Church in Georgia*



Advocacy - GA Resolutions

GA-1523: "Becoming a People of Welcome and Support to People with Mental Illness and/or Mental Health Issues (Adopted)"

- The Mental Health Affinity Group, expansion into a broader Mental Health Initiative, and resulting webinars, networking opportunities, and other resources are all in response to the adoption of this resolution.



Educational Resources

- **Webinar Series**

- Speaking into the Silence: Storytelling as a Path to Healing
- Mental Health, the Criminal Justice System, and the Church
- Liberating the Mind: Understanding Mental Health as a Justice Issue
- Creating Safe Boundaries for Congregations Serving Those with Severe Mental Health Issues
- *Coming in August 2017: Conversation on Suicide Prevention*

- **Blog Series**

- **Private Facebook Group**



“Understand that mental illness is not something that can be beaten or cured for everyone. It is not a fight or issue to rally behind. Your choices of outcome are not always health or death. For me, it is a life-long cycle of three steps forward and two steps back. Much of the life of families with mental illness is taking great joy in things and celebrating when things are going well, but still always watching for the signs that medication needs to be adjusted or life stressors are too much. And when someone is sick with mental illness, there is no ‘normal’ course – no way to know how long it will be before their loved one is ‘better’. Realize that life with mental illness isn’t lived day by day or even hour by hour. Most often it is lived minute by minute.

Listen to the stories of those who are willing to share. Learn what their lives are like, without judgment and without assuming that you know what will ‘fix’ their lives. And then look them in the eyes and tell them that you love them (or that you care about them) – and mean it.”

~Church Music Director, Spring 2017

Current Partnerships

