

Launching the Mental Health and Congregational Care Affinity Group

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We are excited to announce the formal launch of the Mental Health and Congregational Care Affinity Group! Affinity Group ministries were designed to connect collaborative communities of Disciples working together on particular health and social service justice issues. In response to the General Assembly Resolution 1523, which calls the church to become a “welcome and support to people with mental health illness and disorders,” the National Benevolent Association, in partnership with Disciples Home Missions, is carving out a space within the general church for Disciples committed to addressing mental health and mental illness.

With hopes to impact life across the church, the Mental Health and Congregational Care Affinity Group (MHAG) has three main vision areas centered on mental health maintenance and recovery:

1. **Counter stigma** of mental health challenges to help cultivate a welcoming, educated, inclusive church
2. **Provide resources and educational support** for Disciples congregations, clergy, seminarians, and community members
3. **Collaborate and connect** with existing ministries, organizations, and initiatives

To fulfill each vision area, the MHAG aims to support ministries of the church in becoming adept at identifying and addressing issues related to mental health and congregational life through webinars, workshops, monthly blogs, and resources posted to the website. An emphasis will be put on gathering, creating, and inspiring mental health-focused liturgical resources and theological reflections for congregational worship and education. The MHAG also 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.

Additionally, the MHAG looks to support and partner with regional leadership, to accompany the regional church in efforts to prioritize clergy wellness, and offer specialized resources promoting clergy mental health.

If you or someone you know would like to get involved, please fill out the interest form at www.nbacares.org/mental-health, and we will be in touch with you soon!

The Mental Health and Congregational Care Affinity Group is a shared effort between National Benevolent Association and Disciples Home Missions (DHM), in response to the passing of GA-1523 “Becoming a People of Welcome and Support to People with Mental Illness and/or Mental Health Issues” by the 2015 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). For more info, please visit www.nbacares.org/mental-health.