



Well Being Includes Mental Health: Are you healthy?

Chances are you know someone living with a mental illness, The National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that 1 in 5 adults experience some form of mental illness in any given year. People of all ages, races, genders, income levels, religions, and cultures are affected by mental illness.

If you know someone with serious depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder, you probably know what a struggle daily life can be. Mental illness can make regular daily activities such as work, family and social events difficult. People are frequently afraid to talk about a mental health concern out of feelings of shame or fear of being stigmatized. Mental illness is like any other disease and those affected need to be supported by communities of care in the same way.

Many faith communities provide visits, meals, cards, prayers, errands and more to families coping with loss and illness. Did you know that the same support helps people coping with mental illness?

Whole-person wellness is described as, “not simply the absence of disease, illness or stress, but the presence of purpose in life, active involvement in satisfying work and play, joyful relationships, a healthy body and living environment and happiness.” (APA, 2015) It is the ability to participate in daily life at work, in school, or at home. Mental wellness means one is engaged in relationships and can adapt to change and cope with adversity. Faith communities provide social structure and meaningful relationships to support one another with compassion, including those with mental illness.

If you or someone you love is experiencing symptoms such as loss of sleep, feeling tired for no reason, feeling anxious, having difficulty making decisions or hearing voices encourage them to see their doctor. Mental health screening and early intervention can help. Treatments such as talk therapy and medications can help a person with mental illness. There is lots of information available at NAMI, <https://www.nami.org/>. Remember, as I heard somewhere, “there is no health without mental health!” Let’s all share in raising awareness about mental health concerns and make it OK to talk about mental illness.

Mental Health A Guide for Faith Leaders, American Psychiatric Association 2015 retrieved from Faith-mentalhealth-guide.pdf

Call Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley, Deborah Ringen MSN, RN-BC Faith community Nurse to learn more; 860-767-0186