



Abundant Life Wellness Toolkit

A practical resource created for faith
communities in collaboration with NAMI NC and
Partners in Health and Wholeness (An initiative
through the North Carolina Council of Churches)



Usage Guidelines

The Abundant Life Wellness Toolkit may be downloaded, printed, and photocopied for distribution within your faith community. It is intended for educational and ministry purposes only. Please do not alter the content or use it for commercial purposes without permission.

About



The North Carolina Council of Churches represents
27 distinct judicatories from 19 denominations.

MISSION

We enable denominations, congregations, and people of faith to impact our state on issues such as economic justice and development, human well-being, equality, and compassion and peace, following the example and mission of Jesus Christ.

VISION

People of faith leading the social justice movement to create equitable, compassionate, and thriving communities for all.



Partners in Health and Wholeness (PHW) is an initiative of the North Carolina Council of Churches committed to working at the intersection of faith, health, and justice. We seek to educate, equip, and mobilize faith communities to become places of health and wholeness – in mind, body, and spirit.



ncchurches.org



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About



The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

MISSION

NAMI provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

VISION

NAMI envisions a world where all people affected by mental illness live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares.

PARTNERSHIPS

For over 40 years, NAMI North Carolina has worked with dedicated community volunteer leaders to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, and support so people affected by mental illness can build better lives.



naminc.org



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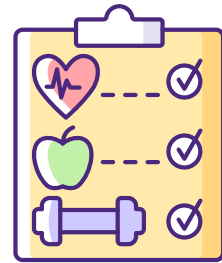
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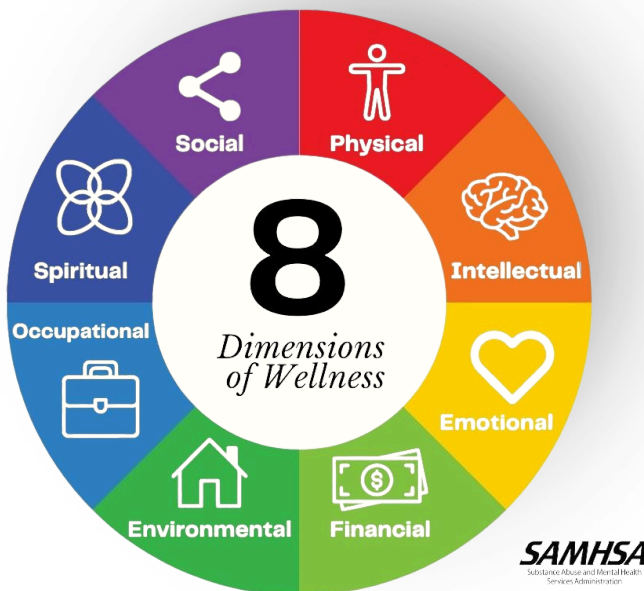
A. WHY HOLISTIC WELLNESS MATTERS

Holistic Wellness is more than a buzzword – it's about

- Resilience → managing stress with strength
- Connection → building supportive relationships
- Balance → tending to body, mind, spirit, and surroundings
- Growth → thriving, not just surviving



Together, SAMHSA's 8 Dimensions of Wellness guide us toward stability, healing, and an abundant life.



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 8 Factors of Wellness provide a holistic framework for understanding how different areas of life contribute to overall wellbeing. These 8 factors are:

- Emotional Wellness
- Physical Wellness
- Intellectual Wellness
- Spiritual Wellness
- Environmental Wellness
- Social Wellness
- Financial Wellness
- Occupational Wellness

When each dimension is nurtured, it promotes balance and resilience, supporting positive mental and behavioral health culminating in an **Abundant Life**.



B. INTEGRATING HOLISTIC WELLNESS INTO MINISTRY

“SO HE WENT DOWN AND IMMERSED HIMSELF SEVEN TIMES IN THE JORDAN, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE MAN OF GOD; HIS FLESH WAS RESTORED LIKE THE FLESH OF A YOUNG BOY, AND HE WAS CLEAN.”

2 KINGS 5:14

Healing has always been at the heart of God’s work. Jesus healed more people than he preached to, restoring not only bodies but relationships and community. From the prophets to the apostles, Scripture shows that God’s vision of wholeness embraces mind, body, and spirit.

““HE BROUGHT HIM OUTSIDE AND SAID, ‘LOOK TOWARD HEAVEN AND COUNT THE STARS, IF YOU ARE ABLE TO COUNT THEM.’ THEN HE SAID TO HIM, ‘SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.’”

— GENESIS 15:5

Faith communities share in this sacred calling. When people experience grief, trauma, or mental health struggles, many first turn to their church. To serve faithfully, congregations must be equipped not only with compassion but also with understanding, grounded in behavioral health, wellness, and the hope of restoration.

“I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY.”

— JOHN 10:10

By nurturing spaces of care, connection, and belonging, churches become modern healing communities - continuing Christ’s work of bringing abundant life to all.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS TOOLKIT

Purpose

A complimentary resource for faith communities interested in exploring abundant wellbeing.

Goal

Helping congregations achieve vibrant, flourishing communities where an abundant life is lived fully.

Scripture-based

Practices, creative ideas, resources, and ministry tools that are scripture-based.

Firm Foundation

Builds on the firm foundations of the Abundant Life study-guide.

Action-Oriented

Shifts perspective from exploring mental health to practicing it.

Framework based

Build awareness with SAMHSA's 8 Dimensions of Wellness.

Guidance Infused

Practical, faith-centered, time-tested, & evidence-based best-practices for holistic wellbeing from NAMI & PHW.



KEY TERMS



Abundant Life

- The abundant life Jesus describes is a life that promotes wholeness and well-being in every dimension. It aligns physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health with the fullness of life God intends.



Health

- A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹ “A dynamic state of well-being of the individual and of the society; of physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political, and social well-being, in harmony with each other, with the material environment and with God.”²



Wellness³

- Used interchangeably with wellbeing, wellness is a broader concept indicating health in many dimensions of life. These include emotional, physical, occupational, intellectual, financial, social, environmental, and spiritual. The dimensions are interconnected, with one building on another.

¹ World Health Organization. (2024). Constitution of the World Health Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>

² Oluikpe, I. M., & Callender-Carter, S. T. (2016). Shalom as wholeness: A biblical basis for meeting global health needs in the 21st Century. *International Forum Journal*, 19(2), 97. <https://doi.org/10.63201/jcsx3547>

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2016, April). Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness. <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf>



KEY TERMS...



Behavioral Health

- An inclusive term that refers to mental health and substance use, as well as the behaviors, habits, and choices that impact overall well-being. It emphasizes how thoughts, emotions, and behaviors affect physical health and daily functioning.



Mental Health

- A state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with life's stresses, realize their abilities, learn well, work well, and contribute to their community.⁴ It underpins our individual and collective ability to make decisions, build relationships, and shape the world we live in.



Mental Illness⁵

- A wide range of mental health conditions affecting mood, thinking, and behavior. These conditions cause distress and impair a person's ability to function. Diagnosis is made by a mental health professional, based on the nature, degree, and duration of impairment.

⁴World Health Organization. "Mental Health." World Health Organization, 17 June 2022, www.who.int/newsroom/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health.

⁵ National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), (n.d.). Mental Health Conditions. Retrieved from [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\), \(2016, April\). Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness. https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf)



UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA: WHY IT MATTERS FOR HOLISTIC WELLNESS

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014) outlines a trauma-informed approach grounded in six core principles: safety, trust and transparency, collaboration, empowerment, peer support, and cultural awareness⁶

Before diving into the practices in this toolkit, it's important to address something many of us carry, silently or openly: **Trauma.**

Trauma is not just what happens to you, it's how your body, mind, and spirit respond to what happened. It can be caused by a single event or by long-term experiences such as abuse, neglect, violence, discrimination, poverty, or chronic stress. Trauma can also be generational. Generational trauma refers to the transmission of emotional and psychological wounds from one generation to the next, often stemming from experiences such as racism, war, displacement, or family violence. Trauma disrupts our sense of safety, connection, and control. It doesn't just live in the past, trauma can live in the body and nervous system long after the event is over.

Wellness practices like meditation, movement, journaling, and spiritual reflection can be powerful tools for healing, yet they can also stir up emotions, memories, or sensations that can feel overwhelming.

That's why this toolkit includes trauma-informed callout boxes (like the one on the side), as gentle reminders and grounding tips designed to help you or your community engage these practices with care. Throughout this toolkit, you will occasionally find some tips to help you stay trauma-informed.

⁶ Trauma-informed approaches and programs. SAMHSA. (n.d.-b). <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/trauma-violence/trauma-informed-approaches-programs>



Dimension 1

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Emotional wellness supports mental health by managing stress, fostering healthy relationships, and guiding values-based decisions. It builds resilience, reduces risks for mental health challenges, and promotes positive coping and habits.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Go at your pace. Getting clarity or feeling raw, both are okay



Journaling or meditation may stir pain



Individual Practices

- Journaling
 - Reflect on your thoughts and feelings to gain clarity and self-awareness.
- Mindful breathing or meditation
 - Practice staying present and calming your nervous system. See extra resources for some helpful sources.
- Gratitude lists
 - Write down a few things you are grateful for each day to shift your mindset.
- Self-compassion
 - Practice speaking to yourself kindly, especially during hard times.
- Setting boundaries
 - Reflect on what drains or energizes you and choose accordingly.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Apps – Insight Timer, Headspace, Calm, Smiling Mind, Breathe
- Websites/Youtube – Tara Brach, UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center, The Honest Guys, Yoga with Adriene
- [Mental Health reference for faith leaders](#) (see Appendix C).



Dimension 1.. **EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

Community Practices

- Take what you need bulletin board - Create a space members can use for positive messages, affirmations, prayer cards, or simple wellness ideas to encourage starting a weekly wellness routine (e.g., “take a walk,” “try a new healthy recipe,” “read a favorite book”).
- Start a gratitude practice - Use mason jars, shoe-boxes, or a public bulletin board for church members to jot or pin their grateful messages each week. You may separate boards for personal and faith gratitude. Bonus: a few can be read aloud at church service announcements.
- Survey congregational needs
 - Conduct a simple survey to identify common issues, struggles, or areas of concern among members (e.g., stress, grief, caregiving, financial strain, parenting, addiction recovery). Then partner with your local NAMI affiliate to start a support group (e.g., NAMI Connection or NAMI Family Support Group) hosted at your church.
- Member self-care challenge - Create a fun wellness challenge (e.g., a 7-day bingo card or a yearlong monthly calendar) with simple emotional wellness activities for members to complete, and consider offering small prizes for participation.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Ground your body first. Simple techniques like noticing your breath, your feet on the ground, etc., help before deep reflection



Normalize optional sharing and emphasize consent - Remind participants they can skip, pause, or opt out

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Sample 7-day challenge:
 - Day 1: Journal feelings for 10 minutes, Day 2: Do nothing but listen to a calming song, Day 3: Conserve your energy/time/space, Day 4: Practice saying “I am enough” out loud, Day 5: Name your top 3 support people, Day 6: Do a guided meditation, & Day 7: Reflect on 1 personal strength you’ve grown this year.
- Group Training e.g., Trauma-informed, resilience building.

Dimension 2



PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Physical wellness means caring for your body through exercise, nutrition, rest, and medical care. It boosts energy, strengthens immunity, improves mood, and helps prevent illness—supporting overall well-being.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Trauma lives in the body, so reconnecting with your body can be hard. Move gently. Even stretching, rocking, or breathing counts.



Trust your limits. Choose movement that feels nourishing, not punishing.



If you feel disconnected from your body, focus on sensations: What do you see, hear, smell, or feel right now?



Individual Practices

- Find a new walking trail or Nature Preserve in your area to hike and explore.
- Go for gratitude walks— as you walk, reflect on all the ways you are grateful and name each thing you're thankful for.
- Volunteering: volunteer in a local community garden, trash clean ups, or other ways that both engage physical activity and giving back to the community.
- Sit in a sauna (see more below).
- Bike to a destination instead of driving, or park away from the store to increase walking.
- Explore new places in the community by way of exercise or movement.
- Volunteer walking dogs or assisting with a local animal shelter or rescue.

EXTRA RESOURCES

According to the American College of Cardiology, sitting in a sauna 2–3 times per week significantly reduces risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, and sudden cardiac death. Quoted from: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2130724>

Dimension 2..

PHYSICAL WELLNESS



Community Practices

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Physical movement, body-focused practices, or wellness challenges may feel unsafe or triggering for some.



Offer a variety of low-impact, adaptive, or private options. Avoid comments about body size, weight loss/gain, or appearance in any wellness conversation.

- Walking club: Meet weekly/monthly at a local park/trail.
- Conduct a mindfulness scavenger hunt.
- Gardening club: Start a community or prayer garden as a faith community to encourage healthy eating and time outdoors.
- Organize group fitness activities like walking clubs, yoga classes, dance sessions, rebounding (led by volunteers or hire a pro for the day)
- Have a mini-series of vegetable, fruit, or healthy meal for the week (see extra resources below).
- Healthy eating challenge: Ask your congregation to share their best on-the-go healthy food secrets.
- Create and share a healthy food pantry list.
- Host a congregation/community yoga class
- Organize congregational seasonal fruit picking and jam/preserve making excursions (bonus: utilize these as prizes or sales at an upcoming celebration/fete)
- Host healthy cooking workshops or nutrition seminars
- Offer health screenings/flu shot clinics during church events
- Plan wellness retreats focused on mind-body-spirit care
- Encourage Sabbath rest
- Reflect on healthy living through sermons or small groups
- Offer a [NAMI Hearts+Minds](#) presentation (see Appendix E: NAMI Resources for details).

EXTRA RESOURCES

- [Ways to educate and engage community about nutrition](#)

Dimension 3

INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

Intellectual wellness is about nurturing curiosity and lifelong learning by engaging in creative, stimulating, and challenging activities. By keeping the mind active, we build resilience, expand knowledge, and enrich the way we think, feel, and connect with the world.



TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Explore topics that spark joy or wonder, not just ones that feel “productive.”



Curiosity is a form of healing. But don’t pressure yourself to “process everything” or “fix” your trauma by reading or learning more.



Individual Practices

- Read books or scholarly articles
- Learn a new language or hobby
- Attend workshops or lectures
- Solve puzzles or play strategy games
- Engage in thoughtful conversation or debate
- Explore art, music, or philosophy
- Follow podcasts, documentaries, or TED Talks on topics you are passionate about, or just curious.
- Take a mindful walk and observe your surroundings.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Sample Books
 - This Here Flesh by Cole Arthur Riley
 - Try Softer by Aundi Kolber
 - No Cure for Being Human by Kate Bowler
 - It’s Okay That You’re Not Okay by Megan Devine
 - The Body Keeps the Score by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.



Dimension 3..

INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

Community Practices

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Not all participants feel safe in groups, especially if they have been historically marginalized.



Create structured sharing options like writing prompts, small groups, or anonymous question boxes to foster inclusion and voice without pressure.

- Faith-based book club or bible study groups on topics of faith, grief, trauma, wellness, and healing (more below).
- Sermon response groups guiding deeper reflection.
- Faith and film events with spiritual/ethical discussion
- Lectio Divina & other contemplative practices with reflection.
- Art (visual art, poetry, music, etc.) with faith workshops.
- Writing circles (e.g., memoirs, spiritual journaling, or storytelling).
- Conduct a community/small group game night.
- Provide a sense of purpose with a vision board capturing goals & aspirations to strive toward.
- Host a monthly workshop or bulletin raising mental health awareness around warning signs/symptoms, stigma, prevalence, coping strategies, etc.
- Workshops on social justice issues (racism, poverty, climate care, etc.).
- Enlist guest theologians, activists, educators, or history buffs on topics that connects to the church's mission.
- Advocacy trainings: writing to Congress or board members, legislative process, understanding public policy, etc.
- Interfaith dialogues to learn about other traditions.
- Host a NAMI adult ed, like "Bridges of Hope or Mental Health 101" presentation, or community learning like "Friends & Family/In Our Own Voice" training.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Sample Books
 - Trauma-Informed Evangelism by Charles Kiser & Elaine Heath
 - Blessed Are the Crazy by Sarah Griffith Lund
 - Healing Our Broken Humanity by Grace Ji-Sun Kim & Graham Hill
 - My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem
 - Rest is Resistance by Tricia Hersey

Dimension 4



SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Spiritual wellness is the pursuit of meaning, purpose, and inner peace by living in harmony with one's core values and beliefs. It grounds us in something greater, fostering clarity, resilience, and a deep sense of connection.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



You don't have to speak to or hear from God in any specific way. Just being still, breathing, or walking in nature can be sacred.



Give yourself permission to skip practices that feel triggering and try others, like visio divina or walking meditations.



If prayer or scripture has been misused in your past, it's okay to redefine what spiritual connection means for you.



Individual Practices

- Reflect in prayer or guided grief journals about spiritual questions, moments of gratitude, or where you see the divine in your life.
- Practice contemplative prayer (see more below).
- Practice contemplative spirituality using centering prayer (see more below).
- Practice Lectio Divina (prayer using scripture) or Visio Divina (scripture plus engaging with an image). See below.
- Prayer/Meditation/Spiritual Reflection - Set aside time for silence, reflection, or listening to God. You can also do this walking a labyrinth or sacred walking path that leads you in a loop, inwards and then out back again.
- Get spiritual direction - spiritual directors are trained companions who help people pay attention to God's presence and movement in their lives.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Contemplative Prayer is a form of silent, wordless prayer that invites you be present and rest in God's presence beyond thoughts, images, or words.
- Contemplative Spirituality uses Centering Prayer, as a contemporary form of contemplative prayer, developed by three Trappist monks.
 - Book: *Open Heart, Open Mind*, Thomas Keating, App: *Centering Prayer* (Contemplative Outreach)
- Lectio Divina (Latin) is an ancient Christian practice of reading Scripture.
 - www.pray-as-you-go.org, Book: *Sacred Reading*, Michael Casey, App: *Lectio 365* (Bible Society)
- Visio Divina (Latin) is similar to Lectio Divina. In addition to using Scripture, it invites you to prayerfully engage with an image such as a piece of art, an icon, a photo, or something in nature.



Dimension 4..

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Community Practices

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Recognize that some people's trauma may be connected to faith settings, religious language, or spiritual abuse.



Always use invitational, not prescriptive language, around prayer, worship, or theological beliefs.



Offer multiple spiritual practices to honor diverse pathways to healing.

- Host prayer nights: pair experienced pray-ers with those who want to grow their confidence in praying.
- Host a night devoted to praise and worship.
- Use inclusive and affirming theological art and resources in worship and sacrament celebration (see more below).
- Hold spiritual groups for prayer, sharing, and spiritual growth
- Hold retreats/opportunities to step away and reconnect with God, doing service and mission assignments.
- Conduct breath work or mindfulness workshops.
- Offer labyrinth walks on church property to invite participants into silent prayer and spiritual reflection as they walk.
- Create a Stephen Ministry for lay-led church members (see more below).
- Live out faith through justice, mercy, and compassion by partnering with a local community (see NAMI below).
- Hold pilgrimages/symbolic journeys toward spiritual renewal.
- Establish a grief ministry to hold space for community members to gather, share, and honor one another's grieving.
- Use NAMI FaithNet resources like "Pathways to Hope", for clergy and lay leaders to help integrate mental wellness and spiritual support into ministry (see more below).

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Inclusive and Affirming Art & Resources (www.Sanctifiedart.org) offers creative gifts to resource, provoke, guide, facilitate, and enrich the spiritual lives of worshipers around the world.
- Stephen Ministries (www.stephenministries.org) trains laypeople as Stephen Ministers, who provide listening, prayer, confidentiality, and presence to those facing difficult times.
- NAMI Faithnet at www.nami.org/get-involved/nami-faithnet/ 19 NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates lead both national plenary sessions and locally curated workshops focused on the vital role of faith and spirituality in breaking the stigma surrounding mental health.



Dimension 5

ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS

Environmental wellness means caring for natural and built spaces to support health, safety, and peace. Clean, calm, green surroundings reduce stress, improve focus, and nurture overall well-being.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Safety can start with a sense of control. Create small spaces of safety, maybe a cozy chair, a prayer corner, or even a single candle.



Let your surroundings reflect you. Choose colors, textures, and items that help you feel calm, rooted, or inspired.



Individual Practices

- Pick up trash as you spend time in nature walking, gardening, hiking, etc.
- Carry a journal and reflect on sights, sounds, and feelings when outside in nature.
- Use eco-friendly products like non-toxic cleaners, reusable bags/bottles (see more below).
- Check local extension offices for help with planting pollinator-friendly, native gardens & not invasives.
- Create a peaceful, uncluttered hangout or green workspace that serves as a mini sanctuary.
- Practice intentional gratitude for creation through prayer, journaling, or in daily spiritual routines.
- Support local farmers, farmer's markets, or sustainable brands.
- Celebrate digital-free outdoor days (e.g., pick one day a month to unplug and spend time in natural settings to reset mentally and spiritually).
- Turn tidying up into a mindful cleaning ritual by using natural scents, gentle music, and focused intention.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- [100 Things You Can Do to Save the Planet](#)



Dimension 5..

ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS

Community Practices

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Decluttering can be powerful, but take it slow if objects hold memories or emotions



Create calm, clean, predictable spaces, avoid noise, chaos, and harsh lighting.



Include sensory-friendly areas (soft lighting, quiet prayer areas) and clear visual cues to show what's happening or expected.

- Host a clothing drive, yard sale, or free market to help members declutter living spaces.
- Participate in church-led town clean-up days. Bonus: Involve local high-schoolers needing volunteer time.
- Conduct a drive to plant trees along urban or busy roads.
- Create bird sanctuaries or houses in the wild.
- Adopt-a-Highway.
- Hold educational workshops on sustainability and faith.
- Create sacred outdoor spaces for prayer, rest, and reflection (e.g., prayer trails, benches, labyrinths),
- Create a community garden on church property.
- Volunteer as a community to clean up a local waterway together.
- Host creation care worship services or “Season of Creation” liturgies.
- Partner with local organizations for tree planting or conservation efforts. Give plants on Mother’s Day, celebrate green thumb church members, etc.
- Implement green practices like reducing paper use, installing recycling bins, energy-efficient lighting, etc.
- Discuss how to protect the local environment from tech and noise pollution.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- [How to Report Spills and Environmental Violations](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency in NC](#)

Dimension 6

SOCIAL WELLNESS

Social wellness means building supportive relationships and feeling connected. It reduces loneliness, boosts emotional support, and encourages healthy choices—helping us feel resilient, valued, and confident in life’s challenges.



TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Choose relationships where you feel seen and safe. It’s okay to limit contact with people who drain or harm you.



You don’t owe anyone vulnerability. Practice connection at a pace that feels right for you.



Even brief moments of connection like a smile, a text, or shared silence, can build trust and healing over time.



Individual Practices

- Host a themed potluck or “story night” – Invite friends or neighbors to share a dish and a personal story related to a theme (e.g., courage, childhood, etc.).
- Write handwritten notes or letters of encouragement or appreciation to a friend, mentor, or someone going through a tough time.
- Start a “walk & talk” tradition with a friend or coworker. Movement plus conversation deepens connection.
- Parallel play as adults – Join friends, neighbors or community days doing activities together (see more below).
- Build connections through shared interests like starting a book club, knitting circle, trivia night, game group, or community garden.
- Practice small acts of kindness weekly to strengthen social ties like giving flowers, paying for coffee, etc.
- Start a daily gratitude for people in your life journal, then share it with them.
- Practice “presence over productivity” by setting aside time without multitasking or rushing, to simply be with others.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Parallel play is the experience of being physically present with another person(s) while engaged in separate, individual activities, e.g., one may be reading their book, another working on their budget, others painting or drawing in a shared space without trying to influence each others’ behavior.



Dimension 6..

SOCIAL WELLNESS

Community Practices

- Host a community potluck or story night where people eat and share personal stories around a central theme like courage, childhood, joy, etc.
- Create a “listening project” of intentional conversations with people from different generations, cultures, or backgrounds. Ask open-ended questions, and just listen.
- Attend a local event like sports, arts, music, fairs, theatre, food, etc., as a group and reflect together after the event.
- Do a community service project together with a local effort or organization.
- Share communal meals (e.g., potlucks, cookouts, or cooking/recipe competitions).
- Practice relational volunteering (see more below).
- Organize need-based community groups around shared interests, life stages, spiritual practices, or location.
- Invite members of the community to collaborate in art, music, gardening, or storytelling.
- Host recovery groups in your church for community members seeking healing. Partner with your local NAMI affiliate to help create awareness, reduce stigma, and strengthen community support around mental health.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Relationship-building can be hard for trauma survivors. Respect those who prefer the “edges” of community.



Offer small group or one-on-one options for connection.



Make sure gatherings are consent-based and low-pressure, no forced sharing or group prayer without opt-outs.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- [Relational Volunteering](#) is developing a volunteer culture as a nurturing and cooperative environment that values and celebrates the accomplishments of volunteers, recognizes their hard work, and promotes transparent communication among volunteers, staff, and partners.
- Free NAMI Educational Resources for mental health
 - [Family-to-Family](#): 8-session educational program for family, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions.
 - [Peer-to-Peer](#): free, 8-session educational program for adults with mental health conditions who are looking to better understand themselves and their recovery.

Dimension 7



FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Financial wellness is managing money wisely and feeling secure about the future. It lowers stress, builds confidence, and supports overall well-being.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Start with small steps and celebrate progress. Finances can trigger shame or fear, especially if you've experienced scarcity or instability.



Reflect on your values: How do you want what matters to you to reflect in your resources?



Budgeting can be empowering, but don't force it in a way that increases anxiety. Seek support if required.



Individual Practices

- Create a budget to track spending & identify your financial goals (see more below).
- Set short-term and long-term financial goals.
- Build an emergency savings fund (see more below).
- Financial Sabbath - Designate a day to pause from spending, reflect on abundance, and practice gratitude for what you already have
- Heal from financial trauma by reflecting - Write letters to past versions of yourself dealing with scarcity, shame, or loss. Honor your growth.
- Become a community patron - track your spending and intentionally support local, ethical businesses.
- Identify organizations locally, domestically, and internationally that are aligned with your core values and commit to financially supporting these mission partners.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- A popular budgeting method includes the 50/30/20 rule, which allocates income to needs, wants, and savings.
- How-to video Emergency Fund: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy7Z0hrp-_w
- How-to video Budget: using Google Sheets: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSPkfdOzbb0>
- How-to video Budget: using pen and paper; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxjZ5aWbfcc>
- Setting Financial Goals: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsEU56WbGLU>



Dimension 7..

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Community Practices

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



For many, financial hardship carries deep shame, particularly when rooted in systemic injustice or generational poverty.



Financial wellness is best understood through dignity and empowerment, not judgment. Language matters; struggle does not equal failure.

- Host budgeting and financial education workshops.
- Bring financial wellness to the pulpit to explore topics like:
 - economic justice from a biblical perspective
 - topics of tithing
 - financial generosity
 - wealth
 - economic development
- As a faith community, identify partners living out love, shalom, and justice and commit to deepen and invest financially in those relationships.
- Build community mission partners by collaborating with efforts that seek to create economic justice and equity in the community (i.e. affordable housing efforts, participating in local community organizing).
- Faith and finance storytelling night: Invite community members to share vulnerable stories about economic hardship, resilience, generosity, or transformation.
- Create a guide to local businesses, farmers, and mission partners aligned with the community's values (a spend with intention map activity).

EXTRA RESOURCES

- [Free Financial Literacy Life Skills](#)
- [Financial/Career Events for Kids \(scholarships available\)](#)

Dimension 8



OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS

Occupational wellness is finding purpose, balance, and satisfaction in work—paid or unpaid. Aligned with values, it reduces stress, builds resilience, and supports overall well-being.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Notice how different roles (caregiver, employee, volunteer) impact your energy. Are there small shifts you can make to feel more whole?



You are more than your productivity. Rest is not laziness—it is resistance and healing.



Let go of the myth that purpose must be found only in paid work. Your worth is not tied to your output.



Individual Practices

- Evaluate your schedule (see more below).
- Discern your path – how do your gifts, passions, and values align with your work or service?
- Set boundaries – what limits or healthy space would create balance and wellness across your personal, professional, and spiritual life?
- Mentorship – mentor others in your field as a way to build leaders and offer guidance to younger individuals discerning their path.
- Volunteer regularly.
- Affirmation board – create small spaces where you post notes, photos, or quotes that remind you of your purpose and values.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Evaluating your schedule: a) Track how you spend your time, b) Jot where most of your time goes, c) Ask if this aligns with your goals and values, d) Add balance by prioritizing work, rest, and energizing tasks
- [Resources to help address workplace issues](#)



Dimension 8..

OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS



Work can be a source of both purpose and trauma, especially for caregivers, frontline workers, and those in unstable or undervalued jobs.



Acknowledge burnout, over-functioning, and grief in your conversations. Create space to honor both vocation and the need to rest.

Community Practices

- Host a sermon series on “work” and “rest.”
- Provide/host a job readiness workshop for your congregation and/or the surrounding community.
- Host community resource fairs with local employers, training programs, and social services.
- Utilize open church space for community partners who are committed to the wellbeing and flourishing of the community.
- Celebrate the work of members of your faith community (e.g., healthcare workers, educators, public servants, etc).
- Partner with local organizations who align with the congregation’s core values as inspired by Christ.
- Provide retreats for those in the community facing burnout, discernment, job loss, or major transitions.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- [Workplace Stress – guidance and tips for employers](#)



FACILITATOR GUIDE

This guide is designed to help congregations and community groups use this toolkit with ease. Use it as a flexible tool to create welcoming, engaging spaces for learning and connection.

CHECKLIST BEFORE BEGINNING

- ☐ READ THE TOOLKIT
- ☐ CHOOSE YOUR GROUP FORMAT
- ☐ SECURE SPACE & MATERIALS
- ☐ ASSESS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Facilitators' Guide



BEFORE YOU DIVE IN CHECKLIST

- Review the entire toolkit to understand its flow, tone, and trauma-informed language.
- Decide on the format - small group series, a seasonal church-wide focus, an 8-week study group, a self-paced study, etc.
- Secure a quiet, comfortable space. Print handouts and supply materials like markers, post-its, snacks, etc.
- Assess your community's needs by reflecting on dimensions that feel most urgent/relevant.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Which area(s) do you feel most passionate about?
- Which area is the most urgent need in your congregation or community?
- Which areas align with your congregation's strengths and resources?

Facilitators' Guide



SAMPLE SERIES STRUCTURE

Week 1: Emotional Wellness

Week 1 Theme: Emotional Wellness

- Suggested ideas: journaling, gratitude list, start a bulletin board of positive message

Week 2: Spiritual Wellness

Week 2 Theme: Spiritual Wellness

- Suggested ideas: Practice visio divina with an image - reflect and come back and share with group; designate time for breathwork, set up prayer partners, walking a labyrinth (if you have one or use a printed out finger labyrinth), end with communion

Week 3: Intellectual Wellness

Week 3 Theme: Intellectual Wellness

- Suggested ideas: choose an article to read and discuss together, learn about local history and discuss how it connects to the church's mission, play strategy games together

Week 4: Physical Wellness

Week 4 Theme: Physical Wellness

- Suggested ideas: go for a walk together and share what you are thankful for, focus on moving either in the form of breathwork, yoga practices, stretches, everyone bring in their favorite healthy snack...

TRAUMA- INFORMED TIPS



Use invitational language.



Honor trauma responses - normalize passing or opting out of activities.

Facilitators' Guide



SAMPLE SERIES STRUCTURE

Week 5: Environmental Wellness

Week 5 Theme: Environmental Wellness

- Suggested ideas: brainstorm ideas to build sacred spaces outdoors or in the building for prayer, rest or reflection, like benches, labyrinths; Discuss ways to be eco-friendly at home, & in the church; Practice gratitude for creation through reading and discussion - use recorded sounds (birdsong, wind, rain) to center group prayer or solo reflection.

Week 6: Social Wellness

Week 6 Theme: Social Wellness

- Suggested ideas: write handwritten notes or letters that can be picked up by church members; discuss volunteer opportunities with the group and decide where you want to help; partner up & share highs and lows (praises / concerns) of the week/month.

Week 7: Financial Wellness

Week 7 Theme: Financial Wellness

- Suggested ideas: set short & long-term financial goals, together - reflect and discuss organizations or partners focused on economic justice and brainstorm ideas on how to deepen connection with that group; invite members to share vulnerable stories about economic hardship, resilience, generosity, or transformation

Week 8: Occupational Wellness

Week 8 Theme: Occupational Wellness

- Suggested ideas: individual reflection - where are you spending most of your time, how can you implement ways to schedule and prioritize work-life balance, share with the group

TRAUMA-INFORMED TIPS

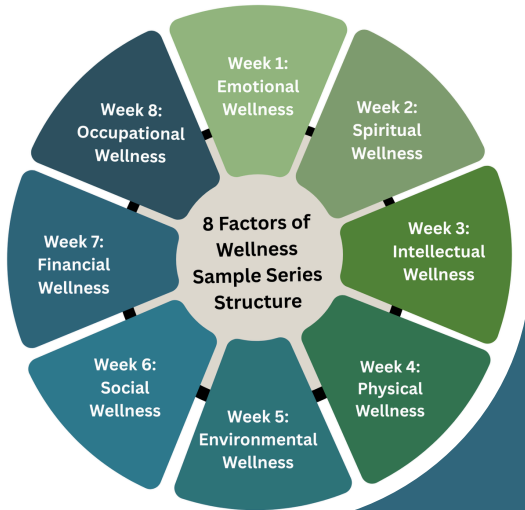


Hold space for vulnerable sharing.



Be present, not perfect - you don't need to be a mental health expert, just a grounded guide.

Facilitators' Guide



8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

Personal Assessment: 8 Dimensions of Wellness

Directions: Circle the number that applies to you for each statement. Then, total up the number for each of the 4 columns. Write the sum of all your totals in the light gray box to the right of the chart. This number is your score for that dimension (out of 40).

EMOTIONAL	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always	
I find healthy ways to cope with stress (e.g. exercise, meditation, social support, self-care activities, etc.)	1	2	3	4	
I am able to ask for assistance when I need it, either from friends and family, or professionals.	1	2	3	4	
I accept responsibility for my own actions.	1	2	3	4	
I am able to set priorities.	1	2	3	4	
I feel good about myself and believe others like me for who I am.	1	2	3	4	
I am flexible and able to adapt/adjust to life's changes in a positive way.	1	2	3	4	
I can express all ranges of feelings (i.e. hurt, sadness, fear, anger, joy, etc.) and manage emotion-related behaviors in a healthy way.	1	2	3	4	
I maintain a balance of work, friends, family, school and other obligations.	1	2	3	4	
I do not let my emotions get the better of me. I think before I act.	1	2	3	4	
I have a healthy relationship with social media.	1	2	3	4	
TOTAL					

SPIRITUAL	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always	
I take time to think about what is important in life – who I am, what I value, where I fit in, where I'm going.	1	2	3	4	
I make time for relaxation during the day.	1	2	3	4	
I have a belief system in place (religious, agnostic, atheist, spiritual, etc.).	1	2	3	4	
My values guide my decisions and actions.	1	2	3	4	
I have a sense of purpose in my life.	1	2	3	4	
I am tolerant and accepting of the view of others.	1	2	3	4	
I utilize resources to improve my well-being.	1	2	3	4	
I am active in communities or causes I care about.	1	2	3	4	
I am able to set, communicate and enforce boundaries.	1	2	3	4	
I work to create balance and peace within my interpersonal relationships, community and the world.	1	2	3	4	
TOTAL					

PHYSICAL	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always	
I manage my weight in healthy ways.	1	2	3	4	
I exercise regularly.	1	2	3	4	
I get 7-9 hours of sleep each night and feel rested in the morning.	1	2	3	4	
I seek advice from health care professionals if I have a health concern I cannot solve on my own.	1	2	3	4	
I do not use or avoid harmful use of drugs (over-the-counter, prescription and illicit).	1	2	3	4	
I drink alcohol responsibly (i.e. designated sober driver, avoid binge drinking, etc.)	1	2	3	4	
I protect my skin from sun damage by using sunscreen with SPF 30+, wearing hats and/or avoiding tanning booths and sun lamps.	1	2	3	4	
I maintain healthy eating patterns that include fruits and vegetables.	1	2	3	4	
I stay hydrated and drink water throughout the day.	1	2	3	4	
I protect myself from STIs and unwanted pregnancy by either abstaining from sexual behaviors or using proper protection, such as condoms.	1	2	3	4	
TOTAL					

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Facilitators' Guide



...8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL

	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
I am satisfied with my social life.	1	2	3	4
I am involved in at least one university community or group.	1	2	3	4
I maintain a network of supportive friends, family and social contacts.	1	2	3	4
I have at least one meaningful relationship in my life.	1	2	3	4
I am accepting of the diversity of others (race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, etc.)	1	2	3	4
I am able to prioritize my own needs by saying "no" to others' requests for my time.	1	2	3	4
I have someone I can talk to about my feelings and struggles.	1	2	3	4
I participate in social activities and enjoy being with people who are different from me.	1	2	3	4
I give and take equally in my relationships.	1	2	3	4
I plan time with my family and friends.	1	2	3	4
TOTAL				

FINANCIAL

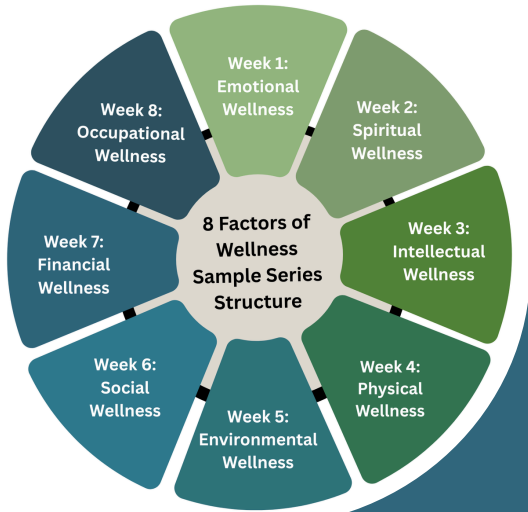
	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
I am able to set and stick to a budget each month so I don't run out of money.	1	2	3	4
I know my total amount of debt and interest rates.	1	2	3	4
I pay my credit cards, tuition/fees and other bills on time.	1	2	3	4
I know about the different sources of financial aid that I am eligible for and apply when I am able.	1	2	3	4
I have a savings account and save money regularly.	1	2	3	4
I know my credit score.	1	2	3	4
I keep my financial information safe by using secure passwords, PINs and dual authentication.	1	2	3	4
I feel good about my current and future financial situation.	1	2	3	4
I check my bank statements/accounts each month.	1	2	3	4
I understand how to build credit and use credit cards wisely.	1	2	3	4
TOTAL				

OCCUPATIONAL

	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
I am able to balance work, play, school and other aspects of my life.	1	2	3	4
I take advantage of opportunities to learn new skills that can enhance my future employment opportunities.	1	2	3	4
I know what skills are necessary for the occupations I am interested in.	1	2	3	4
I strive to develop good work habits (dependability, initiative, etc.).	1	2	3	4
I work effectively with others.	1	2	3	4
I have confidence in my job search skill (resume writing, interviewing, cover letters, networking, etc.).	1	2	3	4
I have explored different career options.	1	2	3	4
I know where to find employment opportunities (job service, online, etc.)	1	2	3	4
I manage my time effectively.	1	2	3	4
I have participated in internships or volunteer work.	1	2	3	4
TOTAL				

2..

Facilitators' Guide



...8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

INTELLECTUAL

	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
I know about available campus resources to help me study.	1	2	3	4
I feel fulfilled in my academic program.	1	2	3	4
I seek personal growth by learning new skills.	1	2	3	4
I look for ways to use my creative and critical thinking skills.	1	2	3	4
I am open to new ideas.	1	2	3	4
I learn about different topics that interest me from books, magazines, newspapers and the internet.	1	2	3	4
I know how to access academic resources when necessary.	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable reaching out to my professor/TA for help or attending office hours.	1	2	3	4
I am eager to learn.	1	2	3	4
I stay informed about social, political and other current issues.	1	2	3	4
TOTAL				

ENVIRONMENTAL

	Rarely, if ever	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
I spend time outdoors enjoying nature.	1	2	3	4
I reduce, reuse and recycle products.	1	2	3	4
I try to lessen my environmental impact.	1	2	3	4
I walk, bike, use public transportation or carpool when possible.	1	2	3	4
I am concerned about impacts on my local, national and world climate.	1	2	3	4
I have a space to call my own.	1	2	3	4
I feel comfortable in the space I occupy.	1	2	3	4
I feel content in my environments (class, home, work, etc.).	1	2	3	4
I shop locally.	1	2	3	4
I participate in campus events that help my community (food drives, fundraisers, etc.).	1	2	3	4
TOTAL				

Personal Wellness Checklist

Directions: Write down your scores from each of the dimensions and compare it to the maximum score. You can divide your score by the maximum score to get a percentage value if that is helpful.

DIMENSION OF WELLNESS	MY SCORE	MAXIMUM SCORE
Emotional		40
Spiritual		40
Physical		40
Social		40
Financial		40
Occupational		40
Intellectual		40
Environmental		40

Which dimensions could you improve on? _____

Which dimensions are going "okay"? _____

Which dimensions are you having success in? _____



Facilitators' Guide



SAMPLE SESSION AGENDA

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



What part of this wellness dimension feels most relevant in your life right now?



What practices felt grounding, surprising, or difficult?



How does your faith inform how you care for this part of yourself?



What's one step you could take this week to nurture this dimension?

08:00 - 09:30 AM

- Welcome and check-in
 - Brief grounding (music, prayer, silence)
 - Check-in (how's your soul today, breathwork/centering practice)

09:30 - 11:15 AM

- Scripture & Theme Intro
 - Choose a scripture that connects to the week's dimension. Read aloud and offer a brief reflection.

11:15 - 12:30 PM

- Lunch Break

12:30 - 2:00 PM

- Toolkit Reading
 - Read the week's wellness section aloud or in pairs. Highlight trauma-informed notes

2:00 - 02:30 PM

- Light Break

2:30 - 3:30 PM

- Discussion questions
 - Use reflection prompts to foster safe, open sharing

3:30 - 4:00 PM

- Coffee Break

4:00 - 4:30 PM

- Wrap-up
 - Closing prayer or reflection

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Use 8 Dimension Assessment at Week 1 & 8 to reflect on growth
- Open each session with posts/wins/stories from a gratitude wall from members as encouragement
- Sermon series companion - align weekly worship themes with each dimension
- Art, music, movement - incorporate creativity and embodiment whenever possible

APPENDIX A: SOURCES

¹ World Health Organization. (2024). Constitution of the World Health Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>

² Oluikpe, I. M., & Callender-Carter, S. T. (2016). Shalom as wholeness: A biblical basis for meeting global health needs in the 21st Century. *International Forum Journal*, 19(2), 97. <https://doi.org/10.63201/jcsx3547>

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2016, April). Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness. <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf>

⁴ World Health Organization. "Mental Health." World Health Organization, 17 June 2022, www.who.int/newsroom/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health.

⁵ National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). (n.d.). Mental Health Conditions. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/mental-health-conditions/>

⁶ Trauma-informed approaches and programs. SAMHSA. (n.d.-b). <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/trauma-violence/trauma-informed-approaches-programs>

APPENDIX B: RESOURCE LINKS

Page No.	Resource	Full Link
12	Mental Health Reference for faith Leaders	Appendix C, https://bit.ly/mentalhealth-faithleaders
13	Group Training	https://www.ruralopportunity.org/reconnect-for-resilience/
14	Sauna Benefits Study	https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2130724
15	Building Nutrition Awareness	https://wellresourced.com/engaging-nutrition-activities-groups-events/
15	NAMI Hearts & Minds Presentation	https://www.nami.org/support-education/mental-health-
18	Centering Prayer	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FWvxwfN_CE
18	Visio Divina	https://margaretsilf.co.uk
19	Sanctified Art Resource	https://sanctifiedart.org
19	Stephen Ministries	http://www.stephenministries.org
19	NAMI FaithNet	https://www.nami.org/get-involved/nami-faithnet/
20	100 Things To Save The Planet	https://www.sierraclub.org/toiyabe/100-things-you-can-do-save-planet
21	How To Report Spills & Environmental Violations	https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-incidents/how-report-spills-and-
21	Environmental Protection Agency, NC	https://www.epa.gov/nc
23	Relational Volunteering	https://volunteerhub.com/blog/maximizing-volunteer-impact-by-creating-a-
23	NAMI Family to Family Resource	https://www.nami.org/support-education/mental-health-
23	NAMI Peer to Peer Resource	https://www.nami.org/support-education/mental-health-

APPENDIX B: RESOURCE LINKS

Page No.	Resource	Full Link
24	50/30/20 Budget Rule	https://www.unfcu.org/financial-wellness/50-30-20-rule/
24	Emergency Fund	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy7ZOhrp-w
24	Budget (Google Sheets)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSPkfdOzbb0
24	Budget (Pen & Paper)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxjZ5aWbfcc
24	Financial Goals	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsEU56WbGLU
25	Free Financial Literacy Life Skills	https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/financial-literacy
25	Financial/Career Events for Kids	https://centralcarolinas.ja.org
26	Resources for Workplace Issues	https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/topic/Resources-for-
27	Resources for Workplace Stress	https://www.osha.gov/workplace-stress/employer-guidance

APPENDIX C: MENTAL HEALTH FOR FAITH LEADERS

Quick Reference on Mental Health for Faith Leaders

MENTAL ILLNESS IS COMMON. In the United States in the last year:

Any mental illness—
nearly 1 in 5 people (19%)

Serious mental illness—
1 in 24 people (4.1%)

Substance use disorder—
1 in 12 people (8.5%)

SUICIDE IS THE 10TH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE U.S.

OBSERVABLE SIGNS:

Some Signs That May Raise a Concern About Mental Illness

These observations **may** help identify an individual with a mental illness; they are not definitive signs of mental illness. Further mental health clinical assessment may be needed.

CATEGORIES OF OBSERVATION	Cognition: Understanding of situation, memory, concentration	Affect/Mood: Eye contact, outbursts of emotion/indifference	Speech: Pace, continuity, vocabulary (Is there difficulty with the English language?)	Thought Patterns and Logic: Rationality, tempo, grasp of reality	Appearance: Hygiene, attire, behavioral mannerisms
EXAMPLES OF OBSERVATIONS (Does something not make sense in context?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seems confused or disoriented to person, time, place Has gaps in memory, answers questions inappropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears sad/depressed or overly high-spirited Overwhelmed by circumstances, switches emotions abruptly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks too quickly or too slowly, misses words Stutters or has long pauses in speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses racing, disconnected thoughts Expresses bizarre ideas, responds to unusual voices/visions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears disheveled; poor hygiene, inappropriate attire Trembles or shakes, is unable to sit or stand still (unexplained)

COMMUNICATION:

When a Mental Health Condition Is Affecting an Individual

- Speak slowly and clearly; express empathy and compassion
- Treat the individual with the respect you would give any other person
- Listen; remember that feelings and thoughts are real even if not based in reality
- Give praise to acknowledge/encourage progress, no matter how small; ignore flaws
- If you don't know the person, don't initiate any physical contact or touching

EXAMPLES OF COMMON OBSERVATIONS

Loss of hope: appears sad, desperate

Recommendations for Responses:

- As appropriate, instill hope for a positive end result
- To the extent possible, establish personal connection

Appears anxious, fearful, panicky

Recommendations for Responses:

- Stay calm; reassure and calm the individual
- Seek to understand

Loss of control: appears angry, irritable

Recommendations for Responses:

- Listen, defuse, deflect; ask why he/she is upset
- Avoid threats and confrontation

Has trouble concentrating

Recommendations for Responses:

- Be brief; repeat if necessary
- Clarify what you are hearing from the individual

For more information, see *Mental Health: A Guide for Faith Leaders*, www.psychiatry.org/faith

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...APPENDIX C: MENTAL HEALTH FOR FAITH LEADERS

IMMEDIATE CONCERN: Approaching a Person With an Urgent Mental Health Concern

- Before interacting, consider **safety** for yourself, the individual, and others
- Is there a family member or friend who can help?
- Find a good, safe place (for both) to talk
- Express willingness to be there for the person
- **Seek immediate assistance if a person poses a danger to self or others; call 911; ask if a person with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training is available**



SUICIDE:

Thoughts of suicide should always be taken seriously. A person who is actively suicidal is a psychiatric emergency. Call 911.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

- Often talking or writing about death or suicide
- Comments about being hopeless, helpless, or worthless, no reason for living
- Increase in alcohol and/or drug use
- Withdrawal from friends, family, and community
- Reckless behavior or engaging in risky activities
- Dramatic mood changes

RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE

- Losses and other events (e.g., death, financial or legal difficulties, relationship breakup, bullying)
- Previous suicide attempts
- History of trauma or abuse
- Having firearms in the home
- Chronic physical illness, chronic pain
- Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others
- History of suicide in family

REFERRAL:

Making a Referral to a Mental Health/Medical Professional

WHEN TO MAKE A REFERRAL

Assessing the person

- **Level of distress**—How much distress, discomfort, or anguish is he/she feeling? How well is he/she able to tolerate, manage or cope?
- **Level of functioning**—Is he/she capable of caring for self? Able to problem solve and make decisions?
- **Possibility for danger**—danger to self or others, including thoughts of suicide or hurting others

Tips on making a mental health referral

- Identify a mental health professional, have a list
- Communicate clearly about the need for referral
- Make the referral a collaborative process between you and the person and/or family
- Reassure person/family you will journey with them
- Be clear about the difference between spiritual support and professional clinical care
- Follow-up; remain connected; support reintegration
- Offer community resources, support groups

DEALING WITH RESISTANCE TO HELP

Resistance to seeking help may come from stigma, not acknowledging a problem, past experience, hopelessness, cultural issues, or religious concepts

- **Learn about mental health** and treatments to help dispel misunderstandings
- **Continue to journey** with the person/family; seek to understand barriers
- **Use stories** of those who have come through similar situations; help the person realize he/she is not alone and people can recover
- **Reassure** that there are ways to feel better, to be connected, and to be functioning well
- If a person of faith, **ask how faith** can give him or her strength to take steps toward healing

If you believe danger to self or others is imminent, call 911

REFERENCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, *Suicide Prevention*
American Association of Suicidology, *Warning Signs and Risk Factors*
Judges Criminal Justice/Mental Health Leadership Initiative, *Judges Guide to Mental Illness*
Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation, *Mental Health Information for Ministers*
Interfaith Network on Mental Illness, *Caring Clergy Project*

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800 Maine Ave. S.W., Suite 900,
Washington, DC
psychiatry.org/faith



Note. Reproduced from *Mental Health: A Guide for Faith Leaders (Quick Reference Guide)*, by the American Psychiatric Association, 2018, <https://www.psychiatry.org/faith>. © 2018 American Psychiatric Association.

APPENDIX D: EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIRECTORY

Emergency	Contact	What to expect
988 (Mental Health Emergencies)	Call 988	When you call 988, you will first hear a greeting message with the options to
988 (Mental Health Emergencies)	Text 988	Text: When you text 988, you will complete a short survey letting the crisis counselor know a little about your situation. You will be connected with a trained crisis counselor in a crisis center, who will answer the text, provide support, and share resources
988 (Mental Health Emergencies)	Chat 988 at www.988lifeline.org	Chat: Visit www.988lifeline.org and find the chat button in the top right-hand
Atrium Behavioral Health (Psychiatric Emergency)	1-800-848-6946	
Carolinas Poison Center	1-800-848-6946	
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance	www.dbsalliance.org	Offers free virtual and in person support groups for those diagnosed
NAMI Faithnet (NAMI Helpline)	1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or text \"NAMI\" to 741741	NAMI FaithNet is an interfaith resource network of NAMI members,
NAMI NC Helpline	1-800-451-9682	
Novant Health Access	704-384-9414	
Peer Warmline (NC Statewide)	855-PEERS NC (855-733-7762)	The Statewide Peer Warmline is a phone line staffed by Peer Support
Sexual Assault National Hotline	1-800-656-HOPE (4673)	
Sexual Assault Safe Helpline for Military	877-995-5247	www.safehelpline.org/telephone DSN users can call Safe Helpline by dialing
Substance Use Recovery	866 210-1303	Professional counselors on the line to help you open up about your struggles and make decisions about your next steps for treatment.

...APPENDIX D: EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIRECTORY

Emergency	Contact	What to expect
Suicide Crisis Text Line	text CONNECT to 741741	
Suicide: LGBTQ+ Trevor Project	1-866-488-7386	
Suicide: National Hopeline	1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)	
Suicide: National Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (8255)	
Suicide: Report suicidal content threats on		https://www.facebook.com/help/contact/305410456169423
Suicide: Veteran's Crisis Line	1-800-273-TALK (8255) press 1 or text 838255	Stop Soldier Suicide: https://stopsoldiersuicide.org/
Teen Certified Peer Support Specialists		https://somethings.com/
Teen NAMI 7 Young Adult HelpLine	1-800-950-NAMI (Four digit code: 6264)	This is a national resource for teens or young adults with questions about
Teen National Dating Abuse Helpline	1-866-331-9474 TTY: 1-866-331-8453	
Teen National Runaway Safeline	1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800-786-2929)	
Teen Safe Place	1-888-290-7233	
Teen Talk Line	1-800-650-8336	Four digit topic numbers: Suicide (6773), Disappointment/Depression
Veterans/Family: Crisis Line	1-800-273-TALK (8255) press 1 or text 838255	Stop Soldier Suicide: https://stopsoldiersuicide.org/
Veterans/Family: DAV Moral Injury Violations		https://www.dav.org/get-help-now/veteran-topics-resources/moral-
Veterans/Family: Military One		Military One Source: Free confidential help and resources for Military,
Veterans/Family: NAMI Homefront		The NAMI Homefront educational program is free and held over six
Veterans/Family: Stop Soldier Suicide		Stop Soldier Suicide: https://stopsoldiersuicide.org/

APPENDIX E: NAMI RESOURCES

NAMI Resource	Contact	What to expect
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)	Click nami.org to look at the calendar of events and register for a NAMI program	NAMI recognizes that churches are often pillars of their communities. Through the NAMI website and through efforts nationally and in local communities, NAMI and NAMI Affiliates encourage an exchange of information, tools and other resources which will help educate and inspire faith communities about mental illness and the vital role spirituality plays in recovery for many.
NAMI Faithnet	NAMI FaithNet	NAMI FaithNet is an interfaith resource network of NAMI members, friends, clergy and congregations of all faith traditions who wish to encourage faith communities who are welcoming and supportive of persons and families living with mental illness. NAMI FaithNet strives to encourage welcoming, caring congregations as well as to promote the vital role of spirituality in the recovery journeys of many who live with mental health conditions, those for whom faith is a key component.
NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A peer-led, peer-based mutual support group open to any adult who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. The support group is designed to connect, encourage, and support participants using a structured support group model. The groups allow for safe, confidential, personal sharing in a flexible group setting. NAMI's support groups are unique because they follow a structured model, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to be heard and to get what they need.

...APPENDIX E: NAMI RESOURCES

NAMI Resource	Contact	What to expect
NAMI Family Support Group	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A peer-led support group for any adult with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. Gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar experiences. NAMI's support groups are unique because they follow a structured model, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to be heard and to get what they need.
NAMI Basics & NAMI Basics OnDemand Educational Classes	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A 6-session education program for parents, caregivers and other family who provide care for youth (ages 22 and younger) who are experiencing mental health symptoms. This program is free to participants, 99% of whom say they would recommend the program to others. NAMI Basics is available both in person and online through NAMI Basics OnDemand. OnDemand is online and self-directed, whereas NAMI Basics can refer to instructor-led, in-person group sessions.
NAMI Family-to-Family Educational Classes	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A class for families, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. Designated as an evidence-based program by SAMHSA, it facilitates a better understanding of mental health conditions, increases coping skills and empowers participants to become advocates for their family members. Also available in Spanish, De Familia a Familia de NAMI.

...APPENDIX E: NAMI RESOURCES

NAMI Resource	Contact	What to expect
NAMI Homefront Educational Classes	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A class for families, caregivers and friends of military service members and veterans with mental health conditions. The course is designed specifically to help these families understand those challenges and improve their ability to support their service member or veteran.
NAMI Peer-to-peer Educational Classes	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A class for adults with mental health conditions. The course is designed to encourage growth, healing and recovery among participants. This program is also available in Spanish, De Persona a Persona de NAMI.
NAMI Bridges of Hope Presentation	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	An educational presentation that educates faith communities about mental illness so that they can create stronger safety nets and welcoming communities of faith for people affected by mental illness.
Mental Health 101 Presentation	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	An educational presentation given by a NAMI NC staff member to provide a basic overview of common mental illnesses and to introduce NAMI as a resource for mental health education and support.
NAMI Ending the Silence Presentation	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A presentation designed for middle and high school students, school staff, and parents or guardians of middle or high school aged youth. Audiences learn about the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions, how to recognize the early warning signs and the importance of acknowledging those warning signs.

...APPENDIX E: NAMI RESOURCES

NAMI Resource	Contact	What to expect
NAMI Family & Friends Presentation	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A 4-hour seminar that informs and supports people who have loved ones with a mental health condition. Participants learn about diagnoses, treatment, recovery, communication strategies, crisis preparation and NAMI resources. Seminar leaders have personal experience with mental health conditions in their families.
NAMI In Our Own Voice Presentation	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A presentation for the general public to promote awareness of mental health conditions and recovery. This program is also available in Spanish, En Nuestra Propia Voz de NAMI.
NAMI Sharing Hope: Mental Wellness in the Black/African Ancestry Communities Presentation	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	A free safe space to have conversations on mental health and wellness, because people of Black and African Ancestry around the country deserve supportive and healing spaces by and for us to help our communities thrive.
NAMI Hearts+Minds Presentation	https://www.nami.org/ and click on the find your state/local NAMI program drop-down search option	The need to focus on mental and physical health simultaneously has never been more important. NAMI Hearts+Minds educates and empowers individuals to better manage their health, mentally and physically.

Journey with
us toward
*Abundant
Life*

STAY ENGAGED!



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 healthandwholeness.org

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 919.828.6501 ext. 107

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 [phwnc](https://www.instagram.com/phwnc)



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