

How to Rate Your Faith Community

(Adapted from criteria established by the Presbyterian Serious Mental Illness Network – PSMIN)

1. Does your congregation make a deliberate attempt to welcome and integrate persons with a serious mental illness and their families into the total life and work of the church without being obvious and setting them apart by:
 - Being accepting, friendly, understanding and genuine?
 - Praying for those who have a mental illness the same way as for other illnesses?
 - Visiting and calling on the mentally ill person and by offering to help in little ways?
 - Offering support and love to the parents family of the ill person, by inquiring about the relative's health as one would for anyone who is ill?
 - Listening and talking with the mentally ill person?

2. Does your congregation use every opportunity to educate themselves and others about mental illness by:
 - Encouraging clergy, lay staff and congregations to learn about mental illnesses?
 - Raising awareness of mental illness in sermons, bulletins, and newsletters.
 - Adding books and other publications to the congregation's library?
 - Becoming familiar with local mental health services and support groups?

3. Does your congregation offer its facilities and/or resources to those having a serious mental illness and their families by:
 - Hosting a group of people from a local facility?
 - Sponsoring a support group for them and/or their families?
 - Sponsoring a social club or drop-in-center?
 - Offering employment opportunities?

4. Does your congregation advocate for people with mental illness by:
 - Working with other churches and organizations, such as the Mental Health Assoc. and NAMI NH(National Alliance on Mental Illness – New Hampshire)?
 - Supporting efforts to obtain appropriate housing and jobs?
 - Not letting false, stigmatizing statements about mental illness go unchallenged?
 - Supporting adequate state and local budgets for mental health services?
 - Giving money for research into the causes and cure for mental illness?

5. Does your congregation undertake a ministry to, ministry with, and ministry by persons with serious mental illness and their families? Are they invited to serve as officer bearers and on committees?