

Healthy Communities



A publication for people who care about improving the health of our community

Fall 2018

A Note from the Director



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Director, Healthy
Community Partnership

Before moving to Johns Hopkins in 2011, I spent more than three decades as a professor of clinical psychology. For most of this time, I also had a clinical practice where I worked primarily with individuals suffering from depression—work that I found extremely gratifying. I eventually had to phase out my clinical practice as our efforts building faith-health partnerships expanded, but I continued to give community talks on mental health, primarily in faith communities. During these presentations, I discovered that of all the health programs offered in religious congregations, mental health typically drew the largest audiences. And this interest continues to grow.

The Healthy Community Partnership actively responds to the demand for mental health education in a number of ways—some of which are highlighted in this newsletter. On the following pages, you will read about a suicide prevention program that was led by The Pro Bono Counseling Project; learn about resources offered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI); and reflect on ways to reduce the stigma of mental health within your congregation and community. We also talk with **Rhonda Cromwell**, a congregant of Cornerstone Church in Columbia, Maryland. Rhonda graduated from the Lay Health Educator Program in 2017 and organized two very successful programs about depression.

Finally, I invite you to attend the 7th Annual William S. Perper Faith-Health Symposium, which focuses on three timely mental health issues—depression, trauma and addiction. The symposium is scheduled for Thursday, November 8 at Preston Hall in Baltimore. More details can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

As always, I invite you to connect with us either by way of partnership or by providing feedback on how we can better serve you—our partners in care.

In faith and good health,

Let's Talk About Depression ...

For handouts and presentations on depression and other health topics, visit hopkinsmedicine.org/jhbmc/building-hcp. Materials may be reproduced and distributed during health education programs, used as bulletin inserts or shared with family, friends and community members.

Content on this website is a supplement to the third edition of *Building Healthy Communities Through Medical-Religious Partnerships*, available through Johns Hopkins University Press.

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

Developed in 1995 by Paul Quinnett, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training is an evidence-based emergency mental health intervention for suicidal persons. The program was originally created in the northwest to prevent suicide among older adults. Postal workers were trained to ask questions of people to whom they delivered their mail. As a result, the number of suicides among older adults in the area decreased.

Amy Greensfelder, executive director of The Pro Bono Counseling Project, recently provided the training at Johns Hopkins Bayview for nearly 30 community members. During the session, participants learned how to ask someone if they're feeling suicidal, ways to persuade someone to stay alive and resources available to those thinking about taking their life.



Participants represented more than 20 local churches.

“Most families are impacted by some form of mental illness, but they are too ashamed or embarrassed to talk about it,” said **William Lee**, lay health educator. “It is up to us as clergy to create a safe space for them to begin to have a conversation.”

QPR Suicide Prevention Training is a one-hour class that is designed for lay people with no mental health background. Participants are trained to become “gatekeepers”—someone in a position to recognize a crisis and the warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide.

“The course teaches community members how to save lives by identifying signs that friends and family members are considering suicide, and learning how to connect people who are struggling to community resources,” said Greensfelder. “Many people suffer alone, and this training helps family members know when and how to help. Together we can save lives.”

If you or someone you know is considering suicide, please call the Suicide Crisis hotline at **800-273-8255** to talk to a local crisis worker who can help connect you to services immediately.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI)



The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness through education, support and advocacy. NAMI recognizes that faith and spirituality can be important to a person's recovery from mental illness and understands the valuable role religious leaders can play. That's why they created an online Faith Toolkit that connects faith leaders to resources that can help them:

- Gain better knowledge and understanding of mental health conditions
- Learn what actions can be taken to create an informed, inclusive and supportive environment
- Connect individuals and families to sources of help and support

Local NAMI chapters also offer in-person workshops and conferences about the signs, symptoms and treatments of mental health conditions. This past spring, NAMI Metropolitan Baltimore sponsored a mental health conference where faith leaders learned strategies to help end the stigma surrounding mental health conditions and treatment. Additionally, representatives from NAMI are available throughout the year to present to congregations and the greater community about mental health.

To learn more about these programs, visit namibaltimore.org or namimd.org.

REFLECTION: REDUCING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Millions of Americans are affected by mental health conditions every year. This large number coupled with the stigma about mental illness means that many people may go unrecognized or untreated.

What can we, as faithful people, do or say in response to the distress of a mental illness? We can have open hands, open hearts and open minds. **Open hands** is acceptance, making sure that everyone knows they are loved and welcomed—no matter their struggles. **Open hearts** means that we create relationships so we can offer care and support. Sometimes an open heart simply means that we show up consistently, sitting present to pain. **Open minds** means that we don't always understand why a person has an illness. It represents a willingness to learn without judgment.

Psalm 34 says, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers ... them all.”

We can embody this sacred text. We can acknowledge those around us who are in need because of a mental illness. We can be near with open hands and hearts. We can save through our open minds. We are one loving community—all desiring to make the world more compassionate and comforting.



Rev. Paula Teague, D.Min.
*Senior Director,
Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy,
Johns Hopkins Health System*

LAY HEALTH EDUCATOR PROGRAM: PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT



Rhonda Cromwell, Cornerstone Church

Rhonda Cromwell, a 2017 graduate of the Lay Health Educator (LHE) program, organized two very successful programs about depression at Cornerstone Church, located in Columbia, Maryland. Below, she talks about her experience with the LHE program and what inspired her to bring such an important topic to her congregation.

What is your role in your church?

My father is the pastor. I help coordinate special events. I have a finance background and serve as an advisor/consultant for church finances.

Why did you sign up for LHE?

I am a freelance business coach. I've found that many individuals put their health on the back burner to build their business or get ahead in their career. Over time, it becomes more apparent that they no longer can do that. I provide them with wellness coaching to help them understand the importance of their overall health.

How did LHE help you, your family or other people in your life?

I was looking for a class that addressed community-related issues to help my clients. After taking the class, I realized that the information I learned could also impact my church family.

Why did you decide to choose depression?

When we went through the different topics in class, depression really resonated with me. While planning for the presentation, there were a number of school shootings, and it confirmed that I needed to do this. The shootings brought up a lot of discussion regarding gun violence, but the real issue with school shootings is mental health. It's something people don't talk about.

Since that program was so successful (more than 60 congregants attended), I suggested that we have a similar presentation at the Chesapeake Delaware Potomac Pastors Conference. I was involved in the initial concept, created a flyer and personally promoted it in the community.

For more information about Healthy Community Partnership, visit hopkinsmedicine.org/jhbmc/hcp.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



7th Annual William S. Perper Faith-Health Symposium

*Depression, Trauma, Addiction:
Demystifying Demons*

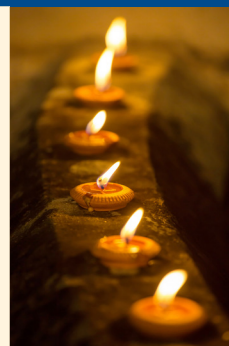
Thursday, November 8

8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Preston Hall
25 W. Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

This is a free conference for individuals and families impacted by depression, trauma or addiction, and for those who care for them.

**For more information or to register,
visit perpersymposium.rsvpify.com**



LIGHT THE LABYRINTH *A Celebration of Light and Diversity*

DECEMBER 4, 2018
5 P.M.

Join us for a celebration of light and diversity on Johns Hopkins Bayview's own unique space—the labyrinth. The program features:

- Reflections on light from diverse perspectives
- Music provided by local musicians
- Light refreshments

Every person who attends also may place a candle on the labyrinth, creating a display of light and peace.

For more information, call 410-550-7569.