

Faith Connections

Supports Faith Communities by . . .

- ♦ Supporting and equipping faith community **leaders** as they seek to welcome and care for those who are living with mental illness.
- ♦ Offering educational, advocacy, and support resources to **individuals** who are living with mental illness.
- ♦ Providing opportunities to connect with **others** who are either living with mental illness or wanting to care for those who are living with mental illness.
- ♦ Providing forums whereby **mental health professionals, mental health consumers, and people of faith** can discuss issues related to faith and mental health.



Please help us connect these various groups who are too often fragmented by the many difficult issues related to living with mental illness.

2014 Annual Conference Sponsors

Sustaining Sponsors (\$500 or more)

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NC Conference of the United Methodist Church,
Disability Concerns Committee
NAMI Durham County, NC
NAMI Orange County, NC
NAMI Alamance Caswell/Rockingham Co.
NC Conference of the United Methodist Church
One Mind Mental Illness Ministry
St. Philips Episcopal Church
The Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Parish

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Mt. Carmel Baptist Church
Orange United Methodist Church
Pullen Memorial Baptist Church
St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church
St. Paul United Methodist Church
First Presbyterian Church, Durham
Union Missionary Baptist Church
United Church of Chapel Hill
Watts Street Baptist Church

Faith Connections On Mental Illness

Mission Statement

The mission of Faith Connections on Mental Illness is to work with all faith communities to welcome, include, support, educate, and advocate for individuals and families who are living with mental illness.



Meeting 3rd Fridays, 3:30 - 5:00 at

St. Thomas More
940 Carmichael Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

919-967-5403

faithconnectionsmentalillness.org

Activities

EDUCATION

Annual Conference

In early Spring, FCOMI sponsors a day-long annual conference featuring speakers nationally renowned in mental health circles for their work and advocacy. In addition to the keynote speakers who presented real-life programs assisting the mentally ill, past conferences have featured practitioners explaining scientific basis of and treatments for mental illness as well as break-out discussion groups. Most presenters have a personal or familial connection to mental illness. Wake AHEC offers optional professional credits for a small additional fee.

ADVOCACY

NAMIWalks

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is the nation's largest mental health nonprofit grassroots organization. FCOMI members are proud participants in its annual fundraising and awareness event held mid-Spring.

SUPPORT

Scholarships

FCOMI provides scholarships for various activities for mental health causes.

Speaker Resource

Faith Communities and organizations are invited to call upon us for recommendations for speakers for their mental health related events.

History

Faith Connections on Mental Illness was officially formed in January 2008 by representatives from three different Chapel Hill faith communities, most of whom were also members of NAMI and had past knowledge and dealings with mental illness in their own families.

This small group united for the specific purpose of seeing how their faith communities could minister to people suffering from mental illness, as well as those who love and care for them.

Out of this initial gathering, an organization was launched!

Meeting on a monthly basis, group members combined their talents and resources to form a new type of ministry for those caring for or suffering with a mental illness, such as Bipolar, Schizophrenia, Major Depression, Anxiety, etc. Each faith community concentrates on what is most needed in its own congregation. Any workshop, prayer/worship service, symposium, support group, weekly education ("Sunday School") program, etc. developed can be shared with the Faith Connections group, to serve as a template for other group members in creating their own offerings. Some programs are also offered as a community outreach, such as "Longest Night/Blue Christmas" services.

The modest yearly panel discussions of 2008 and 2009 have evolved into a highly respected annual conference attended by hundreds. This day-long event features nationally renowned speakers and offers practical advice with optional professional credit for attendees, including mental health professionals, clergy, lay-leaders, and concerned individuals from across the state.

FCOMI continues to encourage and support activities in local congregations to carry out the mandate that began at its inception.

Why It Matters

MENTAL ILLNESS is everywhere . . .
. . . *Headlines stream in local media*
. . . *Heartaches scream from our homes*
. . . *Our prisons, streets, and homeless shelters overflow*

1 in 4 adults will experience a mental health disorder in any given year. In other words, almost every single person in any given congregation is touched by the sadness, stigma, lack of emotional and financial support, and barriers to resources engendered by MENTAL ILLNESS.

Faith Connections on Mental Illness refuses to bow to the hopelessness and believes that ignorance is the biggest barrier of all. We invite you to join us in our efforts to increase understanding of mental illness through Education, Advocacy, & Support.

