

INMI 2014 Highlights

Nationwide Events/Activities

In 2014 we developed a series of five videos for clergy on suicide. Because people with mental illnesses and emotional problems often turn first to their clergy for help, it is important for clergy to know what to do when one of their congregants comes to them with suicidal thoughts. The first three videos deal with recognizing suicidal thinking and responding appropriately to a person who is feeling suicidal. The last two videos cover responding to family members after a suicide and planning a memorial service. The videos are posted on our Caring Clergy Project website and on YouTube so they are available to clergy everywhere.

We continued to add organizations to our **Interfaith Directory** for organizations that are working at the intersection between mental health and spirituality/faith. The directory helps these organizations collaborate and share best practices and helps people in recovery find faith communities that welcome, support and value them. (Faith communities are invited to register in the directory at www.inmi.us)

Throughout 2014, we worked with the **Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition**, the faith-community outreach arm of the American Association of People with Disabilities. IDAC is presently collaborating with the American Psychiatric

Association on ways for mental health professionals and faith community leaders to work together effectively. Our chair, Alan Johnson, is part of that collaboration. He offered the clergy perspective as part of a panel at the APA's September meeting in San Francisco. He also participated in developing a guide book for clergy on mental health.

We developed and adopted the **WISE (welcoming, inclusive, supportive, engaged) model for congregations** to use as a high-level framework for developing mental health ministries.

We presented a **poster session at the NAMI national convention** in Washington DC titled "Spiritual Support Groups for Mental Health and Wellness."

We published **17 blog posts** dealing with the intersection of faith/spirituality and mental health on our Caring Clergy Project website at <http://www.caringclergyproject.org>.

On updated our **INMI website**, www.inmi.us, regularly with the latest news and nationwide events and resources in addition to regularly updating our list of local events.

On our **INMI Facebook page**, we engaged regularly with followers and facilitated conversations with others about faith/spirituality and mental health.

Local Events/Activities

We traditionally hold two annual gatherings, one highlighting Mental Health Month (May) and one in October during Mental Illness Awareness Week. In May 2013 we hosted a **“Men and Depression”** conference featuring nationally recognized family therapist and author Terry Real. Approximately 130 people attended.

Our **October program, “Expanding your Toolkit for Mental Health,”** featured Dr. Abraham Nussbaum. 67 people attended, many of them local clergy.

We consulted with First United Methodist Church, Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, and staff at First Presbyterian Church and Congregation Har HaShem on **establishing mental health ministries or educational programs for their congregations.**

We offered **30-minute presentations at the beginning of five Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) programs** sponsored by the Mental Health Partners. This national Mental Health First Aid program has been used around the country to teach people how to be first responders to someone in a mental health crisis. The INMI presentation addresses **“Spirituality as a Resource in Recovery.”**

We enabled the **“Safe Harbor” support group** at Chinook Clubhouse, Boulder, by funding a person to facilitate the monthly program. It is among the most-attended programs of the Clubhouse.

We sent the **INMI Updates** via email approximately once a month to more than 500 people to announce local programs, resources, groups and classes dealing with mental health challenges.

We cosponsored the **“Hope Lights the**

Night” event to provide support and sacred remembrances of those who have died by suicide.

Organizational Development

We **developed processes for acknowledging members and donors** and for sending reminders to people whose memberships have lapsed. Our newest board member, Kathy Naman, volunteered to be our **“Member Champion”** to help us communicate effectively with members and make them feel more included.

Plans for 2015

As we move into the new year, we have challenges and opportunities ahead of us.

- We are determined to have well-qualified presenters for our annual programs.
- We will begin development of videos on substance abuse and addiction for our Caring Clergy Project website.
- We will move to a more efficient platform for emailing our INMI Updates and create a national version of our newsletter

We are very grateful for the financial and in-kind support from our INMI members and donors. Our goal is to increase awareness and understanding of mental illness among clergy, staff, lay leaders and members of faith communities and help them more effectively develop and nurture supportive environments for persons dealing with mental illness and their families and friends.



The Rev. Alan Johnson
Chair, INMI Board of Directors