

PRAYERS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS RECOVERY AND UNDERSTANDING

The National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding has been designated as the Tuesday of Mental Illness Awareness Week which is first week in October of each year. Mental illness networks and faith leaders are urged to work together so that they may recognize and prepare for this day in a way that works best for each faith community. The prayers and actions of both faith communities and secular organizations (e.g. NAMI, NMHA, DBSA, OCF, ADAA, etc.) are needed to restore mental wellness in America. In seeking God's guidance, we can recommit ourselves to replacing misinformation, blame, fear and prejudice with truth and love in order to offer hope to all who are touched by mental illness.

This flyer includes some resources you may find helpful.

PRAYER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT*

Leader: We acknowledge that we are still uninformed about mental illness and how it impacts persons and their families.

Response: **At times, because of our lack of knowledge and understanding we find ourselves separated from our sisters and brothers with mental illness, their families and ourselves.**

Leader: There are lines drawn between us because we may define wholeness and normality with different words, but not a different spirit.

Response: **Because of our lack of knowledge we live cut off from sources of strength and power that would help us be present to people with mental illness. This lack often makes us feel that we cannot act.**

Leader: So many events, meetings and needs call to us, grabbing for our attention, that we find ourselves stretched to a fine, thin line.

Response: **In the face of all this, we continue to seek knowledge and understanding of mental illness that will bring liberation and shalom to us and those we serve and unite us to action.**

All: **O God, our creator and liberator, we seek Your divine guidance, that we may live in fuller union with You, ourselves and all those with mental illness. Also grant that we may gain courage to love and understand each other. Amen.**

*(adapted from the original by Rabbi Eric Weiss, Bay Area Jewish Healing Center)

PASTORAL PRAYER

Loving Creator, we come to you on this National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding because we know that you are a God of love and compassion. We come as people of all creeds and all nations seeking your presence, comfort and guidance. We come as consumers, family members, friends, co-workers and mental health professionals. We come this day because we believe that you, Divine One, love each one of us just as we are and you walk with us on our individual journeys through life. You see the ignorance and injustice that divides and separates persons struggling with mental illness and you weep with us.

Give us courage to face our challenges and open us today to the many ways you are already working in our midst. Help us to identify mental illness as the disease it is, that we might have courage and wisdom in the face of ignorance and stigma. Inspire us as we seek to overcome fear, acquire knowledge, and advocate for compassionate and enlightened treatment and services.

Lead us as we open our hearts and homes, our communities and job opportunities, our houses of worship and communities of faith. Enable us to find ways to be inclusive of persons living with mental illness in our everyday lives. Be with doctors, therapists, researchers, social workers, and all those in the helping professions as they seek to overcome ignorance and injustice with care and compassion.

Sometimes, Divine Spirit, we feel discouraged and hopeless in the face of so many challenges. Help us to see ourselves as you see us...persons of value and worth...persons of creativity and potential. May we come to understand the interconnectedness of mind, body and spirit in bringing about health and wholeness. And may we go forward into our communities with a renewed sense of vision, hope and possibility for the future.

Amen. Reverend Susan Gregg-Schroeder

CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE

We light the candle of **Truth** that God will help us dispel ignorance and misinformation about major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, severe anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder. (Silent prayer)

We light the candle of **Healing** that troubled minds and hearts, broken lives and relationships might be healed. (Silent prayer)

We light the candle of **Understanding** that the darkness of stigma, labels, exclusion and marginalization might be dispelled for the sake of those touched by mental illness. (Silent prayer)

We light the candle of **Hope** for persons and families living with mental illness, for better treatment, for steadier recovery, for greater opportunity to work and serve. (Silent prayer)

We light the candle of **Thankfulness** for compassionate, dedicated caregivers and mental health professionals; for new discoveries in brain research and better medications. (Silent prayer)

We light the candle of **Faith** to dispel doubt and despair for those who have lost hope and are discouraged. (Silent prayer)

We light the candle of **Steadfast Love** to remind us of God's love and faithfulness, and to remind us to share the light of love and service for those living with mental illness. (Silent prayer)

Carole J. Wills

Other Options

After lighting the candles, participants can be invited to come forward and light a votive candle speaking the name of someone they wish to pray for aloud or in their heart. Other types of candles can be used and a song can be sung.

Another option is to have a fountain or bowl of water in the center of the candles. Participants can come forward and take a stone, colored marble or shell from the water and take it with them as a reminder of their personal prayer.

Websites for More Resources

FaithNET NAMI www.faithnetnami.org

Mental Health Ministries www.MentalHealthMinistries.net

Pathways to Promise www.pathways2promise.org

FaithCEP NAMI Indianapolis www.congregationalresources.org/mentalhealth.asp

From: NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness).