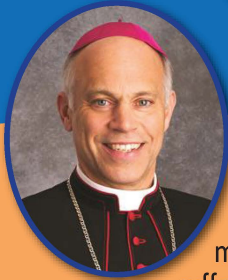


A message from Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone



All of our parishes have family members suffering from the challenge of mental illness, and despite modern understanding of mental illness, many suffer additionally from stigma. Their pain is often felt in silence, hidden and unrecognized by others. For many people, mental illness represents an ongoing and lifelong burden.

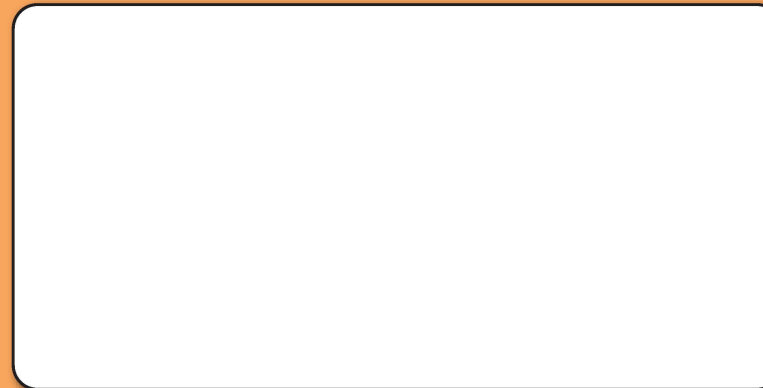
Christ calls us to attend to all those who suffer, including those suffering from mental illness. My brother bishops and I here in California have launched a mental illness awareness effort, calling attention to the fact that we are all called to provide hope and healing, and that we as a Church must accompany our brothers and sisters in their difficulties. We can help to bear their burdens by offering our understanding, prayers, and tangible resources. No one should be isolated and left alone. We must meet people where they are – in our parishes.

The good news about mental illness is that recovery is possible. We know that Jesus' ministry was one of hope and of healing; His Church must also offer hope and healing, by using available resources to help those in need. Our parish-based Mental Health Ministry teams will play a key role in this important mission of easing the suffering of those in our parishes.

Our parish mental health ministry is not intended to replace professional or clinical services and does not provide professional care.

Our volunteers are trained in appropriate procedures designed to maintain the privacy of those with whom they relate. Our parish offers assistance because we love, care for, and want the best for our families and neighbors.

If you or a family member are experiencing mental health challenges, please contact our parish Mental Health Ministry team listed below.



SFSP Crisis Line: 415-781-0500

24 hours a day/7 days a week

This line also serves as a suicide prevention/intervention hotline.

In an emergency please call 911



Mental Health Ministry
Archdiocese of San Francisco
sfarch.org/mental-health

Our parish is a member of the

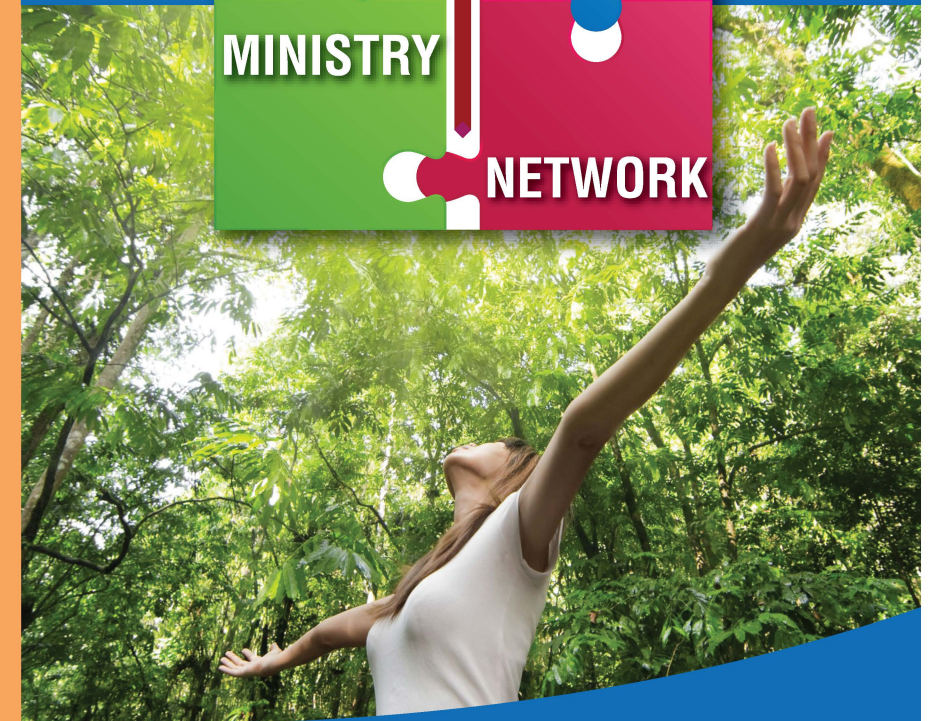
**Archdiocese of
San Francisco**

MENTAL

HEALTH

MINISTRY

NETWORK



**Bringing Christ
to Families Experiencing
Mental Health Challenges**



What is Mental Illness?

Mental illness, as commonly understood, is the improper functioning of the brain, the most complex of all organs of the human body. Mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

Some of the most common serious mental illnesses include: major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), borderline personality disorder, and addiction.

Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, religion or income. In the vast majority of cases, mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness and are not due to a lack of character. Mental illnesses, in general, are thought to be caused by a variety of genetic and environmental factors, including: inherited traits, environmental exposures before birth, brain chemistry imbalances, personal trauma, among many others. The good news about mental illness is that recovery is possible. Most people diagnosed with a serious mental illness can experience relief from their symptoms by actively participating in individual treatment plans.

Why is our parish involved in a mental health ministry network?

There is high prevalence of mental illness in every faith community. One in five families has a member with a diagnosable mental illness. One in seventeen people live with a persistent or severe mental illness.

Often individuals or families turn to their parish community for support and guidance. Regrettably, some parishes fail to respond due to limited understanding of mental illness or lack of awareness of the power of supportive relationships. Our parish has made a commitment to become a faith community that both understands mental illness and can provide compassionate support.

Mental Health Ministry Elements

Spiritual Companionship

Individual mental health ministry team members are available to meet and confidentially talk with those individuals and families needing support. When sufficient numbers of those receiving support elect to meet as a group, a supportive gathering may be offered. When scheduled, group gatherings will offer opportunities for prayer, education, refreshments, and socializing.

Practical Support

Ministry members are familiar with the many public and private support services available to families in their local communities and will help families locate suitable providers. They stay in touch with those families using community services to help ensure that positive outcomes are occurring. They advocate for

those families when services do not meet the needs of individuals or families. Mental health ministry team members will not function in a professional capacity. They do not provide services that should only be offered by medical, psychological, or social work practitioners.

Education

The ministry team provides mental health educational opportunities for the larger parish community on a regular basis. Requests for information about mental illness can be directed to any ministry team member. Ministry team leaders are available to consult with parish clergy, staff and lay leaders on matters related to mental health and wellness. Special attention will be given to assisting those parish leaders who relate to youth.

We are Available

Our mental health ministry exists to serve individuals and families experiencing mental illness by offering God's hope and love through encouragement, practical support and prayer.

We, the volunteers of this ministry, have either experienced mental illness, are family members of those who have experienced mental illness, or have worked with those affected by mental illness. We have a heart for giving. Let us share some of the things we have learned and continue to learn on our mental health journeys. Let us walk with you through your mental health experiences and support you in whatever way we can.

