

Compendium for Catholic Mental Health Ministries (CMHM)

Organizations, Ministries, and Programs Referenced

Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries (sanctuarymentalhealth.org)
Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs)
“Whole Hearted” (Catholic Charities)
Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (www.catholicmhm.org)
National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD)

Abstract

This compendium is intended for the contributors and architects of Catholic Parish Mental Health Ministries. It contains a collection of resources for parish mental health ministries and provides insight into active ministries. Each resource offers an example of the current models and tools available for parish mental health ministries. The examples and tools demonstrate various approaches for building a parish mental health ministry and aim to provide a preliminary sketch of facets and programs for the consideration of the parish mental health ministry team.



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Primary Contents:

Reviews from Parishioners on Mental Health Ministries: What Parishioners Think

Review, 2023 (Source: Reddit)	Key Themes/To Consider (Deductions)
Hey all. I've been kind of struggling with my mental health for the past month. I'm definitely not in crisis and working on getting the help I need medication and therapy wise, but I still feel adrift. I've been thinking of ways to engage my greater support system and not feel so isolated and thought about reaching out to one of the priests at my church. Little hesitant though, as many of us tend to be when reaching out for help. I've been at this church for about a year and there's one priest I know a little better than the others, albeit not super well, but he's always been very kind and friendly to my husband and I, and is the person I would reach out to. Have an email sitting in my phone notes but haven't sent it yet and just feeling a little self conscious about it. During COVID the priest at my last church checked in on me quite a bit, though it was a smaller parish and also pretty extraordinary times so I'm sure he was reaching out to just about everyone. He also helped point me in the direction of a good therapist, but this time I've already found one on my own. I guess I'm wondering if it's still acceptable to reach out if I'm not in crisis or in need of any resources? I feel a little disconnected from God and my faith, not in a "I don't believe in this anymore" way	1. Feeling: "I'm definitely not in crisis and working on getting the help I need medication and therapy wise, but I still feel adrift." 2. Support: "ways to engage my greater support system and not feel so isolated and thought about reaching out to one of the priests at my church" 3. Identified Support: "there's one priest I know a little better than the others, albeit not super well, but he's always been very kind and friendly to my husband and I, and is the person I would reach out to" 4. Mode of Communication: "an email sitting in my phone notes" 5. Uncertainty: "I guess I'm wondering if it's still acceptable to reach out if I'm not in crisis or in need of any resources" 6. Faith and Doubt: "I feel a little disconnected from God and my faith...just feels kind of far away and I'm having trouble leaning on it"



but that it just feels kind of far away and I'm having trouble leaning on it get me through this, like I have in the past. I thought it might help to talk through it with a clergy member and see if I can find some ways to reconnect with it.	get me through this, like I have in the past.” 7. Desire to Reconnect: I feel a little disconnected from God and my faith, not in a “I don’t believe in this anymore” way but that it just feels kind of far away and I’m having trouble leaning on it get me through this, like I have in the past.
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Review, 2023 (Source: Reddit)	Key Themes/To Consider (Deductions)
I'm in a very difficult position where I need to talk to a priest, but it is a difficult subject, and in trying to communicate I've gotten that soft refusal and it sucks... But I know they're not a shrink or a social worker and even though I absolutely do need a priest who can grapple with those, it may be years or never until I can have that conversation and that's something I have to live with. That's my problem. Not theirs. Just as it is yours.	1. Delicate Refusal: “I'm in a very difficult position where I need to talk to a priest, but it is a difficult subject, and in trying to communicate I've gotten that soft refusal and it sucks...” 2. Seeking Specific Guidance from Priest: “I know they're not a shrink or a social worker and even though I absolutely do need a priest who can grapple with those”



Primary Contents:

Ministries at Work: Catholic Programs in Mental Health Ministries

Item #1 (Program): Whole Hearted (Catholic Charities USA)

Reference: Catholic Charities USA (Whole Hearted, Facilitator Guide),
2022

Whole Hearted is meant to provide basic and helpful trauma awareness. It is not clinical or professional therapy. It informs participants of trauma's impact and how one might begin to move forward mentally and spiritually. The first two sessions focus on recognizing and responding to life's hard experiences. The last two sessions focus on the dynamics of renewal and restoration.

Whole Hearted introduces an ongoing process of:

- Recognition: Seeing your experience of trauma and assessing your response(s) to it.
- Renewal: Prayer and other spiritual exercises as sources for strength and newness.
- Restoration: The ongoing and intentional work needed to move forward in a healthy way.

These three dynamics of Recognition, Renewal, and Restoration do not have to be followed in a sequence. They are more like three rooms in a dwelling, each with its own unique purpose. Those dealing with the impact of trauma can spend as much time in each of these different spaces as they wish. And each of us can go from one room to another as needed. Whole Hearted is just an introduction to this ongoing process of inner work.

However, persons who have experienced trauma are also recommended to seek professional treatment. Whole Hearted can be an excellent adjunct or addition to a therapeutic process.

Parishes and organizations can offer Whole Hearted as a day of reflection or four weekly sessions. Sessions take no more than 60 minutes and can be conducted onsite or remotely. If necessary, individuals can work through Whole Hearted on their own.



Each session plays on a different “word inside the word” within “whole” and features:

- Brief content
- Private reflection
- Suggested practice
- Discussion
- Scriptural reflection

In the end, this faith-based experience is focused on:

- Recognition of the assets and blessings God has provided, as well as the painful experiences that have impacted us.
- Prayer for new energy, hope, openness, and/or motivation to move forward.
- Assessment of personal interests, assumptions, expectations, behaviors, and responses that should now be re-evaluated.
- Identifying new or abiding interests, opportunities, and/or relationships worth pursuing.
- Acceptance of our lives as a whole with spiritual openness to what is to come.
- Awareness of spiritual practices and dynamics related to the process of restoration.

Your role can also be described by what you are NOT to do:

You are not to be a counselor.

You are not to be a problem solver.

You are not to be a prayer leader.

You are not to be a teacher.

You are not to minimize, evaluate, or re-state what someone says.

How do you establish and maintain this safe and trustworthy place where people can do this difficult and intimate work?

- Support all the voices in the group.
- Inform the group of double confidentiality: nothing said in the group can be shared outside of the group AND nothing said in the group can ever be brought up again except by the person who actually said it. Point out, however, that there is a moral obligation to share with proper authorities any comment made about hurting oneself or another.
- Gently, faithfully redirect/remind anyone who does what you are NOT to do (see above).



- Ask the group for feedback as to how things are going and ask, “Does anyone else have something they want to say?”
- Step aside during “For Reflection” and let participants do their own inner work.
- Give participants permission to “Pass or Play” during each discussion instead of expecting that everyone “take a turn.”
- Occasionally invite participants to clarify, e. g. “Can you say more about that?”
- Check to see if participants understand the content being offered in the session.
- Have specific information on hand as to how participants can contact local professionals or access services such as Catholic Charities, etc. Remind participants of the value of “talking to” a professional about anything that seems to be overwhelming them.

Session Breakdown:

Session #1: We come with a whole heart full of experiences.

Session #2: A painful experience has probably left a hole in our heart.

Session #3: It can be helpful to change something about our old heart.

Session #4: It is best to move forward in a wholehearted way.

Primary Contents:

Ministries at Work: Catholic Programs in Mental Health Ministries

Item #2 (Study of Mental Health Ministry in Diocese): Approaches to Mental Health
by US Catholic Dioceses: A Narrative Review and Commentary

Published: 15 July 2025

Reference: [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

Nota Bene: This study offers resources regarding mental health ministry in dioceses, not specifically parishes. Information from this study has been condensed for the convenience of the reviewer.

Author: The goal of this paper is to report and reflect upon how Catholic dioceses in the US are talking about mental health one year after the launch of the national campaign. I



write as a Catholic priest and professed religious who has worked in parish, campus ministry, and hospital settings.

Abstract: This article investigates how mental health is approached by the 196 Catholic dioceses in the US through an analysis of their websites. The paper proceeds in four parts. First, I describe the methods used to analyze diocesan websites. Next, I review the various approaches to mental health that these websites display, grouping them into six categories. Then I review how mental health is conceptualized by the dioceses. After the review, I offer a commentary on these findings, placing them within the context of the historical debate within American Catholicism about psychiatry and psychology. This commentary highlights four areas with which the Church must continue to wrestle as we address the current mental health crisis.

Mental Health Ministries

1. Twenty-four dioceses (12%) have their own mental health ministry, even though not all of them use that exact phrase.
2. These dioceses depict themselves as walking with those who suffer from mental disorders and with their families. They want to do more than post a page with helpful information.
3. Whereas treatment entails a person working with a mental health professional, mental health ministry focuses on the Church walking with those who suffer from mental illness and with their families. According to these diocesan websites, mental health treatment and ministry are complementary.
4. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles says that mental health ministers “provide prayer, accompaniment, and human connections within the parish communities. These lay ministers serve as prayerful companions for fellow parishioners experiencing mental illness, provide them with referrals, walk with them, and provide parish-wide education on mental health subjects.”
5. Some diocesan ministries have support groups that transcend parish boundaries. For instance, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis sponsors “Project Hope,” which is a support group consisting of eight to ten individuals with mental health conditions and is facilitated by a mental health professional.



6. Similarly, the Archdiocese of Chicago advertises “Faith and Fellowship,” which is a small group composed of people who experience mental health struggles and volunteers from local churches.
7. In defining a diocesan mental health ministry, many diocesan websites draw upon CMHM's articulation of mental health ministry. The goal of a diocesan mental health ministry is best illustrated by the Diocese of Boise's website:
 - Offer education, formation and spiritual support to parishes who wish to raise awareness, increase acceptance and offer accompaniment to those experiencing mental illness
 - Survey pastors and parishes on mental health ministry needs
 - Offer regional formation days for pastors and parish leadership
 - Encourage and empower parishes to form mental health ministry teams
 - Create online resources and referrals for Catholics and parish ministries
 - Encourage membership in a local Idaho Chapter of the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers

Sample Ministry: The Diocese of Phoenix (Website) - Diocese of Phoenix has one of the most expansive diocesan mental health ministry websites and thus serves as a model for others.

1. The main page then explains its purpose, which is “to accompany those with mental health needs in our parish and school communities in a Catholic, sustainable, ethical, and meaningful way.”
2. After noting that it is not a clinical resource, the site explains that the diocese's mission is to “create pastoral environments where people living with mental illness can meet, share their experiences and their Catholic faith with others, and to grow spiritually in their relationship with God.”
3. The main page also features an option to submit prayer intentions, which are offered as a monthly Mass intention at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.
4. The main page also features two YouTube videos. The first is a powerful twelve-minute video by Bishop John P. Dolan, the Bishop of Phoenix, titled “Sharing My Story: A Life Changed by Suicide.”
5. The diocesan website has two pages dedicated to mental health resources. The first one is for the public and includes resources ranging from emergency hotline and



helpline numbers to tips for everyday suffering such as taking deep breaths, praying, and staying connected with people you trust.³⁷ It also offers advice for finding a good counselor, for marital health, and for ways to seek help if someone experiences domestic violence.

6. The page connects visitors to ministries in the Phoenix area that serve specific groups of people, such as trauma and abuse survivors, parents who have lost children, and veterans.
7. The second resource page is for ministry leaders. These resources include information about starting a mental health ministry through the CMHM as well as information about receiving Mental Health First Aid training.
8. The page also includes links to the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD), which discusses mental illness; the Fiat Program on Faith and Mental Health at the University of Notre Dame; the Arizona chapter of NAMI; First Things First, an organization that provides resources of healthy child development; resources provided by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and La Frontera EMPACT, a suicide prevention center.
9. Two additional pages on the website are worth noting. The first specifically focuses on helping people who have suicidal thoughts
10. A second page reminds visitors that the saints also struggled and are interceding for us, including St. Dymphna, St. John of God, and St. Mark Ji Tianxiang

Minimal Information

1. 128 U.S. dioceses (65%) have minimal information dedicated to mental health on their websites. Many of these dioceses provide links to Catholic Charities, which often offers counseling services.
2. Several of these dioceses advertise one-off parish events related to mental health or post short news articles about mental health (one diocese advertised a webinar for cultivating a trauma-informed parish)
3. Another diocese advertised a seminar at a parish led by a licensed educational psychologist on “youth mental health in the social media age.”



4. A third diocese advertised a one-day “healing retreat” led by a priest with a master's degree in spirituality and a lay person who is a licensed counselor and spiritual director.
5. Mental health work is done in dioceses that have minimal information on their websites.
6. In many dioceses the work of helping people who struggle with mental health might be happening primarily on the parish level.

Counseling Services

1. Five dioceses in the US (3%) primarily offer counseling services that appear to be separate from Catholic Charities.
2. These counseling services differ regarding their use of clinical language and the extent to which they emphasize a Catholic framework.
3. The Archdiocese of New Orleans’ Catholic Counseling Services, which offers individual, couples, and family therapy as well as play therapy for children, all of which can be done in either English or Spanish.
4. The website avoids the language of “mental disorders,” “mental illnesses,” and even “mental health.” Instead, the counseling center emphasizes that it helps individuals, couples, and families grow toward “hope and healing.”
5. The website does not provide information about who the counselors are or what their training is. The Lourdes Center in the Diocese of Sioux Falls similarly avoids the language of illness and disorder and instead focuses on flourishing, freedom, and healing. The center does use a significant amount of language around integrating psychology with the Catholic faith and says that the care team is composed of “clinical counselors,” which includes school counselors and social workers.
6. The Diocese of Lincoln's Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center and the Archdiocese of Denver's St. Raphael Counseling are in the middle of the spectrum: Integrate up-to-date knowledge in the psychological sciences with a Catholic understanding of the human person.
7. The commitment to taking modern psychology seriously is evidenced by the fact that they offer “the only Catholic APA-accredited pre-doctoral internship program in the nation” and have three licensed clinical psychologists on staff.



8. St. Raphael Counseling, which claims to be the largest Catholic therapy practice in the country, emphasizes “empathy, professionalism, and fidelity to Church teachings.” It has numerous licensed clinical psychologists on staff as well as a priest chaplain, and it offers an internship program for master's degree students who hope to enter the mental health profession.

Primary Contents:

Ministries at Work: Catholic Programs in Mental Health Ministries

Item #3 (Programs Offered by CMHM)

Reference: <https://catholicmhm.org/>

Nota Bene: As team members of the MHM are licensed therapists, these programs are not listed to provide additional support or training but to illustrate what CMHM considers to be helpful facets of parish mental health ministries.

Program #1: Communication Skills and Healthy Boundaries

Reference: <https://www.catholicmhm.org/communication-skills-and-healthy-boundaries>

Enhance your ability to offer guidance and support in mental health ministry with our Communication Skills and Healthy Boundaries for Mental Health Ministry course. Led by *Father Michael Maples, PhD—a priest and a licensed psychologist* serving in the [*Diocese of Knoxville*](#)—this course equips you to recognize challenges in others, set appropriate boundaries, and respond effectively to various mental health situations.

Course Highlights:



- Expert instruction from Father Michael Maples, who has experience and credentials in both the Catholic faith and the field of psychology
- Informative video lessons ranging from under one minute to five minutes in length, covering key mental health and ministry topics
- Thought-provoking activities, including reflection questions and journaling exercises, designed to deepen understanding and aid in application
- Certificate of Completion upon completing all required activities

Course Content:

This course explores vital topics essential for mental health ministry, including:

- Symptoms of Common Mood Disorders
- Recognizing Potential Signs of Distress
- Helping Someone Who May Be in Distress: What Might Help & What Might Not
- Recognizing & Responding to a Potential Mental Health Crisis
- Healthy Boundaries in Ministry

Through informative video-led sessions and accompanying activities, participants will gain valuable insights and practical skills while being reminded of the importance of self-care and role boundaries in ministry.

Who Should Enroll?

This course is ideal for:

- Church leaders and ministers looking to expand their understanding of mental health ministry
- Ministry participants who want to develop communication and boundary-setting skill
- Anyone seeking to support others in life challenges while maintaining their own emotional and spiritual well-being

Program #2: Accompanying Those Who Mourn

Reference: <https://catholicmhm.org/accompany-those-who-mourn>



Accompanying Those Who Mourn will provide the training necessary for parish or Catholic community leaders to start or further develop a bereavement ministry. The training will **develop leaders' understanding of grief and how to companion or accompany someone in their sorrow.**

Though this course is about bereavement ministry, there are many valuable parallel lessons and resources for someone interested in mental health ministry. Both ministries can benefit from practicing **active empathy and learning about the art of listening and accompaniment – of being ministries of presence.** Both can benefit from the group dynamics section as well as the sections relating to an **understanding of suffering in the Catholic context.**

This course is for those interested in beginning or improving a parish bereavement ministry, but it can also be helpful to those interested in learning more about grief and bereavement from a Catholic perspective.

Course Highlights:

- This course was developed by Patrick Metts, a Licensed Professional Counselor and Assistant Director in the Office of Evangelization & Discipleship in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Additionally, Patrick received a Master of Marriage and Family Studies from the John Paul II Institute in Valencia, Spain.
- The Companionship model of bereavement care – often we find that grief is treated from a clinical perspective or as a condition in need of treatment. However, we will find that the Companionship model of bereavement care is much more in line with our Catholic faith and one that we can all learn.
- Bereavement care in the Catholic context – find out how bereavement care may look in a Catholic setting verses a non-Catholic or secular setting.

Course Content:

- Utilize the book [“Understanding Your Grief”](#) by Dr. Alan Wolfelt as a basis for understanding grief and forming a bereavement ministry in your Catholic community.
- Work through ten separate videos, packed with insightful content, and presented by a licensed professional counselor.
- Take your learning and ministry deeper by diving into additional content that includes a presentation by Dr. Leonard DeLorenzo of the McGrath Institute for



Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, and a video on grief in the context of dementia care.

Who should enroll?

- Intended for individuals or groups seeking to begin or to further develop a bereavement ministry in their Catholic community.
- Current ministry leaders who would like to develop and better their understanding of grief and how to accompany someone who has lost a loved one.
- Someone who has lost a loved one in the past, has been through their own grief journey, and now is exploring how they might assist or help others who have lost a loved one.

Program #3: Listen with the Ear of the Heart

Reference: <https://www.catholicmhm.org/listen-with-the-ear-of-the-heart>

Embark on a transformative journey focusing on the "soft skills" of Catholic mental health ministry with our ***Listen with the Ear of the Heart course. Led by Barbara Zahner, BCC (ret.), a founding board member of the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (CMHM)***, this course equips you with the tools to serve others with confidence, competence, and compassion.

Course Highlights:

- Expert guidance from Barbara Zahner, who draws from her experiences as a retired Board-Certified Chaplain and trained Spiritual Director and who also holds an honorary PhD from the University of Santa Clara in Public Service
- Dynamic video content featuring nine engaging sessions between 2–6 minutes in length
- Interactive activities, reflection questions, and private journaling opportunities to deepen your understanding and apply learning
- Certificate of Completion upon fulfilling all course requirements

Course Content:

This course offers valuable insights into essential topics such as:

- The Art of Accompaniment



- Holy Listening
- Praying with Another
- Welcoming the Stranger
- Self-Care for Ministry Practitioners

Each module provides a perfect blend of video-led instruction, additional resource exploration, and reflective exercises to enhance your knowledge and practical abilities in mental health ministry.

Who Should Enroll?

This course is ideal for:

- Parish leaders and members involved in mental health ministry
- Catholic community members who are passionate about serving others
- Individuals interested in learning compassionate listening and accompaniment skills

Whether taken individually or as part of a group, this course is a supportive and enriching experience. Join us to deepen your understanding, grow spiritually, and positively impact your community.

Primary Contents:

Types of Parish Mental Health Ministry Programs and Target Audiences
Therein

Reference: files.ecatholic.com/31862/documents/2024/12/Lumen%20Christi%20Catholic%20Community-1.pdf?t=1733110059000

Discussion Groups (Examples):

1. Mom's Group
2. Men's Group
3. Women's Group
4. Social Justice Group
5. Grief and Support Group



6. Mental Health & Wellness Ministry
7. Prayer Line
8. Stephen Ministry: Lumen Christi now has trained Stephen Ministers to walk alongside parishioners during their time of struggle or difficulty. The Stephen Ministry organization provides training and assistance to our Stephen Ministers-to enable them to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in the parish and the community experiencing life difficulties. To learn more about this program, or to connect with a Stephen Minister at Lumen Christi, contact Steve Regnier, at 651-370-1611 (From Parish Mental Health and Wellbeing Ministry Highlights)
9. Caregiver & Chronic Illness Group

Recorded Presentations:

- ❖ Discussion Group Findings and a Well-Being Survey to Group Members Inform the Development of Presentations on Well-Being and Mental Health Promotion Showcases Inspiring Initiatives within Faith Communities

Primary Contents:

13 Resourceful Websites for Parish Mental Health Ministries

Website #1: Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers

URL: www.catholicmhm.org

An International Ministry Working to Bring Mental Health Ministry to Every Catholic Parish and Community.

Website #2: Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries

URL: sanctuarymentalhealth.org

URL for Catholic Course: sanctuarymentalhealth.org/catholics

We provide resources that meaningfully engage the topics of faith and mental health. Our content is developed in collaboration with theologians, mental health professionals, and people with lived experience of mental health challenges. These resources prepare communities of faith around the world to raise awareness, reduce stigma, support mental health, and promote mental wellbeing.



Website #3: National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD)

URL: www.ncpd.org/resources_and_toolkits/catholic-institute-mental-health-ministry

The Catholic Institute for Mental Health Ministry develops, provides and facilitates an effective and responsive network of trained mental health organizers and mental health ministry leaders in Dioceses and parishes throughout the United States.

Website #4: Catholic Therapists

URL: catholictherapists.com

CatholicTherapists.com provides a carefully curated directory of therapists who are not only qualified professionals but also share your Catholic values. Find the support you need for your emotional and spiritual well-being through our network of Catholic therapists.

Website #5: Catholic Charities Diocese of Fall River (Mental Health Ministry)

URL: www.ccfrdioc.org

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fall River is helping parishes within the Diocese to establish a Mental Health Ministry. The Mental Health Ministry, a national model, strives to provide a safe, supportive space in the lives of people with mental health or substance use issues, as well as providing support for their family members and caregivers. Its purpose is to invite, support and provide acceptance to those who may feel isolated and alone

Website #6: Catholic Charities USA

URL: catholiccharitiesusa.org

Catholic Charities believes that through care for the whole person — physical, mental and spiritual well-being, or what the church calls integral human development — everyone can realize their full potential.

Website #7: Catholic Medical Association

URL: www.cathmed.org

CMA is the largest association of Catholic individuals in healthcare. We work at the national and local level to provide services that benefit the entire health care community. Our successful advocacy of conscience rights in the public square and in the courts ensures that our members can practice authentic Catholic medicine.



Website #8: MyCatholicDoctor

URL: mycatholicdoctor.com

You are not alone. MyCatholicDoctor is here to walk with you through these trials. We treat depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, addiction, attention deficit, and much more. We offer medication, therapy, complementary approaches to wellness and healing. Our mental health care incorporates spiritual care.

Website #9: catholicpsych

URL: catholicpsych.com

We combine Faith + Reason + Science to give you *Psychology you can trust*.

Website #10: Catholic in Recovery

URL: catholicinrecovery.com

Healing for those seeking recovery from addiction and a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.

Website #11: Our Lady of Good Counsel Residential Mental Health Center

URL: www.catholicmentalhealthcenter.com

Our Lady of Good Counsel Residential Mental Health Center will be located in Northeastern Wisconsin. It seeks to lead the way and excel in professional, compassionate, and personalized mental health care, where each person will be treated with the dignity endowed to them by their Creator. The entire campus will provide a calm and serene setting that will incorporate an organized graduating system, transitioning by levels of intensity of care to strengthen each individual's skills while working toward rehabilitation, and ultimately, independence. Methods are rooted in Catholic tradition, alongside other classical and innovative sciences, to foster virtue and inspire hope.

Website #12: SNAP (Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests)

URL: www.snapnetwork.org

We are SNAP, the largest, oldest and most active support group for women and men wounded by religious and institutional authorities (priests, ministers, bishops, deacons, nuns, coaches, teachers, and others).



Website #13: Catholic Health Association

URL: www.chausa.org

The Catholic Health Association is the national membership association of Catholic health care in the United States, providing expertise and resources for advocacy and health policy at both national and state levels. It fosters connections and collaboration with the Holy See and bishops to support the health ministry of the Catholic Church and offers thought leadership and consulting on challenging health care issues. Members benefit from networking and sharing best practices across Catholic health care, timely education and formation opportunities for leadership and professional development, complimentary webinars, and access to exclusive resources on chausa.org. Additionally, CHA provides prayers and videos for personal and group reflection.

Website #14: Catholic Counselors (Created by Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak)

URL: catholiccounselors.com

Whether you want to create a more intimate and godly marriage, celebrate a more faithful and fulfilling family life, or discover the path to a more grace-filled personal and emotional life, our team of Catholic pastoral counselors can help you achieve your goals!

Secondary Contents:

Parish Mental Health Ministry Resources from the Vatican

Website: Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers

URL: www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/hlthwork/index.htm

Website: Click to Pray (Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network)

URL: www.clicktopray.org

Secondary Contents:

Resourceful Books for Parish Mental Health Ministries

Nota Bene: The USCCB's "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Healthcare Services" may prove especially useful.



Reference: Global Catholic Resource Center (globalcatholicresourcecenter.com)

Counseling & Pastoral Care Books:

A Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person: Integration with Psychology and Mental Health Practice by Paul C. Vitz (2020)

A Catholic Soul Psychology by Randolph W. Severson (2013)

A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care by Regis A. Duffy (2010)

A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry by Heath Lambert (2016)

Anxious Church, Anxious People: How to Lead Change in an Age of Anxiety by Jack Shitama (2018)

Building Bridges: Biblical Counseling Activities for Children and Teens by Julie Lowe (2020)

Building King's Beloved Community: Foundations for Pastoral Care and Counseling with the Oppressed by Donald M. Chinula (2009)

Caring for the Souls of Children: A Biblical Counselor's Manual by Amy Baker (2020)

Christian Counseling 3rd Edition: Revised and Updated by Gary R Collins PH.D. (2007)

Christian Counseling Casebook by Gary R. Collins (2007)

Coffee Shop Conversations Psychology and the Bible: Live, Lead, and Love Well by Jed Jon Jurchenko (2015)

Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God's Resources in Scripture by Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert (2015)

Descriptions and Prescriptions: A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses and Medications by Micheal R. Emlet (2017)

Helping Teens with Stress, Anxiety, and Depression: A Field Guide for Catholic Parents, Pastors, and Youth Leaders by Roy Petitfils (2019)

How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace, Participant's Workbook by Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp (2006)

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change (Resources for Changing Lives) by Paul David Tripp (2002)

Jesus, the Master Psychologist: Listen to Him by Dr. Ray Guarendi (2021)
Jesus, the Master Psychologist: Listen to Him by Dr. Ray Guarendi (2021)

Practical Psychology for Pastors by William R. Miller and Kathleen A. Jackson (2010)

Psychology of a Faithful Disciple by Dr. Ray Guarendi (2018)

Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling by Dr. Tim Clinton (2007)

Quick-Reference Guide to Marriage & Family Counseling by Dr. Tim Clinton and Dr. John Trent (2009)



Responding to Suicide: A Pastoral Handbook for Catholic Leaders by Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (2020)

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A Work in Progress: Embracing the Life God Gave You by Julia Marie Hogan MS LCPC (2022)

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Grieving with Mary: Finding Comfort and Healing in Devotion to the Mother of God by Mary K. Doyle (2009)
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Holding on to Love after You've Lost a Baby: The 5 Love Languages for Grieving Parents by Gary Chapman and Candy McVicar (2020)
How to Comfort the Grieving: A Dozen Ways to Say "I Care" by Victor Parachin (2012)
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In God's Hands: Living Through Illness with Faith by Maureen A. Cummings (2018)
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My Life is a Miracle: A Story of Hope and Healing by Bernadette Moriau (2021)
Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring by Henri J.M. Nouwen (2009)
Stepping Stones for the Bereaved: Meditations for the Journey of Healing by Elaine Stillwell (2001)
The Fourth Quarter of Your Life: Embracing What Matters Most by Matthew Kelly and Allen R. Hunt (2022)
To Heaven and Back: The Journey of a Roman Catholic Priest by Rev. John Michael Tourangeau and Travis James Vanden Heuvel (2015)
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Turning My Mourning into Dancing: Finding Hope in Hard Times by Henri J.M. Nouwen (2004)
We Are the Lord's: A Catholic Guide to Difficult End-of-Life Questions by Fr. Jeffrey Kirby STD (2019)
When a Loved One Dies by Suicide: Comfort, Hope, and Healing for Grieving Catholics by Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (2020)

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A 12-Step Approach to the Sunday Readings by Jim Harbaugh S.J. (2002)
Abide: A Pathway to Transformative Healing and Intimacy With Jesus by Heather Khym (2022)
Approach to Penance by Hubert Van Zeller (2023)
Be Healed: A Guide to Encountering the Powerful Love of Jesus in Your Life by Bob Schuchts (2014)
Be Restored: Healing Our Sexual Wounds through Jesus' Merciful Love by Bob Schuchts (2021)



Be Transformed: The Healing Power of the Sacraments by Bob Schuchts (2017)
Befriending Your Inner Child: A Catholic Approach to Healing and Wholeness by Brya Hanan (2024)
Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps by Fr. Richard Rohr OFM (2021)
Daily Companion for Healing Addictions by Allan Wright (2018)
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Do You Want to Be Healed: A 10-Day Spiritual Retreat with Jesus by Bob Schuchts (2022)
Forgive Everyone Everything by Gregory Boyle (2022)
Forgiveness: A Catholic Approach by R. Scott Hurd (2011)
From Prodigal to Priest: A Journey Home to Family, Faith, and the Father's Embrace by Fr. Goyo Hidalgo (2023)
Living Calm: Mastering Anger and Frustration by Dr. Ray Guarendi (2022)
Overcoming Addiction: A Biblical Path Towards Freedom by Elizabeth A. Shartle (2018)
Prayers for Recovery: Pocket Prayer Book by Jim Auer
The Catholic Recovery Workbook: A Guide to the Twelve Steps by Catholic in Recovery (2022)
The Light Shines on in the Darkness: Transforming Suffering through Faith (Happiness, Suffering, and Transcendence) by Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J. (2017)
The Saving Power of Love: A Catholic Girl's Healing Journey by Joan Collieran Hoxsey DMin (2020)
The Sober Catholic Way by Paul Sofranko (2024)
The Sunshine Principle: A Radically Simple Guide To Natural Catholic Healing by Melody Lyons (2020)
The Twelve Steps and the Sacraments: A Catholic Journey Through Recovery by Scott Weeman (2017)
Touch the Wounds: On Suffering, Trust, and Transformation by Tomáš Halík (2023)



Secondary Contents:

Parish Mental Health Ministry Helpful Terms

Term: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs)

The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs) are a set of guidelines issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to govern the operation of Catholic healthcare facilities. They provide a theological basis for Catholic healthcare ministry and outline acceptable practices in areas such as medical procedures, end-of-life care, and relationships with patients. These directives are meant to ensure that Catholic healthcare institutions adhere to Catholic teachings and values in their provision of care.

Term: A Trauma-Aware Parish

Reference: Whole Hearted, Catholic Charities

Being a trauma-aware parish or organization is a pastoral response that:

- Demonstrates awareness of, and sensitivity to, trauma's impact on its members and their loved ones.
- Helps parishioners recognize their experience and response to trauma.
- Provides restorative spiritual and professional resources in a variety of ways.

A trauma-aware parish integrates spirituality and religious practices with sound and basic mental health information and practices.

Even more importantly, trauma-aware parishes should not try to do what mental professionals are far better equipped to do.

Being a trauma-aware parish includes showing parishioners how to quickly access professional help, as well as informing them of the services support organizations, such as Catholic Charities, may provide.

Being a trauma-aware parish means maintaining a sharp and simplified focus on the



impact and responses to trauma, not simply improving the parish’s welcoming climate.

A trauma-aware parish takes seriously the impact of Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs) while still making trauma awareness initiatives an adult-centered effort and not another child-centered program. Becoming a trauma-aware parish cannot become “another thing” parish leaders are asked to do.

Term: Living Compass

Reference: International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers,
Ministries at Work

Heart

Relationships: The ability to create and maintain healthy, life giving connections with others.

Emotions: The ability to process, express, and receive emotions in a healthy way.

Soul

Spirituality: The development and practice of a strong personal value system and a meaningful purpose in life.

Rest and Play: The ability to balance work and play and to renew oneself.

Strength

Care for the Body: The ability to build healthy habits and practices regarding our physical well-being.

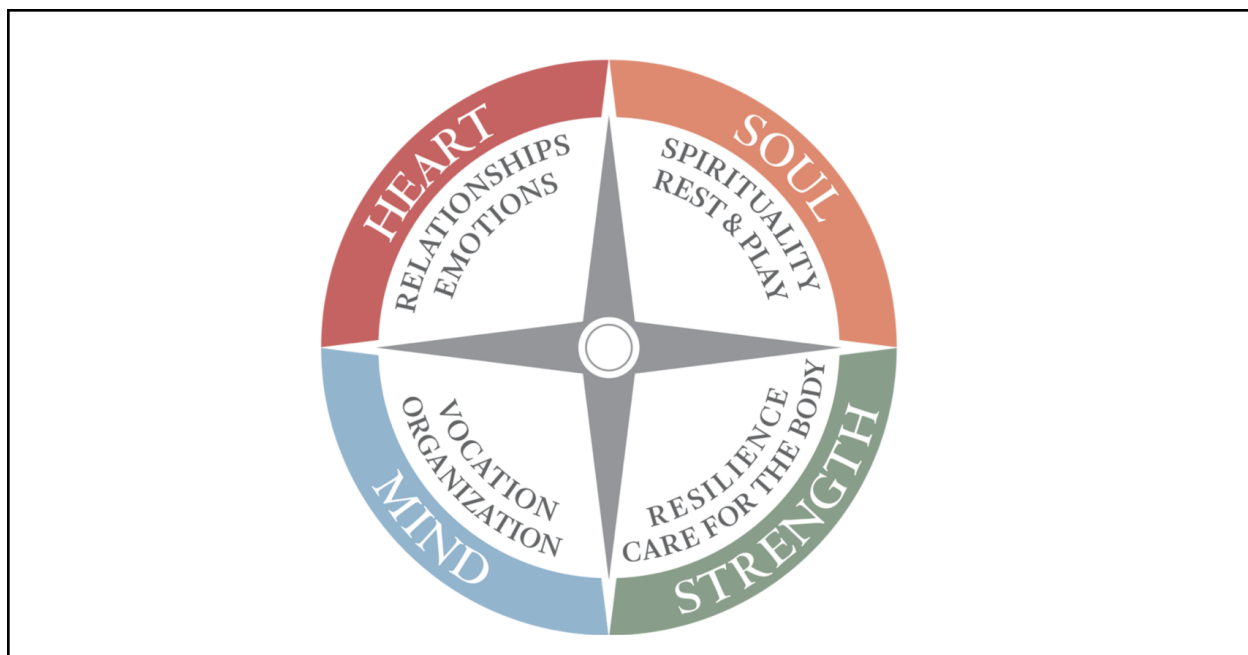
Resilience: The ability to deal positively with the adversities of life.

Mind

Organization: The ability to keep on track and make good use of possessions, money, and time.

Vocation: The ability to get the most out of employment, educational, and volunteer opportunities.





Term: **CMHM**
Reference: Various

CMHM, in the context of Catholic ministries, stands for Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers. It's a lay association focused on supporting individuals with mental illness and their families, as well as educating and equipping clergy and other church leaders to establish mental health ministries.

Lay Association: CMHM is a group of lay people (not clergy or religious) within the Catholic Church who are dedicated to mental health ministry.

Mental Health Ministry: The core of CMHM's work is to provide spiritual support and pastoral care to those affected by mental illness.

Education and Resources: CMHM offers resources, training, and an online learning

center to help parishes and dioceses establish and run mental health ministries.

Combating Stigma: A key aspect of their work is to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and promote a supportive environment.

Not Medical Professionals: CMHM emphasizes that they are not medical professionals and do not provide diagnosis, treatment, or crisis services.

Spiritual Support: Their focus is on providing spiritual support and accompaniment, helping individuals find the resources they need within the Catholic Church and wider community.

In the Vatican's Context: The CMHM has been actively involved in Vatican events related to mental health ministry, highlighting its importance within the Church's broader mission.

Term: Double Effect

Reference: Understanding and Applying the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services: An Educational Resource for the Catholic Health Ministry. CHA, Introduction

This is a fundamental ethical principle very prominent in Catholic moral theology. It maintains that an action with an intended good effect and a foreseeable but unintended bad effect can be considered morally right if four conditions are met: 1) the action in question is neutral or good; 2) what is intended is the good effect and not the bad; 3) the good and bad effects occur together (in other words the bad effect is not the means for achieving the good effect); 4) there is a proportionate reason for allowing the bad effect to occur (cf., ERDs Directives 47, 48, 49, 53, 61).



Term: Ordinary (Proportionate)/Extraordinary (Disproportionate) Means
Reference: Understanding and Applying the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services: An Educational Resource for the Catholic Health Ministry. CHA, Introduction

Ordinary (also referred to as "proportionate") means are those that in the judgment of the patient offer a reasonable hope of benefit and do not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or the community. There is a moral obligation to employ ordinary or proportionate means (cf., Directive 56). Extraordinary (also referred to as "disproportionate") means are those that in the judgment of the patient do not offer a reasonable hope of benefit or entail an excessive burden, or impose excessive expense on the family or the community (cf., Directive 57).

Term: Responsible Parenthood
Reference: Understanding and Applying the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services: An Educational Resource for the Catholic Health Ministry. CHA, Introduction

While the Church affirms and promotes the responsibility of parents to transmit new life, she also recognizes that there are legitimate reasons to space or even limit the procreation of offspring. These reasons might be physical, psychological, economic or other conditions involving the couple themselves, or their duties toward the welfare of their family, the community, society and the church. In these situations, the Church accepts natural family planning and sexual abstinence as moral means to regulate births (cf. Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* (1968), no. 10; Second Vatican Council, *The Church in the Modern World* (1965), no. 50; *The Progress of Peoples*, no. 37).

Term: Substituting for the Marital Act
Reference: Understanding and Applying the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services: An Educational Resource for the Catholic Health Ministry. CHA, Introduction



Just as God has willed that the marital act be both unitive and procreative, so God has also willed that all generations of new life result from the marital act. Therefore, any procedure that substitutes for an act of sexual intercourse in the generation of new life violates God's will and is morally wrong (cf., ERDs, Part Four, Introduction, Directives 40 and 41).

Term: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

Term: Augustine's Restless Heart

Reference: "Confessions" by Augustine of Hippo, Michael J. Himes and Donald P. McNeill, *Doing the Truth in Love: Conversations about God, Relationships, and Service* (Paulist Press, 1995), 13.

In St. Augustine's Confessions, the phrase "our hearts are restless until they rest in You" (often paraphrased as "restless heart") encapsulates a central theme: the human soul's inherent desire for God. Augustine argues that this restlessness stems from our creation by God, and the only true fulfillment comes from finding rest and peace in Him.

Doing the Truth in Love, Michael Himes: "A restless life open to God knows that even amidst great suffering and disillusionment, every moment we live presents an



opportunity to love radically, to take a risk on behalf of another, to testify to the power of life over death. And that is very, very hopeful. It is joyful.”

Michael J. Himes and Donald P. McNeill, *Doing the Truth in Love: Conversations about God, Relationships, and Service* (Paulist Press, 1995), 13.

Term: Six Paths to God

Reference: James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (HarperOne Publishers, 2010).

1. The Path of Belief—“...belief in God has always been part of their lives. They were born into religious families or were introduced to religion at an early age. They move through life more or less confident of their belief in God... Their lives, like every life, are not free from suffering, but faith enables them to put their sufferings into a framework of meaning.” The benefit of this path is that “faith gives meaning to both the joys and struggles of life. A pitfall is “an inability to understand people on other paths and a temptation to judge them for their doubt or disbelief.

2. The Path of Independence—These people “...have made a conscious decision to separate themselves from organized religion, but they still believe in God. Maybe they find church services meaningless, offensive, dull, or all three. Maybe they’ve been hurt by the church.” One strength of this group is a healthy independence that enables them to see things in a fresh way—something their own religious community often desperately needs... The main danger... is a perfectionism that sets up any organized religion for failure.

3. The Path of Disbelief—“Those traveling along the path of disbelief not only find that organized religion holds no appeal for them (even if they sometimes find its services and rituals comforting), but have also arrived at an intellectual conclusion that God may not, does not, or cannot exist. Often they seek proof for God’s existence, and finding none, or encountering intense suffering, they reject the theistic worldview completely.” The cardinal benefit of this group is that they take none of the bland assurances of religion for granted. Sometimes they have thought more deeply about God and religion than some believers have ... They also have a knack for detecting hypocrisy, cant, or lazy answers ... The main danger for this group is that they sometimes expect God’s presence to be proven solely in an intellectual way.



4. The Path of Return—“People in this group typically begin life in a religious family but drift away from their faith. After a childhood in which they were encouraged (or forced) to attend religious services, they find them either tiresome or irrelevant or both. Religion remains distant, though oddly appealing. Then something reignites their curiosity about God....Thus begins a tentative journey back to faith—though it may not be the same faith they knew as a child.”

5. The Path of Exploration—Though settled in their religious beliefs, these seekers “often find that their own spiritual practices are enhanced through interactions with other religious traditions.” The benefit is that “after a serious search, you may discover a tradition ideally suited to your understanding of God, your desires for community, and even your own personality. Likewise, returning to your original community may give you a renewed appreciation for your ‘spiritual home.’” The pitfall is “the danger of not settling for any tradition because none is perfect. An even greater danger for explorers is not settling on any religious tradition because it doesn’t suit *them*.”

6. The Path of Confusion—“This final path crosses all the other ones at various points. People on the path of confusion run hot and cold with their childhood faith....They haven’t ‘fallen away,’ but they haven’t stayed connected....finding God is a mystery, a worry, or a problem.” The main benefit of this path is that it often helps people fine-tune their approach to their childhood faith....But confusion can lapse into laziness.”

James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life*
(HarperOnePublishers, 2010).



Secondary Contents:

Common Apostolic Exhortations and Pastoral Constitutions Parish Mental Health Ministries Use to Model Themselves

Apostolic Exhortation: *Salvifici Doloris* (On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering)

Pontiff: John Paul II

Quotation: “Even when man brings suffering on himself, when he is its cause, this suffering remains something passive in its metaphysical essence... This does not however mean that suffering in the psychological sense is not marked by a *specific "activity"*. This is in fact that multiple and subjectively differentiated "activity" of pain, sadness, disappointment, discouragement or even despair, according to the intensity of the suffering subject and his or her specific sensitivity. In the midst of what constitutes the psychological form of suffering there is always *an experience of evil*, which causes the individual to suffer” (Apostolic Exhortation, *Salvifici Doloris*, 40).

Vatican Council Scale of Attitudes: Vatican II

Apostolic Exhortation: *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)

Pontiff: Francis

Quotation: “The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience” (Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2)

Vatican Council (Scale of Attitudes): Vatican II

Apostolic Exhortation: *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)

Pontiff: Francis

Quotation: “We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur” (Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 171).

Vatican Council Scale of Attitudes: Vatican II



Pastoral Constitution (on the Church in the Modern World): *Gaudium et spes (Joy and Hope)*

Vatican Council: Vatican II

Quotation: “The Church, then, offers to the world the revelation of God’s saving offer: “The Church is the guardian of the deposit of God’s word and draws religious and moral principles from it, but it does not always have a ready answer to every question. Still, it is eager to associate the light of revelation with the experience of humanity in trying to clarify the course upon which it has recently entered” (Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 33).

Pastoral Constitution (on the Church in the Modern World): *Gaudium et spes (Joy and Hope)*

Vatican Council: Vatican II

Quotation: "Hence, the norm of human activity is this: that in accord with the divine plan and will, it harmonize with the genuine good of the human race, and that it allow men as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfill it. Now many of our contemporaries seem to fear that a closer bond between human activity and religion will work against the independence of men, of societies, or of the sciences" (Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 35).



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Nota Bene: Some of these citations are incomplete due to missing authors or dates of publication. Thank you for your understanding.

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