

Mental Health Ministry Leaders Facebook Group Guidelines

February 2024

Purpose of the group: To facilitate and accelerate the resourcing and equipping of churches and ministry leaders to serve individuals and families with mental health needs.

Who should join: ministry leaders and ministry volunteers with a desire to support the mental health needs of individuals and families in the church and local community, in the capacity that is appropriate for a church, as part of bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Why you should join this group, versus just being in the Special Needs and Disability Leaders (SNAD) Facebook Group:

Mental health ministry is a subset of overall disability ministry, but with significant differences from a typical church's disability ministry and/or disability support.

1. Individuals and families with mental health needs typically do not want to be identified as needing or receiving ministry supports. Disability ministry serving people with more obvious physical disabilities typically do not have this constraint.
2. Individuals with mental health needs often experience faith crises related to their mental health challenges. Ministry leaders need to be equipped with sound theology related specifically to mental illness versus disability in general, to provide appropriate response and support. Individuals with more obvious physical disabilities may or may not have a faith crisis related to their disabilities, though their caregivers often do.
3. Mental health challenges or disabilities are often made known in behavior. Church leaders need discernment and education to understand and respond appropriately to behaviors that need support from the church versus correction.
4. Community and friendship are critical elements for supporting individuals with mental health needs. Programming designed for other kinds of disabilities will not be effective with individuals who have normal intelligence and capabilities.

SNAD has been highly effective in helping church leaders develop disability ministry policies and procedures, establish best practices for specific situations and events, and resourcing the Church across denominational lines. The desire for the Mental Health Ministry Leaders Facebook group is that similar policies, practices and resources would be developed, so that any person who is or desires to be a Christ-follower will find community and support, regardless of their mental health needs.

Ways to use this group:

1. Ask questions related to the mental health needs in your church and community.
2. Find resources to equip and support pastors, paid staff and ministry volunteers.
3. Learn about and share events designed to equip leaders to minister effectively to and with individuals and families with mental health needs.
4. Establish policies and procedures to serve the needs of individuals and families of the church and local community, as well as protect the integrity of the church and its ministries.
5. Learn and share best practices for coming alongside families with mental health needs, starting with children, but also extending to the mental health needs of people throughout the lifespan.
6. Learn about and share ways that individuals with mental health needs effectively serve in ministry roles using their spiritual and natural gifts, whether volunteers or paid staff.

Group rules:

1. Be Kind and Courteous. We're all in this together to create support for individuals and families with mental health needs. Treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness and assuming the best about others in the group is required.
2. Keep posts focused on furthering mental health ministry. Admins reserve the right to remove memberships or discussions that are divisive or unhealthy.
3. It is helpful if posts begin with a subject title before posting a question, opinion or resource information.
4. Only use each Thursday's weekly Resource Roundup post to share resource announcements. The admins will post a unique graphic each Thursday soliciting resource announcements, so we can keep conversations free from ads and solicitations the rest of the week. We want to keep the conversations going!
5. This group is not affiliated with a particular Christian denomination. The group admins understand there is freedom of interpretation and expression among

believers from different denominations. However, that freedom exists under the limits of biblical truth in all areas to which Scripture speaks.

6. We believe in God's ability to heal: physically, spiritually, emotionally and relationally. But God does not always choose to heal in the way that we desire healing. Instead, He often works through the body of Christ to support one another and deepen reliance on Him.
7. The focus of this group is mental health ministry. Posts must be mental health ministry centered, and respectful of others. Please refrain from politically partisan posts.