



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami

Sharing Hope: Understanding Mental Health

A Toolkit for Outreach to African American Congregations

Across the nation, congregations of all denominations bring African American families together and provide emotional support to their members. Researchers have found evidence that African Americans seek help from the clergy more frequently than from other professionals. Mental health issues are no exception. When dealing with mental illness, African American families might look for guidance, support, and understanding from their faith community.

It is for these reasons that NAMI has developed *Sharing Hope: Understanding Mental Health*.

Initiative Goals

- * Educate African American congregations about mental illness
- * Address mental health stigma in the African American community
- * Increase understanding and awareness of mental health recovery
- * Foster dialogue in African American congregations about mental illness
- * Introduce NAMI education and support programs.

Guided by a 15-person advisory group consisting of pastors, NAMI leaders, and other experts from around the country, the NAMI Multicultural Action Center designed this do-it-yourself toolkit initiative in order to keep costs to a minimum and optimize accessibility and applicability to communities across the country. *Sharing Hope* provides a walk-through of all the major steps needed for successful implementation of the initiative.

Toolkit Components

- * A practical guide to successful outreach to African American congregations
- * Scripted 60 minute presentation for a team of three presenters consisting of a consumer, family member and a faith leader.
- * Companion educational booklet, *A Family Guide to Mental Health: What You Need to Know*

The *Sharing Hope* presentation was piloted in Atlanta (NAMI Georgia), Trenton (NAMI Mercer, NJ), and in St. Paul (NAMI Minnesota). Pilots provided evaluation data and constructive feedback, ensuring the initiative's positive impact in helping congregations learn about mental illness.

For more information, visit www.nami.org/sharinghope or contact us:
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