

Learning Opportunity:

Mental Health Issues: Vital Skills for Congregations

Is your congregation looking for ways to discuss mental health? Are you actively looking for ways to support those with mental illnesses in your community?

This learning opportunity, offered as part of the URJ-Ruderman Family Foundation Disabilities Inclusion Initiative, provides strategies for reducing stigma around mental illness, and properly supporting those who have it.

Covering anxiety, depression and other mood disorders, eating disorders, and more, this learning opportunity will feature live webinars with experts from the fields of mental health and congregational life. Participants in each individual webinar will learn skills and helpful strategies for addressing mental illness in their communities, enabling their communities to be more inclusive for all.

These webinars are open to anyone, from clergy to lay leadership, to congregants, as mental illness is something that impacts us all.

Sessions Include:

Judaism, Older Adults, Mental Health and Your Congregation **Monday, April 18th, 2:00 p.m. Eastern**

Many of our families and congregations know the challenges of mental illness. In this webinar we will examine mental illness and mental health as they relate to older adults, and explore what congregations can do to support those dealing with mental illness.

We will view the Jewish textual tradition surrounding this issue, look at how these texts can relate to our families, and take note of how some congregations have programmed around this issue in recent years. We will discuss the alarming rise of dementia and Alzheimer's, as a result of the revolution in longevity, and how this issue is re-shaping families.

This webinar will be led by Rabbi Richard Address, D.Min, founder of Jewish Sacred Aging, LLC.

<https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/1d9209d0ad24c4c68c34be5db4a05ad8>

Addressing Our Teens' Mental Health Needs

Monday, May 2nd, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

Congregations are perfectly positioned to make a difference in the lives of children and adolescents experiencing emotional distress. This webinar will offer guidance about what congregations can do to help their staff, parents, and their teens to recognize and find appropriate help for anxiety, depression, eating disorders and other mental health disorders.

We will distinguish between the ordinary moods of children and adolescents, and disorders, which need to be professionally addressed. The webinar will reference successful programs, and resources, including those offered in the book *Resilience of the Soul – Developing Spiritual and Emotional Resilience in Adolescents and their Families*.

This webinar will be led by Rabbi Edythe Held Mencher, URJ Faculty for Sacred and Caring Community, and Coordinator of the URJ-Ruderman Family Foundation Disabilities Inclusion Initiative. Rabbi Mencher is a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist.

<https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/8ce2b51f2e84ae9f7510d14dfea9e911>

Challenging the Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness

Monday, May 23rd, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

Families and individuals with mental health disorders live within our congregations, many in isolation and silence. There are also many families who leave the congregation, or never join to begin with, because they fear their family member will not be accepted. Each family that leaves misses out on being part of the Jewish community, and we lose out on having them in our congregations. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) states that 1 in 5 adults will experience a diagnosable mental illness in a lifetime, and 1 in 25 will live with a serious mental illness. In a congregation of about 2000 individuals, those numbers tell us that we could have 400 congregants with a mental illness and 80 with a serious mental illness. That is a lot of silence.

Nine years ago Temple Isaiah in Lafayette, California decided to break that history of silence and isolation and embarked on an effort to create an open and supportive climate for those that live with mental illness and their families. Participants will hear the stories of Temple Isaiah's journey, and what the congregation has learned through its experience setting up support groups for congregants. Additionally, we will present strategies and tools that are relevant and useful to all congregations. We will also learn about next steps we can take to challenge the stigma of mental illness.

This webinar will be led by Diana MaKieve, leader of P'tach Libeynu: Open our Hearts, the mental health program at Temple Isaiah In Lafayette California.

<https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/0fd7a8b106ccde7ecde7dc3c8da9331e>

Including Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities
Monday, June 20th, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

Many congregations have a desire to be inclusive of people with disabilities, and are working hard to achieve full inclusivity. Unfortunately, psychiatric disabilities are often absent from the discussion on inclusion. This webinar will give background on what it means to live with serious mental illness, and discuss the ways in which we can support those in our families and our communities who are dealing with mental illness.

We will explore frameworks and factors to consider for welcoming people with psychiatric disabilities into our congregations, as well as the barriers to acceptance. The webinar will also include strategies for inclusion, how to build circles of support within the community, and ways that the community can partner with providers to best support each and every one of us.

This webinar will be led by Dr. Mark Salzer, Professor and Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at Temple University, and Director of the Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities.

<https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/093f95ff90a7f254dc2040ba88984b7b>