

# Interfaith Mental Health Coalition

Tuesday, Aug 18th, 2020; 1-3 pm

## MINUTES

Time: Aug 18, 2020 01:00 – 3 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting given social distancing guidelines given COVID19

Interfaith Mental Health Coalition (IMHC) ... "Connecting faith leaders with mental health resources"

[www.interfaithmhc.org](http://www.interfaithmhc.org)

### Regular Attendees (Minutes will underline to show attending):

Jolene LeRoy, IMHC Pres/Presence

Rev. Dr. Darryl Jenkins, IMHC VP,  
(arrived at 1:30)

Denise Elsbree, IMHC Treasurer/MHFA

Rita Rippentrop, IMHC Sec/Stenzel

Robert Skrocki, IMHC Communication

Greg Alexander, McHenry Co Cluster

Rene' Barney, private practice

Venoncia Bate'-Ambrus

Roy Bennet, Life of the Heart

Hugh Brady, NAMI

Julie Byer, Christ Church, Oakbrook

Pam Caine, Church of Jesus Christ of LDS

Maria Connolly, St. Damian's

Revita DeChalus, Amita Center for MH

Bob Dell, Sandwich IL Cluster

Bruce Duffield, CJC of LDS Naperville

Nicole Edmonds, Good Samaritan

Nathaniel Ekman, NAMI Cook County

North Sub

Sheila Herpolsheimer

Janet Holden, UTUUC, UUMHN

William Hood, CRSS, NAMI DuPage

Dawn Levin, JCFS

Trina Lueckhoff, Linden Oaks MHFA

Brian Lux, Outreach

Deborah Major, LOSS Program

Suzanne Martinez, Advocate Aurora,

Co-Pres NAMI McHenry, QPR Trainer,

ACES programming

Amy McNicholas, Advocate Health

David Penner, Pastor, Pr of Peace, Pal

Judy Smith, MHFA, NAMI

Shamim Sufi, LCSW, Nap Islamic Ctr

Dorothy Symonds, Chaplain, ABBHH

(replacing Revita)

Barbara Wilson, Chicago Presbytery

Asha Witherspoon, CRSS, Aetna Better  
Health

Michael Bushman, Am Foundation for

Suicide Prev Board member

Dago Cobtreras, Moving Forward, So Kane  
Co

Isaan Broh, Victim Srv Intern, Assoc for

Indiv

Development

Charla Waxman, Lake Beh Hosp, Waukegan

Cesar Hernandez, 1st United Ch of Crystal  
Lake

Norvel Brown, UMC

La Tonja Ellis

Pat Doyle

Pam Caine

- 1) Reflection: provided by Shamim Sufi, LCSW, Islamic Center of Naperville
- 2) Introductions of those present
- 3) 1:15 – 2:00 pm Business Matters:
  - a. Approval of Minutes of last meeting, July 21, 2020-Suzanne motion, Shamim seconded, carried.
  - b. Financial Report Denise Elsbree: Cash on hand \$11,589.55; expense \$341.87 to GoDaddy to restore IMHC website after it got hacked in July.
  - c. Report on latest discussion on development of a one stop shop repository of resources for mental health ministry development.
    - i. Jolene provided overview of IMHC to new attenders
    - ii. Robert and Amy provided overview: IMHC and Center for Community Health Transformation collaboration with upgrading and expanding website with Northbridge Non Profit; repository website under consideration; Nexus webpage; Explain how it could be helpful and how more effectively work together using the internet and websites and social media. Amy added looking for synergy and enhancing the efforts of both organizations. Other options within the webpage to make the web page more visible, user friendly, secure, email communications, etc. Bandwidth and sustainability for both organizations.
    - iii. \$2,500 to set up an enhanced website and \$300-500/year to maintain it.

1. Shared costs with partners
  2. Team of IMHC and CCHT to work on this project
  - iv. Denise asked about updates on what faith leaders are noticing with regard to mental health matters: Darryl mentioned fatigue, a cautiousness about returning to physical church building; frustration among teens how they are processing all of this; Older Adults are appreciating the calls and the lack of connecting has been traumatic especially for those who live alone. Amy added seeing a need for connection.
  - v. Trauma 101 done by CCHT and NAMI pivoting to online classes as well (Amy)
  - vi. September--hope to have virtual Companionship training (Amy)
  - vii. Suzanne reported on providing a variety of groups online and good response. She'll provide info to Robert to share with members
  - viii. SamaraCare, Scott CEO, provided support and feedback on the project
  - ix. Working Technology Group: Greg Alexander, Robert Skrocki, Darryl, Denise, Amy
  - x. Rita motioned to approve moving forward with exploring a renovated website and will review financial proposal as provided by the Work Group, Hugh seconded, motion carried.
- 4) **2-2:45 pm Discussion Topic: Suicide Awareness and Prevention in an age of COVID; Panel presentation by staff member of Suicide Prevention Services in Batavia, Mike Bushman who will speak as person with lived with experience and work with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and Deborah Major from the LOSS program to discuss her work with those who have lost a loved one to suicide.**

Denise introduced panel: suicide awareness and prevention focus; as faith communities how do we have these conversations and how do we bring resources to our communities. This portion will be recorded.

Mike Bushman, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Personal, lived experience with mental health issues; writing a book about program, JKB, young man who died by suicide as a 16 year old; help young people helping peers

7-8 years got involved in MH advocacy and suicide awareness; thru AFSP

Created list of 100 items to try to help yourself through a trying time

AFSP outreach and educational programming; moved to zoom; found better participation, rather than 10 now have 40 participants

Program that was cancelled, Soul Shop training: dedicated to training on mental health and suicide prevention for faith leaders. In future, AFSP will be open to sharing in cost to provide this program.

Michael's contact info: [michaelbushman64@gmail.com](mailto:michaelbushman64@gmail.com); 331-330-6961

Deborah Major, LOSS (Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide), Catholic Charities; 40 year program

Provide a number of support groups across Chicagoland; now providing online groups. Not drawing a larger number; some groups have held steady; some have dropped off.

People come into program in need of compassion and support; many rebuild their lives; life reconstruction and identity reconstruction due to nature of suicide; rips up worldview and assumptions.

If people don't give up, manage to do so with support of their peers

Groups led by 1-2 survivors of suicide; also a mental health professional in each group; monthly or weekly groups; people come for as long as need to; a post loss group.

Also offer individual therapy

8 session support group: closed group; get to know each other and person the group participant has lost

Monthly newsletter: couple articles, dates of groups listed; [catholiccharities.net/LOSS](http://catholiccharities.net/LOSS)

Fill out form on the link below

Call LOSS office (312) 655-7283

Email [etegenkamp@catholiccharities.net](mailto:etegenkamp@catholiccharities.net)

<http://www.catholiccharities.net/GetHelp/OurServices/Counseling/Loss/ContactUs.aspx>

LOSS Program Office

721 N. LaSalle Street

Chicago, IL 60654

Main Line: (312) 655-7283  
Fax Line: (312) 948-3340  
Debbie's contact info: 312 655-7285 dmajor@catholiccharities.net

Discussion:

- Faith communities have been both helpful and unhelpful throughout the process
  - Many myths about suicide and faith communities perspective/doctrinal positions
  - Parents need to learn how to talk with their teens. Being listened to is very important.
  - Soul Shop--exercise to create a prayer to be shared in worship service that mentioned suicide and people struggling with suicidal despair (Robert)
    - Michael reminded that AFSP would be willing to help promote and financially support this effort.
    - 1-2 day program
  - Talk Saves Lives, AFSP are doing virtually; move people to taking additional programs; people who don't even know where to start; 1 hour training.
  - More than Sad, for parents and educators, AFSP;
  - Safe Talk, AFSP; 3 hour course (Jolene shared)
  - LOSS, pandemic; had 15 groups, had no idea how we were going to respond
    - Virtual groups: 1.5 hours without a break; 2 hours with a break in person
  - LOSS: how do people typically find you? online; word of mouth; funeral homes, EAPs; priests
  - Harvard and Group in England did research: 25-40% of those who attempt survival had spent less than 10 minutes contemplating suicide; time to clear cortisol to explore other solutions; impulse control; important to remove access to means. Have something looking forward to that there is always something top of mind that I am looking forward to doing.
  - Apps: My3, has Safety Plan; Not Ok; WRAP; Suicide Safe (Samhsa); my distractions; 988 nationwide suicide hotline number, is two years away from implementations. 741 741 text
- 5) Planning for upcoming 2020 calendar meeting events
- 6) Ongoing strategic questions to ponder:
- a. How can we continue to support and complement the development of new interfaith inter-organization local geographic clusters such as in McHenry, South Chicago, West side of Chicago?
  - b. How can we increase the religious diversity and interfaith cultural competency of our coalition?
- 7) Announcements: upcoming events, legislative updates, or anything else applicable to our audience.
- a. League of Women Voters, Denise, non partisan group: register to vote; if have questions about vote by mail, their website as information. Illinois--amendment on the ballot proposing constitutionally Illinois has to have a flat tax, amendment 'fair tax' (answer "yes" for the amendment) says we can change from flat tax to a graduated tax. Legislature has said that if it passes, they've already set tax structure; only 3% will pay higher taxes. Release monies or social services.

Next scheduled meeting: October 20, 2020; 3-4 pm Zoom internet meeting  
Discussion Topic: Faith responses when there has been a  
suicide; what we do well and what we can improve upon

Respectfully Submitted by Rita Rippentrop, IMHC Secretary