



Executive Summary

Sabbaths of Hope is about faith communities responding to depression. It is an initiative that aims to:

- ✚ enable clergy, seminarians, and other faith leaders to recognize signs and symptoms of depression
- ✚ offer more effective support to congregants and clergy suffering from depression
- ✚ provide referral and linkage to treatment options
- ✚ address stigma, discrimination, and other barriers to treatment
- ✚ promote holistic approaches to depression treatment

Faith community participants receive training and resources to enable them to conduct educational events for congregants and colleagues. All of this culminates in a congregationally designated *Sabbaths of Hope* weekend observance in May, designated National Mental Health Month.

The Mental Health America of the Heartland and the Center for Practical Bioethics are collaborators in an initial two year planning and implementation of *Sabbaths of Hope*, with funding provided by the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City—and with much in-kind assistance from the theological seminaries, faith communities, spiritual and mental health care providers of the metropolitan area. Additional HCF funding has been secured through 2010.

Why *Sabbaths of Hope*?

Clinical depression is a national epidemic. It has emerged as one of the most common and debilitating of disorders. Sources cited in the 2008 *Sabbaths of Hope* Response Kit note that every year nearly 19 million Americans suffer from treatable depressive disorders. That's just the adults. Children and youth experience depression, also. Every year at least 31,500 people die as a result of depressive symptoms that lead to suicide, and more than half a million end up in emergency rooms because of self-inflicted injuries.

These injuries and deaths are particularly tragic because they are potentially preventable. Treatment of depression with medication and psychotherapy is effective 70-80% of the time. Support groups, pets, exercise, nutrition, light, art, and music therapies, along with spiritual care, meditation and prayer, all may be helpful antidotes in a holistic therapeutic response. Sometimes counseling can enable a restructuring of one's emotionally toxic home or work environment so

as to promote healing. Yet only about one fourth to a third of us seek or receive professional help and treatment for our depressive illness.¹

Sabbaths of Hope arose from a 2004 project of the Metropolitan Health Council. The Council's report, *Depression in Kansas City*, provides alarming data regarding the incidence of both major and minor depression among various populations. Applying national rates of depression to the U.S. Census Bureau population numbers for 2000, it is estimated that in five counties of metropolitan Kansas City, approximately 17,572 adult men and 38,136 adult women suffer from clinical depression yearly.

The report also notes incidence and treatment disparities that exist by race or ethnicity, age, gender, and sexual preference. These local disparities parallel those cited in the 2001 Surgeon General's Supplemental Report, *Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity*.

More importantly, minority groups often delay seeking treatment until symptoms are severe, and are less inclined to seek treatment from mental health specialists. According to the Surgeon General's report, only 16% of African Americans and 11% of Hispanic/Latinos with diagnosable mood disorders (including depression) saw a mental health specialist, in contrast to 22% of Caucasians. The report also revealed that minorities are more likely to seek help for their depression from persons within their faith communities.

These results corroborate the data reported from a recent research project of the Mid-America Coalition on Health Care. Survey responses from several major corporations in Greater Kansas City indicated that clergy and other faith community leaders serve as "first-responders" 31% of the time for those suffering depression. The MACHC report pointed to the need for an educational project targeted to faith community leaders.

Additional research demonstrates that religious leaders believe they need help in understanding and addressing depressive disorders—affecting both their congregants and the clergy themselves. It is a matter of some urgency that we learn how to recognize and collaborate in treatment of what may otherwise end up a deadly disorder. *Sabbaths of Hope* is offered in response to this need.

This program is modeled on one conceived and implemented by the Center for Practical Bioethics in 1998-99 as *Compassion Sabbath*. It has proved to be a highly successful initiative with faith communities in many parts of the United States. *Compassion Sabbath* provides educational resources on end of life issues, aiming at better dying and deaths through palliative care and advance care planning. Like that predecessor project, *Sabbaths of Hope* involves faith community leaders in annual conferences, and provides educational curricula and other resources with consultation services. The Response Kit offers participants a sampling of relevant multi-faith liturgical resources for carrying out an annual weekend observance. The Center and MHAH have enhanced and built upon an already proven concept in order to address collaboratively yet another major national health care issue affecting faith communities and their leaders, that of clinical depression.

In March 2007, the first *Sabbaths of Hope* conference was held in Kansas City with more than 150 faith community leaders participating. A cohort of two dozen clergy and congregations committed to observing a Sabbath of Hope in May. In February 2008, a "best practices" conference was held, with similar attendance and outcomes. Currently, more than 50 faith communities have observed a Sabbath of Hope. Funding has been granted through 2010 so as to work at wider dissemination, Spanish and web-based resources, and mission sustainability.

¹ "The Societal Promise of Improving Care for Depression," RAND Health, accessed at www.rand.org/health. This report summarizes findings of six studies published in medical journals from 2000-2004.

Sabbaths of Hope Advisory Council

Betty Bashaw, MD, Psychiatrist
Jerry Beltramo, DMin, NOA Global, Inc.
Dionne Boyice, Park University (student)
Jacob Brudoley, MD
Ursula Copeland, MSW, Kansas City Health Department
Tom Cranshaw, Tri-County Mental Health Services
Stan Edlavitch, PhD, University of Missouri—Kansas City, School of Medicine
Cynthia Eldridge-Davis, Kansas City Health Department
Gayle Erikson-Laney, MSW, LCSW, Mattie Rhodes Center
Cielo Fernandez-Ortega, MA, Mattie Rhodes Center
Rev. George Flanagan, DMin, Kansas City Veterans Administration Medical Center
Mindy Goldstein
Rev. Keith Herron, DMin, Holmeswood Baptist Church
Rev. Jeanne Hoeft, PhD, Saint Paul School of Theology
Rev. Vernon Howard, DMin, Saint James United Methodist Church
Rev. Marvinna Jackson, MDiv, Providence Medical Center
Tammy Jackson, MA, Healing Grace Counseling Center
Cynthia Jarrold, MA, MDiv, Free-Lance Curriculum Writer
Steven Jeffers, PhD, Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Institute for Spirituality in Health
Sally Kneibert, MSW, LCSW, Tri-County Mental Health Services
Rev. John McCabe, DMin, Johnson County Mental Health Center
Rev. Richard Olson, PhD, Central Baptist Theological Seminary
Rev. Ruth Rosell, PhD, RN, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Prairie Baptist Church
Rabbi Jonathan Rudnick, Kansas City Jewish Community Chaplain
Rev. Judith Schwanz, PhD, Nazarene Theological Seminary
Chaplain Alice Sims, Community of Christ
Tony Terwelp, Mental Health Association of the Heartland
Rev. Richard Vogel, MDiv, Saint James United Methodist Church
Nancy Wagner, RN, Saint Luke's Health System Parish Nurse Program
Josef Walker, Kansas City HarmonyNCCJ
Charles Welsh, PhD, ReDiscover Mental Health Services
Rev. Dexter White, Hillview Church of God

Sabbaths of Hope Honorary Co-Chairpersons

2007

The Honorable Reverend Emanuel Cleaver II, United States Congressman, Missouri's Fifth District; Senior Pastor,
Saint James United Methodist Church
Betsy Vander Velde, President and CEO, The Family Conservancy

2008

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn, New Reform Temple; President, Rabbinical Association of Greater Kansas City
Reverend Wallace S. Hartsfield II, PhD, Senior Pastor, Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church; Assoc Professor of
Hebrew Bible, Interdenominational Theological Center (Atlanta), Central Baptist Theological Seminary

Sabbaths of Hope Project Staff

Mental Health America of the Heartland

- Shellie Arriaga, Project Co-Director (2006-2007)
- Stacy Davis, MA, Project Co-Director (2008-2009)
- Michelle Howard, MS, LPC, Project Co-Director (2007)
- Susan Crain Lewis, MSSW, President and CEO
- Stephen O'Neill, Project Staff (2006-2007)
- Cheryl Wozniak, Project Staff (2007-2008)

The Center for Practical Bioethics

- Donna Blackwood, Graphic Design Artist
- Myra Christopher, President and CEO
- Sharon Hunt, MA, Project Staff for Research and Evaluation
- Rachel Reeder, MA, Editor
- Rev Tarris Rosell, PhD, DMin, Project Co-Director