

**Ventura County  
Behavioral Health Department  
Mental Health, Faith & Spirituality Initiative  
July 31, 2009**

***"The greatest mistake in the treatment of disease is that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, but the two cannot be separated." We must address the mind, the behavior, the affective and spiritual issues." -Plato***

**GOALS OF THE VENTURA COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH & SPIRITUALITY INITIATIVE**

1. To increase awareness of faith & spirituality as a potential resource in mental health prevention, intervention, and recovery
2. To advance the capacity of mental health service providers in Ventura County to prevent mental health problems and to support individuals and families in recovery by including faith & spirituality as an aspect of cultural competency and natural community supports
3. To encourage collaboration among faith-based organizations, mental health service providers, clients, and families in combating stigma and reducing disparities in access to services for diverse populations
4. To provide technical assistance to mental health service providers on how to utilize faith & spirituality as a resource for prevention, early intervention and recovery while preserving client/family choice and respecting the separation of church & state

**PROPOSED ACTIONS**

Goal 1: To increase awareness of faith & spirituality as a potential resource in mental health prevention, intervention, and recovery.

- Action 1: Development and distribution of Brochure on Mental Health & Spirituality  
Strategy 1: Development of content for brochures that may include but not be limited to:
- Affirmation of faith and spirituality;
  - Relationship of faith & spirituality to prevention, intervention, treatment, wellness & recovery;
  - Community resources and key contacts
- Strategy 2: Distribution of brochure to all mental health sites, contractors, CBO's, and other key community entry points  
Strategy 3: Wellness Centers serve as central clearinghouse for brochures and information
- Action 2: Sponsor & support local conferences, training and forums (e.g., in conjunction with May Is Mental Health, Recovery Happens Month or stand alone activities, etc.) for mental health providers, clergy, consumers, family member and others.  
Strategy 1: Host and support a minimum of 2 trainings with faith & spirituality focus per year.  
Strategy 2: Host and support training specifically for MH professionals & faith and spirituality organizations/persons leading to resource toolbox.  
Strategy 3: Host and support training specifically for consumers and family members that examines faith & spirituality in wellness & recovery.

- Action 3: Establish community outreach campaign  
Strategy 1: Develop a media advocacy campaign that includes but is not limited to broadcast & print venues (e.g., radio, cable access, print, bus posters, places of worship or practice, etc.)  
Strategy 2: Presentations (consumer/family members & MH professionals) at places of worship and/or spirituality centers.  
Strategy 3: Develop listing of community events & activities to participate in throughout the community.

Goal 2: To advance the capacity of mental health service providers in Ventura County to prevent mental health problems and to support individuals and families in recovery by including faith & spirituality as an aspect of cultural competency and natural community supports.

- Action 1: Establish spirituality/clergy program within local mental health system  
Strategy 1: Develop local inter-faith/spirituality care chaplaincy program for mental health system  
Strategy 2: Establish dedicated position within mental health system
- Action 2: Advocate and support local career educational and career pathway programs to include faith & spirituality curriculum  
Strategy 1: Identify existing curriculum or course outlines.  
Strategy 2: Establish internship opportunities with seminary's, colleges, universities
- Action 3: Sponsor & support topic specific training for mental health providers, clergy, consumers, family members and other.  
Strategy 1: Develop Faith & Spirituality 101 training for clergy & faith based organizations  
Strategy 2: Include civic groups in dissemination of information.  
Strategy 3: Institute an integrated healing model with emphasis on importance of community supporting wellness & recovery; including but not limited to; the use descriptive language that is and leads to inclusion & acceptance (e.g., The practice of affirming mind, body & spirit constructs).  
Strategy 4: Develop a clergy/spirituality consultant resource pool that individuals and or family members can contact when seeking treatment in hospitals or clinics. A). Similar to how social workers are on staff at hospitals, these individuals could be on staff acting as spiritual liaisons. B). Or, it may be a referral by phone; providing a resource list of contacts.

Goal 3: To encourage collaboration among faith-based and spirituality identified organizations/individuals, mental health service providers, clients, and families in combating stigma and reducing disparities in access to services for diverse populations.

- Action 1: Participate in local community events/activities  
Strategy 1: Address local clergy council & ministerial associations.  
Strategy 2: Identify community activities and venues to have information tables.

Strategy 3: Create venues & opportunities to communicate the purpose and goal of initiative.

Action 2: Formulate local mental health, faith & spirituality council  
Strategy 1: Identify and recruit participants.  
Strategy 2: Identify leadership and roles of council members.  
Strategy 3: Define purpose of council.

Action 3: Convene Quarterly Faith & Spirituality Roundtable  
Strategy 1: Develop schedule.  
Strategy 2: Identify participants.  
Strategy 3: communicate to the community.

Goal 4: To provide technical assistance to mental health service providers on how to utilize faith & spirituality as a resource for prevention, early intervention and recovery while preserving client/family choice and respecting the separation of church & state

Action 1: Identify local faith & spirituality technical assistance resource pool  
Strategy 1: Establish technical assistance agreements with CiMH (Spirituality Initiative)  
Strategy 2: TBD  
Strategy 3: TBD

Action 2: Serve as local clearinghouse for needs and supports of consumers, families, mental health professionals, and community organizations  
Strategy 1: TBD  
Strategy 2: TBD  
Strategy 3: TBD

Action 3: Adopt policy on faith & spirituality for VCBH affirming value and role within the context of mental health services.  
Strategy 1: Adopt policy on faith & spirituality for VCBH affirming value and role within the context of mental health services.  
Strategy 2: Include within the treatment screening/assessment process the questions about practice and/or interest in faith and/or spirituality of the consumer.