



Mental Health Certification for Churches in Granville and Vance Counties

Goal: To equip churches to better respond to individuals in their congregation and community who may have mental health, behavioral health, or substance use disorders. This certification provides a better understanding of mental health and equips churches to start and manage a mental health ministry.

Three Levels of Certification: Because churches come in a variety of sizes with a range of staff and resources, if there is only one way to be a part of the mental health certification program, it could seem daunting. Three different certification levels are designed to make the program doable in any local church. All churches can identify a level that works for their congregation.

1. Basic certification: Orients the church to resources and clinicians in the local mental health community
2. Intermediate certification: Establishes the church as a hub for mental health-specific resources for members of the congregation and begins equipping members of the congregation to assist those with acute mental health needs.
3. Advanced certification: Ensures that most of an individual's needs and questions regarding mental health, except for the provision of treatment by licensed professionals, can be adequately responded to by members of the Church.

Within this program, the word “churches” is used to encourage participation from church pastors, leadership, personnel and members. “Mental health” refers broadly to an individual's psychological and emotional well-being, which is inclusive of both behaviors and mental states typically captured under the categories of mental illness, behavioral health, and substance use and addiction.

The development of this program is a joint effort between Pastor Frank Sossamon, members of Granville Vance Public Health, representatives from Vaya Health, and NCDHHS division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Karl Johnson (kjohnson@gvph.org)



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Mental Health,
Developmental Disabilities
and Substance Abuse Services

Level 1: Basic Certification

Level 1 Components:

Feature	Details	Certificate Criteria
Orientation to local mental health clinicians	Members of the Church are trained and knowledgeable about local mental health and substance use clinicians. Not only do they have a directory with contact information, but they are knowledgeable about the services each provider offers.	At least one training course on this information is attended during the year.

Level 2: Intermediate Certification

Level 2 Components: Includes all of Level 1, plus the following...

Feature	Details	Certificate Criteria
Warm referrals to local clinicians	For the sake of improving follow-through, members of the Church are comfortable and equipped to schedule an appointment for someone with a mental health need. In turn, this member ensures that the clinician has the person's information to follow up in case the appointment is missed	At least one member of the Church is identified as capable of referring individuals to local clinicians.
Monthly Feature	The Church highlights and promotes a different mental health topic each month through a variety of channels. Some examples include but are not limited to: • Providing learning resources in high traffic areas • Inserting information about the topic into the church bulletin and/or church website • Hosting learning sessions in the evening or Sunday morning (with bulletin promotion), delivering topic-based sermon(s). For a list of topics and accompanying resources, please refer to the National Institute of Mental Health (https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (https://www.nami.org/)	Each month at least one mental health topic has been featured.
Support Groups	The church supports mental health-related support groups for members of the congregation or community (e.g., grief support groups, divorce support groups, alcohol support groups etc.) and/or provides references for support groups that are not held at the church.	The church hosts at least one mental health-related support group or provides information for nearby support groups
Mental Health Resource Library	A mental health-specific resource library is collection (small or large) of books and/or pamphlets about mental health. Church members could donate books in honor or memory of a loved one.	A Mental Resource library is established and clearly identified in the Church

Public announcement	Some form of announcement is made to help members of the Church and community better understand the Church's commitment to serving the needs of those with mental illness. Depending on the Church's preference and capacity, this announcement may be in the bulletin, on the website, on their social media account, or other public platform	A public-facing announcement is made to reflect the Church's involvement in the certificate program
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Level 3: Advanced Certification

Components: Includes all of Level 1 and Level 2, plus the following...

Feature	Details	Certificate Criteria
Forums on Mental Health	The Church invites mental health experts and/or counselors to talk about a specific mental health issue. The Church could recruit speakers from the Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organization (LME-MCO) (e.g., Vaya Health), the health department, the hospital, the community college, and other related agencies. The goal of these forums is to get people familiar with the people who are providing mental health services in the community (beyond their name and phone number). It is encouraged for Churches in the same area to partner in presenting these forums.	The Church is involved in hosting a mental health forum at least once every quarter.
Question, Persuade, Referral (QPR) Training	QPR Training Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention is a 1–2-hour educational program designed to teach lay and professional “gatekeepers” the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond. Churches strongly encourage the following members to receive QPR training: student/youth pastor, senior/lead pastor, deacons, elders, music leaders.	The Church attends or hosts at least one QPR training in the year.
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training	MHFA is an 8-hour course which teaches participants how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. Churches strongly encourage the following members to receive MHFA training: student/youth pastor, senior/lead pastor, deacons, elders, music leaders.	The Church attends or hosts at least one MHFA training in the year.