

# MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRIES

## *Creating Caring Congregations*

### About this resource

Creating Caring Congregations, is a project of Mental Health Ministries, an ecumenical program through the California- Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The mission of Mental Health Ministries is to train clergy and lay persons for the purpose of decreasing the stigma associated with mental illness in our faith communities. Providing resources to churches to develop a mental health program in the local church is the important first step in the inclusion and support of persons with mental illness and their families into the life of the church community.

The sharing of personal stories and experiences provides a way to give voice to those who have suffered in silence, and allows churches to begin the process of reaching out and providing compassionate care to those affected by disorders of the brain.

### Suggestions for using this resource

This resource is divided into four major sections with an introduction. A Discussion Guide provides a brief overview of each segment and provides questions to help generate discussion among group members. Individuals share their personal experiences with various mental illnesses in three of the segments. "Shawn's Story" tells of an adolescent's experience with bi-polar depression, addiction and suicidal ideations. "Carol's Story" is about the most common illness of the brain, clinical depression, with accompanying anxiety issues. "Jan's Story" highlights how the normal life changes associated with the aging process can lead to depression in older adults. The final segment, "How Congregations Can Respond," provides a five-step program of education, covenant, welcome, support and advocacy, to help churches begin to address mental health issues in the local church.



Creating Caring Congregations was named a Finalist (Bronze Award) in the 24th annual Telly Awards in the Religious Program category.

**Creating Caring Congregations** is produced by Mental Health Ministries. The cost of this resource is \$19.95 and it is closed captioned. It can be purchased by credit card on the Mental Health Ministries web site, [www.MentalHealthMinistries.net](http://www.MentalHealthMinistries.net). Or send a check (\$19.95 plus \$6.00 shipping and handling) to Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder, Coordinator of Mental Health Ministries, 6707 Monte Verde Dr., San Diego, CA 92119. Make check out to "Mental Health Ministries." Visit [www.MentalHealthMinistries.net](http://www.MentalHealthMinistries.net) for other resources on mental health issues.