

RHC 2016: The Church and Mental Health Reimagining Health Collaborative



- Do you or others in your congregation live with mental illness?
- Does your congregation long to promote mental health and to respond faithfully to the needs of people with mental illness, but you are not sure how?
- Are there opportunities within your congregation to learn from and walk alongside people with mental illness?
- Do you want to partner with other congregations that are faithfully and creatively engaging mental health and mental illness?

Over the course of our lives, approximately 45% of Americans will develop some form of mental illness—from depression, anxiety, and substance use to many other mental disorders like bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Suicide claims 40,000 lives per year in the United States and is a leading cause of death among adolescents and adults. Living with mental illness, particularly serious mental illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, is filled with both challenges and opportunities. **The church must be equipped and energized to respond faithfully.**

What is the Reimagining Health Collaborative?

The **Reimagining Health Collaborative at Duke Divinity School** invites Christian congregations to partner with each other and with Duke Divinity School faculty, students, and staff to envision and to implement faithful practices related to health and illness. **This year's cohort will focus on the Church and mental health.**

RHC 2016: The Church and Mental Health will begin with the Reimagining Health Summer Gathering on the campus of Duke Divinity School campus from Thursday, July 14 to Saturday, July 16, 2016. In this gathering, congregational teams will:

- *Equip* themselves with practical mental health resources, including the opportunity to complete training in Mental Health First Aid;
- *Engage* scripture, theology, and Christian history with respect to mental health and mental illness;
- *Encounter* both local and national resources and networks for helping the church respond faithfully to mental health and mental illness;
- *Hear* transformative stories and experiences of people in your own and other congregations; and
- *Receive* practical resources for translating theological vision into congregational engagement.

After the 2016 Reimagining Health Summer Gathering, participating congregations will be invited:

- To *discern* needs and opportunities in your congregational context related to mental health, using a focused study guide;
- To *envision* and to *enact* transformative practices regarding mental health and mental illness, with the support of a Reimagining Health Collaborative project facilitator and Duke Divinity School faculty;
- To *convene* in semi-annual Reimagining Health Collaborative Gatherings in January 2017, and July 2017 (2 days/1 night, on the Duke University campus).

Is RHC 2016 Right for My Congregation?

Your congregation is a great fit for RHC 2016 if:

- Your congregation feels **called** to learn from and to walk faithfully with persons with mental illness in your congregation and in your larger community;
- You experience **energy and vitality** in your congregation for pastoral care and health-related ministry;
- You want to **explore and discover** new models of ministry, rather than only to implement existing models and programs;
- Your congregation has both **clergy and laypeople** interested in helping to lead this venture;
- You **believe** that God is at work healing and restoring the world in Jesus Christ, and want to participate in this healing work.

What Are the Costs of Participation?

There is no charge for participation in the Reimagining Health Collaborative or for participation in the Reimagining Health Collaborative Gatherings. Congregations will be responsible, however, for travel and lodging costs related to the Gatherings, and for the costs of their own ministry programs.

What is Expected of Participating Congregations?

Participating in this collaborative means that you and the other team members from your church will commit to doing the following:

1. **Send** at least 2 team members (ideally 3-5 team members) to the 2016 Reimagining Health Summer Gathering on July 14-16, 2016 at Duke Divinity School. At least one of these members must be a pastor or clergy person, and at least one must be a layperson. (Registration costs for this gathering will be covered, but teams are responsible for travel and lodging costs.)
2. **Participate** in a 3-month congregational discernment process after the Summer Gathering, to study the needs of your congregation and to envision new practices that respond faithfully to these needs.
3. **Send** at least 2 team members to subsequent Reimagining Health Collaborative gatherings in January 2017 and July 2017 (each gathering will be 2 days/1 night).
4. **Work** within your congregation on project/program development, planning, and implementation.
5. **Share** stories of successes and barriers with fellow participants in the Reimagining Health Collaborative, as well as with others who might desire to learn from your experience.
6. **Invest** time and resources, including any needed funds from the church's budget, to support the development and implantation of the program.

How Do We Apply?

Applications are available here [<https://tmc.divinity.duke.edu/programs/reimagining-health-collaborative/>] and must be submitted to DukeTMC@div.duke.edu by **May 1, 2016**. For questions or further information, e-mail rmeyer@div.duke.edu.