

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A074
Title: Completing Mental Health Ministry Curriculum for Clergy
Proposer: Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness
Topic: Health

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-A108 Authorize, Fund and Recommend Training in Mental Health First Aid
2022-A109 Create New Curriculum to Train Clergy in Mental Health Pastoral Care
2022-A110 Expand the Task Force on Ministry to Individuals with Mental Illness

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2018-C034 Create a Task Force on Mental Illness
1991-D088 Encourage Understanding of Mental Illness and the Needs of the Mentally Ill

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

A074 - Completing Mental Health Ministry Curriculum for Clergy

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness

Has Budget Implications: Yes

Cost: \$34,000.00

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st Convention of the Episcopal Church direct the appropriate body to continue and complete the development of all sections of the Mental Health Ministry Curriculum for the education and training of Episcopal clergy in ministering to persons and families experiencing mental health challenges in the church; and be it further,

Resolved, That \$20,000 be allocated for that work in this triennium; and be it further,

Resolved, That all curriculum modules be translated into all relevant languages in use by the Episcopal Church; and be it further,

Resolved, That \$14,000 be allocated for that work in this triennium.

Explanation

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year, 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year, 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year, 50% of all lifetime

mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14.¹

Faith communities are on the leading edge of communities in interfacing with people experiencing a mental health challenge, including, but not limited to, mental health crises, mental illness diagnoses, and substance use disorders.

The Church can be a setting in which people experiencing a mental health challenge can feel that they will not be judged, or seen to be "weak" or stigmatized. In order to meet the needs and respect the dignity of people experiencing, clergy and those seeking ordination need tools and training to deal confidently and pastorally with the issues that arise in the various settings in which they serve.

Recognizing this need, in 2022, the 80th General Convention passed resolution A109, which called for the creation of a curriculum to address mental health and that "all those to be ordained from January 2024 onward be trained" as well as recommending "the training of all active priests, deacons, and bishops in this curriculum for mental health and mental illness awareness."

The Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness recognizes that, for many reasons including the short time frame between the 80th and 81st General Conventions, having training prepared for all active clergy as well as all those discerning a call to ordained ministry was a tall order. A draft of the curriculum was created and shared as part of the Task Force report. However, it is not ready for immediate implementation. The Task Force believes that this curriculum needs to be further refined and developed, with each section prepared for delivery in online and in-person formats. The curriculum in its complete form also must be translated and culturally adjusted for different ethnic and racial communities. The previous curriculum has been a joint effort between the Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness and a sub-committee of the Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development, largely driven by the Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness. This work is not strictly speaking a matter of formation but of equipping the saints with capacities and skills for a specific form of ministry in their faith communities and the public square. Moving forward, the Task Force recommends keeping this work with any bodies focused on Human Health and Wellness.

Completing a robust, centralized curriculum is an essential part of clergy education for mental health. It ensures that there is consistent and equitable learning across cultures and languages, establishes clear learning goals, and adapts to a changing world.



Resolution Number: 2022-A108
Title: Authorize, Fund and Recommend Training in Mental Health First Aid
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention authorize launch of training people in dioceses, congregations, schools, seminaries, and other entities of the Episcopal Church in the forming of caring relationships with people with mental illness and their families, in recognizing possible mental health crises and interacting in healthy and supportive ways with people in crisis, and in advocacy and bridge-building support, using the resources and training processes of Mental Health First Aid and the National Alliance on Mental Illness, as well as the Interfaith Network on Mental Illness, WISE for Mental Health, and other helpful organizations and networks; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention authorize and fund the training of at least 15 regional trainers in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for the sake of providing basic MHFA training in the Provinces of the Episcopal Church, drawing as well upon the expertise of MHFA trainers who are part of the Union of Black Episcopalians along with other Episcopal MHFA trainers, with training to be completed by May 2024, so that they will become available as resource trainers for the dioceses in each Province; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention recommend training in Mental Health First Aid and general awareness of mental health and illness for all active clergy and lay staff in the church entities of each diocese, with issuance of certifications; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$35,000 to help fund the training of the regional trainers for the Provinces.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 851.



Resolution Number: 2022-A109
Title: Create New Curriculum to Train Clergy in Mental Health Pastoral Care
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention authorize the creation and launch of new curriculum to train all Episcopal ordained clergy, candidates, and postulants in mental health and mental illness awareness that emphasizes pastoral care, the forming of caring relationships, and effective advocacy. This new curriculum will incorporate and expand upon a range of resources including Mental Health First Aid, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Interfaith Network on Mental Illness, WISE for Mental Health, and other helpful organizations and networks; and be it further

Resolved, That it is recommended that all those to be ordained from January 2024 onward be trained in this new curriculum that will include training in Mental Health First Aid and in the advocacy work of the National Alliance on Mental Illness; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention recommend the training of all active priests, deacons, and bishops in this curriculum for mental health and mental illness awareness; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$15,000 to support curriculum development for this training of clergy.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 852.



Resolution Number: 2022-A110
Title: Expand the Task Force on Ministry to Individuals with Mental Illness
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention continue The Task Force on Ministry to Individuals with Mental Illness, in order to aid in the direction and development and provision of resources, trainings, and curricula in pastoral and ministerial mental health care for The Episcopal Church, its provinces, dioceses, parishes, seminaries, schools, and affiliated organizations, among all of its bishops, priests, deacons, and parishioners; and be it further
Resolved, That The Task Force on Ministry with Individuals with Mental Illness be expanded to eighteen in its membership that represents a depth and range of professional, personal, familial, and organizational experience with mental illness, in order to successfully develop and provide aforementioned resources, trainings, and curricula; and be it further
Resolved, That the Task Force on Ministry with Individuals with Mental Illness, in its expanded version in conjunction with its development of and provision of aforementioned trainings, will develop and share resources for The Episcopal Church, its various organizations, and all of its people centered on pastoral and ministerial mental health care; and be it further
Resolved, That this expanded Task Force report back on its actions to the 81st General Convention; and be it further
Resolved, That the 80th General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$21,700 to complete resources for churchwide distribution and use by the next triennium.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 843.