

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2024-A075  
**Title:** A Directive for Clergy Mental Health Ministry Training  
**Proposer:** Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness  
**Topic:** Health

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### **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](#).*

# A075 - A Directive for Clergy Mental Health Ministry Training

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness

**Has Budget Implications:** No

**Cost:**

**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

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## Resolution Text

That the 81st General Convention direct the President of the House of Deputies to assign to a church body the task of beginning training clergy and postulants in the curriculum for Mental Health Ministry as previously directed in 2022-A109, examining the potential for canonically requiring this training for all active clergy, and reporting to the 82nd Convention on the number of clergy trained and offering a proposal for implementation of training requirement.

## 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.<sup>[1]</sup>

Faith communities on the leading edge of communities in interfacing with people experiencing mental health challenges, including, but not limited to, mental health crises, mental illness diagnoses, and substance use disorders. Church can be a setting in which people experiencing mental health challenges can feel that they will not be judged or seen to be “weak” or stigmatized in various ways. In order meet the needs and respect the dignity

of people experiencing, clergy and those seeking ordination need tools and training to deal with the issues that arise in the various setting 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 to be created 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.”

This resolution instructs the Standing Commission for Human Health and Wellness take steps toward fulfilling the goals set in resolution 2022-A109 by working with other church bodies in delivering the curriculum for Mental Health Ministry with postulants and ordained clergy. The new Commission will also consider the potential for codifying such training in the canons of the church alongside equivalent trainings on prevention of abuse and the church’s teaching on racism. The Commission can bring a realistic timeframe for the training of active clergy in a curriculum that is in development, beginning with delivery of certification in basic Mental Health First Aid, an evidence- and research-based, peer-reviewed training, which the General Convention training provision called for in resolution 2022-A108.

Future canonical adjustment requiring all active clergy to be trained in a curriculum for mental health and wellness is crucial because it recognizes the significant role clergy play in providing support and guidance to individuals within their communities of faith and their wider ministry settings. Mental health training equips clergy with the knowledge and skills needed to offer effective pastoral care to those struggling with mental health issues, aid families of individuals facing mental health challenges, attend more clearly to their own mental health, and foster strengths and skills in faith communities for welcoming, including supporting, strengthening, encouraging, empowering, and advocating with people facing mental health challenges. By reducing stigma, fostering early identification and intervention, and promoting a holistic approach to well-being, this holistic curriculum ensures that clergy can better meet the mental health needs of congregants. Moreover, by prioritizing the mental health and well-being of clergy themselves, this curriculum and training supports a healthier and more resilient clergy community.

[1] <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>, accessed 10/27/23.

Note: this resolution and/or its explanation contains external references, such as URLs of websites, that may not be in the required languages of General Convention. Because of copyright restrictions, the General Convention cannot provide translations. However, your web browser may be able to provide a machine translation into another language. If you need assistance with this, please contact [gc.support@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gc.support@episcopalchurch.org).



**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.