



## How Faith Communities Help in Suicide Prevention

Studies show that persons experiencing mental health problems or emotional distress frequently turn to faith communities and their leaders for help. You and your faith community can help in many ways:

- **Know the facts.** Suicide does not discriminate; it can touch people of all ages and classes; all racial, ethnic, and religious groups. However, suicide is also preventable and your faith community can play a role. There is hope and help.
- **Talk about mental illness.** Help your faith members understand mental health problems as being real and treatable in the same way that physical health problems are. Speak and pray about mental illness just as you would about physical illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, or diabetes.
- **Promote connectedness.** Fellowship groups, choirs, service work, worship—all are ways people connect in faith communities. Such connections let people know they are not alone and that they are cared for.
- **“Narratives of hope.”** Faith communities share stories—from the Bible, the Koran, or other sacred texts—of how people have overcome adversity and experienced God’s presence in times of struggle and hardship. They also share the stories of their own lives—their faith and courage—that can give hope and strength to others.

### Resources for Help

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24 hours): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Pathways2Promise: Ministry and Mental Illness: [pathways@mimh.edu](mailto:pathways@mimh.edu)

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