

An African American Faith-Based Outreach and Education Initiative

Across the nation, congregations of all denominations bring African American families together and provide emotional support to their members. Researchers have found evidence that African Americans seek help from the clergy more frequently than from other professionals. Mental health issues are no exception. When dealing with mental illness, African American families might look for guidance, support, and understanding from their faith community. It is for these reasons that NAMI has developed Sharing Hope: Understanding Mental Health.

Initiative Goals

- * Build partnership among NAMI and African American faith communities
- * Increase understanding and awareness of mental health recovery by sharing lived experiences of people with mental illness, family members and faith leaders.
- * Address mental health stigma in the African American community by providing science-based information on mental illness.
- * Foster dialogue in African American congregations about mental illness and how they can provide a caring and supportive environment for individuals with these illnesses and their families.
- * Introduce NAMI education and support programs to African American congregations.

Sharing Hope materials were designed in do-it-yourself style with modifiable tools and templates electronically disseminated in order to optimize accessibility and applicability to communities across the country. Unlike other NAMI education and support programs, Sharing Hope does not have a formal training component. The Sharing Hope materials provide a walk-through of all the major steps needed for successful implementation of the initiative:

Components

- * A practical coordination guide for successful implementation, outreach and educational programming for African American congregations
- * A 60-minute interactive presentation focusing primarily on personal reflections of the presentation team (including an individual with mental illness, family member and a faith leader) and a discussion-based activity with the companion booklet, *A Family Guide to Mental Health: What You Need to Know*
- * Checklists, practice sheets and other helpful materials included to assist the individuals working with this initiative.



The Sharing Hope materials are available free of charge to NAMI state and affiliate organizations. Those interested bringing Sharing Hope to their community but not affiliated with NAMI are encouraged to partner with a NAMI state or affiliate to do so.

Visit www.nami.org/sharinghope or contact sharinghope@nami.org for more information and to request the materials.