

Collaborating in Care: Ministry and Mental Health

What is it?

- A one-day event to foster connection and discussion between clergy and mental health professionals to better support veterans and persons struggling with mental health concerns.
- Interactive discussion interspersed with video clips featuring post-9/11 veterans, clergy from diverse faith traditions, and mental health professionals.
- Identification of opportunities and obstacles for attendees to assist veterans and persons struggling with mental health concerns to find meaningful belonging in faith communities.

Why is it important?

- Faith communities have traditionally been epicenters of social, emotional, and spiritual lives for many Americans.
- A sense of meaningful belonging and active engagement in communities may help promote and maintain healthy behaviors and strengthen social relationships.
- By contrast, people who feel disconnected from communities of meaning and purpose – which may include veterans transitioning to civilian life and persons with mental health concerns – can experience difficulty integrating into these communities.
- Both mental health professionals and clergy are dedicated to providing support and care for these individuals, and both groups bring unique expertise to the table. The key is to facilitate conversation and trust between these disciplines to better serve those who need them.

Why should I attend?

- There are often mixed messages or communication gaps between clergy and mental health professionals. Both groups are engaged in important work and would stand to strengthen their impact with collaborative care.
- **Collaborating in Care: Ministry & Mental Health** aims to help foster such collaborative relationships to promote understanding and appreciation of what each group uniquely offers those who need support.

Please email mh-c@va.gov or steve.sullivan@va.gov with any additional questions