

# Mental Illness and Families of Faith

A VIDEO PRODUCED BY MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRIES



## ABOUT THIS TAPE

Surveys show that forty to sixty percent of Americans seeking help with mental health issues turn first to ministers, priests and rabbis. Unfortunately, the response of clergy and congregations often falls short of what parishioners expect of their faith leaders. Individuals struggling with mental illness are significantly less likely to receive the same level of pastoral care as those in the hospital with physical illnesses, those who are dying or those who have long-term illnesses.

There are a number of reasons that the needs of the mentally ill and their families are not met by many faith communities. Clergy do not receive adequate education about mental illnesses in seminaries. Some faith groups have theologies that equate sin or weakness with mental illnesses instead of seeing them as biochemical illnesses of the brain. Congregations are made up of individuals who mirror the stigma and fear we find in society as a whole. Even if people are aware of the problem, they may not know what to do or say.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS VIDEO

This video is divided into two sections that tell the stories of how two families are coping with mental illness in the family. The first story is about a Jewish family and how they have dealt with their daughter's bi-polar illness. The onset of many mental illnesses is often when someone is an older teen or in their twenties. The second story features a couple from the Christian tradition. One spouse struggles with bi-polar illness while the other struggles with depression triggered by difficult life circumstances. The response of the faith community around the initial episode of mental illness will influence the family's ability to turn to that community for support in the future.

The stories in this video can be viewed separately or the video can be viewed in its entirety. A Discussion Guide is included. The video concludes with helpful information on how faith communities can be supportive of persons with a mental illness and their families.



*Mental Illness and Families of Faith* won a Telly Award at the 25th annual award ceremony.

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*Mental Illness and Families of Faith* is produced by Mental Health Ministries.

Running Time: 22:10 minutes

The cost of this resource is \$20. It can be purchased by credit card on the Mental Health Ministries Web site, [www.MentalHealthMinistries.net](http://www.MentalHealthMinistries.net). Or, send a check (\$20 plus \$4 shipping and handling) made out to "Mental Health Ministries" to Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder, Coordinator of Mental Health Ministries, 6707 Monte Verde Dr., San Diego CA 92119. Visit the Mental Health Ministries Web site for other resources on mental health issues.

[www.MentalHealthMinistries.net](http://www.MentalHealthMinistries.net)