

Innovative  
Ideas to  
meet  
unmet  
Mental  
Health  
Needs



## The Need:

Professional Counselors and Psychiatrists provide evidence-based counseling and medical treatment that is proven to help people experiencing a mental illness, SUD, or trauma move toward health and recovery.

These services are essential and life-saving for many people.



Photo credit: Christina @ wocintechchat.com

**But there are not enough counselors and psychiatrists to meet current mental health needs...**



School districts around the country have used federal pandemic money to hire more mental health specialists, if they can find them, but say they are stretched thin and that students who need expert care outside of school often can't get it because therapists are overburdened and have long waitlists.

PBS News Hour/Lindsey Tanner/2023



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## Goal: Creative Solutions to address the Gaps

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Today's Goal - think creatively.

We need new ideas, new strategies to expand the help and support that's available to people experiencing mental health challenges.

**What other types of support or solutions in your area of influence could meet or help meet people's mental health needs?**



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## Goal: Creative Solutions to address the Gaps

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What is innovative?

What is new?

We don't want to duplicate services that others are already providing.

What creative things could you do to meet needs in your area that no-one is meeting? Do it in a new way...

What are the resources that already exist in the church or community that can be tapped to creatively help meet the needs?

Are there new ways to maximize linkages between the faith community and mental health providers?



## Some types of programs are already ongoing:

- Certified Peer Support Specialists with lived- experience providing accompaniment & support.
- Trained volunteers staffing mental health hotlines
- Peer and Professional-led Support groups providing counseling and social support for more than 1 person at a time
- New interactive technology programs (apps) are being piloted and providing 24/7 support to youth with illnesses that involve psychosis; people experiencing anxiety; meditation apps...
- Clergy & parishioners in churches being trained on mental health and support strategies to help provide support and reduce suicides. (Churches Care Program;) MH First Aid, others.
- Police and first responders being trained on crisis de-escalation and identifying MH needs (CIT – Crisis Intervention Team).



# Examples of innovative programs...

## Friendship Benches Zimbabwe

Dixon Chibanda, MD, Psychiatrist, Zimbabwe



Friendship benches – Volunteer Grandmothers trained in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and active listening, talk to strangers on public benches to support mental health needs in their communities.



“Yellow is for Hello.”  
University Friendship  
Bench programs across  
Canada.



Volunteers trained in  
Basic counseling  
support strangers at  
NYC Friendship Benches

Photo: Good Morning, America.

# Examples of innovative programs...

## The Churches Care Program

We Rise International (Churchescare.net)



Training : MH/SUD/Stigma/Self-care



Networking with other church leaders



Educational Resources for the Congregation



Linking to Local Treatment Providers



Congregational "Church Assessment" & Consult



Clinical Consults/Support Guidance

Empowering Church leaders and parishioners to reduce stigma and provide effective support and linking for people in their church or community experiencing a mental health or addiction challenge.

### Churches receive:

- Training Course: 2.5-days of training on mental illnesses & addictions, support strategies, stigma reduction, and self-care.
- Church Assessment and 1:1 consultation followed by 18 months of support.
- Adult Sunday School Educational Resources
- Guidebook - Emergency response and providing hands on support
- Linking to local professional treatment providers
- Networking with other churches in the program.
- Clinical consultations



# Examples of innovative programs...

## KOSHISH – Nepal

Empowering women who are homeless due to psychotic illnesses to stabilize & reintegrate with family and life again.

### Rehabilitation and reintegration support for homeless women with psychotic illnesses



A pioneer non-profit mental health self-help organization working for the voice of the voiceless people living with a mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities in Nepal.

"Nothing about us without us"



- Seek, find, invite homeless women with psychosis to voluntarily enter the free program
- Provide residential program/group housing.
- Mental Health Education, counseling, meds, life-skills, social support, employment skills - jewelry making).
- Locate & Educate the women's family
- Reintegrate the psychiatrically stable women back into her family and community.
- Help the family access disability \$ & psychiatric care in community
- Educate community leaders
  
- LIVE TOGETHER
- EAT TOGETHER
- DANCE TOGETHER
- LAUGH TOGETHER

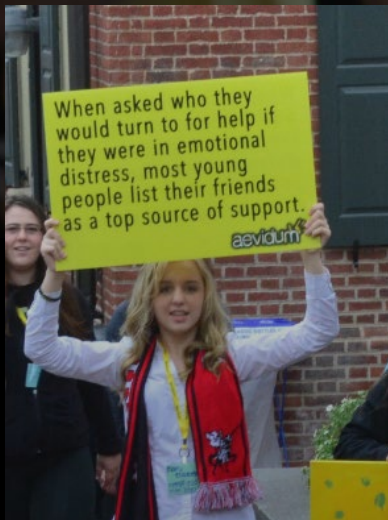
# Examples of innovative programs...

Aavidum – “I’ve Got Your Back”

## We Are Aavidum

The word Aavidum, which means “I’ve got your back,” was created by students after they lost a classmate to suicide.

What started in one tiny school in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania has now become a nationwide movement.



*Tough topics like depression and suicide become much more approachable when the information comes from a friend. Aavidum is definitely changing the way youth view mental health talk and making it easier to open up, get help, and be there for friends in need.” Aavidum student*



Aavidum was founded at Cocalico H.S. in Lancaster Co, PA. in 2003. Aavidum groups in schools empower high school, middle school, and elementary school students and teachers to educate and support their peers on mental health. **Over 150 clubs exist in elementary, middle, and high schools and colleges throughout Pennsylvania and beyond.**

Our message has been shared widely and tens of thousands of individuals have pledged “Aavidum.”

Examples of innovative programs

Listening people in Libraries

Friendship groups in nursing homes

You can find other innovative programs listed on the

[LMC Legacy Foundation Website](#)

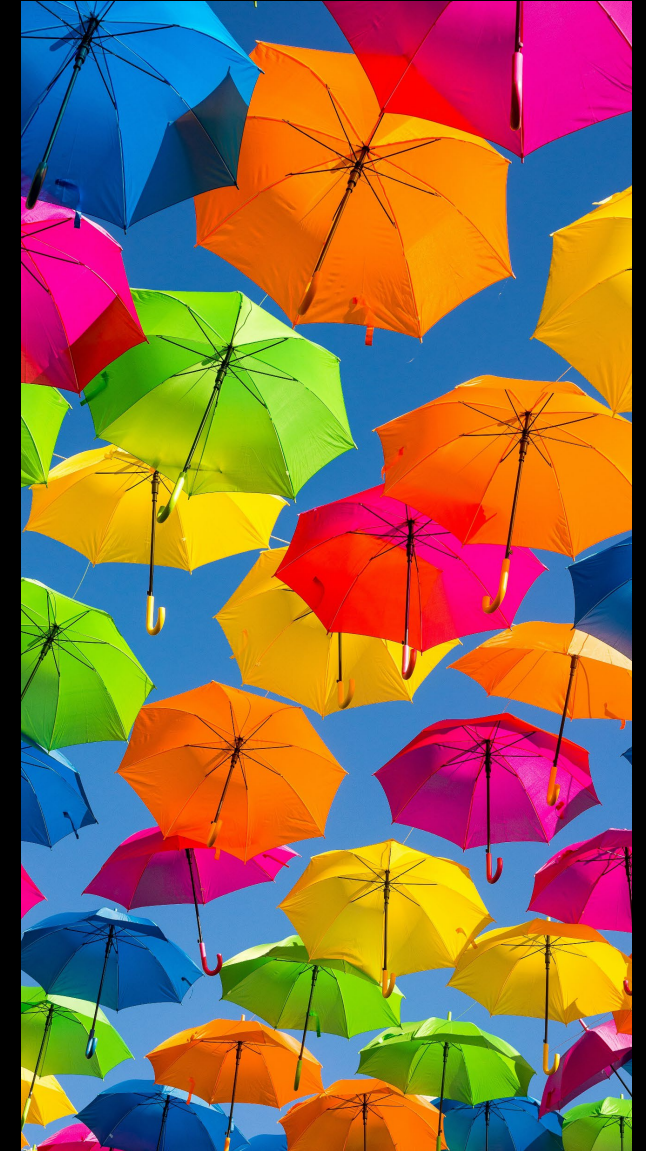
**Each Umbrella Makes a  
difference!**



**It takes a village ... to address the  
mental health needs of our time...**

**What Innovative Programs could  
you develop?**

**Brainstorming  
activity...**



## Innovative Strategies to help address unmet mental health needs

Who are the  
people  
(target  
group)

What is the  
mental  
health need?

What are  
possible  
innovative  
strategies/  
ideas?

Any Key  
Partnerships  
to consider?

## What are the gaps you see that need innovative mental health supports?

## Who are the people that are on your heart?

Trauma  
Survivors

College  
students  
29% anxiety; 23%  
depression

Foster  
Children

Health  
professionals  
(burnout)

Grieving  
people

Women

Teachers  
(school shooting trauma)

Elderly/Retired  
(grief/loneliness/need purpose)

LGBTQ+  
Youth  
(50% considered suicide)

People with  
Developmental  
Disabilities &  
their families

Teen girls  
(30% considered suicide;  
20% experienced sexual  
violence)

Immigrant  
children

Single  
Parents

Non-  
English  
speakers

Families  
experiencing  
addiction

People  
overwhelmed  
by shame and  
guilt.

Family  
Caregivers

People  
with a  
Chronic  
Illness

Fathers

What are the gaps you see that need innovative mental health supports? **What's the issue that's on your heart?**

Suicide

Loneliness  
Social Isolation

Trauma

Grief &  
Loss

Teens'  
"sexting"

Post-  
partum  
Depression

Divorce

Abuse

Depression

Substance  
Abuse

Burn-out

Racial  
Trauma

Self-  
esteem

Chronic  
Illness

Anxiety

What are creative/innovative strategies / programs / solutions that could help meet this need?

Peer led...

Church based...

Community -based...

Target group led  
(Ex. "for veterans by veterans")

Group-based...

Technology...

Home Based...

Faith Component

Trained Volunteers

Inter-generational....

Gender specific

Multi-lingual

Specialized...

Culturally-adapted...

Collaboration of multiple partners

Low cost/free



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