“Building a Faith Based Community Relationship with our Local Mental Health Center”

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Faith Based Coordinator
Legislative Liaison

1. The Mental Health Center needs to identify its goal of building a bridge of connection to the communities of faith in their catchment areas.

2. The Mental Health Center needs to consider the balance of taking Federal funding and the separation of church and state. 13 years ago the Aurora Mental Health Center had to work internally and externally to educate, identify and advance their Faith Based partnerships.

3. The Federal Charitable Choice Act (President Clinton 1996-2000) established several laws allowing communities of faith and government funded programs to partner as long as the individuals being served have an “alternate choice” in services.

4. Building bridges may go in both directions...helping Mental Health Center employees feel comfortable to invite clients to ask for their faith needs to be integrated into their counseling process where possible. And to developing relationships of trust out to the local communities of faith.

5. Aurora Mental Health Center established a voluntary Clinician’s Faith Based List where therapists can voluntarily identify if they are comfortable to work with a client’s faith perspective in the treatment process. This voluntary list is offered to all clinical staff. It is posted on a “Common” drive for anyone doing an intake to respond to requests by clients for a clinician that will recognize their faith.

6. A City-wide partnership with Mental Health and the Community of Faith has been establishing by having a local faith leader become the liaison between their City Council Ward Member and the faith leaders in each of our six of our Council Wards.
7. A City-wide Conference hosted in partnership with local faith leaders was just held to strengthen the relationship between the City and communities of faith. This partnership also embraced mental health and crisis services.

8. Faith based funding to offer Mental Health First Aid to the Faith Community has been a great partnership to advance the relationship with mental health services and crisis services.

9. On-going Faith Based discussions and trainings with the staff has enabled the staff to better understand the nuances of working with a variety of faith communities.

By attending local city and community activities as the Faith Based Coordinator for our mental health center, this faith based coordinator has been able to strengthen faith relationships and reduce the stigma of mental health care. The template below has helped clinicians identify their desire to be a part of the voluntary faith based therapists list:

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Aurora Mental Health Faith Based Initiatives
Therapist Voluntary Commitment
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The Aurora Mental Health Center has identified Faith Based Initiatives as one of our areas of advancement.

The following definition has been adopted as our Faith Based Initiative statement:

“Our best chance to overcome our community’s deepest problems is to partner with communities of faith by building bridges of understanding between clergy, their congregations, and the Aurora Mental Health Center. People in pain often seek help from their church. By integrating education and the client’s belief system into treatment, more stabilizing and successful outcomes can be realized”.

Each manager is asked to pass this information along to your clinical and intake staff members. It is important that we create a voluntary list of identified therapists who can be listed as willing to meet a client at their point of faith need into the treatment process. A therapist does not need to be an expert on a particular faith. The goal is to be willing and open to identifying with the client’s faith values during treatment as appropriate.
Yes, I am willing to have my name listed on the AuMHC Therapist referral list. I understand that this is a voluntary decision.

Name & Credentials__________________________________________________________
AuMHC Department___________________________________________________________
Please (X) the appropriate category:  Therapist____  Case Manager____
                                      Peer Specialist____
Area of Expertise_____________________________________________________________ 
Faith______________________________________________________________________
Can work with other faiths if client directed_________________________(y or n) 
Contact Information: 
Work Address_______________________________________________________________ 
Work Email_______________________________________________________________ 

Thank you for helping the Center in being more flexible to serve our clients at their point of need. We are committed to offer on-going training and consultation to assist you as you incorporate faith based issues into your treatment plan as appropriate. Please return this form to your manager or to me. Feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

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