Discussion Starters for *Welcomed and Valued* DVD
Produced and Distributed by the NCPD Council on Mental Illness

*(Leader should use the “Resource Manual” as the resource for discussion.)*

Each of the following sections begins on the DVD with the announcer voiceover.

**DVD Section I – Who are people with mental illness?**

- Do you know someone with a severe and persistent mental illness?
- Is it possible that you know people with mild or moderate mental illness who do not speak of it due to stigma?
- If not, what do you imagine it would be like to interact with a person who has a mental illness?
- How would (or did) you react if you found out a close friend or family member had been diagnosed with MI?
- What are examples of a mental illness, and what are some of the symptoms?
- Where are people with mental illness (discuss range of severity and tendency not to talk about the illness)?

**DVD Section II – The impact of mental illness on the family**

- What are the concerns for family members?
  - Parents (When a child/adult child has a mental illness)
  - Siblings
  - Children (When a parent has a mental illness)
  - Spouse
- What are the impacts of insurance, multiple hospitalizations, and finding services for a person with mental illness and their families?

**DVD Section III – Confronting Stigma**

- How has the media shaped your image of people with mental illness? What characters from television and the movies can you think of who provide a positive, negative, realistic, caricature of persons with mental illness?
- What is “people first” language and why is it important?
- What can we do to reduce stigma?
DVD Section IV – Welcoming people with mental illness in parish life – forming relationships

- How do we make the parish welcoming and a “safe” place for people to feel free to talk about their illness or their family member’s illness?
- What are some of the barriers people with mental illness face when coming to our church? Would removing those barriers make the parish more welcoming for all persons?
- How do we welcome families of people with mental illness?

DVD Section V – How can the parish support the participation of parishioners with mental illness

- What are the spiritual needs of people with mental illness and their families?
- How can we meet these needs in a way that invites people with mental illness and family members into the life of the parish?

DVD Section VI – Living with mental illness: recovery, cyclical nature of the illness

- What does recovery mean?
- What are the cycles of the illness, (i.e., cycles of crisis)?
- What does living with a person with mental illness mean for the family?
- What role does hope play in recovery, and how can the Church support that?

DVD Section VII – Specific issues for parishes

- What does it mean to set boundaries?
- How do we develop a plan for a pastoral approach to acute behavior? Do you know who to call or where to find the numbers?
- Where does confidentiality come in and how does it affect our ability to help someone?
- What do we do when someone talks about suicide?

DVD Section VII – The Body of Christ

- How do we ensure our parishes are welcoming and inviting people into a deeper relationship with God?
- How do we ensure people are invited not only into participation but leadership?

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