

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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