



# Mental Illness Network News

*The Monthly Newsletter of the  
National Catholic Network on Mental Illness*



**FEBRUARY 2012**

## **The Following Reflection is Shared by Chaplain Craig Rennebohm**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The tragedy of Newtown, CT, the sudden and brutal loss of children and teachers, the shooting of a mother by her son, and the son's death, has struck us all. Our most immediate response is to share the trauma, to open ourselves to the horrendous loss, to search our faith for strength and comfort. Long after the services are over, and any investigations completed, the grieving of parents, and sisters and brothers, family and friends, coworkers and a community will continue. Clergy and congregations will be left to care for broken hearts and tears throughout a village, and to support neighbors in finding hope and healing.



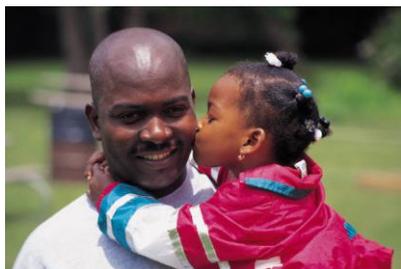
Our traditions, scriptures, and most holy practice hold us at the edge, move us together away from the abyss, and lead us to new and more solid ground.

“Hold us in our deepest need,  
Relieve our sorrow,  
Bring us to wholeness,  
Keep us in peace.”

We need not have words, or the right gesture. Our touch may be fumbling and awkward. But our presence is enough. Our prayers, even at a distance, are important. The thing is not to turn away, simply pass by, or go on as if nothing really has happened.

This is our task as communities of faith – to mark the reality of human suffering, to share the struggle, to be a companionship of the wounded and vulnerable.

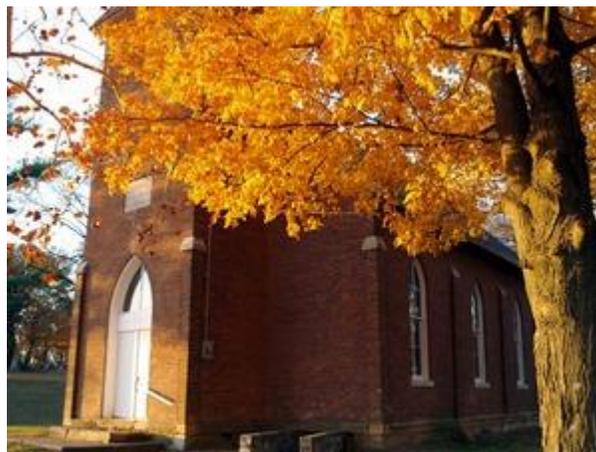
For some death we are prepared – the end of a long and full life, the final days of an illness, when at last no more of treatment is possible. When death is sudden, when violence obtains, when the young die with so much promise and spirit to be realized, our grief may be deeply infused with trauma.



We are just beginning to understand the full effects of violence upon us and in our common life. The urge to do something to prevent and protect is primal. I would urge us to grow together as communities of faith, in addressing trauma and become truly sanctuaries. Let us become people who live from our most nurturing and peaceable capacities. Let us make of our sacred places, homes of unceasing safety and welcome for those most fragile.

Much has been written and said about the young man who entered Sandy Hook School with weapons of extraordinary fatality. It is equally primal to blame or call for changes – in gun laws, school safety, the educational system and mental health services. We may never know what complexity of brain disorder, social exclusion, micro-cultural climate and other factors contributed to this tragedy or to others like it. But I commend these pathways forward.

Let us ever deepen our capacity for compassion and comfort in the face of grief and loss.



Let us develop more fully an understanding of the violence among us, and the effects of trauma in our lives – that we may become more loving and caring in our homes and neighborhoods, communities and world.

Let us redouble and expand our efforts to learn about the most complex and wondrous organ in our bodies – our brain – that we may extend our love and care to include especially individuals and families who struggle with severe and persistent mental health issues.



Let us form in every congregation, a chapter of companions, committed to sharing the journey with persons facing brain illnesses, the imbalances and disturbances which leave a human being estranged, isolated and stigmatized.

Let us use our gifts to maximize health, to support healing in body and brain, well-being in thought and emotions, growth in personal and social relationships, and wholeness in soul and Spirit.

Remembering all who suffered, all who grieve, all in need of care, and all called to love and provide and treat,

Craig Rennebohm  
Executive Director, Pathways to Promise  
Author, *Souls in the Hands of a Tender God*  
Available on [Amazon](#).

## DID YOU KNOW?

### **Are women or men at higher risk of suicide?**

Suicide was the seventh leading cause of death for males and the fifteenth leading cause of death for females in 2007.

Almost four times as many males as females die by suicide.

Firearms, suffocation, and poison are by far the most common methods of suicide, overall. However, men and women differ in the method used, as shown below.

<b>Suicide by:</b>	<b>Males (%)</b>	<b>Females (%)</b>
Firearms	56	30
Suffocation	24	21
Poisoning	13	40

### References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS): [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars)

See <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/suicide-in-the-us-statistics-and-prevention/index.shtml#CDC-Web-Tool>

### FROM THE EDITOR

We invite you to tell us about your ministry. What are you doing, what are your hopes, and what are your struggles? One of our goals is to network ideas and ministries so that we can all share in the day-to-day life of people trying to make a difference by being Christ to one another.

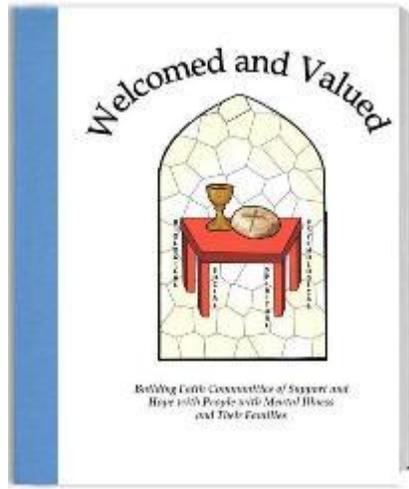


Please send all emails to me, Deacon Tom Lambert, at [olmcinfo2@aol.com](mailto:olmcinfo2@aol.com) and put **NCPD Council on MI Network** in the subject line. You can also call me at 773-525-0453 if you have any questions or ideas, or for more information on workshops, DVDs, speakers, and our [Resource Binder](#).

### **Our Mission:**

Following Jesus who embraced all, we assist the Catholic Community in reaching out to and accompanying our brothers and sisters with mental illness and their families, assuring their rightful place in the Church and society.

## Welcomed and Valued: Mental Illness Resource Manual and DVD



The Resource Manual features 90+ pages of information, perspectives and tools to assist in the ministry with people with mental illness.

The DVD features in depth looks at people with mental illness and how they participate in parish life.

(27 minute open captioned DVD)  
Discussion guide included.

[Click here](#) for a free download of the Resource

Manual.

[Click here](#) for purchase options (scroll to lower portion of webpage.)

Please consider making a donation to support the mission of the Council on Mental Illness. Your help allows this effort to continue.

**Donate**  
to NCPD

---

National Catholic Partnership on Disability  
415 Michigan Avenue, N.E., Suite 95  
Washington, DC 20017-4501  
202-529-2933; 202-529-2934 (tty); 202-529-4678 (fax)  
Email: [ncpd@ncpd.org](mailto:ncpd@ncpd.org) / Website: [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org)

---

The logo depicts the Eucharistic table to which all are called.

It also presents four dimensions to personal wholeness, each important to healing and recovery: spiritual, biological, psychological, and social.

© NCPD Council on Mental Illness

Contact NCPD to request permission to use this logo.

