

# Reading Across Our Faith Communities 3-Session Format

(Binkley Baptist Church)

Time: 6:15 to 8:00

6:15 to 6:30 pm Light refreshments

**Supplies:** nametags, sheets of paper with markers, sign-up sheet with email  
(Appoint someone as timekeeper is the time keeper and recorder.)

## 6:30 **Leader One**

Prayer

Welcome and Introduction

Go around the circle, **say first name and what each participant anticipates getting out of the 3 sessions.**

(Recorder will briefly write each person's remark on paper. Keep to post each week.)

State ground rules: Confidentiality, Use "I" statements, No Crosstalk

Disclaimer: We are not discussing theology, none of us agrees 100% with the author or even with each other. Let's not get bogged down in what that means.

## 6:50 **Leader Two**

5-minute remarks on what our faith community's ministry has been with people who have a mental illness

## 6:55 **Leader Three**

2-minute summary of the author's personal story found in chapter. Make suggestion for chapter 2 that each person on their own, in order, to benefit from the abundance of information, make a simple outline of any information new to them.

## 7:00 **Leader One**

Leads another "round robin", going around in the circle: *What in the author's personal story surprised you and what was familiar?*

### ***Faith Connections on Mental Illness***

*An inter-faith coalition whose mission is to work with all faith communities to welcome, include, support, educate, and advocate for individuals and families who are living with mental illness.*

Meeting at St. Thomas More ♦ 940 Carmichael St. ♦ Chapel Hill, NC 27514

info@faithconnectionsmentalillness.org ♦ faithconnectionsmentalillness.org  
On FaceBook ♦ <https://www.facebook.com/faithconnectionsmentalillness>

Follow-up with a "popcorn" format of *Share, if you have one, an incident that you just couldn't put aside.*

As time permits, if there is a **professional present** give him/her the opportunity to lead a Q&A.

### 7:55 **Leader One**

Assigns the next 3 chapters

### **Clergy, if present,**

Closing prayer.

## Session II

Time: 6:15 to 8:00

6:15 to 6:30 pm Light refreshments

**Supplies:** nametags, sheets of paper with markers, sign-up sheet with email (Appoint someone as timekeeper is the time keeper and recorder.)

6:30 **Leader:** Prayer and guidelines and 1st person language

**Whole group:** What would you like to discuss from chapters 4, 5, and 6? (Recorder records comments.)

6:55 **Small groups** (Number of groups depends upon participants.)

Discuss the above points, other points and suggested questions created before the evening and posted and given to leaders. Reporters chosen within each group  
Suggested questions:

1. *What do you think about this statement made by the author on page 100?  
"....when the church is silent to a person in crisis, it can sound remarkably like silence from God."*
2. *Respond to this statement from the author found on page 112:  
"For serious and chronic mental illness, there is no cure - short of a miracle. There is no "all better".....Walking alongside someone with mental illness many mean a lifetime hike over peaks and valleys....."*
3. *What surprised you about the author's description of the mental health care system (chapter 4, pp.81.-87)*

7:35 Leader One facilitates; **Whole group;** Reporters share

7:45 Q&A time with **professional facilitator**

7:55 Leader assign last three chapters. **Clergy** lead pastoral prayer

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## Session III

Time: 6:15 to 8:00

6:15 to 6:30 pm Light refreshments

**Supplies:** nametags, sheets of paper with markers, sign-up sheet with email  
(Appoint someone as timekeeper is the time keeper and recorder.)

6:30 **Facilitator** Whole group Prayer, Candle, 1st person language, Guidelines

6:35 **Leader One** give a synopsis of last 3 chapters with emphasis on what other faith communities are doing.

6:40 **Small groups** (Number of groups depends upon participants.)

Brainstorm what church can do. Reporters chosen within each group

Suggested questions to get started:

1. *What do you wish someone had done for your family when you were dealing with a mental illness?*
2. *What a team of folks willing and eager to help families touched by mental illness would do.*
3. *What resources could be put into a sort of packet to give to families in need of help navigating the system - doctors, meds, hospitals, ECT, job security issues, etc.*

7:20 **Reporters** report

7:30 **Facilitator** presents signs of recovery from SAMHSA

- *Self-Direction*
- *Person Centered*
- *Empowerment*
- *Holistic*
- *Non-linear*
- *Strengths based*
- *Peer support*
- *Respect*
- *Responsibility*
- *Hope*

How can the church play an important part in supporting an individual in the recovery process?

7:40 **Panel** to respond to the small group suggestions

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7:50 If possible, appoint an Ad Hoc committee to go forth. People leave contact information and in a column beside their name say if they are able to be on a team. "There is no pressure; b/c we all know that we lead busy lives."

7:55 **Clergy** lead in prayer and announcements

## Reading Across Our Faith Communities 3-Session Format

(Chapel Hill Bible Church)

The first week, more than half of the group had not had a copy of the book previously, so discussion was centered around individuals' experiences. For the three sessions questions included:

1. What positive experiences have you had in a church setting that helped or supported you when you had mental health needs?
2. What negative experiences regarding mental illness have you had in a church setting?
3. What resources have you found that helped you? They can be ones outside your church.
4. If resources were not an issue, what would you like to see our church implement? Making lists of resources more readily available? Support groups? Change the church webpage to reflect acceptance and welcome to those with mental illness? Make speaking with a pastor more accessible?

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