



Disability Ministries

Greetings!

I hope everyone had a blessed Easter.

May is Mental Health Month, which is just around the corner.

Mental Health Month was created in 1949 to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of mental wellness for all. In the spirit of the month, the ELCA recommends that all congregational and community leaders create and encourage a dialogue with congregation and community members about mental health awareness and the destigmatizing of mental illness. Nearly every person in the pews has been touched by mental illness in some way; individuals and families do not need to suffer in silence. Our faith communities can be an active and sympathetic sanctuary for people living with a mental illness, their family members, friends, advocates and allies. Help is available to you, and there is hope for all of us!

More information and resources:

- Mental Health America
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 800 273 TALK (8255)



Rachel Bouman

Rachel Bouman
Program Director, Disability Ministries
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

When the righteous call for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord rescues them from them all. He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken

(Psalm 34:17-20).

Find additional information on Disability Ministries [here](#). To financially support this work, click [here](#) and select Disability Ministries.

Hi. My name is Sherry Bryant, and I am with Lutheran Suicide Prevention Ministry.

The mission of Lutheran Suicide Prevention Ministry (LSPM) is to eliminate death-by-suicide. LSPM accomplishes this through awareness, education and advocacy. Our ministry acts on the goals from the 1999 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted social message, [Suicide Prevention](#). We are a grass-roots organization, empowered by volunteers who have been affected by mental illness and/or suicide.

LSPM provides congregations with resources, communication guidelines and proactive methods to reduce the stigma around talking about mental illness and suicide and to create a welcoming, accepting environment for all. We are a non-profit corporation and an independent Lutheran organization working to implement suicide prevention policies approved by the ELCA.

More than [42,000](#) Americans die by suicide every year compared to fewer than [16,000](#) by homicide. [Worldwide](#), there are far more suicides recorded than combat deaths and homicides combined. [Twenty-two](#) veterans or current members of the military die each day by suicide.

During Mental Health Month, which occurs every May, we encourage all congregations to destigmatize, discuss and provide resources devoted to advocating for increased mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Some successful examples include: information in church bulletins, a table display explaining how to help and how to get help, a message from the pulpit, prayers for those who suffer from despair, and showing ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's message on suicide prevention, a three-minute video that can be played during worship services. It is available on YouTube [here](#).

Please go to lutheralsuicideprevention.org/ for these resources or e-mail me at sher44@msn.com for more information or assistance.

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255; press 1 for veterans
- Para Español: 800-628-9454; Crisis Text Line: Text START to 741-741
- mentalhealthministries.net
- nami.org/NAMIFaithnet

Sherry Bryant, Lutheran Suicide Prevention Ministry