



2015

Promoting Wellness in the Church and Community: A Guide for Ministry Leaders

A PEACE Project

Missouri City Baptist Church

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Section I: Introduction

This module was created as part of a program of the Missouri City Baptist Church PEACE project which is funded by the Hogg Foundation. The goal of the project is to collaborate with clergy/faith leaders from rural communities to enhance the African American community's awareness and perceptions of mental health recovery and wellness by education and program development. We hope that this wellness module will be helpful to you as you help your congregation.

Purpose of the Wellness Module

Churches play an important role in encouraging and supporting their members to make healthy lifestyle choices. The concern for one's health and healthiness, as well as for the health of others, is seen throughout the Scripture: from the simple inquiries about "how are you" (Genesis. 43:28; 2 Samuel. 20:0) to a concern about the "balm in Gilead" (Jeremiah. 8:22) to John's wish that "you are as well physically as you are spiritually" (2 John. 2). Even in Paul's letter to the Romans, he urges believers to respect and appreciate their bodies:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1).

Churches can lovingly encourage their members and the communities they serve to honor their bodies as their temples through the implementation of a wellness ministry. The purpose of this module is to assist churches in establishing or expanding their wellness ministry to address emotional health needs and reduce the mental health stigma that exists within African American communities.

What is a Wellness Ministry?

A health ministry is a structured organization within the church that focuses on implementing physical, nutritional and emotional health programs for their church and the communities they serve. Health ministry activities can range from programs that minister to the mind, body and spirit, increase self-knowledge of community resources, and promote personal responsibility for health.

There are many models for addressing congregational health and wellness. However, for the purpose of this module, we will focus on the lay health promoters model. This model relies on volunteers to plan health education activities, provide health education information and encourage healthy lifestyles among members of the congregation. The volunteers who make up the health ministry do not need to have any medical training or background. Ideally, people who are natural helpers and who are respected by their fellow members do well at this kind of work.

<http://www.altabatessummit.org/community/hm.html>

Starting a Health Ministry

Just as churches and faith organizations are effective in fostering spiritual wholeness, they can also help members improve their physical and emotional health. By starting a health ministry, churches can empower members with increased knowledge and community resources to meet their needs. Follow these steps to start a health ministry at your church.

Step 1: Obtain Pastoral Support

Share your vision and plan for a health ministry with your pastor and demonstrate how it supports other ministries in the church. Pastoral support is essential for a successful ministry and it demonstrates the commitment of the church to the congregation's well-being.

Some suggestions on ways the pastor can support ministry activities include: providing time during worship service for "Health Moments"; creating linkages with other ministries; conducting Bible studies that focus on biblical concepts of health and wellness, and including health messages in the church bulletin.

Step 2: Identify Ministry Members

Recruiting volunteers to serve on the health ministry may not be an easy task. Remember, they do not need to be health professionals. They should just have an interest in improving their own personal health and that of the congregation and/or community.

The health ministry is usually made up of at least three to five members, with one serving as the health coordinator or leader. The health coordinator is responsible for planning and leading ministry meetings; serving as a liaison between the ministry, the congregation and the pastor; and ensuring that health activities are planned and implemented and reliable health information is disseminated. The health coordinator serves as an advocate, empowering the congregation to make healthier lifestyle choices.

- Pray about your health ministry. Ask for guidance in recruiting key people who will be committed and faithful.
- Place a notice in the church bulletin to recruit members. Briefly describe the purpose of the ministry and member responsibilities.
- Ask your pastor to suggest members who may be interested in serving on the committee
- Identify individuals who may have community or professional relations that could enhance the work of the ministry, such as community health educators, small business owners, nurses and doctors.

Step 3: Determine the Needs of the Members and Community

After you have recruited members, conduct an assessment of the health needs of your congregation. Identify resources that may be available to support the ministry. The purpose of these assessments can vary, it may be to:

- Identify the health concerns and interest of members;
- Introduce and add ideas about health and wellness;
- Identify activities or events to implement; and
- Identify available resources within your church and community

Step 4: Prepare Your Team

Your ministry leaders could include: a coordinator, assistant coordinator, secretary, an Emergency response Team (includes medical professionals and ushers to assist with medical emergencies during service) and a fitness team leader. Since some ministry members may not be health professionals, you may need to provide training or information on the issues you will address in your ministry. There are many national organizations that provide free training to faith-based programs (**See Resources**). Check with organizations that serve your area and schedule training for your ministry members as needed.

Step 5: Program Implementation

Once you have completed these steps, you will be ready to implement activities designed to meet the health needs of your congregation. Identify other ministries that may be able to help you create awareness within the congregation.

There are many wellness programs that have been developed and packaged for use by churches. This module offers suggestions on how to obtain these programs. Use this information, along with the monthly health observance list (**See Resources- Health Finder**), to plan your education and awareness activities.

How to use this module

While many churches organize health events or programs for their congregation, this module can be used to add structure to existing wellness ministries or serve as a model for new ones. The Program Ideas Section includes information on: **Emotional Health and Wellness, Food and Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Disease Management**. Each topic provides ideas from evidence based programs that can be replicated for use. Resource information, handouts, forms to keep track of activities, and evaluate feedback from participants are included. This module is not designed to be all inclusive. You or members of your congregation may be aware of other programs that maybe better suited to for you to implement. We pray that this information will be useful to you as you plan programs for your congregation.

Section II: Health Ministry Program Ideas



Emotional Health and Wellness

Faith and community leaders are often the first point of contact when individuals and families face mental health problems or traumatic events. In fact, in times of crisis, many will turn to trusted leaders in their communities before they turn to mental health professionals. When leaders know how to respond, they become significant assets to the overall health system.

A Few Facts: Mental health issues affect all

members of society in some way, shape, or form. It is estimated that one in five Americans over age 18 will experience a mental health problem this year. It is estimated that 6-12 percent of transition-age youth and young adults struggle with a serious mental health condition (2.4-5 million individuals). Of children and youth in need of mental health services, 75-80 percent of these youth do not receive services. Mental health involves how a person handles stress, relates to other people, manages emotions, makes decisions, and perceives the world and their sense of purpose in life. Mental health is essential to the overall health and well-being. Misunderstandings about mental health can lead to negative attitudes that prevent people with mental illness from being accepted and supported, and can make it harder for them and their families to get help and lead productive lives in their communities. People can and do recover from mental health problems.

Creating Awareness

There are a variety of ways in which your ministry can create awareness about mental health events in your congregation:

- Bulletin Announcements
- Marquee Promotion
- Fliers
- Handouts(Mental Health in My Community) <http://www.MentalHealth.gov>
- List information on the church website
- Health Moment Announcements during the worship service
- Community Calendar listings

Activity ideas:

- **Mental Health Presentations/Workshops**
- Presentations and workshops are useful ways to enhance and reinforce health ministry activities. For example, a health ministry member could present information about mental

health issues or invite a mental health professional or speaker from a local organization like NAMI or Texana.

➤ **Movie Night**

Preview shows from the Mental Health Channel, select one for your congregation and facilitate a discussion afterward on how your church can address the issue.

➤ For information: www.mentalhealthchannel.tv

➤ **Free Program:** Community Conversations about Mental Health Tool Kit

This kit provides tools to help ministries hold a one-day community conversation. Includes information for planning conversations, recruiting and training facilitators, recruiting conversation participants, and identifying steps participants may want to take in order to raise awareness about mental health and promote access to mental health services.

➤ **Get the Kit:** www.mentalhealth.gov

➤ **Free Program:** The Calmer Life Program

Calmer Life helps individuals deal with worry and stress, connections to community resources and communicate with healthcare providers. The program is for individuals 50 and older, no medication is necessary, one-on-one sessions are offered in convenient locations and by telephone. Individuals have a choice to include religion/spirituality in the program.

For more information: Call 713-794-8519/Email: pwagener@bcm.edu

Food and Nutrition



The best way to give your body the balanced nutrition it needs is by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day. This section provides information and resources to help individuals learn how to make healthy choices and get the most nutrition out of their calories.

A Few Facts: Small changes can make a big difference to your health. If we incorporate at least six of the eight goals below into our diet, we would be on our way to better health. Encourage your congregation to set healthy eating goals and track their success. .

1. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables to get vitamins, minerals and fiber
2. Make half the grains you eat whole grains (like whole wheat, brown or wild rice)
3. Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
4. Choose a variety of lean protein foods, 90% lean or higher
5. Compare sodium in foods and choose lower sodium versions
6. Drink water instead of sugary drinks
7. Eat seafood like salmon, tuna or crab with Omega 3 fatty acids (health fats)
8. Cut back on foods that contain solid fats (like cake, cookies, pizza, ice cream)

Creating Awareness

There are a variety of ways in which your ministry can create awareness about healthy eating and physical activity in your congregation:

- Bulletin Announcements
- Marquee Promotion
- Fliers
- List information on the church website
- Health Moment Announcements during the worship service
- Community Calendar listings

Activity ideas:

- Start a walking club
- Physical Activity Presentations/Workshops
- Physical activity presentations and workshops are useful ways to enhance and reinforce health ministry activities. For example, a health ministry member could present information about healthy eating, shopping, and fitness or invite a mental health professional or speaker from a local organization like Texas AgriLife, the Prairie View Cooperative Extension Service, or the American Heart Association.

ChooseMyPlate

Individuals and families make food choices every day that often lead to eating too much and moving too little. The resources available through ChooseMyPlate.gov can help you create a lifestyle and environment that supports nutritious eating. MyPlate reminds Americans to think about healthier choices. Foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein foods contain the nutrients needed to build a better plate, meal, or snack. ChooseMyPlate.gov provides individuals involved with schools, workplaces, places of worship, retail establishments, and other organizations with the practical tips and tools to promote healthy lifestyles among children and families. Use this toolkit to support your personal and community wellness goals.

➤ **Get the Kit:**

My Plate Community Tool Kit

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/sites/default/files/printablematerials/MyPlateCommunityToolkit.pdf>

➤ **Free Program: *Body and Soul***

Body and Soul is a church-wide program designed to increase healthy eating. This program has been evaluated in several national studies and shown to be effective in getting people to eat more fruits and vegetables. Program activities include: hosting a kick-off event, forming a project committee, hosting healthy eating events, and working to involve the pastor in supporting healthy eating by setting church policies and guidelines. Churches are encouraged to host guest speakers, cooking demonstrations and taste tests. Body and Soul also suggests using self-help materials such as a cookbook, video, and educational pamphlets. Many excellent resources are available and ready for your congregation to use!

Get the Kit: <http://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/viewProduct.do?viewMode=product&productId=257631>



Physical Activity

Becoming healthier isn't just about eating healthy – it's also about physical activity. Many individuals don't get enough physical activity to stay fit and burn those extra calories. Regular physical activity is important to your overall health and fitness. It also helps control body weight by balancing the calories you take in as food with the calories you expend each day. Exercising for at least 30 minutes most days of the week is recommended. Increasing the intensity or the amount of time you exercise may be needed to prevent weight gain. Children and teenagers should get at least 60 minutes of exercise every day.

A Few Facts

Taking steps to increase your physical activity can be beneficial to one's health. Try to move more and sit less! You spend the day sitting behind a desk. You commute home to relax, sit and watch TV, read a book or play computer games. Like most Americans, you'll spend more than eight hours of your day sitting. However sitting for several hours a day puts your health at risk – even if you exercise regularly. It raises your risk for cancer, obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

Creating Awareness

There are a variety of ways in which your ministry can create awareness about mental health events in your congregation:

- Bulletin Announcements
- Marquee Promotion
- Fliers
- Handouts
- List information on the church website
- Health Moment Announcements during the worship service
- Community Calendar listings

Activity Ideas:

➤ Set Weekly Goals

Share these tips weekly to help members reduce sitting time and get feedback on their success.

Cut back on screen time

Put down the remote. Fit in breaks to move around. For example, watch your favorite show while riding an exercise bike.

Choose an active leisure activity

Relax with an activity that doesn't require sitting. Take a fun dance class, work in your garden or walk around your neighborhood. You'll burn about 140 extra calories per day to help you maintain a healthy weight.

Build activity into your day

- Even short spurts of activity can get your heart pumping and improve your health.
- Park at the far end of the parking lot, take the stairs or walk while you're on the phone. Cleaning the house also can limit couch time.

Reduce sitting at work

- Find simple ways to move more without disrupting your work.
- Have a walking meeting, stand during seminars or perform desk exercises.
- You can even ask your co-workers to join you for laps around the office.

Get regular exercise

You still need regular exercise. Aim for two and half hours of moderate physical activity or an hour and a half of vigorous physical activity each week.

➤ **Physical Activity Presentations/Workshops**

Physical activity presentations and workshops are useful ways to enhance and reinforce health ministry activities. For example, a health ministry member could present information about the benefits of increasing physical activity or invite a fitness professional from a YMCA, fitness center or partner with the Prairie View Cooperative Extension

➤ **Start a Walking Club**

Check out the Healthy Congregations Toolkit:

<http://www.texas cancer.info/cancercontrol/energybalance.html>

➤ For information: Activity Guides: www.heart.gov

➤ For information: <http://www.fitness.gov/be-active/ways-to-be-active/>

Disease Management



Chronic Disease is a long-lasting condition that can be controlled but not cured. Chronic disease conditions are the major cause of illness, disability, and death in Texas as well as in the United States today. Despite broad public awareness of specific life threatening diseases such as cancer and heart disease, most people are still not aware that, collectively, chronic disease conditions account for 3 out of every 4 deaths in Texas and the United States.

A Few Facts: Many patients with chronic conditions often don't follow their prescribed treatment regimen. Four modifiable health risk behaviors include lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and excessive alcohol consumption are responsible for much of the illness, suffering, and early death related to chronic diseases. There are many programs that are available to faith based institutions to help individuals:

- to take control of their health and make better health decisions
- recognize the signs and symptoms of their disease, and
- provide ongoing education and support to patients so that they understand and adhere to their plan of care.

Creating Awareness

There are a variety of ways in which your ministry can create awareness about chronic disease management in your congregation.

- Bulletin Announcements
- Marquee Promotion
- Fliers
- Handouts
- List information on the church website
- Health Moment Announcements during the worship service
- Community Calendar listings

Activity Ideas:

Contact your local American Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, American Kidney Foundation, Alzheimer's Association, health departments or your local

hospital for programs that can be implemented by your committee or to request a speaker.

Second Wind for Life Program: Second Wind for Life is a Texas nonprofit organization that assists individuals in the community with sustaining their quality of life by promoting healthy lifestyles awareness and prevention of major medical diseases.

Check it out: <http://www.secondwindforlife.org/>

D.A.W.N: Diabetes Awareness & Wellness Network: Free classes, conversations, healthy eating, active living, support and diabetes management. Call 832-393-4055 for more information or send an email to: dawncenter@houstontx.gov

YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program: The YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is based on the landmark Diabetes Prevention Program led by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and supported by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The Diabetes Prevention Program has shown that with lifestyle changes and modest weight reduction, a person with pre-diabetic symptoms can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes by 58 percent. The program strives to help participants achieve two primary goals:

- Reduce body weight by 7%
- Engage in regular physical activity

Check it out: <https://www.ymcahouston.org/healthy-living/ydpp/>

Power to End Stroke Guide: Is a guide developed by the American Heart Association to help African Americans lower heart disease and stroke risks.

Check it out: http://powertoendstroke.org/pdf/PTES_Guide_to_Lower_Risk.pdf

➤ **Movie Night**

Preview videos from the American Heart Association's Power TV. Select videos and show before during health events and facilitate a discussion afterward on how your church can address the issue.

Check it out: <http://powertoendstroke.org/articlemain.html?hl=en&category=tv>

Section III: Promoting your Programs



Sometimes ministries plan excellent programs and the attendance is low. Take the time at to identify your audience and determine how you will get members to attend your events as soon as you start planning. Check your church calendar to avoid summer vacation, holidays and other church or community events that may impact attendance at your program. Be creative in your planning; consider using catchy titles, special guests, food, prizes and fun activities to increase participation.

In-reach Strategies

- Work with other church leaders to share information with their ministries and encourage representation from each group.
- Invite members from the congregation to join in the promotion of events to family and friends
- Be sure to inform ministers, ushers and deacons about activities and involve them if the opportunity arises
- Make special announcements or sign up participants at church events leading up to your event.
- Send phone-tree announcements to members reminding them of your event
- Send post card announcements to member about the event

Outreach Strategies

Create an awareness of your events through traditional media outlets in the community your church serves. Send announcements to local newspapers, radio and television. Distribute fliers to area businesses, libraries, schools and other churches. Whichever media outlet you choose, be clear on the purpose of your message. Try to create a message that is compelling and that people can relate to by humanizing the message rather than just providing statistics.

- Press Releases
- Community Calendar Announcements
- Invite churches in the area to attend
- Partner with other organizations or schools
- Billboards, signs, marquee

Section IV: Forms and Tools



Sample Physical Activity Waiver – this form should be used when you implement physical activity programs.



Sample Congregational Health Survey – this survey can be used to identify what information is needed by your congregation.

The diagram is titled "Lesson Planning by @LeadingLearner". It features a central table with five columns. Above the table is a yellow arrow pointing right labeled "Planning". Below the table is a yellow arrow pointing left labeled "Teaching". The columns are labeled as follows: "The Bible Theme", "Learning Objective", "Bible Verse", "Learning Resource", and "Learning Resource". Each column has a corresponding box below it for notes or details.

Sample Program Planning Form – think about goals and objectives for your programs and how your congregation could benefit from participation.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a black pen, marking a checkmark in a box on a survey form. The form lists four levels of evaluation: "Excellent:", "Good:", "Fair:", and "Poor:". Each level has a corresponding empty box for a checkmark.

Sample Evaluation Form – evaluating your program can shed light on what worked and what needs to be improved.

These forms can be adapted for use with your congregation.

Sample Physical Activity Waiver Form

I agree and understand that participation in _____

(Name of activity)

Sponsored by _____,

(Name of church)

will not diagnose or attempt to cure any disease or physical conditions. I further understand that I should continue under the care of my physician and not discontinue any medications without the advisement of my health care provider while participating in this program.

I acknowledge that my participation in this program is voluntary and I accept full responsibility for the management of my own health care. I further agree that the church, program or any of its instructors are not responsible for my health care or any injury that I may sustain during this fitness program.

Participant name: _____ Date: _____

Acknowledged and accepted by: _____

(Instructor)

Sample Congregational Health Survey

Getting information from your congregation on their health and information needs could help your ministry identify issues to address in your programs, increase awareness of healthy behaviors, empower individuals and provide tools to assist them in taking care of God's temple. Using electronic survey tools analyze the results for you. If you have to use printed copies, make sure you have a team to analyze the results to use for program planning.



Use these links to help develop a survey to meet your needs:

UMC Health Ministry Network

<http://www.gbophb.org/assets/1/7/4381.pdf>

Congregational Health Ministry Survey (Tennessee)

<https://health.state.tn.us/dmhde/pdf/CongregationalSurvey.pdf>

Sample Program Planning Form

Program Title _____

Health Topic being addressed _____

Audience _____

Date _____ Length of Activity _____

Describe Activity

Planning Committee (Names and roles)

Promotion to Congregation

Bulletin _____

Announcements _____

Phone Calls _____

Fliers _____

Promotion to Community

Letters _____

Media _____

Phone Calls _____

Fliers _____

Resources

Space/Room _____

Food: Pot Luck _____ Catered _____ (Funds) _____

Equipment needs _____

Section V: Evaluating Success

Evaluating your activities is important in determining which ones were beneficial to your congregation. Share reports with the pastor and other key leaders. Modify existing tools to evaluate your success (See Resources).

Sample Evaluation Form

Name of Event _____ Date _____

Directions: Please take a few moments to provide feedback on the Health Ministry Event by circling your response. Thank you.

Rating Scale:

5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Undecided 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree

Evaluation

1.	The program was organized.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	The program addressed my needs.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	The information was relevant.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	The speaker(s) was/were effective.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	The materials were useful.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	The slides/visuals were readable.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	I will make changes as a result of the program.	5	4	3	2	1

Please write comments below.

Section VI: Resources/References/Programs

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

Phone: 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345)

American Council for Physical Fitness and Nutrition

www.acfn.org

Phone: (614) 442-8793

American Diabetes Association

www.diabetes.org

Phone: 1-800-877-1600

American Dietetic Association

www.eatright.org

Phone: 1-800-877-1600

American Heart Association

www.americanheart.org

Phone: 1-800-242-8721

American Lung Association

www.lungusa.org

Phone: 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)

American Stroke Association

www.strokeassociation.org

Phone: 1-888-4-STROKE

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

www.tobaccofreekids.org Phone: (202) 296-5469

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

Phone: (404) 639-3311

Let's Move

www.letsmove.gov

National Cancer Institute

www.cancer.gov

Phone: (800) 422-6237

National Health Observances

www.healthfinder.gov

National Institutes of Health

www.nih.gov

Phone: (301) 496-4000

Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities

<http://www.cdc.gov/omhd/>

Phone: (800) 232-4636

Other Resources/References/Programs**Alta Bates Medical Center Health Ministry Program**

www.altabatessummit.org

Body and Soul: A Celebrating of Healthy Eating and Living

National Cancer Institute

<http://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/viewProduct.do?productId=257631&viewMode=product>

Calmer Life Program (713) 794-8519/Email: pwagener@bcm.edu

Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines

Healthy Congregations Tool Kit

MD Anderson Cancer Center

<http://www.texas cancer.info/cancercontrol/energybalance.html>

Health Education Week Tool Kit 2015

www.sophe.org

Health Ministry in the Local Congregation

www.episcopalhealthministries.org

Move More, Sit Less

In the Spirit of Health Newsletter – March 2014

MD Anderson Cancer Center

www.mdanderson.org/focused

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

www.nami.org

National Network Library of Medicine - Health Ministry Outreach Tool Kit

<http://guides.nlm.gov/ministry>

Mental Health Channel

www.mentathealthchannel.tv

[www.mental Health.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.gov)

Partnering for Life: Affirming Health & Wellbeing through Cancer Awareness

Health Ministry Program Booklet

American Cancer Society

Prairie View Cooperative Extension Service

Family and Consumer Sciences Programs

<https://www.pvamu.edu/cahs/family-consumer-sciences/>

Protect Your Body-Protect Your Temple

Health Ministry Booklet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Services

<https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=protect%20your%20body%20protect%20your%20temple>

Texana Center

<https://www.texanacenter.com>

Texas AgriLife Extension

AgriLife Extension delivers research-based educational programs and solutions for all Texans.

<http://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/>

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