

Mental Illness With Grace Series Best Practices

Initial Planning:

- Form a small team consisting of a Deacon or Priest and a couple concerned parishioners.
- Meet with Pastor to take him through the program and his approval on running the series.
- Identify dates and rooms for the series. Depending upon the number of parishes participating together. Be prepared with a location “plan B” in case your attendance estimate is off.
- Identify Deacons / Priests to deliver homily the Sunday before the series begins.
- Reach out early to community service providers to learn / provide options for speakers and resources. Ideas could include local mental health hospitals/treatment centers, therapy groups, NAMI, DBSA etc...
- Connect with other parishes who have done this before for key learnings and to get questions answered.
- Begin work on a community resource document. Utilize local mental health hospitals, treatment centers, NAMI or mental health centers to start gathering information.

Marketing Materials:

Utilize a bulletin schedule to organize bulletin articles.

Reach out to each parish to find out:

- bulletin editor contact info
- preferred format they like to receive articles
- how far in advance they need articles.
- Mass announcement copy for two weeks before and the Sunday before the series begins
- 9 bulletin articles (examples and copy in drop box)
 - *1 announcing the series with a list of everything it will cover preferably written by the pastor*
 - *4 short informational articles*
- If interested - create a large poster to have outside the event

At the event:

Collect names & email addresses. Be prepared for a crowd - consider having multiple ways people can sign in vs all waiting in one line.

Utilize individually wrapped pre-packaged snacks - so you can easily store them for each week.

You will need at least one microphone. What other AV needs.

Make resource articles and handouts available for each evening. Try to make them specific to the nights presentation

Save the large community resource document for the last night.