

DAMI News

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Summer Review

Inclusion Training

The Resource Center for Churches and DAMI will partner to present a training workshop for directors of religious education. Attendees will learn

Activities at DAMI

1. *Inclusion Training*
 2. *INMH*
 3. *Worship*
- Info: 612-230-3264

how to use a child assessment survey to make their registration process inclusive. The

workshop is timely with fall registration coming soon. The half-day workshop will be held on August 24.

INMH

The Interfaith Network for Mental Health, of which DAMI is a member, holds free quarterly meetings for information sharing and networking among faith communities. The next meeting is September 14 over the noon hour, 11:30 to 1:30, at Tem-



DOES YOUR CONGREGATION HAVE ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES FOR THOSE WHO ARE HEARING IMPAIRED?

ple Israel, Mpls.

Worship

Grace Trinity Community Church, Mpls., invited DAMI to lead Inclusion Awareness Worship on July

INMH Quarterly Meetings

Four times a year, the Interfaith Network for Mental Health gathers over the lunch hour. It is an opportunity for faith communities to share their stories of includ-

ing people with mental illness in worship and programming. The gathering this Sep. 14th will feature a panel presentation and discussion on specific strate-

gies for inclusion of children with mental illness. Interfaith networking and a free noon meal are included. For more info, call DAMI at 612-230-3264.

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Congregations & ADD/ADHD

In January, 2000, Sally Patton wrote, "The majority of us in ... religious education have experienced at one time or another, children who we identify as ADD/ADHD. They are often the children that we have the most difficulty serving. If there is consistent disruptive behavior in a religious education program, it is usually from a child who has been diagnosed as ADD/ADHD. These are the children who will make volunteer parent/leaders decide never to lead another religious education group. These are the children that the other children will often shun and be understandably upset by their behavior. I am aware that working with these children only one day a week for an hour precludes faith communities being the place of primary intervention and services, nor do we have extensive resources from which to

draw to help with our efforts. However, I do believe that we can have a significant impact on ADD/ADHD children's self esteem by providing that sacred place where the children can feel protected and free to explore their own potential, if only for an hour." Refer to: www.uua.org/re/other/needs_jan00.html

Over 15 million people in the USA live with ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). The condition may be described as an inability to focus attention long enough to complete a task or to interact appropriately in a social setting. The loss of focus can be caused by impulsiveness, distractibility, hyperactivity or some combination of these conditions.

In a classroom setting, like a faith formation class, a child with ADD or ADHD can be disruptive.

They may fidget, make noise, be distracted by movement or even get up and walk around the room. Don't make the mistake of assuming they are not paying attention. Often they know exactly what's going on even though they appear to be focused on something else.

The following strategies may help in dealing with ADD/ADHD.

1. Give a 5 minute warning about transitions from one activity to another.
2. Give clear, simple instructions and give only one or two at a time.
3. Give clear expectations and set clear boundaries.
4. Use encouragement and/or questions to help students stay on task.
5. Use breaks from tasks to help refocus attention.
6. Avoid snacks with sugar and caffeine.

TIPS for Faith Communities to Support Teachers of Children with ADD / ADHD

1. Identify children with ADD/ADHD through an inclusive registration process.
2. Meet with parents; learn what strategies work best at home.
3. Agree on goals and expectations.
4. Provide a teaching assistant in class.
5. Increase knowledge of ADD/ADHD through education.
6. Accommodate children with ADD/ADHD in events & activities.

An Inclusive Registration Process

Imagine you are the parent of a child with a disability. You want to register your child in a faith formation class, a youth activity, a summer camp or vacation faith school. You fill out the registration form, but no where does the form ask you for information about special needs your child may have. When you submit the

form, you wonder if the staff running the activity will know what accommodations to make so your child can participate fully.

On August 24, DAMI and the Resource Center for Churches will offer a workshop on how to implement an inclusive registration process. Participants will learn how to use a Child Assessment Sur-

vey form to gather data that can be used to make accommodations for special needs. The form will be included in the handout materials. The workshop is \$20 per person; \$15 for two or more people. To register call the Resource Center toll free at 1-800-293-9901 or in the Twin Cities, 612-870-0861.

DAMI NEWS

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 DAMI News is published by Disability Awareness Ministries, Inc.
 DAMI is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit, founded in 1991, whose mission is to remove barriers in faith-based communities that prevent full participation of people with disabilities in community life.

Religious Disability

Resources

American Baptists

Rev Rosalie Norman-
McNaney: Email to:
rmcnahey@abc-usa.org

Episcopal

ecdeaf.com
ahealingministry.com

Jewish Community

uscj.org/accessibility/

jfcsmpls.org/Services/
services.html#Inclusion

Lutheran

elca.org/disability

Mennonite

adnetonline.org

Presbyterian

pcusa.org/phewa/
pdc.htm

Unitarian

uaa.org/programs/justice
/accessibility/

United Methodist

gbgm-umc.org/DISC/

National Organizations

aamr.org
joniandfriends.org
nami.org
nod.org

Returning to Service

This story is fiction, but it represents the experience of many people of faith who live with a disability.

Doris lived for many years with degenerative disk disease. The deterioration of her disks pinched on her spinal column causing her great pain. While disk surgery is risky, Doris was in her late 50's and believed she still had much to offer if she could get some relief from the pain. She especially wanted to return to volunteer service at her church. She had stopped volunteering because of her back pain.

After the surgery, her recovery was long and discouraging. She had to use a wheel chair to move about, but after some time she became quite adept at maneuvering her chair.

One day, Doris decided she had progressed enough to return to church and resume some of her volunteer activities. What she

discovered surprised and upset her. The people at church were glad to see her, but they also assumed she could no longer perform her volunteer service because of her disability. They did not ask her to help with the rummage sale. They did not ask her to serve on any committee of the church. They assumed she needed to be served so they did not ask her to participate on the hospitality committee. They kept trying to do things for her and assumed she could no longer contribute as a volunteer.

The effect on Doris was devastating. She felt isolated, unappreciated, discounted and dismissed. She began to feel invisible in her own church. As time went by, she eventually stopped going to church altogether.

Doris' story is not uncommon. Well-meaning people make assumptions about what a person with a

disability can and can't do. Instead of asking the person directly, they simply assume the disability prevents any further volunteer service, when in fact it's their own assumption and attitude that prevent participation by the person with the disability.

People with disabilities have gifts to share. Ask them what they want to do. Include them in decisions that affect them. Don't deprive them of their right to decide their level of participation.

Start an Inclusion Team that can address the barriers that prevent access to programs and volunteer service opportunities. The team can also be an advocate for people with disabilities who are seeking help overcoming the barriers their faith communities erect.

Worship at Grace Trinity Church

Grace Trinity Church in south Minneapolis invited DAMI to lead a disability awareness service of worship. The service occurred on Sunday, July 30, when the temperature hit 100 degrees. Thirty-six people attended even though the church has no air conditioning. During the service, Stanley the puppet helped give the

children's sermon, and John, a person with special needs who lives in the church's neighborhood, read scripture. The church secretary and administrator, Deborah Clark, delivered a personal reflection, which told the story of dealing with severe developmental disabilities in her family of origin and how important these expe-

riences have been for her faith development. The sermon focused on the divine presence in the gifts that each person in a faith community can share, especially those gifts shared by people with disabilities. Contact DAMI for ideas or resources to create disability awareness worship at your church. 612-230-3264

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DAMI NEWS

DONATIONS

All during 2006, donations from churches & individuals have steadily declined. DAMI has met its monthly expenses through grants and earned income. One time gifts help, but a pledge of a regular monthly or quarterly gift goes further to make this ministry stable. Please make a monthly or quarterly pledge today.

DAMI Yearly Memberships

DAMI is a membership non-profit organization. The bylaws grant voting privileges at the Annual Meeting to persons who join DAMI and whose total gifts equal or exceed \$25 or 10 hours of volunteer service in a calendar year. (Gifts of less than \$25 are still welcome!)

Contribution Structure

- \$25 Friend
- \$50 Supporter
- \$100 Advocate
- \$500 Partner
- \$1000 Sustainer
- \$5000 Benefactor

JOIN DAMI TODAY !!!

Yes ! Sign me up for a one-year membership in DAMI !!!

New Member Renewing Upgrade

My check is enclosed for \$_____ payable to DAMI

NAME

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone/Email