

**United Church of Christ, Congregational
Webster, NY**

**A WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) Congregation for Mental
Health**

In living our commitment to being open and affirming to all, we, the congregation of the United Church of Christ, Congregational, are committed to being sensitive to the challenges faced by the millions of Americans with brain disorders or mental illnesses and their caregivers, family, and friends. The scope of this initiative includes, but is not limited to: anxiety, depression, eating disorders, suicide, OCD, PTSD, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, Tourette Syndrome, ADHD, autism, Alzheimer's Disease, dementia, grief, substance abuse and other addictions.

We pledge to offer support, acceptance, and respect to each person, and to provide information and resources with the goal of reducing the stigma attached to mental illness.

We pledge to create a welcoming environment for people with mental health challenges, and their families:

- We pledge to educate ourselves and offer educational opportunities to help our whole congregation understand the issues surrounding mental health challenges such as: mental illnesses, brain disorders, addictions and trauma.
- In an effort to reduce social stigma, we pledge to examine our own attitudes and preconceived notions about mental health challenges and mental health and to confront our own ingrained biases.
- We pledge to actively welcome those with mental health challenges into our faith community and provide a safe environment in which people can tell their stories and share their journeys.

We pledge to include people with mental health challenges in the life, work and leadership of the congregation:

- We commit to creating an environment where people with mental health challenges are welcome and encouraged to fully participate in the life of the church, including leadership roles and staff positions.

We pledge to support people in our congregation who have mental health challenges, and their families:

- We pledge to reach out to those suffering from brain disorders, mental illnesses, addictions, and trauma in the same way we reach out to those living with other physical illnesses.
- We pledge to offer companionship and compassion for individuals and families living with mental health challenges.

We pledge to engage with other organizations that work at the intersection of mental health and faith/spirituality/religion:

- We pledge to welcome and encourage outside groups who deal with mental health challenges, brain disorders, mental illnesses, addictions, and trauma to use our church facilities.
- We pledge to engage with other organizations both inside and outside the Church to find opportunities to be in shared mission, ministry and advocacy together.