

- Communicate, communicate, communicate!
- Educate, educate, educate!
- Listen, listen, listen!

Outcome 2

Create an infrastructure for beginning a faith community nurse ministry.

What happens first? **Begin with prayer** asking for guidance.

- Ask for guidance and the key people who will be faithful and committed.
- Invite the spiritual leader, faith community, family, and friends to also pray for you, the FCN, during the initial discernment period (30 days is recommended).
- Reflect on personal spiritual growth: define your reflective pattern and how you will begin or maintain your own prayer life (time alone, worship, Bible studies, prayer labyrinth).

Talk with your family and significant others about the FCN ministry expectations and possible changes in your life and theirs.

The C.U.R.E. model can serve as a guide for building a health ministry (Tennessee Department of Health, <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/dmhde/dmhde-faith/dmhde-faith-growaministry.html>).

C—Contact the key people.

U—Understand the needs of your congregation.

R—Build Relationships and gather **Resources**.

E—Evaluate your ministry.

■ Step 1 of C.U.R.E. Method: C—Contact Key People

Key Term: Health and wellness team is a group of professionals and laypeople committed to the concept of a ministry of health and wellness; it may also be called a health cabinet, a health and wellness committee or commission. If the faith community does not already have a **health and wellness team**, consider establishing one.

- This group will help you discover the individuals in the faith community who want to take an active role in improving health in the faith community.
- The people who agree to work with you—and each other—will be the health and wellness team.
- Be sure to include people with professional experience in health-related fields, such as physicians, pharmacists, and dieticians, as well as people with skills in other areas, such as financial advisers, attorneys, or project organizers.
- The role of the health and wellness team or health cabinet is to provide guidance and support to this important ministry. Their involvement, and the programs that result, will empower individuals in the faith community to move toward greater wholeness of body and spirit. Recruit people who are excited about making health changes, who want to know more about whole-life health, and who are willing to meet on a regular schedule to plan activities for the faith community.

How will you find these key people?

- Talk with your spiritual leaders to discover whether they are aware of individuals with a special interest in health.
- Think back over your own conversations about health with people in the faith community.
- Invite people to come forward. Post a notice on the faith community bulletin board and in normal faith community communications, including the bulletin, newsletter, bulletin boards, presentations to committees, announcements during worship. Your notice might look like this:

Critical Thinking

Discuss the importance of advance preparation as part of the process of beginning an FCN ministry in the faith community.

How does advance preparation apply to spiritual care?

- √ Are you interested in improving your health?
- √ Do you want to help others live abundantly?
- √ Do you have a heart for health?
- √ Contact _____ to talk about being part of the health and wellness team.
- Provide basic education on the role of a health and wellness team, such as:
 - √ plan health programs for the faith community
 - √ place healthy messages in the bulletin
 - √ listen to the faith community's health concerns
 - √ report good news of improved health to the faith community
- Personally contact people you would particularly like to see contribute to the team.

Not everyone who initially expresses interest will join the team. Be flexible with your expectations while stirring up interest and awareness of health matters.

Once your key contacts form a team:

- Thank everyone for being willing to serve.
- Let the faith community know what the team will be called and that team members are available to hear their health concerns and suggestions for programs.
- Consider hosting an event, such as a fellowship time following worship, and ask team members to be present for conversation with members of the faith community.
- Offer healthy refreshments as a role model for healthy living.

A key decision is whether the FCN will be a member of the health team or the leader of the health team. Ensure that team members have a clear understanding of wholistic health and the role of the FCN in health promotion. Providing a copy of *Stronger Together: Starting a Health Team in Your Congregation* by Jill Westberg McNamara (2014) is a good place to begin developing a common mindset within the team.

■ The Health Team and the Faith Community

- The team represents various groups within the faith community, such as marrieds, singles, adults, youth, seniors, health care professionals, business people, and homemakers.
- The team is well-informed about health ministry on behalf of the congregation.
- The team envisions the potential of health ministry in the faith community.
- The team develops a mission statement and establishes short- and long-term goals to carry out within the faith community or larger community.
- The team communicates the concept of health and wellness ministry through the communication channels available within the faith community.
- The team assesses what is already being done related to health and wellness, what needs are not being met, and what resources are available within and outside the faith community.
- The team plans, implements, and evaluates health ministry.
- The team organizes a commissioning service for health and wellness team members, validating the ministry and raising awareness within the faith community.
- The team asks for God's blessing and guidance.

Consider the characteristics of the faith community you serve and whether your team represents it well.

- Do you have a youth representative on the team?
- Do you have a team member familiar with mental health issues or who is living with a mental illness or disability?
- Have you included members living with physical disability or chronic illness?

Critical Thinking

Why is the FCN's relationship with the spiritual leader important to launching a ministry?

- Are there other lifestyle issues among members of your faith community that should be reflected in the team?

Critical Thinking

Why is establishing a health and wellness team so important to the success of an FCN program?

The Organizational Structure of the Team

- Review the current ministerial staff structure in your faith community and in your denomination: Where does the FCN fit into the structure? Who does the FCN report to or who supervises the FCN?
- What title will the FCN use? This may be faith community nurse, faith community minister, health minister, or other title given by your faith community or denomination. Determine what title is best and appropriate for both you and your faith community.
- If one is not already in place, create a position description: Use *Faith Community Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (3rd ed., 2017) as a guideline.
- Discuss and clarify relationships within the faith community. **Key Term: Politics** is the practice and theory of influencing other people on a civic or individual level. Be realistic about the politics that exist in the faith community. Remember that all faith communities have politics.

Common Issues for Structure and Politics

- Are there clear expectations of spiritual leaders, the governing body, the faith community, and the broader community?
- Does the health team have access to administrative or other staff support?
- Does the team have access to and collaboration with other groups within the faith community? Be sure to talk to each group about your FCN ministry.
- What is the level of support from leadership? Be sure to gain support early in the development process.
- Determine if the FCN position is paid or unpaid. As a matter of stewardship, sometimes the assumption is that FCNs will act as volunteers if they are members of the faith community.
- Ask whether professional development activities, such as continuing education conferences and the annual Westberg Symposium, will be covered and at what amount.
- Be aware that it is easy to get caught up in politics; remember that is not your focus.
- Build the ministry a little at a time and have ongoing assessment and evaluation. Don't let this become your ministry. It belongs to the faith community!
- Remember, if you have affected only one person, then you have done your job, and done it well.
- Consider the structure of the faith community. Who is the leader (pastor, rabbi, imam, priest, etc.)? Who are others in the organizational chart? Who will the FCN report to?
- Who are informal leaders in the faith community? Are there lay leaders who need to be considered? What administrative support will be available?
- Be aware of working within the organizational system and structure. Personality types can influence the relationships. See the Communication and Collaboration module for information on working with various personality types.

Practicing in a Faith Community Other than Your Own

- It may take longer to learn the culture of the faith community.
- Determine which individuals are the formal and informal leaders.
- Attend as many activities as possible in order to meet people in different situations.
- Don't participate in church gossip; it's always good to say, "I really don't know."
- Maintain confidentiality.

Critical Thinking

How does infrastructure support spiritual care?

Outcome 3

Collaborate with spiritual leaders and members of the faith community to establish a health ministry.

■ Establishing a Health Ministry Office

A key point in establishing a health ministry is establishing a **health ministry office**.

- Establish office hours and communicate your hours to the spiritual leader and the faith community.
- Determine and set up a documentation system. (See the Documenting Practice module.)
- Put necessary policies in place (blood pressure screenings and other screenings, documentation and records, volunteers).
- Set boundaries; be realistic about how many hours you will work and know the work hour expectations by the spiritual leader. Don't extend the number of hours you have negotiated.

■ Step 2 of the C.U.R.E. Method: U—Understand the Needs of the Faith Community

Conduct a needs assessment for the faith community. Once you have assembled your health team, you will want to know what activities, speakers, or programs are of interest to your congregation. In order to know what the faith community wants, you have to ask them. Pray for the health needs of your faith community.

Revise the Faith Community Health Needs Survey (Appendix D) for your faith community. Decide how long it should be. The length of the survey will determine when you ask the faith community to complete it (during worship, after worship, at midweek Bible study, in small groups, online, and so on).

- Ask volunteers to review the survey and prepare a brief report for the health team and faith community about its appropriateness for your setting. Is it clear? Easy to complete?
- Use the most frequently requested health items as a guide for developing programs and activities for your health ministry calendar.
- Remember to make the assessment short and simple—perhaps just half a page. Have pencils available at the time you administer the survey. Ask your spiritual leader to talk about the importance of responding to the survey.
- Ask only what you need to know, such as:
 - √ Do you have a chronic illness (asthma, diabetes, etc.)?
 - √ Do you have someone in the home to help with your care?
 - √ Do you have transportation to medical appointments and to the faith community?
 - √ Do you have special health questions?

Develop programs for the faith community. After you determine the needs and concerns of the faith community, the next step is creating the programs that will improve the health of all of your members while helping them develop health practices that will last a lifetime. Some models of congregational health ministry published in the *Church Health Reader* (www.chreader.org) since 2015 include:

- Church-based sports ministry for people with special needs (Summer 2015)
- Hospitality ministry about congregations that open their doors to long-distance cyclists (Winter 2016)
- Tips for ways congregations can help a refugee ministry (Winter 2016)
- Churches adopting faith-based nature preschool model (Summer 2016)
- Caregiver support ministry (Fall 2016)
- Lutheran church comfort dogs (Winter 2017)
- Dancing away depression through liturgical dance programs (Winter 2017)
- Church-based caregiving for mental illness (Spring 2017)
- Support groups for pregnancy and infant loss (Summer 2017)
- Pilgrimage of racial reconciliation (Summer 2017)
- Mental Health First Aid (Fall 2018)

Some tips for starting a health ministry program or event include:

- Begin your ministry with familiar, nonthreatening, one-on-one activities.
- Blood pressure clinics often are a first choice because of the ease of organization and the positive results and referrals that can come from this simple activity.
- Write a wholistic health-related article for the church newsletter, bulletin, or website on a regular basis.
- Display health literature on a bulletin board, website, or other appropriate area.
- Implement an easy wholistic movement program, such as prayer motion (www.prayermotion.com) or a chair exercise program.
- When planning an event:
 - √ Determine the goals of the event.
 - √ Determine the content to be presented.
 - √ Determine the methods of presentation.
 - √ Determine where and when the event will be.
 - √ Publicize the event.
 - √ Evaluate the event.

Critical Thinking

How can collaboration with spiritual leaders affect a new ministry?

Why do you think it is important to “start small and go slow”?

Communicate with the faith community. Meet with leaders from the faith community and community at large, formally and informally. Remember *being* (presence) is more important than *doing*. Take it one step at a time.

Outcome 4

Access resources within the faith community.

■ Step 3 of the C.U.R.E. Method: R—Build Relationships and Gather Resources

Consider the following categories of resources when beginning this ministry.

People

- Who sits in the pew next to you? A grant writer? Legal expert? Marketing manager? Cook and hospitality expert? Pharmacist? Facilitator? Academic dean?
- Who can help with blood pressure screenings? Health fairs? Fundraising?
- Is networking with other FCNs in the community a possibility? What about the ones in your Foundations class?
- How can the Faith Community Outreach office at Church Health assist you in this new position?

Critical Thinking

Why is it important for the FCN to build relationships?

Finances

“Financial support is essential to establish and support the program. It is crucial to consider program structure, budget line items, financial responsibilities, funding sources, and budget maintenance. A faith community nurse program is a ministry, yet to ensure a solid foundation there must be a funding source and a clearly stated budget. The budget is a useful and necessary tool for every program on several points of practice: the most obvious being the structure and accountability for the finances of a program. It is the tracking system for the revenue and expenses of a department but also the snapshot for the institution’s management that demonstrates a well-run program. Second, the line items or categories in a budget outline the activities that the program sees as essential to its operations. Last, it is a tool that fosters good stewardship through the monitoring of available resources for a program” (Durbin and Slutz, 2013).

- Will this be a paid or unpaid position?
- Who will the FCN be accountable to?

- Who is responsible for preparing the budget? What information is necessary to present to the finance committee? (See Smucker, 2009, page 35 for typical budget expenses.)
- Will your ministry be a line item in the budget?
- Are grants available from within or outside the faith community? What is the application process? Grants are available from foundations that support health care. They may be smaller foundations related to a specific faith tradition or nationally known such as the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Help for grant writing can be found in articles available online (Chasan-Taber, 2018). Or see Solari-Twadell & McDermott's *Parish Nursing*, Chapter 25, for grant writing tips. Help is also available by partnering with a faculty member of a university school of nursing who is doing research on faith community nursing.
- Does the church allow you to ask for donations for specific causes?
- Place a donation box nearby when doing blood pressure readings, screenings, etc.
- Ask for gifts in honor or memory of faith community members to be given specifically to the FCN ministry.
- May endowment funds be used for continuing education?

Critical Thinking

What are the advantages or disadvantages for the faith community of the FCN being paid or unpaid?

Other Tangible Resources

- Who can donate items you might need, such as office equipment and supplies? Remember that the more technical equipment you have, the more people will see you as a technical nurse. For example, you do not need an exam table.
- Is there an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on site or is there someone who might donate one?
- Plan ahead now for your continuing education—faith community nursing conferences, annual Westberg Symposium, spiritual retreats, or enrichment times. You must take care of and nurture yourself.

Time

- God's time often is much different than ours; remember the importance of discernment, trust, patience, and persistence. Ministry happens in God's time.
- Faith community time—often the work is very slow unless there is a champion or advocate, and even then, there can be barriers.
- Business time puts a target on the calendar so the activity happens on a particular date.
- Your time must be carefully allocated. Don't overextend yourself. Self-care is really important! Your ministry will only be as wholistically healthy as you are.
- Don't forget to take time to celebrate milestones and accomplishments with special services or gatherings.

Critical Thinking

How does accessing resources apply to spiritual care?

■ Step 4 in the C.U.R.E. Process: E—Evaluate Your Ministry

“You have a successful health ministry. People have changed their lifestyles: improved their eating, exercise 3–4 times a week, stopped smoking, and are making important lifestyle changes that they can maintain for a lifetime. But how will you know what changes have been made if you don't keep records?”

- Evaluate your programs so you will know what works and what programs were not helpful.
 - Evaluate your programs so you will have results to inspire others to change their lifestyle.”
- <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/dmhd/dmhd-faith/dmhd-faith-growaministry.html>