

First Steps to Start a Mental Health Ministry in Your Parish

- 1) Visit <https://catholicmhm.org/> to review the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers website to get an overview of the ministry. Pay particular attention to the page <https://catholicmhm.org/start-a-parish-ministry> to familiarize yourself with what is involved in starting and developing a ministry and look at the resources provided there.
- 2) Seek permission from your parish priest. Having his support will be of great importance as you develop and grow this ministry. Even if he is not going to be actively involved, his support is a sign to the rest of the parish that this is a good and important ministry.
- 3) Next reach out to:

Deacon Dave Bezusko
Senior Director - Vicariate of Catholic Social Doctrine
dbezusko@columbuscatholic.org

and

Jack Justin Dreher
Mental Health Ministry Coordinator
jdreher@columbuscatholic.org

To be added to our email list regarding the ministry and diocesan events.
- 4) Coordinate with your parish administrator and ask for an advertisement be run in your weekly bulletin stating your intention to start a ministry in your parish and ask for volunteers. Ask your parish priest to speak about the ministry during announcements and events.
- 5) Begin developing your ministry team by watching the Sanctuary Series for Catholics. Invite Deacon Dave Bezusko and / or Jack Justin Dreher to one of the meetings to speak on the ministry and help develop team members.
- 6) Register with Deacon Dave Bezusko and/or Jack Justin Dreher to schedule the Accompaniment and Connection Training for your team.
- 7) Ensure all of your team members have completed their background checks and Virtus Trainings. You can reach out to your parish administrator and/or Deacon Dave Bezusko and Jack Justin Dreher to help coordinate this.
- 8) After completing the Sanctuary Series and ACT programs go to the *Next Steps* document.



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