

Mental Health Advocate – Who, What, When, Where, & Why?

WHO – Who can be a Mental Health Advocate?

A Mental Health Advocate is a volunteer with a heart for those experiencing mental health challenges and a desire to promote mental wellness. He/she is a practicing Catholic who promotes all aspects of the Catholic faith. A Mental Health Advocate does not need to be employed in a mental health setting or in a church setting. Nor is it required that a Mental Health Advocate have prior experience in either of these settings.

WHAT – What is the role of a Mental Health Advocate?

A Mental Health Advocate is committed to promoting a culture focused on reducing the stigma around mental illness and fostering positive strategies for maintaining mental wellness. He/she provides compassion and empathy for parishioners experiencing mental health challenges, and while maintaining appropriate boundaries, directs parishioners to where they can access mental health support and resources. He/she is attentive to the specific mental health needs present in the parish and communicates those needs with the Apostolate. He/she promotes the Apostolate's mental health resources, events, and trainings, while advocating for events and trainings to be held at the parish-level.

WHEN – When is a Mental Health Advocate ready to begin their role?

A volunteer is ready to begin his/her role as a Mental Health Advocate after completing the Apostolate's required trainings and receiving approval from the Mental Health Program Coordinator and Pastor.

WHERE – Where are Mental Health Advocates needed?

Mental Health Advocates are needed in all pastorates/parishes across the diocese. The Apostolate's goal is to have a Mental Health Advocate in every pastorate/parish in the Diocese of Madison. It is especially important to have a Mental Health Advocates in the rural parts of the diocese where access to mental health resources can be more limited.

WHY – Why is it important to have a Mental Health Advocate?

A Mental Health Advocate actively engages in the Apostolate's mission of working to promote the full inclusion and participation of all individuals, particularly those with mental health challenges, into the life of the Church. Mental Health Advocates participate in the Church's role of providing hope and healing, reminding parishioners that Christ took all suffering upon Himself, even mental illness.