

Introduction – Bridges to Hope

ERNIE FLETCHER



Incidence of Illicit Drug Use

- ❖ 59.277 million or 21.4% of people 12 and over have used illegal drugs or misused prescription drugs within the last year.
- ❖ 138.543 million or 50.0% of people aged 12 and over have illicitly used drugs in their lifetime.
- ❖ 13% persons ≥ 12 y.o. used in the past month.

Monitor the Future Survey (MTF) - 2022

- ❖ Started in 1975 – Funded by NIDA
- ❖ University of Michigan Institute for Social Research - Megan Patrick - PI
- ❖ Surveyed 10,000 individuals
- ❖ Marijuana, hallucinogens, alcohol and vaping use at all time highs.
- ❖ Two Cohorts: Ages 19-30 and Ages 35-50

MTF Survey Results - Younger Cohort

- ❖ 44% used Marijuana up from 28% in 2012
- ❖ 20% Report daily use of Marijuana up from 6% in 2012
- ❖ 8% using hallucinogens
- ❖ 24% Vaping up from 14% in 2017

MTF Survey – Older Cohort

- ❖ 85% use Alcohol up from 83% in 2012
- ❖ 33% Reported Binge Drinking - 5 or more drinks in last 2 weeks
- ❖ ~33% use Marijuana up from 25% in 2021 and double from 2012
- ❖ 4% using Hallucinogens, double from 2021

Faith and Discontentment

- ❖ NIH Study on religion and suicide
- ❖ Suicide as a proxy for discontentment
- ❖ Religious affiliation associated with reduce suicide attempts.
- ❖ No reduction in suicide ideation
- ❖ Note the many dimensions to religion

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7310534/>

AUD Treatment in Early 1900's

- ❖ Clinicians had nothing to offer
- ❖ History of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
 - ❖ Oxford Movement Influence
 - ❖ Early Church Principles

AA - Founded in the Early 1930's

- No medical treatment for alcoholism
- A physician was part of the founding team
- Saw the disease model as affecting the whole body
 - Physical
 - Mental
 - Spiritual

History of Medicine Embracing Change from Outside the Profession

- 1662, a Flemish Medical Chemist proposed a trial of blood letting vs other treatment with a \$60,000 wager on best outcomes with 500 poor people with fever, pleurisies, etc.
- No one took him up on the bet
- He was arrested, interrogated, condemned and confined by authorities
- Took another 200 years before blood letter ceased.
- Implementation Lags Evidence

Sister Kenny and Polio

- Australian Nurse In 1910 Reported Good Results with Heat And Massage vs. Plaster Casting and Braces
 - Bringing patients back to “normalcy” vs. standard treatment
 - Rejected by Medical Establishment
 - Finally in 1940 (30 years of rejection) came to US
- Minneapolis School of Medicine where ideas received support
- Her work is recognized in the 1946 movie "Sister Kenny," starring Rosalind Russell, winning an Oscar for Best Actress.

Clinical with Social Recovery - Hope

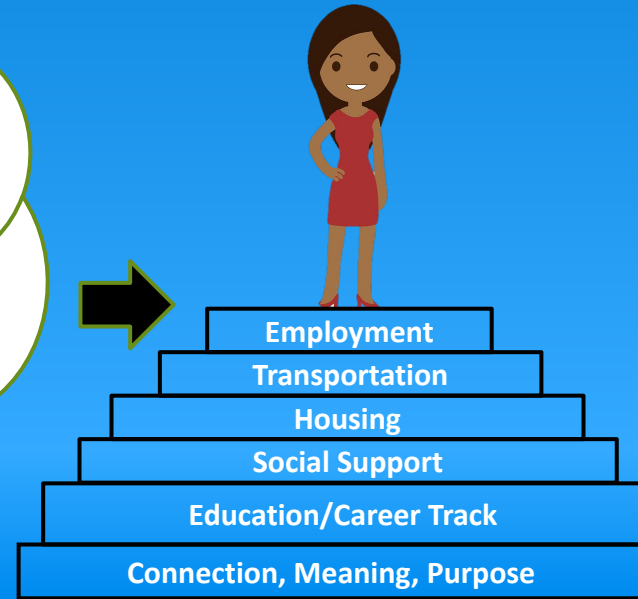
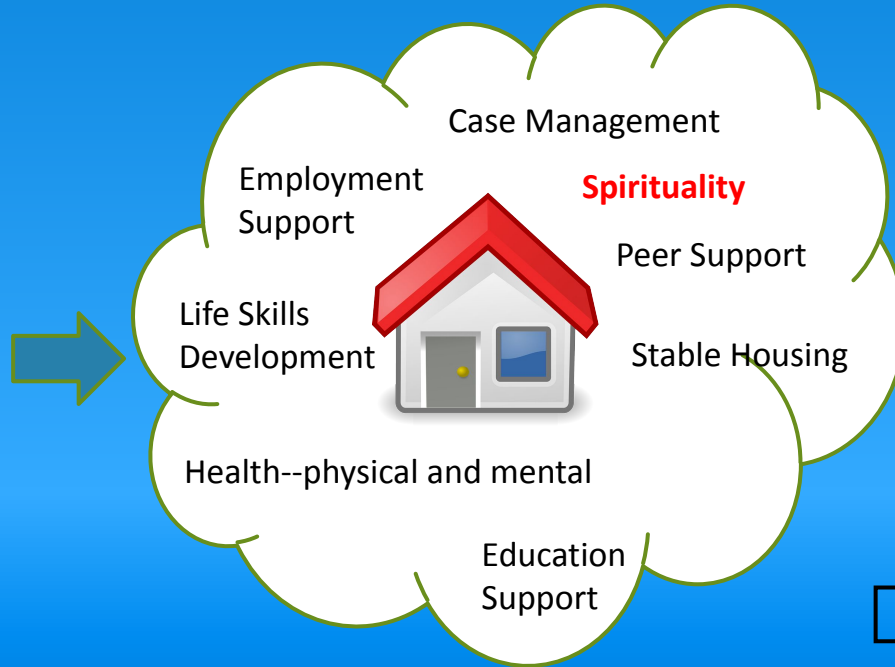
- ❖ Cochrane Report – by Dr. John Kelly 2020
- ❖ AA is evidence-based
- ❖ Few fully integrated models
- ❖ More appreciation of Peer Support and Social Determinants

<https://www.cochrane.org/news/new-cochrane-review-finds-alcoholics-anonymous-and-12-step-facilitation-programs-help-people>

Recovery Ecosystem

Referral Sources:

- Criminal Justice
- Treatment Providers
- Counselors
- Community Support Groups
- Physical Health
- Self-directed
- Faith Based Organizations



Building Recovery Capital



Building Bridges of Hope:

Fostering Faith-Based Partnerships in Rural Recovery Housing

THIS PRESENTATION IS SUPPORTED BY THE HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HRSA) OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) AS PART OF AN AWARD TOTALING \$17.1 MILLION WITH 0% FINANCED WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES. THE CONTENTS ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHOR(S) AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF, NOR AN ENDORSEMENT, BY HRSA, HHS, OR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.





Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson

Matt Johnson has been the Director of Faith-Based Initiatives for the Fletcher Group since July 2022. He is an ordained United Methodist pastor, who has spent much of his career encouraging faith-based organizations to become more deeply engaged with the important work happening in their communities. In 2021 he founded the Abundant Life Recovery Housing Network in Morgantown, WV, a faith-based recovery housing organization that works to empower individuals on their recovery journey. He believes that partnerships between faith-based organizations and recovery entities can change the world. Matt is known in the Morgantown recovery community as "Pastor Matt" and that is one of his favorite ways of being known.

He lives in Morgantown with his wife, two children, and two very large dogs. He loves spending time outside on his kayak, watching the Mountaineers, and singing karaoke.

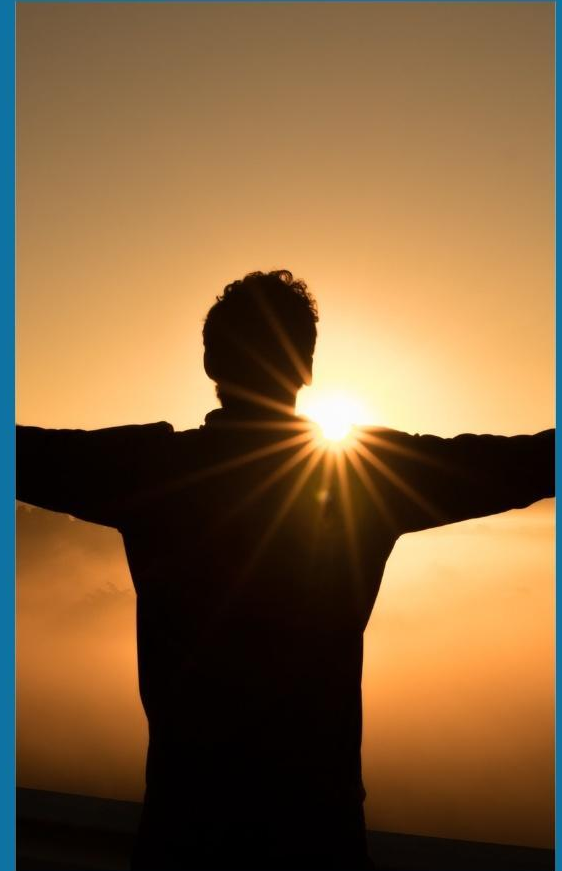
**“We suffer to get well. We surrender to win.
We die to live. We give it away to keep it.”**

Father Richard Rohr, *Breathing Underwater*

Many studies have explored the relationship between religious practices and positive emotions such as well-being, purpose and optimism. Of 100 studies that examined religion and well-being prior to the year 2000, nearly 80% found a statistically significant relationship between greater religious involvement and greater life satisfaction, happiness, better mood, or higher morals.

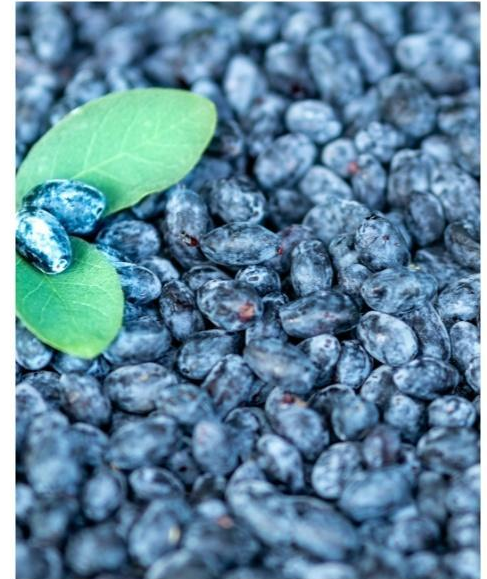


Dr. Harold Koenig,
Center for Theology, Spirituality, and Health
Duke University



The relationship between **faith-based organizations** and **rural recovery housing** entities can be mutually beneficial.

- A partnership with faith-based organizations can help provide a recovery housing entity with much needed resources
- In many rural communities, faith-based organizations hold the heartbeat of the community. They are gathering spaces, places of connection, and influential voices. A partnership can help offer support and stability



PSALMS 60.2—62.6
to the rock that is
than I.
I have been a refuge
from the enemy.
Well in thy tabernacle
for
I have taken refuge in the covert
of wings: Selah
O God, hast heard
my voice?
Thou hast given me the heri-
ty of those that fear thy
name.
Thou hast prolonged the king's life;
thou shalt be as many
years as thou wilt.
Abide before God for
he will give love and kindness,
and he will preserve
the paths of his saints.
I will sing praise unto thy
name for ever,
O God.
I will sing praise unto thy
name daily.
I will seek refuge from
treachery and
from oppression.
Mankind: after the manner
of a faith of death,
I will wait in silence
for the Lord only:
for he will save my soul
from all mine enemies.
Thou art my rock and my
high tower: I shall
not be greatly moved.
Thou shalt set upon a
rock, and thou shalt
slay him, all of
them: as a wall, like a
tower of defence?
I will consult to thrust him
from his dignity,
for he hath lied in his
mouth, and he hath
cursed inwardly. Selah
I will wait for the Lord:
my expectation is from
him: for he will save
my soul from all mine
enemies.
Thou art so high for me: I
will not be troubled.
Thou art so high for me: I
will not be troubled.
Thou art so high for me: I
will not be troubled.

The Benefits of Faith-Based Partnerships

Empowering Partnerships

Faith Based Organizations often have seen the impact of the substance use epidemic on our communities, yet they are unsure how to be supportive.

Intentional partnerships between recovery housing and faith-based organizations open appropriate avenues of connection that support the overall recovery ecosystem, allows residents the opportunity to explore faith and spirituality if they choose, and grow the community understanding about recovery housing.

Suncrest UMC/Johnsons Chapel UMC/Abundant Life Example



Financial Partnerships



Meals and Food Support



Community Service



Meeting Space



Transportation



Housing

Identifying Possible Faith-Based Partnerships in Rural Communities

How do we find potential faith-based partners?

How do we start to create meaningful partnerships? How do we identify potential faith-based partners?

Several key characteristics can help us identify great partners:

- What faith-based organizations in your community already host a recovery meeting on their premise?
- Does the faith-based organization already have outreach into the community that supports people in recovery? Do they host a free meal or a clothing closet?



Identifying Possible Faith-Based Partnerships in Rural Communities

- Are social service agencies aware of faith-based organizations that are actively involved in the community?
- Ask individuals in the recovery community if they participate in a faith-community that is recovery friendly or supportive of individuals in recovery.
- Local community leaders might be aware of faith-based organizations that care about the recovery community. There may be opportunities for unexpected connections!



Building the Bridge



Once you have identified a possible partnership, what steps can you take as you approach the organization?

Some Dos and Don'ts:

- Do initiate a conversation with an email or phone call to the organization to set up a time to stop by for conversation
- Do NOT simply show up during their regular worship gathering and hope to speak to a clergy person.
- Do find a potential person who might be able to facilitate an introduction. Does someone on your Board of Directors participate in a faith community? Can they assist you in making the connection?

Building the Bridge



Some Dos and Don'ts: (Con't)

- Check out the social media presence of the organization to learn about the things that really matter to that particular faith community.
- Do NOT assume that the person you are meeting with knows anything about recovery housing or even that something exists in the community.

Prepare for the Conversation



Once you have a time for conversation scheduled, prepare for the conversation.

- How will you describe your organization and the work that you do to someone who is not aware of what you do or why you do it?
- How will you help someone grasp the importance of and need for recovery housing in your community?
- What stories of hope can you share that demonstrates the success of your organization?

An Exchange of Value

How does a partnership impact both organizations?

What does the recovery housing entity receive from the FBO?

What does the FBO receive from the recovery house?

Learn to Listen

To build a bridge of trust with a faith-based organization that may have potential for partnership, it is important to establish open communication. Be honest and transparent about your intentions, and provide evidence that you are committed to engaging in a positive partnership. Furthermore, strive to understand their values and expectations, and offer your support in any way that you can. Honesty and respect are key components of building trust—demonstrate both, and the bridge of trust will follow.



What are some of the questions you can ask to learn about the faith-based organization?

- What does the organization see as some of their greatest strengths?
- What are some of the issues in the community that the organization really cares about?
- What work has the organization done previously that has brought them significant satisfaction or joy?
- What are three words that the leader would use to describe the community?
- What is the make-up of the membership of the organization? Who is regularly involved?

Always ask my favorite question:

**Who else do you know that
I should talk to about this?**

What are some practical concerns that might exist?



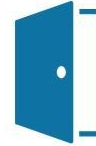
Money

Many FBOs are concerned about finances.
How often will you be asking them for money?



Protecting Anonymity

How will you continue to protect the
confidentiality of your clients?



Inclusion

Communicate clearly around the values of your
organization when it comes to inclusion.

What can practical partnerships look like in rural communities?

- Sponsoring an individual to get their state ID
- Finding a small group from the organization that would be willing to sponsor a room
- Assisting with transportation
- Planning to deliver a weekly or monthly meal for residents
- Becoming advocates for recovery in the community through education and connection



Practical Partnerships (Continued)

- Providing meeting space for a recovery meeting or RCO activities
- Sponsor a supply drive to collect paper products, cleaning supplies, etc
- Collect donations or clothes or furniture, as needed
- Work together to distribute Narcan
- Collect and refurbish bikes to help with transportation issues



Practical Partnerships (Continued)

- Utilize the church nursery as a possibility for supervised visits
- Work with a teacher or retired educator to provide literacy/GED classes
- Connect with a FBO to discuss utilizing residential property that might be available.



Communicate, Communicate, Communicate



Faith-based organizations have tremendous communication networks. Weekly bulletins, newsletter, announcements, and social media are powerful tools to help educate and communicate with the community. If you design educational and communication tools that faith-based organizations can share, you can significantly share information to larger groups of people.



Contact

How can we help you grow faith-based partnerships?

📞 304-266-9253

@ mjohnson@fletchergroup.org

📺 <https://www.youtube.com/@fletchergroup>

🌐 www.fletchergroup.org