

Thrive Together:

faith communities working
together on mental health
#ThriveTogether

Thrive LDN 
towards happier, healthier lives

Join the conversation
#ThriveTogether #OKLDN

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 Info@ThriveLDN.co.uk

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Welcome

This information pack has been designed to help you have meaningful and positive conversations about mental health with your family, friends and within your faith communities.

Post your conversations to twitter and instagram
#ThriveTogether @thriveldn

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Good mental health matters

More than two million Londoners experience poor mental health every year. This means that in nearly every household across London, someone will be dealing with poor mental health. Particular groups are at greater risk of developing poor mental health. These include Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

As a society, we are still not comfortable with talking about mental health in a way that we should be. Although, we are seeing some positive change in public understanding of the issues surrounding mental health, many Londoners still feel uncomfortable talking about their mental health. In fact, Londoners report lower levels of life satisfaction and feelings of self-worth than the national average.



About Thrive LDN

Thrive LDN was launched in July 2017 as a citywide movement aiming to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Londoners.

We are supported by the Mayor of London and led by the London Health Board, in partnership with Greater London Authority, Healthy London Partnership, NHS England (London region), Public Health England (London region) and London Councils.

Thrive Together

Inspired by Jami's 'Head On - The Mental Health Awareness Shabbat', we're working with faith communities across London to generate conversations about mental health to raise awareness and to tackle stigma and discrimination. We especially want to work with young people who are active in their faith communities to help drive the discussions. Here's how you can get involved.

Over the weekend of the 19th - 21st January, we're launching our 'Thrive Together' campaign that will be asking all faith communities across London to have open conversations about mental health. Whether you wish to have a chat in a small group or as part of a larger service, we want to hear your views. Previous activities included the Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum marking World Mental Health Day last October by using relevant scripture at the End London Mosque and several Rabbis spoke on the topic for last year's Head On Shabbat.

Join the conversation

We want all faith communities to join us over the weekend of the **19th - 21st January** by posting snippets of your conversations on Twitter or Instagram. Using **#ThriveTogether**, this will allow us to engage with each other to help raise awareness and tackle stigma and discrimination within faith communities to show others how it can be done.

Post your conversations to
twitter and instagram
#ThriveTogether @thrivedn



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We appreciate that approaching this topic can be difficult and you may be unsure of what to say - don't worry, we're here to help. Over the next couple of pages, we will offer ideas and tips on how to start a conversation about mental health. We've also included success stories on how other faith communities are addressing mental health positively.

We would love to hear some of the conversations you have. Post snippets on Twitter or Instagram



**#ThriveTogether
@ThriveLDN**



#ThriveTogether

Starting a conversation about mental health: ideas and tips

The Thrive Together campaign asks all faith communities to inform its members to become more aware of their own and others' mental health and wellbeing.

Here are some tips on how to start a conversation. Also, read about how other faith communities are already having discussions that are making a positive impact.

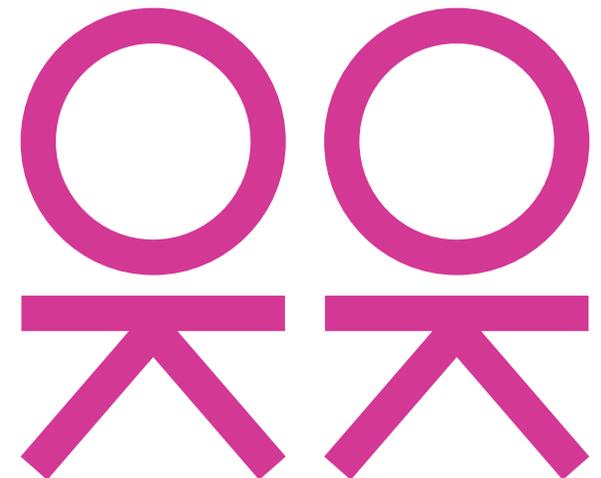
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Why do we need to talk about mental health and wellbeing within faith communities?

- Evidence has shown that stigma and discrimination continues to be a key factor for members who belong to a faith community. This can be due to a lack of knowledge about mental health, individuals being slower to seek help and a belief that mental health is caused by spirit possession.
- Religious life and community is often a first port of call to help resolve problems. Being a part of a faith community can bolster emotional wellbeing and religious leaders are often the first point of contact for members at times of trouble.
- Places of worship often provide solace, peace, routine and comfort for both day-to-day needs and when members most need help. From having a friendly chat, to providing comfort in the face of a bereavement, religious life and community can offer enormous emotional support and strength to members.
- Religious and lay leaders and young people, often ask us for support and ideas on how to address mental health within faith communities. This has created a growing need for us to learn from each other to improve conversation and action.



Starting a conversation about mental health: ideas and tips

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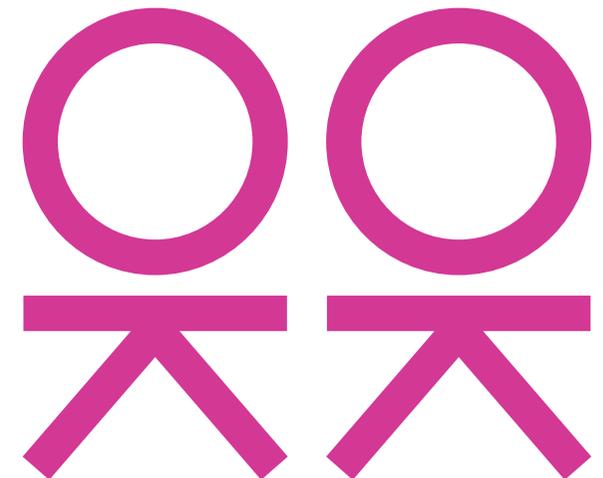
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How should I approach talking about mental health and wellbeing within faith communities?

- When speaking about mental health to a congregation or at a service, it is best to use broad generic terms so that everyone can relate. Bear in mind that people will have a wide-range of experiences of mental health both personally and with friends, family or colleagues.
- If someone wants to speak to you personally about their mental health, be mindful to speak to them on their terms. It is important to speak to individuals in a way that is most comfortable for them to openly express themselves.
- Take time to listen, empathise and inform sensitively. Mental health is a sensitive subject and we can't ignore it due to fears or worries people may have about it.
- Involve and empower your community. Do people have ideas? How can you give them a platform to change the way that your community addresses mental health?
- Think about ways to include mental health into the way you do things in your community. Asking someone if "they're OK" can be a good starting point.
- Remember, a lot of the pastoral side of running a community involves providing emotional support, so you probably already know and do more than you realise. Be confident!

Key points to educate yourself and others about mental health and wellbeing:

- Everyone has mental health just as we all have physical health.
- Our feelings and thoughts are a part of our mental health – how we feel about ourselves and the world is important.
- There's nothing wrong with talking to others about our mental health.
- It's OK to ask someone if "they're OK".
- Whilst talking to your community about mental health, don't forget to think about your own.



Success stories within faith communities

Jami – Head On: The Mental Health Awareness Shabbat

Earlier this year, Jami (the mental health service for the Jewish community) launched Head On: The Mental Health Awareness Shabbat. The inaugural Shabbat was held on the 3rd and 4th February 2017 – these dates were chosen as it is the week the passage about the Plague of Darkness is read in the Sabbath services, presenting a suitable launch pad to discuss the nature of mental health.



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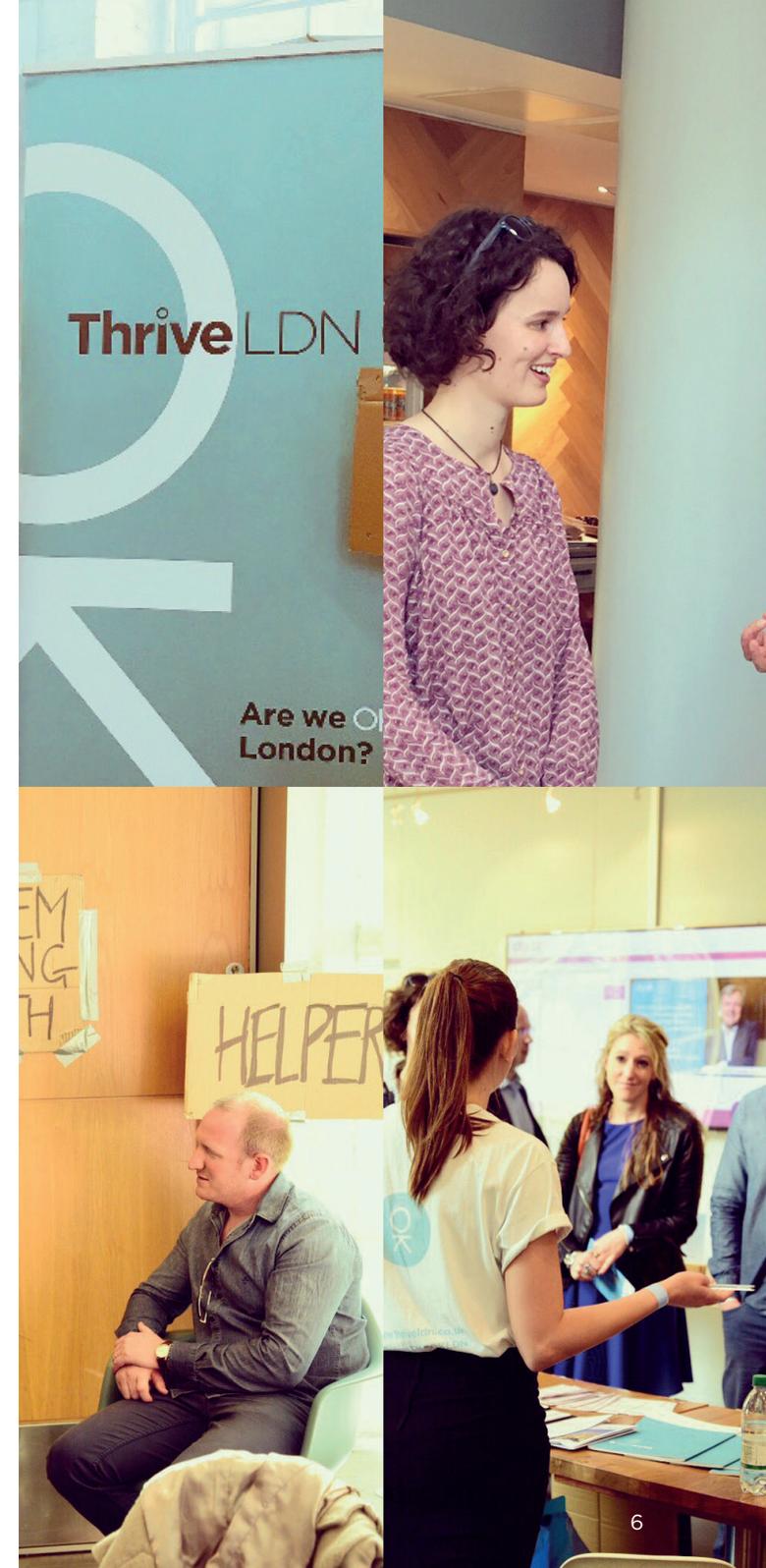
The following resources were provided to those participating in Head On:

- A mental health related sermon
- A series of training sessions for community members on mental health related issues
- A briefing note and activities suitable for small youth groups sessions
- A fact sheet about mental health

Results:

In the first year, over 80 synagogues, Jewish societies, schools and youth groups participated through sermons, talks and discussions, themed 'Friday night dinners,' and many other events.

Following the success of the inaugural ground-breaking community-wide event, Head On has now become an annual event with even more insightful talks, training sessions and engaging activities. For 2018, even more organisations are joining the conversation to help tackle the stigma and discrimination that surrounds mental illness, HEAD ON.



Success stories within faith communities

Hillview Community Services

Situated in the London Borough of Lewisham, Hillview Community Services (HCS) have actively hosted emotional health and wellbeing conferences for a number of years.

As a local Christian group, HCS aims to build capacity through its graduates (the mental health training for faith groups) to actively engage with communities about good mental health and wellbeing. The faith group embraces the notion that 'mental health is everyone's business' and its mandate is to educate, steer and drive mental health onto the agenda of local and national government.

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Hillview Community Services Results:

HSC's work provides a pathway for people with lived experience, communities and mental health professionals and organisations to come together to address the challenges of mental health and accessing statutory services.

Approaching emotional health and wellbeing from a holistic and spiritual mindset, some of the community workshops address:

- forgiveness
- mindfulness
- and uses Tai Chi for health benefits

Every Wednesday, HSC hosts its Shared Conversation Project, which helps people with lived experience make friends and reduce isolation. In addition, HSC's reverend will also openly discuss mental health and wellbeing in his sermons.



Citizens UK

Organising communities to act together for power, social justice and the common good, is what Citizens UK is best at and they are now focussing their attention on mental health.

On Time to Talk Day (1st February 2018), Citizens UK is hosting multi-session workshops that will focus on different types of mental health for Bangladeshi women in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Working with those from the Islamic faith, Citizens UK will focus discussions on anxiety and panic attacks, depression, eating disorders plus many more relevant subject matters.

Let's keep talking

We want conversations about mental health and wellbeing to continue long after our Thrive Together campaign.

To achieve this, you can become a Thrive LDN Champion and work with us to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Londoners.

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Thrive LDN Champion

Join a network of people across London, who are passionate about improving everyone's mental health and wellbeing.

As a Champion, you will have opportunities to proactively challenge mental health stigma in your communities by running activities and arranging your own events, as well as attending external events, and if appropriate speaking about your own experiences.

Read more about being a Champion [here](#) or email info@thrivedn.co.uk to apply.

Finally, thank you for taking the time to join our campaign. By doing so, we're all working together to make London a happier, healthier city!



Contact

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MIND

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