

## NAIC Meeting Minutes, March 6, 2024, United Way

Attendees: John Rowntree, President; Tom Woodward, Mike Apfelberg, Katy Cowen, speaker, Amy Jo Muscott, speaker; Bobbie Knickerbocker, Meg Hamm, Jocelyn Sharp-Henning, Secretary; Ethel Parker, Karl Hester, Kim Hester, Jon Spira-Savett, Liz Fitzgerald, Allison Palm, Jim Jensen, Meta Vornehm, Treasurer; Judy Bryant.

Joining on Zoom: Doreen Rinas, Miranda Melson, Nancy Meyer, Betsy Cotton, Leah Rumsey, Victoria Markiewicz.

Presentation: Nurturing Trauma Informed Faith Communities by Katy Cowen and Amy Jo Muscott of Bridges. Katy gave a power point presentation of the dynamics of domestic violence followed by tips and tools.

Domestic violence is a socio-cultural and spiritual issue. “In the context of violence against [victims], religious teachings and communities will play a role; they will never be neutral.”

Group reflection: What are our assumptions about domestic violence? What experiences frame your thinking? Do you have sacred/theological resources to help reflect on the topic?

Several people talked about types of violence, emotions, the importance to separate behavior from the person, and the need to create communities for supporting the victim and the perpetrator. There is no quick fix.

Katy and Amy Jo stated Bridges uses an empowerment model to support individuals and congregations and build partnerships.

It takes 7-10 times for clients/victims to leave abuser. The situation disempowers victims for years. It is a complicated and insidious problem. Victims are female, male, LGBTQ+, etc. Men don't like to disclose abuse so numbers are much higher than reported.

Abuse is a pattern of coercive behavior used by one person to gain and maintain power and control over another in the context of an intimate or familial relationship. A Power and Control Wheel was shared indicating that the abuser uses intimidation, emotional tactics, isolation, minimizing, denying and blaming, economics and threats, etc. Substance abuse may be involved. A victim may stay in the situation because of financial dependence, belief that a partner can change, believing that love is still there somewhere, being isolated from a support system, etc.

A Spiritual and Religious Abuse wheel was also shared with additional handouts.

Katy offered an exercise describing abuse in a family. Different people read responses from family, friends, doctor, police, pastor, who couldn't quite put the whole picture together to help the wife reaching out.

Katy and Amy Jo suggest looking for patterns, ask questions to see the whole picture, use questions to get at power and control pieces. Look for cues to pay attention to. Trust and honor your visceral reactions. Hearing, seeing, sensing, are incredibly important.

Call Bridges for help with these questions. Bridges can also go to a congregation to help pastors. A Trauma Informed Care Model will be sent by email addressing safety, trust, voice and choice, collaboration, etc. in a systematic way.

The following screening tools can be used:

- 1) Communicate that the congregation is a safe place and information is confidential.
- 2) Ask if family and/or friends are aware and if there is a support system.
- 3) Identify a safe place to go.
- 4) Make a warm handoff to Bridges.

Bridges has a 24-hour support line and calls are handled within 10 minutes. Professionals will listen to, educate, support, empower, and develop a safety plan with the person calling. People can also walk into 28 Concord Street in Nashua without an appointment, as well as their office in Milford. There is a secret safe house and support groups.

NAIC Announcements

Next meeting is April 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Unitarian Universalist Church with topic to be announced.

Sacred Poetry: Multifaith Perspectives is offered on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm at the library.

Beginning May 6<sup>th</sup> and continuing on May 13 and 20, My Neighbors Faith is a book discussion on Zoom starting at 7 pm. There are no copies at the library, but the book is available on Amazon or in other state libraries. John will send an online email sign-up.

Treasurer's report:

Main - \$1987.13

Crop Walk - \$2686.20

Choir - \$904.27

Please contact John if you can host the May meeting.

An intercessory prayer was said for Kathy Boss' mother and Bobbie Knickerbocker's grandson.

No Old Business

New Business

Liz Fitzgerald of United Way invites you to the Community Baby Shower on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Also, is there anyone in the faith community who will rent space for a childcare program?

Bridges announces the Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund deadline is May 15th. See the flyer and/or Amy Jo for more information.

Greater Nashua Mental Health has an opening for a 3-year Board position. Cynthia Whitaker will be at our meeting in April to answer questions.

Rabbi Jon suggests we send holiday information to him for NAIC'S Facebook page and email information to John to share with NAIC participants. Recode Nashua is rewriting the Land Use code and has a meeting next week. As you receive information please share with others.

Allison Palm invites people to "My Queer Faith" with Kimayo on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm at the UU church. There will be storytelling, music, and a panel discussion including how NH is and can be accepting to the LGBTQ+ community. Child care is provided. This is a donation event.

Mike Apfelberg invites the community to a discussion of how to decrease youth homelessness on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Ask Mike for the Zoom link.

Bobbie is impressed how the Continuum of Care group is a very caring group.

Meta announced the Multicultural Festival is Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup> from 11-4 pm at the Nashua library. Volunteers are needed. There will be performances, community information, food, etc.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jocelyn Sharp-Henning, Secretary