



# Friendly Places

Everyone's welcome

Martin Smith [martin.smith@faithaction.net](mailto:martin.smith@faithaction.net)

Rodie Garland [rodie.garland@faithaction.net](mailto:rodie.garland@faithaction.net)



# Introducing Friendly Places

Faith groups are a key point of connection

Belonging

Meaning

Community

Provision for  
need

The logo consists of three overlapping red squares of varying sizes and opacities, creating a layered effect. The text 'FaithAction' is written in white, with 'Faith' in a standard sans-serif font and 'Action' in a slightly bolder, italicized sans-serif font.

FaithAction

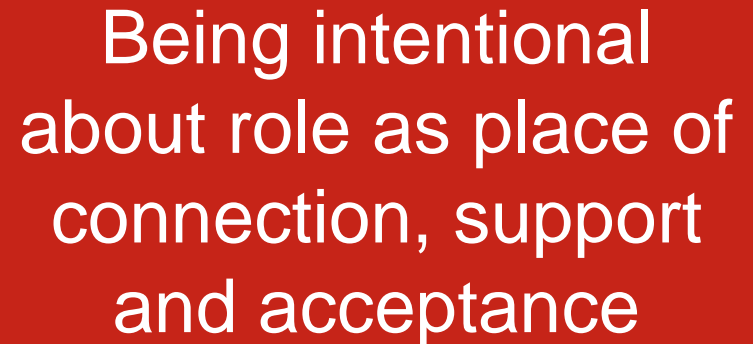
# Introducing Friendly Places

Faith communities have a significant, positive role to play in supporting those with mental health problems:

- in their own congregations
- in the wider community



Signposting to local services



Being intentional about role as place of connection, support and acceptance

# The Friendly Places Pledge

- I believe that there is a significant and positive role for faith communities to play in the support of mental health
- I pledge to support faith groups in my community to become Friendly Places which welcome and support those struggling with their mental health



# The Pledge is about:



Recognising the small, intentional things that make a big difference

Recognising that those suffering with their mental health should not be placed on the margins of the community

Recognising the role that faith groups already play in providing welcome and support

Encouraging practical steps to provide support and tackle stigma and discrimination



# What do we do next?

Having an awareness of local services  
that can help is important...

...But we want to be hosts, not just signposts



Spotting people  
who might  
need help

Being sensitive  
to needs

Follow-up and  
friendliness

Raising  
awareness



# Spotting people who might need help

Have people to greet and help those attending, who can:

- Be the 'friendly face' of the group
- Help those who seem unsure of what to do
- Offer to find them a place to sit/stand
- Keep an eye out for anyone who might like to step outside during the service or meeting



# Being sensitive to needs

- Keep seats or spaces free so people can slip in and out during services or ceremonies
- Listen; give people time and space to speak
- Make sure that people who can be approached to talk about pastoral care or prayer are visibly available



# Being sensitive to needs

- Accept and welcome others as they are; try to focus on the person
- Be prepared to value someone's journey – don't make them feel that they have to be 'fixed'
- Provide support for carers too

# Follow-up and friendliness

- Provide opportunities for connection, eg activities or refreshments after the service
- Ensure that everyone who is new or might not know anyone is spoken to and offered opportunities for further contact
- Ensure that each person in the community is 'seen', even if they do not regularly participate; notice and act if someone is absent for a while



# Raising awareness

- Address mental health issues in public messages or sermons
- Talk openly about the mental health needs of the whole community
- Offer opportunities for improved awareness, eg a discussion groups or film to raise awareness and dispel myths



# Raising awareness

- If there is an appropriate space, support those with experience of mental health problems to share their story with others
- Commit to understand more about mental health as a congregation
- Support those who want a deeper understanding of mental health to access training opportunities



# Maslaha: Talking from the Heart



[www.talkingfromtheheart.org](http://www.talkingfromtheheart.org)

Find more resources and sign  
the Friendly Places pledge at:

[www.faithaction.net/friendlyplaces](http://www.faithaction.net/friendlyplaces)

