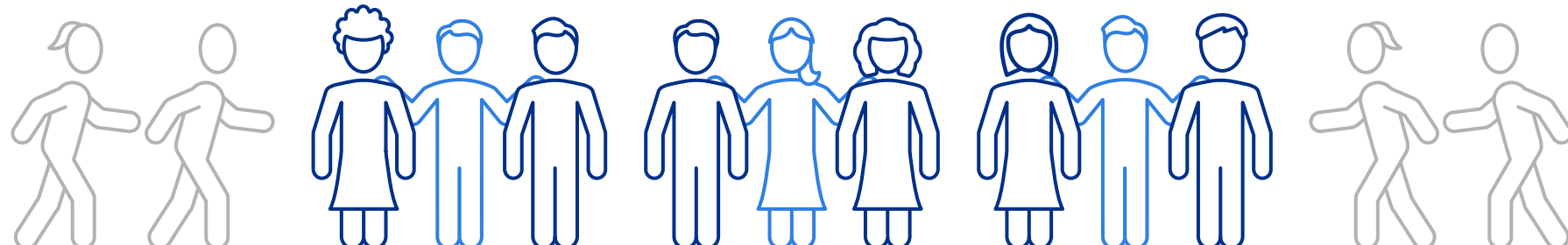




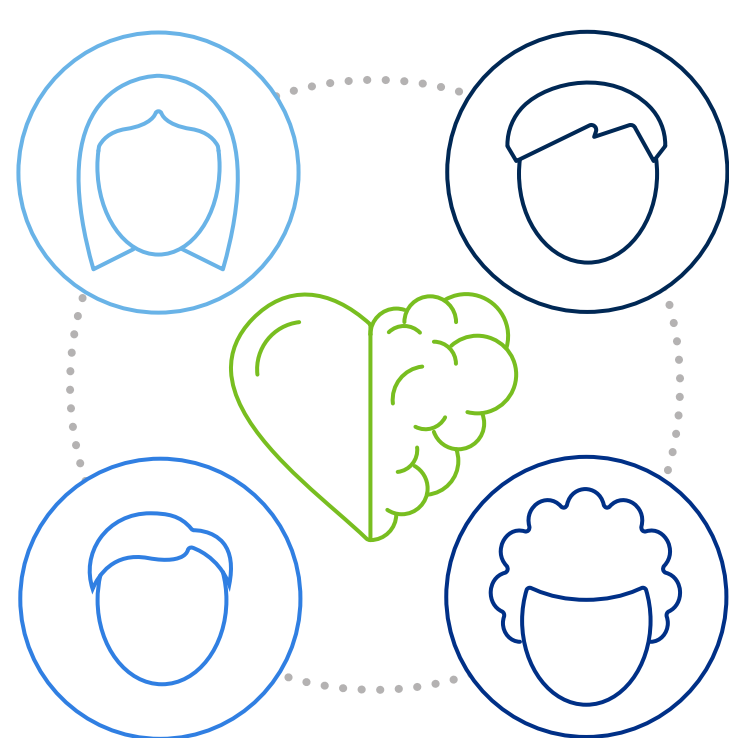
## CREATING A TRUSTING ENVIRONMENT HELPS IMPROVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

Faith-based leaders have long played a pivotal role in helping **Northwell Health** address mental health needs in New York City and its surrounding areas, including Long Island and Westchester County.



For a variety of reasons, including financial concerns, convenience, trust and personal comfort, many people seek support for mental health concerns through their religious organization rather than a clinician.

**To help address an increasing need for mental health services, Northwell Health expanded the community of faith-based leaders that it had worked with during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



### The health system organized the **Northwell Health Faith Leaders Forum:**

- Invited more than 250 interdenominational faith leaders in the region to discuss mental health needs and care gaps in downstate New York.
- Convened participants representing diverse religious faiths and cultures who attended in person and virtually.

### Forum participants identified four priorities for addressing mental health:

- Expand** help to those in need by creating a trusting environment that includes religious organizations.
- Educate** faith-based leaders to help raise awareness and reduce the stigma around mental health issues.
- Prioritize** self-care so these leaders are better able to help themselves and others.
- Make** youth mental health a top focus area.



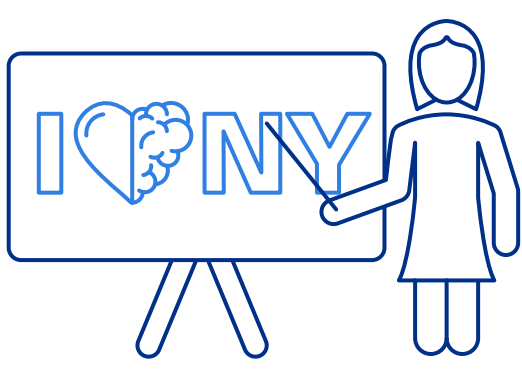
### Northwell Health took immediate action based on the Forum's findings.

It joined the Hospital Community Collaborative to partner with two area organizations that could help educate faith-based leaders:

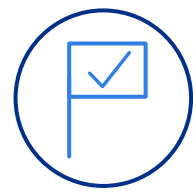
- Mental Health Association of Nassau County**
- Association for Mental Health and Wellness**

Northwell Health implemented **Mental Health First Aid**, a national skills-based training course that teaches participants to identify and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorder.

The Mental Health Association of Nassau County and the Association for Mental Health and Wellness brought certified MHFA instructors to the partnership.



### Educating and training 50 faith-based leaders fueled a wave of momentum in supporting the community's mental health needs, including:



**Establishing** the Northwell Behavioral Health Community Coalition to stay current on real-time opportunities and challenges.



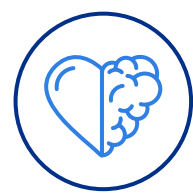
**Introducing** mental health clinicians and therapists into religious organizations to support the community.



**Creating** school-based programs and focus groups that encourage students to discuss and address mental health issues.



**Engaging** volunteers to connect with a younger audience through programs like the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County.



**Offering** ongoing Mental Health First Aid training.

***"The HCC helped us build strong, long-lasting partnerships because it guided us to be very intentional in developing a relationship. As a result, we have a deep level of trust and a good understanding of each other's capacities, which allowed us to expand our initiatives together."***



**Olushola Latus-Olaifa**  
Program Director, Community and Population Health  
Northwell Health

