

## **Ways to become a friendlier place...**

### **Increasing accessibility**

- Providing opportunities for connection, such as activities or refreshments after services.
- Making sure those people who can be approached to talk about pastoral care or prayer are visibly available to speak to after services or meetings.
- Providing help and support for people caring for those with mental health difficulties.
- Keeping seats or spaces free so people can slip in and out during services or ceremonies.

### **Being friendly and welcoming**

- Having people in place to greet those attending meetings or services
- Ensuring that there is a structure where each person in the community is 'seen', so that even if a person does not regularly participate in social or community activities, there is someone to look out for them, or if they are absent it is noticed and acted upon.
- Listening; giving people time and space to speak.
- Accepting and welcoming others as they are: seeing past unhelpful behaviour and focusing on the person rather than 'reacting' to people who may be 'different'.
- Being prepared to come alongside and accept people with complex problems, so that they are not made to feel that they have to be 'fixed'.

### **Raising awareness and challenge stigma**

- Talking openly about the mental health needs of the whole community.
- Offering opportunities for improved awareness, such as discussion groups or a film event to help to raise awareness and dispel myths.
- Addressing mental health issues in public messages or sermons.
- If your place of worship has space for telling stories – encouraging and supporting those with personal experience of mental health problems to share their story with others in the faith group.

### **Understand Mental Health**

- Committing to understand more about mental health as a congregation; supporting those who want a deeper understanding of mental health through accessing training opportunities available.
- Having an awareness of local mental health services.

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

