

NOVEMBER 2020

ENLIGHTENED

Reflections on the United Methodist Social Principles
by the Young Adult Bible Study of the CCUMC

The United Methodist Church on Mental Health

BY AMANDA DAM

“Jesus went through Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”
- Matthew 4:23

Jesus healed all people. His healing did not discriminate and neither should ours. We need to be compassionate and understanding towards all forms of illnesses. We are often quick to display sympathy and empathy towards the ailments that we can visibly see, but how do we react to the illnesses and disorders that may show no outward symptoms? Mental illness still carries heavy stigmas and judgments that have come from years of not fully understanding how the brain functions and the effects of these illnesses

The UMC states, “We therefore commit ourselves to learning more about the causes of mental illnesses; advocating for compassion and generosity in the treatment of mental illnesses; and prayerfully leading our congregations to be in ministry, demonstrating that our church, as the body of Christ, can work to provide the means of grace that leads to wholeness and healing for all.”

The UMC states that mental health “challenges our commitment to community” and lists the main challenges as stigma, incarceration, deinstitutionalization, and misunderstanding of faith. So, how as Christians do we commit to combating these challenges and lifting up those among us struggling with mental illness? The church has listed its commitment as including healing and education and more. We are called by God to be his hands and feet in the world and to shine his love and light, to foster compassion, to fight stigmas, and advocate for all those around us.



Fast Facts

NEARLY 1 IN 5 ADULTS LIVE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

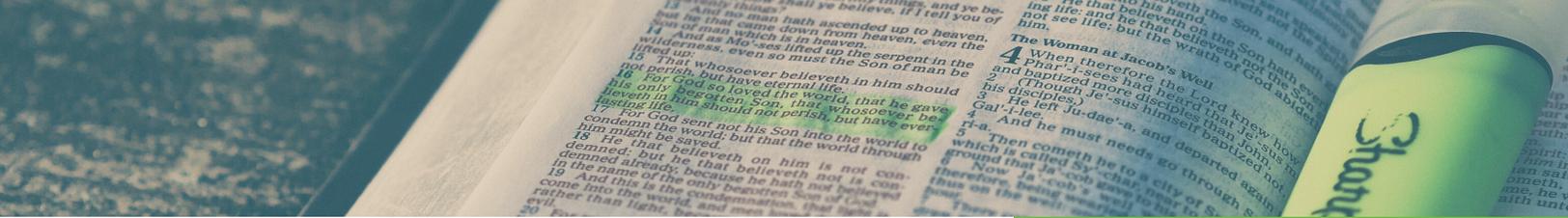
YOUNG ADULTS 18-25 HAVE THE HIGHEST PREVALENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS

AN ESTIMATED 49.5% OF ADOLESCENTS (AGE 13-18) HAVE A MENTAL DISORDER

AN ESTIMATED 19% OF ADULTS HAVE AN ANXIETY DISORDER

AN ESTIMATED 31.1% OF ALL U.S. ADULTS WILL EXPERIENCE AN ANXIETY DISORDER IN THEIR LIFE

AN ESTIMATED 17.3 MILLION OF ALL U.S. ADULTS EXPERIENCED AT LEAST ONE MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE



How to cope with anxiety

BY GAELLE M CLOUD

In this article I'm going to talk about my seven favorite coping skills. As someone who has struggled my whole life with mental illness, I've had a lot of time to develop a nice tool box of coping skills. I would define a coping skill as a positive way to get through a difficult situation or distressing emotion. Of course there can be negative coping skills as well, such as an addiction to something damaging, but here I'm going to focus on positive things. The Young Adults Bible Study (YABS) had a great group meeting about anxiety led by Pastor John, and these coping skills are all ones we discussed together on that night.

The first coping skill is prayer. This may be a quick prayer of, "Help me God," or something longer depending on the situation. One prayer that my Father taught me is called the Jesus Prayer, and it goes, "Son of God, have Mercy on me, a sinner." This is a great prayer to repeat in order to calm down.

The second coping skill is deep breathing or meditation. I like to breathe to a count such as, breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and breathe out for 8 seconds. I find this to be very calming. With meditation I prefer the guided approach, with someone's soothing voice taking me through the process. There are good resources available online or on a smartphone app or simply on a CD for guided meditations.

The third coping skill is to splash ice water on your upper face. This stimulates something called the body's "dive reflex" and has been scientifically proven to lower stress. This is a good coping skill to use in a very high stress situation.

The fourth coping skill is journaling. I find it so helpful to pour my emotions out on the page. It is a safe space because nobody needs to see what you've written if that's what you want. You can also destroy what you've written in some cases in order to let go.

The fifth coping skill is exercise. I love to go for a brisk walk in order to walk off my anxiety. There are so many kinds of exercise that can help to lower stress. For example, I find yoga to be very helpful in relaxation. It's all about finding what works for you.

The sixth coping skill is aromatherapy. This can be used in many ways. Many people find essential oils to be very helpful. Something that I have done as well is purchase lavender chamomile baby lotion and applied it after a shower, because if it soothes a baby it can soothe me too!

The seventh coping skill is reading a good book or watching a favorite movie. There is something wonderful about getting lost in another world for awhile. You can release your worries and become a resident of another person's story.

These seven coping skills are some simple suggestions to help you through a difficult time. In closing, I would like to remind everyone that you are never alone, and to please reach out for extra help if you are struggling with a mental health issue. God Bless and wishing you all wellness!

Fast Facts Cont.

SUICIDE IS THE 10TH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE U.S.

SUICIDE RATE HAS INCREASED 35% FROM 1999 TO 2018

IN 2019 THE PREVALENCE OF SERIOUS SUICIDAL THOUGHTS WAS HIGHEST AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

National Institute of Mental Health
Statistics are from their 2018 reports

"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well"

3 JOHN 1:2



What we wish people knew about Mental Health

BY YABS MEMBERS

- "I wish people understood that mental health is just as real as a broken bone and can be much harder to treat. Psychiatry is a science and an art form, and recovery can be a very real full time job for the patient. Please treat each other with love, compassion, and empathy always!" ~ Gaelle
- "Still today mental health is stigmatized, struggling with anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other mental illnesses are often portrayed as something to be ashamed of, or something you need to just "get over". As a church family I wish that we would be able to break this stigma together by lifting our voices and talking about the struggles we are dealing with. No matter how you are feeling, you are never alone. We are accepted by Christ and to feel accepted and valued for our differences by the church would only strengthen the knowledge that we are more than our struggles, that we are loved. I want people to know that we are often unaware of the mental struggles that those in our church are dealing with. Kindness and understanding can go further than you know." ~ Aleta
- "I want to be able to diminish the stigma surrounding therapy. I feel as though we should always encourage people to seek help in whatever way, shape or form fits their life. Therapy is an amazing tool but I feel as though many don't want to seek that kind of help for the fear of how others will look at them. Sometimes we need for people outside of our daily lives to help us understand the way our brains, thoughts and feelings work. There should be no shame in seeking help from a therapist or medical professional." ~ Anonymous

Further Reading

WHERE TO FIND MORE RESOURCES ON MENTAL HEALTH

1. United Methodist Church websites on Mental Health
<https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/health-and-wholeness/mental-health> and
<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/resources-for-mental-health-ministries>
2. National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255 and Crisis Text Line: 741-741
3. National Alliance on Mental Illness Website
<https://www.nami.org/Home>
4. National Institute of Mental Health Website
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/index.shtml>

We are happy to hear feedback from our church family! Is there any social principle that you would like us to cover? Are you enjoying the newsletter, do you have any ideas for a section for us to include? Please let us know!

"Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I am gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves. My yoke is easy to bear, and my burden is light"

MATTHEW 11:28

November is:

- NATIONAL DIABETES MONTH
- LUNG, PANCREATIC, AND SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
- NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH
- WORLD KINDNESS DAY (NOVEMBER 13TH)

Please keep all those individuals and families affected by these in your thoughts and prayers throughout the month.