

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination



Worship on the theme of mental health: a guide for the Church

One in four people will experience a mental health problem in any year. Mental health problems like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia can affect anyone at any time, and it's likely that many people in your congregation have been affected.

But although mental health problems are common, nearly nine out of ten people affected still say they have faced stigma and discrimination as a result. Often, people say the stigma is as bad as the symptoms of the illness itself. Stigma and discrimination ruin lives – they stop people taking part in family, social and community life, stop people working who want to and can work, and even stop people seeking help.

Time to Change is England's biggest campaign to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. Run by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, it works hard to change public attitudes and behaviour around mental health, and empower people with mental health problems to speak out. Often, what we do is about starting conversations that get mental health out into the open.

As a society, mental health is not a subject we are open about. We feel afraid - either to talk about our own mental health problems (for fear of how people will react), or to talk to someone we know has been affected about it (maybe for fear of having an awkward conversation, or of not knowing quite the right thing to say).

This fear means we're silent about mental health issues. We tread on eggshells, we decide it's less awkward just not to say anything. This silence fuels the stigma - which in turn makes it even harder for those with mental health problems to open up about it.

For many, church provides community and comfort. They can be a good place to start conversations about mental health, and help people feel it's OK to talk about it. They can provide a safe space for people with mental health problems to open up – and in doing so they will help open the minds of those around them. This pack, put together by The Church of England's mental health group and Revd Eva McIntyre with Time to Change, provides some ideas and resources for churches to plan worship on the theme of mental health. We hope it will only be a starting point and that you and your congregations, once the issue is opened up, will have your own ideas for worship that helps to tackle this long lasting taboo.



For better
mental health



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Introduction: Worship on the theme of mental health

Worship on the theme of mental health can be organised at any time of the year. Many faith communities plan events to coincide with World Mental Health Day, which takes place on 10 October each year.

When planning a service, try to:

- Involve those with personal experience of mental health problems and/or carers in the planning of the worship and encourage them to share ideas for theme and content
- Encourage the participation of people with experience of mental health problems in the service e.g. playing, singing, reading, prayers, drama, particularly of their own composition
- Invite someone with experience of mental health problems or a carer to preach the sermon
- Try to have someone speak at the service about his or her own experience. This could take the form of an interview.

Each Christian community will have its own texts, music and traditions to draw upon but the following selections provide a starting point.

Prayers

O God,
who has so faithfully cared for me in the past,
and so often seen me through to safety:
Grant me that in moments of depression,
desolation, failure and despair,
I may look back in gratitude,
and refreshed by the remembrance of past grace
turn again to the future in renewed trust
and unfailing hope
resting upon Jesus Christ,
my beloved Saviour.
(George Appleton One Man's Prayers London: SPCK)
Lord of the excluded
Open my eyes to those I would prefer not to see
Open my life to those I would prefer not to know
Open my heart to those I would prefer not to love
And so open my eyes to see
Where I exclude you

(Iona Community)

Leader: When all hope is gone, Lord,
Response: You are born.
Leader: When the darkness is complete,
Response: You come.
Leader: When all things are beyond despair,
Response: We find you.
Leader: You roll back the stone
Response: and are there to greet us.

(Graham Jeffery in Hear Our Prayer: An Anthology for Collective Worship Bury St Edmunds: Kevin Mayhew, 1996)

Have pity, good God
On those who cannot live with themselves
Because their past looms too large
Or their relationship is a mistake
Or their work is a compromise
Or because
No one has said 'You are good to be with';
No one has said 'Come and visit me';
No one has said 'I love you'
And in all of us
Eradicate the long miles
Between what we are and what we should be
Until, like Jesus
Our performance lives up
To our potential

(Panel on Worship of the Church of Scotland Pray Now Edinburgh: St Andrew's)

Press, 1999)

Lord, look upon us with the eyes of your mercy.
May your healing hand rest upon us;
may your life-giving power
flow into every cell of our bodies
and into the depths of our souls,
cleansing, purifying,
restoring us to wholeness and strength
for service in your Kingdom.

(Author unknown in Hear Our Prayer: An Anthology for Collective Worship Bury St Edmunds: Kevin Mayhew, 1996)

Lord Jesus Christ, who for love of our souls entered the deep darkness of the cross: we pray that your love may surround all who are in the darkness of great mental distress and who find it difficult to pray for themselves. May they know that darkness and light are both alike to you and that you have promised never to fail them or forsake them. We ask it for your name's sake.

(Cumings L. in Frank Colquoun (ed) Contemporary Parish Prayers London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975 no.443, p.161)

Lord, hear our voices when we cry to you! Our hearts say:
we have longed, earnestly have we longed,
to gaze upon your face.
Do not turn your face away from us.
Look tenderly upon your servants and, in your love,
teach us to be free.

(Carmelite Monastery, Quidenham in Hear Our Prayer: An Anthology for Collective Worship Bury St Edmunds: Kevin Mayhew, 1996)

Leader The grace of God has dawned upon the world with forgiveness for all.
So let us come to Him in sorrow for our sins, seeking wholeness and salvation.

Leader Lord for the weakness of our faith
All Jesus forgive
Leader Lord for the joylessness of our living
All Spirit forgive.

Leader Holy Trinity, have mercy upon us
All Forgive our sins.

Leader Almighty God who is both power and love, forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you his Spirit, and raise you to new life, in Christ our Lord.
All Amen

(The Iona Community from The Iona Abbey Worship Book published by Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Unit 16, Six Harmony Row, Glasgow G51 3BA)

Jesus says, 'Come to me all you who are troubled and I will give you rest'.
(Quiet music in the background and people coming to light a candle)

So come, you who are burdened by regrets and anxieties,
you who are broken in body and spirit'
you who are torn by relationships and by doubt,
you who feel deeply within yourselves the divisions and injustices of our world.
Come, for Jesus invites us to bring him our brokenness.
(Invitation to silent prayer)

Litany of the Cross from the Iona Book of Worship:

Leader The Cross . . .
All We shall take it.
Leader The bread . . .
All We shall break it.
Leader The pain . . .
All We shall share it.
Leader The joy . . .
All We shall share it.
Leader The Gospel . . .
All We shall live it.
Leader The love . . .
All We shall give it.
Leader The light . . .
All We shall cherish it.
Leader The darkness . . .
All God shall perish it.
Amen

(The Iona Community from The Iona Abbey Worship Book published by Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Unit 16, Six Harmony Row, Glasgow G51 3BA)

Bible readings that offer comfort and reassurance

Many New Testament passages offer comfort and reassurance to those who are feeling anxious or disturbed.

For example, in John:

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid'

(John 14:27)

'Trust in God; also trust in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you'

(John 14:1-2)

References from the Psalms and other scriptures encourage a holistic vision.

The passage in Deuteronomy 6:4 'Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one' shows the reflection of humankind in relation to the Creator. The next verse goes on to say 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and strength'. In some translations the mind is featured here.

Biblical readings and Psalms:

Job 6:1-14

Isaiah 38:10 – end; 52:13 – 53:5

Lamentations 3:1-33

Mark 4:35-41; 5:1-20; 15:34

Luke 7:11-23; 11:1-13; 15:11-end

John 10:7-21; 11:1-44; 14:1-21

Romans 12:15; 15:17

1 Corinthians 12:22

Revelation 21:1-4 and 21:22 – 22:5

Psalms 17:1-2 & 15; 22; 23; 25; 39; 40; 69; 90; 102; 116

Non-scriptural readings

From Cotter J (1997) Brainsquall: Soundings from a deep depression.

Sheffield:

Cairns Publications/ Berkhamsted: Arthur James Ltd

Thank you for being honest about how difficult, no, how frightening it was to visit me. There is nothing that the visitor to the patient can do. Even the pastoral actions of prayer, of giving communion, even of touch, may have no visible effect. They do not appear to be doing any good, and they give no encouragement to the pastor. You found yourself wanting to get away quickly, away from a place, which seemed so empty, from a person who seemed but a shell. A friendship that had been two-way had no substance any more because there was no response. You mentioned to me that you had been seeing a young man who said, "My soul has gone: I am only a shell." Simply to be with such a person, to be fully there, aware and alive, entering that empty nothing even for a few minutes, is terrifying, however rational we may be in talking about it. I am reminded of someone else's comment, "You had left us; and I did not know if you were coming back." Nevertheless, you came back, returning again and again despite your fear. But no wonder in such circumstances that the patient becomes suicidal, whether actively so with wrist slashing, or passively so, as I did, simply giving up. If there is nothing here of me but a shell, there is no point in keeping a shell in existence, barely alive and not in any way that has meaning. Yet you did not give up. You did return, trusting that in time I would also return. And eventually we discovered that it was so, your remarking that my openness about my treatment, my helplessness, my feeling of guilt, had helped, as had my courage in fighting (too strong a word, crawling perhaps) my way back, despite the setbacks and falls . . .

Further suggestions for thought-provoking readings:

Peter Brice *On the Edge: Wrestling with God in Depression* Norwich: Millstream Press, 1995

Sheila Cassidy *Sharing the Darkness* London: Darton, Longman & Todd

Jim Cotter *Healing – more or less* Sheffield: Cairns Publications, 1990

Jim Cotter *Dazzling Darkness* Sheffield: Cairns Publications & New Alresford: Arthur James / John Hunt Publishers, 1999

John Foskett *Meaning in Madness*

Roger Grainger *A Place Like This* Worthing: Churchman, 1984 (not in print)

Roger Grainger *A Place Like That* Wakefield: Eastmoor, 1997

Gerard Hughes *God, Where are You?*

Fr Gerald Mahoney *The Other Side of the Mountain*

Stephen Pattison *Alive and Kicking*

Jean Vanier *The Broken Body* London: Darton, Longman & Todd

Short readings from the Saints

From Julian of Norwich:

It is more blissful that man be taken from pain, than that pain be taken from man; for if pain be taken from us it may come again: therefore it is a sovereign comfort and blissful beholding in a loving soul that we shall be taken from pain. For in this behest I saw a marvellous compassion that our Lord hath in us for our woe, and a courteous promising of clear deliverance. For He willeth that we be comforted in the overpassing; and that He shewed in these words: 'And thou shalt come up above, and thou shalt have me to thy meed, and thou shalt be fulfilled of joy and bliss.'

It is God's will that we set the point of our thought in this blissful beholding as often as we may, - and as long time keep us therein with His grace; for this is a blessed contemplation to the soul that is led of God, and full greatly to His worship, for the time that it lasteth. And when we fall again to our heaviness, and spiritual blindness, and feeling of pains spiritual and bodily, by our frailty, it is God's will that that we know that He hath not forgotten us. And so signifieth He in these words: 'And thou shalt never more have pain; no manner of sickness, no manner of misliking, no wanting of will, but ever joy and bliss without end. What should it then aggrieve thee to suffer awhile, seeing it is my will and my worship?'

It is God's will that we take His behests and His comfortings as largely and as mightily as we may take them, and also He willeth that we take our abiding and our troubles as lightly as we may take them, and set them at nought. For the more lightly we take them, and the less price we set on them, for love, the less pain we shall have in the feeling of them, and the more thanks and meed we shall have for them.

(Revelations of Divine Love The Fifteenth Revelation, Chapter 64)

Other saints whose writings are relevant are

St John of the Cross (on 'the dark night of the soul')

St Aelred of Rievaulx (on friendship)

St Teresa of Avila.

Poetry

God stir the soil,
Run the ploughshare deep,
Cut the furrows round and round,
Overturn the hard, dry ground,
Spare no strength nor toil,
Even though I weep.
In the loose, fresh mangled earth
Sow new seed.
Free of withered vine and weed
Bring fair flowers to birth. Anon

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?
Think not thou canst sigh a sigh
And thy maker is not by;
Think not thou canst weep a tear
And thy maker is not near.
O! he gives to us his joy
That our grief he may destroy;
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

*'On Another's Sorrow': William Blake
Batchelor, M (ed) (1995) Lion Christian Poetry Collection Oxford: Lion Publishing*

A Glass of Water

Here is a glass of water from my well.
It tastes of rock and root and earth and rain;
It is the best I have, my only spell
And it is cold, and better than champagne.
Perhaps someone will pass this house one day
To drink, and be restored, and go his way,
Someone in dark confusion as I was
When I drank down cold water in a glass,
Drank a transparent health to keep me sane,
After the bitter mood had gone again.

*Sarton M, Benson G, Chernaik J, Herbert C (eds) (1995) Poems on the
Underground: Cassell, London*

Other poets whose work grows out of their experience of mental health problems are:

John Clare
William Cowper
Gerard Manley Hopkins
Christopher Smart

Sylvia Plath
Anne Sexton

Batchelor, M (ed) (1995) *Lion Christian Poetry Collection* Oxford: Lion Publishing,
also includes a section on health and illness.

Hymns

The following list gives a wide choice of suitable hymns. All of them appear in *Hymns Old and New (1996) Bury St Edmunds: Kevin Mayhew*, and the first number following each hymn refers to that book. They are all obtainable in other standard and easily obtainable collections:

A&M Hymns Ancient and Modern New Standard Edition (Canterbury Press, 1983)
BPW Baptist Praise and Worship (Oxford University Press, 1991)
H&P Hymns and Psalms (Methodist Publishing House, 1983)
HTC Hymns for Today's Church (Hodder & Stoughton, 1982)
LP Let's Praise 1 & 2 (Harper Collins, 1988, 1994)
MP Mission Praise Combined Edition (Harper Collins, 1982, 1986, 1990)
NEH New English Hymnal (Canterbury Press, 1989)
SF Songs of Fellowship (Kingsway's Thankyou Music, 1991)
WP World Praise (Harper Collins, 1993 1995)
NRH New Redemption Hymnal

All my hope on God is founded

(15) [A&M 336; BPW 327; H&P 63; HTC 451; MP 16; NEH 333]

Amazing grace

(27) [BPW 550; H&P 215; HTC 28; LP 6; WP 175]

And can it be

(30) [BPW 328; H&P 216; HTC 588; LP 8; MP 33]

As now the sun's declining rays

(37) [NEH 42]

As pants the hart for cooling streams

(38) [NEH 337; A&M 226; H&P 416]

At even, 'ere the sun was set

(NRH 453)

Be still and know that I am God

(52) [BPW 280; LP 245; MP 48; SF 41]

Brother, sister, let me serve you

(73) [BPW 473]

Dear Lord and Father of mankind

(106) [A&M 115; NEH 353]

God moves in a mysterious way

(173) [A&M 112; BPW 122; H&P 65; MP 193; NEH 365]

Great is thy faithfulness

(186) [BPW 553; H&P 66; HTC 260; LP 54; MP 200; SF 147; WP 188]

Help us to help each other, Lord

(208) [A&M 374; HTC 540]

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

(220) [A&M 122; BPW 339; H&P 257; HTC 211; MP 251; NEH 374; SF 194]

I'm accepted

(239) [LP 86; MP 321; SF 229]

Immortal love, for ever full

(243) [A&M 133; BPW 198; H&P 392; HTC 105; MP 328; NEH 378]

Jesu, grant me this, I pray

(260) [A&M 136; NEH 382]

Just as I am, without one plea

(287) [A&M 246; BPW 346; H&P 697; HTC 440; LP 101; MP 396; NEH 294; SF 316]

Lord, we come to ask your healing

(319)

Love divine, all loves excelling

(321) [A&M 131; BPW 559; H&P 267; HTC 217; LP 354; MP 449; NEH 408; SF 377]

O for a thousand tongues to sing

(362) [WP 204]

O Lord, hear my prayer

(379) [BPW 600; LP 149; SF 423]

One more step along the world I go

(405) [BPW 356; H&P 746]

Rock of ages

(437) [A&M 135; BPW 545; H&P 273; HTC 593; MP 582; NEH 445; SF 488]

Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear

(462) [A&M 11; H&P 646; MP 618; NEH 251]

The great Physician now is near

(NRH 502)

There is a Redeemer

(500) [LP 207; MP 673; SF 544; WP 212]

There's a wideness in God's mercy

(501) [BPW 573; H&P 230; MP 683; NEH 461]

Within our darkest night

(562) [LP 439]

The following hymns are from *Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New* (Kevin Mayhew 2000)

Among us and before us (30)

Bread is Blessed and Broken (81)

Do not be Afraid (150)

God you meet us (237)

Healer of the sick (270)
Touching place (101)
O Love that wilt not let me go (517)

Suggestions for using Time to Change materials at your service

By Revd Eva McIntyre

Show videos

For those with the technical capacity, videos from the Time to Change website www.time-to-change.org.uk can be played either during the worship or whilst people are having refreshments before or after the service.

Run a quiz

Get people to fill in the 'Myth/Fact Quiz' before the service starts and go through the questions giving the accurate answers during the service.

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/files/Time%20to%20Change%20Myth%20Fact%20quiz.pdf>

Display campaign materials

Order an event box and use the items to advertise your service or decorate the church or hall. Materials included include posters, bunting, postcards, leaflets, T-shirts, bags and badges.

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/your-organisation/order-materials>

Sign the pledge

Offer everyone the chance to sign and send back a Time to Change pledge postcard or to sign the pledge online if you can have a computer or wireless laptop, or internet tv available for use at your event.

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/shop/pledge-posters-postcards>

Use Time to Change drinks coasters

Use the Time to Change coasters on the tables when refreshments are being served and suggest that people take them away and leave them in a café, pub or restaurant during the coming days.

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/shop/myth-fact-items>

Get others talking

Explore campaigning with the Time to Talk materials with your PCC, DCC, Elders, Church committee or other focus group.

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/shop/time-to-talk>

Sermon suggestion

By Revd Eva McIntyre

Many of the people we read about in Bible stories might today be considered as having mental health issues. For example; Would Jesus' family maybe on occasion have said, "Cousin John is a bit odd, bless him!" when John the Baptist took to his eccentric style of life? It has long been thought that King Saul, in the books of Samuel, was displaying mood swings that suggest he had bi-polar disorder and some think that St Paul's Damascus Road experience was the result of some sort of breakdown or psychotic episode. Even Jesus was not immune to accusations about his mental health – there is a story in the gospel that tells of his mother and siblings attempting to take him home because they are afraid that he has lost his mind. Many of the stories of the Saints, too, have led people to discuss their mental health – for example; was Saint Francis suffering from a mental health issue? (You may wish to use biblical quotations in this section).

Some may find these suggestions disturbing or offensive even. Perhaps we need to ask why it would be so terrible to think that some of our most inspirational forebears might have experienced mental health illness! Do we mistakenly believe that God cannot or will not work through people with mental health illness? Do we transfer our judgment of the capacity of others onto God? Do we think that mental illness is one condition that makes people less able to do God's work, more unlikely to be able to articulate spiritual truth, and unable to participate meaningfully in worship?

Who do we think 'these people' are? Statistics show us that one in four people suffer from mental health illness during their lives. That figure is based on those who go to the GP for help; the true figure is likely to be even higher. That means; in a congregation of 50 people, at least 12 people will have experienced or be experiencing mental health issues. That includes the clergy and ministers, too! These conditions are part of human living; they are often caused by life experience such as grief, trauma and loss. These are things that happen to all of us and none of us should have to suffer in silence for fear of what others might think or say!

[Pre- arrange for members of the congregation to read out the quotes from the celebrity postcards at this point <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/shop/celebrity-posters-and-postcards> and follow this up with the stories of people who are not famous from the poster range <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/shop/miscellaneous> If you have your own story to share or a member of the congregation is prepared (and emotionally robust enough) to share a personal story, it can be used here.]

Mental illnesses are real conditions that occur in real people – they are not a sign of weakness or an excuse; they involve real suffering and need understanding and appropriate responses, just like any other condition we might have. Those who suffer don't need people saying 'pull yourself together' or 'I know just how you feel'. What is needed is understanding and a listening ear – and not being talked to as though you are only the illness and not a whole human being. A problem shared can be a problem halved if the friend is actually listening.

If we are following the teaching of Jesus who met people where they were in life and reached out to them in love and healing, Churches will be places of welcome, friendship and acceptance. It is our ministry to educate ourselves about mental health and to make sure that our welcome is appropriate and that no-one who enters our church experiences prejudice or feels stigmatized.