

How Doctrine Affects Mental Health

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I. Mental Health as a Secular World View

- a. Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in.
- b. Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders. It exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of difficulty and distress and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes.¹

II. Mental Disorders.

- a. A mental disorder is characterized by a clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior. It is usually associated with distress or impairment in important areas of functioning. There are many different types of mental disorders. Mental disorders may also be referred to as mental health conditions. The latter is a broader term covering mental disorders, psychosocial disabilities and (other) mental states associated with significant distress, impairment in functioning, or risk of self-harm. This fact sheet focuses on mental disorders as described by the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11).
- b. In 2019, 1 in every 8 people, or 970 million people around the world were living with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders the most common.²

III. Most Common Mental Disorders and helps.³

- a. Anxiety Disorder
 - i. Psychological treatment and medication.
- b. Depression
 - i. Psychological treatment and medication.
- c. Bipolar Disorder
 - i. Psychoeducation, reduction of stress and strengthening of social functioning, and medication.
- d. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - i. Psychological treatment.
- e. Schizophrenia
 - i. Medication, psychoeducation, family interventions, and psychosocial rehabilitation.
- f. Eating Disorders
 - i. Family-based treatment and cognitive-based therapy.
- g. Disruptive Behavior and Dissocial Disorders

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>, July 25, 2024.

² <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>, July 25, 2024.

³ Ibid.

- i. Psychological treatments, often involving parents, caregivers, and teachers, cognitive problem-solving or social skills training.
- h. Neurodevelopmental Disorders (Example: Autism and ADHD)
 - i. Psychosocial interventions, behavioral interventions, occupational and speech therapy, medication.

IV. Does the Bible Speak to Mental Health?

- a. From the WHO's definition: "Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community."
- b. "State of mental well-being."
 - i. Isaiah 26:3; Phil 4:7; 1 Pet 3:15.
- c. "Cope with the stresses of life."
 - i. James 1:2-8; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Cor 4:16-18.
- d. "Realize their abilities."
 - i. 1 Cor 1:26-31; Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14; Phil 4:13.
- e. "Learn well and work well."
 - i. Eph 4:11-16; 17-32.
- f. "Contribute to their community."
 - i. Rom 12; 1 Cor 12.

V. The root of Mental Health

- a. Good theology leads to right living.
- b. We live what we believe (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23).
- c. Theology of God.
 - i. His Sovereignty.
 - ii. His Providence.
 - iii. All other attributes: Wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, etc.
- d. Difference between God's wrath and His discipline (Rom 5:9; Heb 12:6-11).
- e. Theology of suffering (James 1:2-8; Rom 5:3-5; 1 Peter).
- f. Union with Christ.
- g. Future Hope (2 Cor 4:7-18).
- h. There are genuine physical issues.
 - i. Pathology – has medical testing been done?
 - ii. Traumatic Brain Injury
 - iii. Dementia, Alzheimer's Disease.
 - iv. Physical issues can make things difficult, but your body can't make you sin.

VI. Sample issues and general helps.

- a. Anxiety Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.
 - i. Understand God's sovereignty (Is 46:9-11), His providence (Ps 121), His attributes (Ex 33:19 and so many others...)
 - ii. Learn to trust God (Prov 3:5-6; Rom 8:28-29).
 - iii. Think and meditate on truth (Phil 4:4-9).

- b. Depression
 - i. What is the heart issue? Sin (Psalm 32)? Evil people (Psalm 37)? Circumstances (Psalm 42)? Relationships (Jer 17:5-8)?
 - ii. There may be physical causes which we can respond to in a biblical way.
- c. Bipolar Disorder
 - i. Real mood swings that can be dealt with in a biblical way.
 - ii. Humility and church involvement (James 4:6).
- d. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - i. Understand God's sovereignty, His providence.
 - ii. Good theology of living in a fallen world and of suffering (Rom 8:18-24).
- e. Schizophrenia
 - i. Patiently teaching (2 Tim 2:24-25).
 - ii. Church family being patient and caring (1 Thess 5:14).
- f. Eating Disorders
 - i. Good biblical anthropology and understanding of God's sovereignty.
 - ii. Discovering idols of the heart.
- g. Disruptive Behavior and Dissocial Disorders
 - i. Training and discipline (Prov 22:6; Prov 6:23; Prov 22:15).
- h. Neurodevelopmental Disorders (Example: Autism and ADHD)
 - i. Occupational and speech therapy; Training and discipline (Prov 22:6; Prov 6:23; Prov 22:15).

VII. Summary

- a. Mental Health stems from a right understanding of God, and of our relationship to Him.
- b. We must also understand the results of the Fall and Christ's redemption, not only of His people, but of the physical world as well (Rom 5 & 8).
- c. We must have compassion for those who struggle (Rom 12:8-15; 1 Thess 5:14).
- d. We can live for God's glory even in the midst of difficult circumstances, whether physical or social (1 Peter).