MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Caring for mental health is a way of caring for our neighbors and ourselves.

"We all have mental health, some days good, some days bad" — Marcia Haaf, The Lutheran Foundation. Things like healthy food, sleep, exercise, social contact and conversation, and prayer/meditation all help us to be mentally healthy. Sometimes we need some additional help, and that is when talking to a therapist, and possibly taking medication, can be beneficial. See the **National Institute of Mental Health** for more info, ***nimh.nih.gov***.



What distinguishes a disorder from regular struggle is intensity and duration. Normal worries have a beginning, middle and end; anxiety has no end.
Nearly all of us will meet the criteria for mental illness at some point in our lives. People suffer an average of 11 years with symptoms before getting treatment. Most long-term mental health struggles begin in childhood.

Common Warning Signs of Mental Illness (from the **National Alliance on Mental Illness, *nami.org***):

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Trying to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so
- Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behavior that causes harm to self or others
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or difficulty breathing
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Seeing, hearing or believing things that aren't real
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
- Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities

First steps if you or someone you care about is struggling with mental health. If it is a crisis and someone is at risk of harm, call 911 right away. But for non-crisis, ongoing situations, one first step is to talk with your family doctor, and they can help assess the situation and get you connected with additional resources. Another good first step is **Mental Health America, Wabash Valley Region, *mhawv.org***, especially their 1) mental health navigator and 2) mental health screening. They also have a lot of additional information and can connect you to support groups.

While we know each person is valuable and created in God's image (Gen. 1:26), sadly *we lose 130 people in the United States to **suicide** each day.* Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people ages 10–34, and the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.

The good news is there is hope, and help. Suicide has been called a permanent solution to a temporary problem. **Suicidal thoughts do not have to be acted on; they can be treated.** There are also resources for those who have attempted suicide.

- For **crisis intervention**, suicide prevention and emotional support 24/7, call or text (765) 742-0244. Mental Health America, a national organization with a local office in Carroll County, is well trained and can help determine if law enforcement is needed in a situation. ***mhawv.org/crisis-center***
- If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255)**. **As of July 16, dialing **988** will immediately connect callers to the Lifeline, ***suicidepreventionlifeline.org***
- Text HOME to 741741 to be connected to a free, trained crisis counselor on the **Crisis Text Line** 24/7, ***crisistextline.org***
- **Speaking of Suicide** ("A site for suicidal individuals and their loved ones, survivors, mental health professionals, & others who care") ***speakingofsuicide.com***
- Farm families and rural communities can be hit hard by mental health challenges. Many resources are available through the **Indiana State Department of Agriculture** (***bit.ly/isdamh***) and the **Purdue University extension** (***bit.ly/purduefarmstress***).

***Addiction** directly affects 40.3 million people in the U.S;* 14.5% of the population aged 12 and older had a substance use disorder in the past year.

Addiction is broadly defined as an activity that keeps us from managing to do the things we want or need to do. It is a problem that we try to solve with more use.

At this year's Faith and Mental Health conference, Dr Sonia Waters taught that *our brains change with addiction*, and this affects the life of our soul in profound and painful ways. As she said, addiction is not a sin but a condition, and "none of us can get our lives together [on our own] that's why we have grace."

Having a sober network of people when struggling with addiction is very important. Getting through the next minute is key, either calling someone or exercising right away to change brain chemistry. Managing stress is essential for avoiding relapse.

Resources (some online meetings are also available):

1. A good starting point is Mental Health America, *mhawv.org*. Click on *"Let's talk"* under "Let's get through this together" to be connected to a peer recovery specialist for free support and help connecting to resources.
2. Alcoholics Anonymous for northern Indiana, ***area22indiana.org***
3. Narcotics Anonymous, ***naindiana.org***
4. Brianna's Hope, a faith-based recovery movement looking to expand to all IN counties, ***ablbh.org***