

This is a four-part series about mental health, peace of mind, and loving community.

Leader Tip: We are not mental health practitioners. We simply want to engage in conversations about mental health through the lens of a Jesus-centred community.

HANGOUT

1. Discuss:
 - What's one thing that brings you joy? What's one thing that stresses you out?
 - What do you already know about depression or anxiety?
2. Read aloud: In the past, some churches have made it sound like, "If you just had more faith, or prayed harder, you'd be healed." This kind of mentality only makes someone feel worse. We don't know why God acts when he does. Prayer is important, talking to God is important, and asking for his help is important. However, for many of us, medication, counselling, eating well, a full night of sleep, and exercise are necessary tools for mental wellness. In fact, God empowers doctors, nutritionists, counsellors, and others to help us. One could say that our prayers are answered through their work. Remember, God partners with people.
3. Discuss: How do you think a church community could support mental wellness?

HEAR

4. Look up and read Matthew 11:28-30 together.
5. Discuss:
 - Did anything stick out to you in this passage? If so, what was it and why did it stick out?
 - Why do you think Jesus said this? How do you think he does this for us?
 - Has there been a time when you've needed to hear these words? How does our community help lighten the load in a Jesus-y way?
6. Look up and read Matthew 12:15-21 together.
7. Discuss:
 - Did anything stick out to you in this passage?
 - What do you think this means? In what ways is this good news?
 - How do you think this passage connects with those who are impacted by mental illness?

HUDDLE

8. Discuss: Are there any other thoughts or questions you have as we start this series on mental health, Jesus, and community?
9. Encourage everyone to take a few moments to sit silently with their eyes closed. Students could pray, give thanks, or just breathe and calm their minds. After an appropriate amount of time, thank God for your time together and pray for each student in your group.