

RESTORING  
HOPE:  
CARE FOR  
MENTAL  
HEALTH



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# INTRODUCTION

**L**utherans have always understood well-being to encompass both body and soul. “Restoring Hope” is a resource designed to offer guidance and spiritual support for individuals, caregivers and others who are navigating various mental health challenges. In this resource, you will find a pertinent Scripture verse, hymn stanza, theological reflection and prayer for common mental health issues, as well as other valuable resources and information. This resource is written primarily for caregivers to read aloud to the souls for whom they are caring. Rooted in the Lutheran understanding of the theology of the cross, we approach these issues through the lens of Christ crucified.

This means that we recognize that mental health challenges do not define us. Rather, these tribulations serve to turn us away from ourselves and focus solely on Christ, who invites us to cast our burdens on Him because He cares for us (1 PETER 5:7). We pray that you are encouraged by this resource, and refreshed with the truth of God’s abiding presence and steadfast love for you in the midst of life’s trials.

If you are in an emergency situation, please call 911. If you are depressed or thinking about harming yourself or someone else, or if this is the case for someone you know, please call or text 988 from a smartphone to reach the National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

# – OVERVIEW –

## WARNING SIGNS AND HELPING STRATEGIES

There are many warning signs that medical and psychology professionals identify for mental health problems and disorders. Some include:

- › Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- › Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
- › Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors
- › Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
- › Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
- › Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real
- › Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol
- › Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- › Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still
- › Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities<sup>1</sup>

The above emotions and behaviors may indicate a mental health problem or illness. If you notice these things about yourself, please get help from a medical or psychological professional and seek spiritual care from a pastor. If you notice the emotions and behaviors in a loved one or a person for whom you care, there are some simple strategies you can undertake to help the individual<sup>2</sup>:

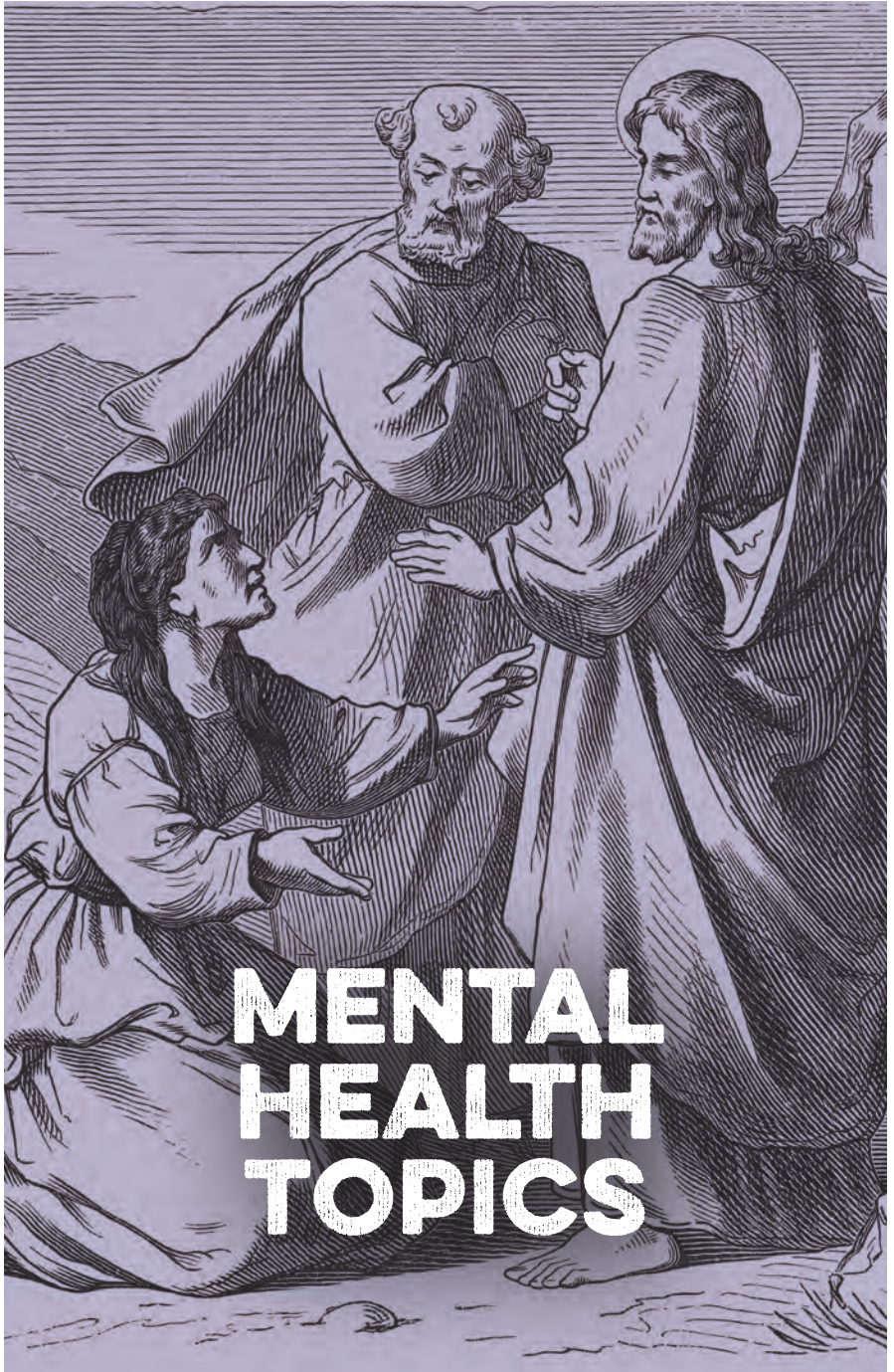
- › Gently and compassionately ask the person about the emotions and behaviors that you observe. Plan to have a conversation that is at least 20 minutes in length.
- › Keep the person safe, including calling for immediate professional intervention (calling 911 or 988) as needed.
- › Be there for distressed individuals by listening.
- › Offer referrals to professional help, and accompany the person to get needed help.
- › Stay connected and continue to care for the person within your competency and abilities.

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<sup>1</sup> National Alliance Mental Illness (NAMI)  
<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-by-the-Numbers/Infographics-Fact-Sheets>

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<sup>2</sup> National Institute Mental Health (NIMH)  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/5-action-steps-for-helping-someone-in-emotional-pain>



# ANXIETY

Most of us have experienced some type of anxiety. Being overly worried over your work, relationships, and other cares of this world is a common experience. Our Lord, however, calls us to not rely on ourselves, but to trust in Him. He invites us to cast our cares and our worries on Him alone, trusting that He will provide for our every need. This is what faith is all about. The Holy Spirit gives us faith that clings to God in the midst of life's trials and tribulations. When anxiety afflicts you, be comforted that your Savior stands ready to bear your worries and fears. Pray to Him in every trouble and every joy, continuing to receive His good gifts every week at His holy house.

## PRAYER

Merciful Father, In the depths of anxiety's grip, we turn to you, seeking solace and peace for all who are burdened by fear and worry. We pray for all who wrestle with the relentless storm of anxiety, longing for relief and reassurance, especially for your servant \_\_\_\_\_. In your mercy, grant him/her Your peace that surpasses understanding. Assure him/her that You are with him/her always in Your Word and Sacraments. May he/she find rest in Your promises and Your Son, who bore all anxiety, worry and sin upon Himself, winning the victory over all of these by His death and resurrection. Continue to comfort \_\_\_\_\_, defend him/her against all evil, and bring him/her to eternal life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

— MATT. 11:28–30

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Phil. 4:6–7; John 16:33

## HYMN

### *Salvation Unto Us Has Come (LSB 555)*

- 1 Salvation unto us has come  
By God's free grace and favor;  
Good works cannot avert our doom,  
They help and save us never.  
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,  
Who did for all the world atone;  
He is our one Redeemer.
- 7 Let me not doubt, but truly see  
Your Word cannot be broken;  
Your call rings out, “Come unto Me!”  
No falsehood have You spoken.  
Baptized into Your precious name,  
My faith cannot be put to shame,  
And I shall never perish.
- 9 Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone  
And rests in Him unceasing;  
And by its fruits true faith is known,  
With love and hope increasing.  
For faith alone can justify;  
Works serve our neighbor and supply  
The proof that faith is living.

# COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

Our Lord delights in His whole creation, but He especially rejoices over the precious people He has made. We are all masterpieces of His workmanship, and He knows the good works He has laid out for us beforehand (EPH. 2:10). Regardless of our abilities, strengths or weaknesses, the Lord sings over His beloved children. Through Baptism He unites Himself to you and claims you as His own. That means that the Lord's might, power and protection also belong to you. Take heart in all trials, knowing that the Lord is glad in you.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You value all of creation and humanity as Your beloved children, especially all who suffer from cognitive impairment. This day we pray for Your servant \_\_\_\_\_. In the face of the uncertainties his/her challenges bring, You are the constant source of strength, mercy and refuge. Grant \_\_\_\_\_ the assurance of Your unfailing love, that he/she may find peace and comfort in You alone. Comfort him/her when he/she feels isolated, misunderstood or confused. You have made \_\_\_\_\_ Your own precious child in his/her Baptism, and his/her identity is in You. According to Your good and gracious will, grant him/her healing of mind and body and comfort in the victory of Christ crucified, for him/her. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

– ZEPH. 3:17

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Psalm 59; Psalm 71

## HYMN

### *Jesus Loves Me (LSB 588)*

1 Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong;  
They are weak, but He is strong.

### *Refrain:*

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

2 Jesus loves me! He who died  
Heaven's gates to open wide.  
He has washed away my sin,  
Lets His little child come in.  
*[Refrain]*

# DEPRESSION

A true gift of the Psalms is that they give words to our suffering. Suffering often feels vague and nondescript. Depression is real and visceral. It can make our souls feel utterly downcast. Depression can feel like a wave pulling us under to drown us in deeper waters. Turmoil and hopelessness lurk in these dark seas.

We join our voice with the psalmist and cry out even in our despair, for we have the promises of God and the certain hope of His salvation. His holy Baptism has drowned us in waves of mercy, and He remains steadfast throughout our entire baptismal life. Martin Luther reminds us that we pray for this as God's children every time we pray the Lord's Prayer. As Luther writes, "We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice" (Small Catechism, Lord's Prayer, 6th petition). We pray for this deliverance daily, and our Lord inclines His ear to our prayer and answers us. Remember, even in the dark night of the soul He preserves our life. He commands His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways (PSALM 91:11). For this sweet comfort our lips can praise Him.

## PRAYER

Merciful Father, We pray for our brothers and sisters who navigate the depths of depression, longing for light and healing in their anguish, especially

for your servant \_\_\_\_\_. Send your holy angel to defend him/her against all evil of body and mind, and remind him/her that sin and shame do not define him/her. He/she is loved, valued and precious in Your sight. Be with him/her, dispelling his/her darkness and bringing him/her into Your marvelous light. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

— PSALM 42:5-6A; 7-8

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Deut. 31:8; Psalm 34

## HYMN

### *Holy Spirit, Light Divine (LSB 496)*

- 1 Holy Spirit, light divine,  
Shine upon this heart of mine;  
Chase the shades of night away,  
Turn the darkness into day.
- 4 Holy Spirit, joy divine,  
Cheer this saddened heart of mine;  
Yield a sacred, settled peace,  
Let it grow and still increase.

# ANGER

Anger is not a new emotion to any of us, but some bear the cross of being more quick to anger than others. Anger is not intrinsically sinful, but often leads to sin. In First Corinthians 13, we learn that love is patient, kind and not easily angered. The sinful dangers that often accompany anger are clear throughout Scripture, and we are called to repentance. The first step in dealing with anger is to confess this sin before God. Ask your pastor for private Confession and Absolution, where you verbally confess the sins caused by your anger, and hear the beautiful Absolution of our Lord given to you. Pray to God about your struggle with anger and pray for those with whom you are angry. Christ has promised to hear and answer your prayers. Sing hymns of love, rooted in Christ's love for you, and make every attempt to reconcile with God and/or your neighbor before the sun sets for the day.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Grant patience to all those who struggle with anger, especially \_\_\_\_\_. Give him/her a spirit of humility and patience, granting him/her a repentant and forgiving heart as he/she extends the love that you have first shown to him/her. Relieve him/her of this harsh temptation, according to Your good and gracious will. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

— EPH. 4:26–27, 31

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Psalm 37; James 1:19–20

## HYMNS

### *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* (LSB 709)

- 1 The King of love my shepherd is,  
Whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am His  
And He is mine forever.
- 3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
But yet in love He sought me  
And on His shoulder gently laid  
And home rejoicing brought me.
- 6 And so through all the length  
of days  
Thy goodness faileth never;  
Good Shepherd, may I sing  
Thy praise  
Within Thy house forever!

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

Are you weary? Are you burdened by the heaviness of caring for others? Our Lord knows what it is to show relentless compassion. While we are prone to buckle under the weight of endless caregiving, our Heavenly Father never grows faint, never tires, never falters. We are limited creatures, but our Creator is limitless in strength and constant in presence. We run — yes, run — to Him when we meet the end of ourselves. His rest and renewal remind us who we really are. His rest and renewal remind us that we must rest often. His rest and renewal will strengthen us for every good work He has prepared for us to do.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You are the source of all mercy and love. In the midst of our service to others, we sometimes find ourselves weary and burdened by the weight of compassion fatigue. We pray especially for your servant \_\_\_\_\_. Grant him/her wisdom to recognize that You are the source of all healing and comfort, and he/she does not bear this burden alone. Give \_\_\_\_\_ consolation and encouragement through fellow Christians, uplifting one another through Your Holy Word. Grant us grace to continue extending Your love and mercy to others, as we ourselves find refreshment through Your Word and Sacraments. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

— ISAIAH 40:28–31

## HYMN

*Jesus, Refuge of the Weary* (LSB 423)

- 1 Jesus, refuge of the weary,  
Blest Redeemer, whom we love,  
Fountain in life's desert dreary,  
Savior from the world above:  
Often have Your eyes, offended,  
Gazed upon the sinner's fall;  
Yet upon the cross extended,  
You have borne the pain of all.

# GRIEF



Grief can take many forms, and grief can be over a multitude of things: loss of a loved one, loss of health, loss of independence, loss of a friendship and so on. In *A Grief Observed*, C.S. Lewis describes grief as a “...long, winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.” Though there are different stages of grief, some may engulf you more than others, and your grief may come and go during this long journey. Yet you are not alone in this valley. The landscapes may change, but there is something that is constant. That is Christ’s love for you. It is OK for you to weep. Christ Himself wept

at the death of His friend Lazarus. Yet, as St. Paul writes, we do not mourn as those who have no hope. Cling to Christ and His promises to you during this time, seek comfort in the fellowship of your brothers and sisters in Christ, and be assured “Weeping may tarry through the night, but joy comes in the morning (PSALM 30:5).”

Christ promises you that there will be a time when your mourning is over, and He will wipe every tear away from your eyes.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, comfort \_\_\_\_\_ who mourns with the truth of Christ's empty tomb, that in the midst of his/her grief he/she may abide in the hope of His resurrection. Uphold \_\_\_\_\_ in faith as he/she awaits the day when You will wipe every tear from all eyes. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

— 1 THESS. 4:13–18

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Matt. 5:2–12; Rev. 21:4

## HYMN

### *Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart* (LSB 708)

- 1 Lord, Thee I love with all my heart;  
I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart,  
With tender mercy cheer me.  
Earth has no pleasure I would share.  
Yea, heav'n itself were void and bare  
If Thou, Lord, wert not near me.  
And should my heart for  
sorrow break,  
My trust in Thee can nothing shake.  
Thou art the portion I have sought;  
Thy precious blood my soul  
has bought.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and  
Lord, my God and Lord,  
Forsake me not! I trust Thy Word.
- 3 Lord, let at last Thine angels come,  
To Abr'ham's bosom bear me home,  
That I may die unfearing;  
And in its narrow chamber keep  
My body safe in peaceful sleep  
Until Thy reappearing.  
And then from death awaken me,  
That these mine eyes with joy may see,  
O Son of God, Thy glorious face,  
My Savior and my fount of grace.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend,  
my prayer attend,  
And I will praise Thee without end.

# LONELINESS

When God created humanity, He created a people meant to be in fellowship with one another and with Him. However, a sinful, fallen world means broken fellowships. We can become isolated, feeling alone even if we are in a bustling crowd. With Christ, you are never alone. Christ promises He is with you always, in the ways He has promised: His Word and His Sacraments. You are baptized into His name and welcomed into His family. And in this family, you are never alone. You are joined with all the company of heaven, Christians around the world, the saints who have entered eternal rest, angels and archangels. Reach out to your pastor, members of your church and other Christians for company. Even in the loneliest of circumstances, trust in Christ alone. He has taken you in, and you are His.

## PRAYER

Merciful Lord, You are the Good Shepherd. You have promised that your goodness and mercy shall follow us all of the days of our lives, even when we feel alone. Look with compassion upon those who are struggling with loneliness, especially \_\_\_\_\_. Reassure him/her of Your love, which is like that of the shepherd who seeks and saves the one lost sheep. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.

— PSALM 27:7–10

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Psalm 25; Isaiah 41:8–10

## HYMN

*God of Grace and God of Glory*  
(LSB 850)

- 1 God of grace and God of glory,  
On Your people pour Your pow'r;  
Crown Your ancient Church's story;  
Bring its bud to glorious flow'r.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
For the facing of this hour,  
For the facing of this hour.
- 2 Lo, the hosts of evil round us  
Scorn the Christ, assail His ways!  
From the fears that long have  
bound us  
Free our hearts to faith and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
For the living of these days,  
For the living of these days.