

A Prayer for Sunday 9th October to mark World Mental Health Day (10th October 2022)

Lord of all comfort, as we mark World Mental Health Day, we bring before you those in our communities and around the world who are affected by mental distress.

We pray for those suffering from anxiety, that they would know your peace.

We pray for those living with depression, that you would lighten their darkness.

We pray for those who have OCD, that you would bring relief from intrusive thoughts and release from compulsions.

We pray for those with eating disorders, that they would find grace and healing.

We pray for those living with bipolar disorder, that you would bring stability.

We pray for those who have schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder, that you would quieten unwanted voices and bring freedom from distorted thinking.

We pray for those who have dementia, that you would restore to them their sense of self.

We pray for those suffering from personality disorders, that you would calm their surging emotions.

We pray for those living with addictions, that they would find a path to wholeness.

We pray for those with PTSD, that you would calm their fears and settle their heightened senses.

We pray for carers of those with mental illness, that you would sustain them when the road is long and hard and replenish them when they grow weary.

We pray for mental health professionals, that you would fill them with your wisdom and give them strength to continue where they feel under-resourced.

We pray for mental health charities, that you would guide their leaders and encourage their staff as they advance knowledge and care for the vulnerable.

We pray for pastoral care workers, that you would inspire them with the right words in each encounter and that they would drink from your cup as they give of themselves.

We pray for our churches, that they would be places of sanctuary for those in mental distress and that they would take the lead in the fight against stigma.

Only you, Lord, can fully fathom the workings of the mind, but we give you thanks for advances in understanding of mental illness, for the development of effective treatments, and for the growing acceptance of those who suffer as valuable members of our society.

We praise you that you are a God who shepherds us through dark valleys, who makes us lie down in green pastures and leads us beside quiet waters, who restores our souls.

We ask today that, whatever our current mental state, you would help us to look to you as our source of light and peace. And for all those amongst us who are wrestling with their thoughts, we ask above all that they would know hope – for hope is the foundation for every recovery.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who experienced mental anguish and understands our pain,

Amen

Other suggestions for marking World Mental Health Day during your church service on Sunday 9th October.

Reading

Psalm 13

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

²How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶I will sing the Lord's praise,

for he has been good to me.

Book Review Slot

These are examples of books by Christians with mental illness that you might wish to highlight:

"When Darkness Seems My Closest Friend: Reflections on Life and Ministry With Depression" by Mark Meynell (IVP, 2018)

"A New Name: Grace and Healing for Anorexia" (IVP, 2012) and *"A New Day: Moving on from Hunger, Anxiety, Control, Shame, Anger and Despair"* (IVP, 2017) by Emma Scrivener

"Wrestling With My Thoughts: A Doctor With Severe Mental Illness Discovers Strength" by Sharon Hastings (IVP, 2020)

"Learning to Breathe: My Journey With Mental Illness" by Rachael Newham (SPCK, 2018)

Other ways to mark World Mental Health Day in church on 9th October:

- Interview a mental health professional in your congregation, or someone with lived experience of mental illness who is willing to share some of their story
- Have green ribbons available (the symbol for mental health awareness) and encourage people to take and wear them over WMHD
- Have a £1 suggested donation for tea and coffee after the service, and give what is raised to a mental health charity (such as The Mind and Soul Foundation <https://www.mindandsoulfoundation.org/>)

This is a shareable resource and the WMHD prayer can be adapted for local use.