

Wellness

Saddleback's HOPE FOR MENTAL HEALTH ministry starter kit: A Synopsis.

(Clive Cowell, September, 2016)

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Intro

This synopsis covers 2 (of 5) DVD's and 3 books of Saddleback's resource kit Hope: for mental health. Let's start with the books first.

I. Book: Mental Health Resource Guide

An 88-page book that includes basic education about common mental illnesses; answers for frequently asked questions, and helpful information for families on how to support mentally ill loved ones.

This book is a quick reference guide. It gives insight into basic information; potential warning signs; definitions of common diagnoses; and frequently asked questions.

Overview

A three-page overview from (pp 8-10) is your first starting place.

***In brief** Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social well-being; each of which affect how we feel, think and act.*

***Mental Health** is the ability to function effectively in daily activities, resulting in productivity in tasks; fulfilling relationships; and, the development of resilience to change and adversity. It is important at every age of life.*

***Mental illness** is a disease causing mild to significant disturbances to emotion, thinking, and behavior resulting in (dis)abilities to cope with life and routines.*

From the Bootcamp book we note the following:

What is depression? *A psychiatric disorder characterized by an inability to concentrate, insomnia, loss of appetite, anhedonia (an inability to experience pleasure), feelings of extreme sadness, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness and thoughts of death.*

What is anxiety? *A disorder that has three common components:*

- *Extreme fear and dread, even when there is no real danger.*
- *Emotional distress that interferes with daily life [there are multiple facets to this and these are listed on pp8-9 of Bootcamp].*
- *A tendency to avoid situations that bring on anxiety.*

Causes *vary from reaction to environmental stresses, genetic factors, biochemical imbalances; or a combination.*

From the Bootcamp book:

What causes depression? *Loss; illness – post operative / post partum; hopelessness; shame; success; divorce; negative thought patterns; hormonal issues; chronic illness and pain; genetics and brain chemistry; family of origin issues; diet; traumatic brain injury.*

Triggering events *and circumstances can bring about a mental health issue and might include: loss of a loved-one; divorce or separation; a transition of location; work, etc.; trauma such as a disaster, abuse, victimization, accident, death; teasing or bullying; and, even events that might seem positive but actually cause an adverse reaction.*

Possible signs are listed on page 9-10 (by age group); ranging from confused thinking to temper tantrums.

A. Types of Mental Illness

A 21-page review from (pp 12-32) of many disorders and diseases; as well as conditions related to mental illness from the more than 200 classified forms identified by Mental Health America is given. Each is described by way of: impact; types of; and, symptoms. For example: Bipolar Disorder impacts 2.6% of adults; symptoms include hallucinations; and, types include Bipolar I, II and Cyclothymic Disorder.

Quote Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death ages 15-24.

B. Frequently Asked Questions

A 24-page collection from (pp 34-57) of 15 FAQ's is documented.

- How to talk about Mental illness?
- How to get a diagnosis?
- Types of professionals?
- Tips to get a good professional?
- Tips to help family members?
- How to advocate for children?
- Discussion of talk therapy I & I?!
- Other types of treatment available?
- Effectiveness of therapy?
- How to help someone suicidal?
- Next steps for a loved one struggling?
- Next steps for a love one resisting help?
- How to explain mental illness to children?
- How to help is hospitalization has occurred?

Quote Don't be afraid to ask how someone is doing

C. Mental Health Resources

A 13-page collection from (pp 60-72) of resources is documented.

Phone Numbers

Websites (pp61, 72)

Mental Health Insurance Information

Saddleback Support Groups

Books

A very useful feelings word list

A feelings chart for kids

Scriptures

Quote *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.*
1 Chronicles 16:11 (NIV)

Finally: Saddleback provide an important disclaimer for their guide.

II. Book: Anxiety and Depression Boot Camp

This 156-page book is aimed at helping those suffering from anxiety and depression. It comprises 10 chapters from **getting started** to **achieving final victory**.

Preface

A four-page preface from (pp i-iv) is your first starting place.

Current state 30,000 suicides on average in the US. And for every suicide there are eight or more failed attempts (250,000+). High profile celebrities have voiced their own struggles including actor Owen Wilson, TV host Larry King, musician Sting, and sports star Terry Bradshaw.

Stigma prevents acceptance of treatment and of those who do get treatment only 20% are getting better.

Quote: More people are suffering and too many are not getting better.

Action Plan. The book hopes to **prepare; plan; aid in practice; and equip to pursue**. It provides information, and techniques and tools for the journey ahead.

Quote: There is no “one size fits all” plan.

Quote: Often... a fully-orbed approach is needed.

A. Chapter 1: Getting Started

A 16-page (pp 1-16) opening chapter on how to get started.

First Approach. The author's first approach is encouragement by way of discovery: *"like any experience of discovery it's amazing how much one can learn in a short period of time."*

First Step is Participation. The author's first step is for the person to participate. No matter their condition, the person is to make at least one step; and that means participation.

The Most Important Rule: There is NO rule when it comes to overcome mental health issues. There is no simple answer; despite what various experts might claim. That said, there are four basic helps which the author calls "attack points."

Attack Points. A fully-orbed approach will attack issues from biological; psychological; sociological; and spiritual vantage points.

Quote: The problem must be looked at in its entirety and every available option must be or might need to be explored.

Quote: Don't give up in your pursuit of health. Again, no one method will bring success.

Understanding Your Enemy. Understanding the situation will shape a person's response. This, in turn, makes what is hopeless turn to something as manageable.

Causes of Mental Health Issues? It could be a multitude of issues!

SIGECAPS. A tool used by therapists.

Sadness/sleep. Overwhelming sadness of an unusual depth. Additionally, sleep disruption.

Interests. Things that were once appealing are no longer so.

Guilt. Overwhelming guilt of an unusual depth. *"If only"* becomes a common statement.

Energy. Lack of energy levels; including pain.

Concentration. Difficulties in concentrating.

Appetite. Loss of appetite.

Psychomotor Abnormalities. Must be observed by a trained professional.

Psychomotor Retardation. Slow movements, collapsed posture, low voice etc.

Psychomotor Agitation. Pacing around a room, wringing one's hands, robing and disrobing.

Suicidal. Feelings of and attempts to commit suicide.

Active. Such people have a plan: *“I’m going to drive my car off a cliff”*

Passive. Such people stop caring: *“I don’t see the point anymore.”*

Para-Suicidal. The description used of overt attempts, like wrist-slashing or pill overdoses, though the person knows/feels that it won’t likely come to success.

Other facts. Alcohol will always bite the sufferer viciously.

Various stats. The stats of treatment, those taking it, and those succeeding are not good.

Bottom Line: The more you know about anxiety and depression, the less likely you are to be paralyzed by fear and ignorance. **FACE THE REALITIES; GROUND YOUR THINKING**

B. Chapter 2: All in Your Head

A 12-page (pp 17-28) chapter on thinking and feeling.

First Approach. Your thoughts and thinking patterns play a major role in shaping your struggle. Thinking will affect everything.

Your thoughts are powerful; your thoughts lie; you don’t have to believe every thought; inaccurate thoughts will affect you

Every thought you have: releases a chemical in your brain.

Type of Inaccurate Thinking

All or nothing thinking

Disproportionate weight

Grandiose self-image

Fortune telling

Catastrophizing

Over or under-spiritualizing

Loss of control

Hyper-control

Thoughts of persecution

You have some control over your thoughts: you don't have to believe every thought.

It's not about positive thinking; it's about accurate thinking.

What about feelings? You have no control over your feelings; they are what they are. What can you do?

Identify. Accurately identify your feelings. You might think you are angry, when really deeper down you are sad. Don't try to cover your feelings – identify them; they are what they are.

Seek the root of your feelings. Identify and then ask, "where is this coming from?" Understand! And in doing so, your feelings will be less powerful.

Actions. This is where you have control.

Join a group.

See a professional

Make some small changes to your diet

Start a moderate exercise program

Learn about your issues

Sleep well

Write things down that you are grateful for

Make appointments you have to keep

Limit your time on certain tasks (computer, TV)

Take time to nurture your spirit (pray, meditate, reflect)

C. Chapter 3: People, who needs them?

A 13-page (pp 29-41) chapter on people.

Isolation. It is one of the worst things you can do. Isolation will feed anxiety and depression. Ecc. 4:9-12 “*two are better than one.*” It is not good for man to be alone!

Have good voices in your life. Keep voices that underscore feelings of hopelessness to a minimum or zero.

Healthy relationships take time. Plant in good soil. Plant healthy seeds. If necessary, connect with existing support groups. [However, do due diligence on groups; some are not healthy].

Overcome tendencies to hide in the crowd. Open up (a little).

Have more than just one person to be your voice. Otherwise you will overwhelm them.

Go slow.

Have a realistic picture in mind of what you are looking for in a support group. There is a good list on pp33-34.

Be creative. For example: Join a neighborhood work project.

Set some goals. For example: “*Today, I am going to say hello to three people. If any of them respond, then set a goal of introducing yourself.*”

Safe, sane?

Are interested in personal growth

Are genuinely interested in others

Talk and listen

Do not embrace gossip

Tell you what they need, not what you need

Make themselves reasonably available

Know other safe, sane people

D. Chapter 4: Better boundaries

A 13-page (pp 43-61) chapter on boundaries, packed with lots of principles.

Boundary. Something that indicates or fixes a limit or extent.

Understanding boundaries is easy; setting them and keeping them is more difficult.

Fences: to keep you toward your destination.

Have values. When you do decisions become easier.

Like what you like; dislike what you dislike.

External Boundaries. More tangible than internal boundaries. For example: I'm not going to that place, or I'm not going to meet with those people; it triggers/they trigger negative emotions.

Internal Boundaries. More about what is going on inside. For example: *Before I run to food for comfort, I'm going to write down what I feel at that moment.* For example: *If someone doesn't say hello to me I'll remember that I cannot actually read minds.*

Obstacles to boundaries?

Don't be afraid to invest a little money to set a boundary

Setting a boundary might risk losing a relationship

Setting a boundary might mean you are misunderstood

Setting boundaries can involve some initial pain

Setting boundaries forces you to face reality

Delayed gratification. Setting a boundary will bring about patience. Keep in mind it's a process and a learned skill.

Fears. The question, "*what if I do it wrong?*" will get in the way. Challenge your thoughts.

Setting boundaries affects relationships

You can say no without fear of punishment.

You won't need to rely solely on one other for all of your emotional needs.

Don't be isolated: Be in relationships where you are responsible to each other.

However: When you take over someone else's responsibility and do not allow them to do what they are capable of, you cross boundaries.

Setting boundaries will build trust in relationships. It doesn't mean loss; rather security. You'll become less dependent on others for needs and approval.

When you can't find what you're looking for from past relationships (esp. parents); seek it in new relationships. If your parents didn't give you what you needed it might be it was because they didn't have it to give. This is not to sweep the issue under the carpet; but to understand how your boundaries should operate.

Setting boundaries will help with intimacy. When you set clear boundaries intimacy becomes *your* choice. It is not one of life's cruel tricks that you have no control over.

Boundaries will help you achieve your goals. They keep you on track.

Setting boundaries will help you avoid taking responsibility for things that were never your responsibility.

Setting boundaries will help overcome being a victim.

Setting boundaries can help with confrontation.

Setting boundaries will help with forgiveness.

Assigning accurate responsibility leads to understanding what actually happened. Understanding leads to forgiving others and yourself. Forgiving leads to freedom.

You are not responsible for whether people accept your forgiveness or will forgive you.

Understanding your actions helps in self-forgiveness.

Setting boundaries can decrease passive aggressive behavior. Poor boundaries will foster hostility.

Setting boundaries breed better self-control.

Three core components:

Truth: Embrace what is, not what should be.

Grace: Have grace for others and yourself

Love: Have boundaries with love. Don't be inordinately self-serving.

Setting boundaries is about YOUR response. If life is all about what others do – then they own you. Your life does not have to be defined by your past.

Focus on what is, instead of what should be

Focus on what you can do, not what you cannot

Focus on YOUR response – not others' behavior.

E. Chapter 5: Relationships. Family and Work

A 22-page (pp 63-84) chapter on relationships. One of two of the longest chapters.

Anxiety and depression affect: secrets; anger, lies, a change in peer group; mood swings; tendencies to dominate; impaired ability to sympathize or empathize.

What to do? Recognize there is a problem.

Don't draw in. Engage with others; encourage others to learn about your struggle; develop a safe place to offload; seek every possible avenue of health; guard against expectations.

Family?

Depression and anxiety affect the whole family. Here are some ways they may react:

They may change routines or rules

They may begin to avoid contact

Everyone may start walking on eggshells

They may vent their frustration

Parents may be stricter or more harsh with non-struggling children or family members

They may blame themselves

They may feel resentful

You might feel ashamed of the family member's struggle.

When anxiety or depression invade the family structure it's important to be pro-active.

Active ideas:

Take care of yourself and encourage others to do so as well

Take time to go places and enjoy yourselves as a family, even if the struggling person does not participate

Encourage all family members to continue with regular activities

Acknowledge that some days will be better than others

Include the whole family in the treatment process; in fact they themselves may benefit from treatment

Be realistic: Sometimes it might seem like everything you try to do to help is met with resistance. One method is to better coordinate the family's efforts. Get everyone on the same music sheet.

Common questions

Does a person have to hit rock-bottom to truly seek help?

Answer: No.

What if they won't get help? Get help for yourself.

How can I best help my family, from either side of the fence?

Rebalance the entire family otherwise some will get lost in the disease and forget about themselves.

Educate yourself

Practice active listening

Be there for the struggler; don't fix them, just walk with them

Try not to take things personally

Family of origin issues must be dealt with. It's not about blame; it's about understanding.

Anxiety and depression tend to run in families.

Members take on roles:

Little parent
Hero
Mascot
Chief enabler
Scapegoat
Lost child

Reshape your response to *unhealthy* family relationships. As an adult you have the power to *respond* differently. For example: begin to set and keep better boundaries.

Workplace?

What to do?

Acknowledge the struggle. Face the reality.

Share your work struggle in the context of a safe community of support.

If you have a safe and supportive supervisor, you may wish to be vulnerable with them.

Prepare. Speak of the issue concisely. Let them also know the action steps you are taking to resolve your issue.

If you DON'T have a safe and supportive supervisor, don't go there. If anything, and if possible, ask your human resources for help.

Clinical depression and anxiety are covered by the American with Disabilities Act.

F. Chapter 6: Shame on You

A 15-page (pp 85-99) chapter on shame.

Shame. Shame is about the defectiveness you feel as a human being. Shame is not “*you’ve done something bad, it’s you ARE bad.*”

Shame provokes unworthiness. It fosters anxiety and depression.

Shame often comes by way of experience from someone else. But in the long run we begin to put it on ourselves.

Ways we respond to shame:

Perfectionism. The thought that if only I could be good enough

Isolationism and withdrawal. Rather than face criticism you withdraw.

Exhibitionism. You flaunt your bad parts to create the rejection you have come to expect.

Healing comes from understanding. Again, identification of the core root is key; it is essential.

Correcting inaccurate thinking is an important step. Is the shame you feel really based on your defectiveness? Are you really stupid? Are you really lazy? Are you really unable to do something? Such thought patterns get engrained that they become our automatic thought whenever our worth is challenged.

Shame-filled people over-react to what everyone else is doing and under-react to what’s going on inside them.

Shame-filled people often are co-dependent. They don’t feel worthy of self-care and feel that their needs always take place to others’ needs.

Shame results in a loss of dignity.

Shame produces emotional pain.

Shamed people often medicate their pain.

Shame often brings about child-like stances.

Alas, the Church can be a place of shame.

Depression and anxiety can be a result of sin, but they are NOT always a result of sin!

Faith is important, but sometimes you need the faith of others – as in Mark 2:4; the story of how four friends help another.

The idea that taking medication is bad for such a stance is you playing God is to be rethought. God can heal, but many times our healing comes from what are conventional methods.

The idea that Scripture comments that everything that happens is for one’s own good is to be rethought. Depression and anxiety are not good, but there

can be concurrent good things that parallel if we embrace what is in front of us. And, some good things do come about because of suffering – patience, courage, wisdom, maturity and ability or sense of understanding others. Knowing this doesn't make the bad any less bad, but it does bring an element of purpose to one's pain. Bad and good can often co-exist; don't think of them as mutually exclusive.

The idea that mental illness is an issue of self-discipline needs to be re-thought.

The idea that one should pray more needs to be re-thought. Well, what constitutes enough prayer? 30 minutes? Two hours? One of the best prayers though might be the simple, "Help me God, I'm hurting."

The idea that you just need to rebuke the spirit of depression and tell it to leave needs to be re-thought.

Keys to unplugging shame:

Be aware that shame is a part of your life; and change is possible.

Do Something. Nothing will happen if you do nothing.

Stop minimizing the hurt; assign appropriate responsibility. It not about blame; it is about embracing reality. You can't move forward unless you forgive and you can't forgive unless you first acknowledge the legitimate offense.

Learn to forgive. It is a process. Learn it!

Begin to re-train your thinking patterns.

Give yourself permission to look after yourself.

G. Chapter 7: Body, brain, food, mood

A 23-page (pp 101-123) what we can in-take and what we can do physically. One of two of the longest chapters.

Reminder: the four pillars of mental health are: biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual.

Rule out/Focus In. Rule out things that don't apply to you. Focus in on the things which do.

Your brain affects everything you feel, think and do. Taking care of your brain, will to some extent help in your struggle. Brain problems can

cause anxiety and depression; anxiety and depression can cause brain problems.

Get a physical and medical history. For example, abnormal thyroid hormone and testosterone levels have long been associated with depression. Get a reliable base line of information. Also, see if there has been any brain trauma. Further, look to at your family and their medical history.

Diet. Drink 10 cups of coffee to see if it affects you!

Increase water intake.

Eat fish, fish oil and good fats.

Eat lots of dietary antioxidants.

Lean protein can be beneficial

Complex carbohydrates can be helpful

Physical Exercise.

The benefit of confidence

The benefit of distraction

The benefit of interactions

The benefit of health coping

Have a plan: Identify what exercise you might enjoy

Set reasonable goals

Exercise is not to be thought of as a burden.

Address your barriers. If you feel intimidated, then by all means start in privacy.

Prepare for setbacks and obstacles.

One bad day of not exercising should not outweigh the good that can be done. Give yourself some grace.

Psychiatric Medications

They do have some benefits.

They are not innocuous. There are some side effects.

A list of medications is given on pp 117-121

Cautions. Less than 1/3rd of people on medication seek professional help. Work with a trained counselor in conjunction with any medications.

It's not a sin to need help.

H. Chapter 8: What to do when you don't know what to do?

An 11-page (pp 125-135) chapter on what to do when you are not sure what to do.

Keep in mind that nobody knows what to do all of the time. Everyone has ups and downs.

It's easy to get trapped in all or nothing thinking. But others might see things differently. Retraining of how you see things is vital.

Common Thoughts

I don't know what to do... to I don't matter.

Common Feelings

Fear... to burdened.

Common Actions

Isolation... to Impulsive behavior.

What to do? When you don't know what to do?

Break things down to the smallest thing you can do and concentrate on that only.

Wrestle with your thoughts

Remind yourself that your current feelings, thoughts and actions are normal for someone struggling with anxiety and depression.

Remember that every day won't be like this.

Make attempts to connect with someone

Move. Exercise

Pray

Knowing what NOT to do? When you don't know what to do

Bury your head in the computer

Bury your head in the TV

Make big decisions

Be careful about timetables.

During dark times, do not trust your own judgment

I. Chapter 9: What's God got to do with it?

A 7-page (pp 137-143) chapter on what God has to do with anxiety and depression. The shortest chapter (no doubt purposefully so).

The spiritual component to recovery is essential.

There is comfort in knowing that there is a God who has your best interests at heart

God is reaching out to you in your struggle.

Make a commitment to state what you truly believe. If you believe that there is NO God then you are going to have to embrace that and move forward. Unbelief doesn't mean that you won't get better, but the road ahead is a road ahead without God. It is likely that that road will be longer, harder, and less likely to last. But, if you are not willing to reject God, then it is time you ask yourself deeper questions. Is God good? Is He concerned with your life? Why is there pain? Do you have an eternal soul? God DOES have a major if not complete part to play in your journey with anxiety and depression.

Our soul requires care and nurturing. Neglecting our soul often leads to depression and anxiety. Get clarity on what you believe. In doing so, you'll be better able to seek and accept help from God.

Scripture says that you can come to God, no matter your condition. Jesus was not sent into the world to condemn, but to save. John 3:17. And, through Jesus there is no condemnation, Rom. 8:1

You may feel shame about yourself even condemnation, but God loves you.

When it comes to God there are no strings attached. **He offers unconditional grace.**

If you take the journey with God, do so WITH other people.

J. Chapter 10: Victory

A 12-page (pp 145-156) chapter on what God has to do with anxiety and depression.

There is no “one size fits all”

A comprehensive approach is best. It could be biological; psychological; sociological; or, spiritual approaches in combination or singularly that are needed. As you take on each approach remember that the key is **SURRENDER**.

In you battle you win when you surrender.

Embrace what is true

Release what is false

Acknowledge your limits

Stop fortune telling (you cannot see the future, so stop trying).

Surrender is NOT:

Acting as though it didn't happen

Accepting a powerless role

Absolving others and ourselves of appropriate responsibility

Surrender past regrets

Surrender the “if only” fantasy

Surrender putting life on hold

Surrender yearning for the good old days

Surrender believing it's your lot in life to suffer

Surrender the addiction to drama in your life

Surrender unrealistic expectations about life

Surrender setting impossible standards for yourself

Surrender feeling responsible for others' reactions

Surrender wondering what other people think of you

Surrender trying to change other people

Surrender bitterness

Surrender the myth of the just world. The world is NOT fair.

Surrender control of everything outside of your own actions.

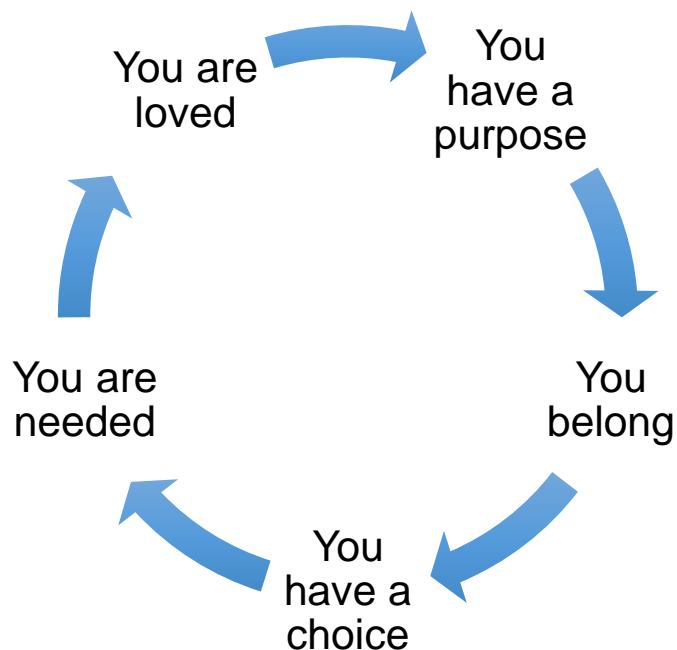
Don't give up! It isn't over yet!

III. Book: Journey toward Hope

This 205-page book is described as a “*guided experience*” through the journey of hope using what the authors call THE HOPE CIRCLE; five Biblical affirmations that provide the pathway toward hope.

Introduction

On page 7 of the work is found the diagram: The Hope Circle



This circle represents the structure of the book: five focused chapters on hope:

Hope says you are loved

Hope says you have a purpose

Hope says you belong

Hope says you have a choice

Hope says you are needed

Following these five chapters is a **7-day Journal**; **Appendices**; and, a list of **Resources** including a list of websites and recommended reading material.

A. Chapter 1: I Hate Myself But Hope Says You are Loved

A 33-page (pp 13-45) chapter on the affirmation that you are loved. This section, like the rest, is laid out with multiple scripture references with the intention of the reader responding to and, in their own words, affirming what the Bible is saying.

The role of the Holy Spirit as comforter

Releasing shame The intense painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging.

Shame has more to do with who we are rather than what we've done.

God says: You are precious in my eyes... you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Isaiah 43:4 and Psalm 139:14.

Christ: "accepted you." Rom. 15:17

God's Truths and Promises The Bible is brimming with an abundance of truths and promises that we can always count on.

Love all Around An experience of seeing that love is, in fact, all around.

Prayer Thank you, Lord, for loving me even when I feel unlovable. I am grateful that You don't judge me by my past and that You forgive me when I mess up. Teach me to love and accept myself just as You love and accept all of me. As I spend more and more time with You, and soak in Your restoring Word, I know I will be continually refreshed. Thank You for the hope that sustains and replenishes my soul.

B. Chapter 2: I Don't Matter But Hope Says You Have a Purpose

This is the shortest chapter of the book. A 10-page (pp 49-58) chapter on the affirmation that you have a purpose. This section, like the rest, is laid out with multiple scripture references with the intention of the reader responding to and, in their own words, affirming what the Bible is saying.

Discovering Your Purpose God will reveal everything you need to know about your purpose; a purpose that surpasses anything you could imagine. Why? Because you were made by God and for God.

Purpose Produces Passion Even our pain is there for a purpose.

An Invitation to Write Your Story

Prayer of Salvation The invitation to pray for salvation

I come to You confessing I am a sinner. I have done things I am not proud of. I feel like a mess sometimes, and I don't feel worthy of Your love. But I know that fully receiving Your forgiveness is the key to my freedom. Right now, I choose to accept Your forgiveness knowing it's not something I earned, but simply a gift. Thank You for loving me even when I'm unlovable. So, Jesus Christ, please come into my heart and life. Thank you for saving me. Right now I surrender to Your will for me.

C. Chapter 3: I Don't Fit In But Hope Says You Belong

A 27-page (pp 61-87) chapter on the affirmation that you belong.

Radical Friendship Jesus pursued us when we were estranged from Him, dying even for us when we wanted nothing to do with Him. This kind of love is a radical friendship. We are to serve one another. That might mean too, that we share our joys and sorrows... making them visible to each other in a gesture of hope.

Never Alone Loneliness is real; hope is your antidote

Intentional Connection Encourage one another and help one another

Boundaries are Biblical Without them you can slip into unhealthy patterns, asking on too much and becoming overwhelmed. Boundaries give a sense of who you are, what is happening around you, and distinguish what is or is not your responsibility.

Learning to say No The most basic yet powerful boundary-setting word you can use is “no”. It is not only wise to use it, but might also be the most loving thing to say.

Your Best “Yes” Intimacy with God and reliance on His direction will ultimately reveal your “best yes”.

Safe People God designed us for relationship, but sometimes we don’t choose “safe people”. But, the Bible provides the wisdom and guidance you need to discern who is safe. Safe people are those that draw you closer to being the people God intended us to be.

***Prayer for wisdom and guidance** Father God, There is so much in your Word that will help guide me to make better choices. Some of the concepts like radical friendship and safe people are new to me and I sense that I have much more to learn. Right now I just want to pause and say “thank you.” I’m grateful to be learning. I’m thankful You will never give up in me. I appreciate everything in this guided experience that is helping me understand more about myself and how I can always choose to move toward hope. God, will you please continue to guide me? I know Your Word says it, but please don’t leave me. I need You. Now more than ever. I boldly ask for large doses of wisdom. I know it’s Your wisdom that will filter into my mind to help me make healthy choices.*

Communion with God and Others Developing a friendship with God and being in communion with Him is a daily adventure. It takes practice. Praying without ceasing is a good approach! As a result of being connected with God, we are also connected with other believers who share a common faith. Communion, or the Lord’s Supper, is a tangible way we recognize our oneness with God and with others.

A Time of Communion Come together. Pray confession and forgiveness together. Read Scripture together. Eat bread together. Drink His cup together.

Prayer of Community In taking communion together, we recognize that we are joined to You and to each other as members of Christ’s Body; the church. We find great healing and hope in Your sacrifice, Jesus, and receive it deeply into our souls. May we also draw strength and courage from the union with You and each other to stay on our journey until we finally reach our true home in heaven.

D. Chapter 4: I Don't Fit In But Hope Says You Have a Choice

This is the longest chapter of the book. A 41-page (pp 91-131) chapter on the affirmation that you have a choice.

Move toward Hope You did not choose to have a mental illness, but you do have the ability to make choices that will move you toward hope. Having a support team including professional counselor will be necessary, but again, you will have to make the choices to move you toward hope. You can choose: to get help, feel, grieve, forgive, nurture your mind, pursue life, take medication, get clean, stay sober, and most importantly, you can choose to commit to stay in this life and play your part.

Nurturing Your Mind “Be careful what you think, because thoughts run your life.” Proverbs 4:23 (NCV)

Catch it, Challenge It, Change It A simple formula to investigate and challenge with the outcome that you can bring about a healthy change.

Transformative Power God's power transforms.

Self-Care Take intentional time to care for yourself – it's not selfish; rather essential. Pray, read, meditate.

Prayer for Refreshment and Restoration God, thank you for the hope You have given me through Your Son, Jesus Christ. I long to become more and more like You so I can be a reflection of Your love and compassion. I am so grateful that as I seek and come closer to You, that You will come closer to me (James 4:8). That promise gives me hope that I can enter into Your peaceful presence when I need shelter from the storm. In Jeremiah 31:25 (GW) you promise to “give those who are weary all they need... and refresh everyone who is filled with sorrow.” Lord, there are times when I am so spent, so tired, and so in need of renewal. Thank You for this verse; this promise that reminds me that You are for me and that You love me. Teach me to reach out to You when I am weary, and simply ask for refreshment when I feel empty and need Your love the most.

Personal Replenishment An inventory checklist of things that replenish.

Just Breathe The maker of heaven and earth gave you breath. Take time to pause and remember what God gave you. (Includes breathing exercises).

My Hope Network Have a hope network of friends and support.

Understanding Grief Grief comes from many places: Loss of relationships; dreams; income; potential; innocence; self-confidence; identity; control; independence.

The Grief Process Shock==sorrow==struggle==slow acceptance==start seeing==service.

Four Things to Help You Get Unstuck List the losses; identify what you've really lost; lament; ask for healing.

The Gift of Forgiveness The first step of forgiving other is to wholeheartedly accept God's gift of forgiveness for yourself.

Letting Go Forgiving does not mean forgetting or erasing the offense. Forgiving stops your suffering and lets God take care of the rest.

***Prayer of Forgiveness** God, I'm so tired of resisting forgiving those who have hurt me. I've piled up the offenses and have kept an inventory – as a result my heart is sick with the heaviness of bitterness. I know it's time for me to surrender and trust that Your power will lead me to forgive and let go of all the pain. I now know that forgiving doesn't mean forgetting. Forgiving doesn't erase the wrongdoing. But I want the peace that You promise when I release the need to get even and choose to forgive. Oh, I long for that kind of peace. Teach me how to do this. I want to offer the same no-strings-attached forgiveness to others. I can't do it alone. I am weak but You are strong and in that I hold my hope.*

E. Chapter 5: I Feel Useless but Hope Says You are Needed

A 13-page (pp 135-147) chapter on the affirmation that you are needed.

God has written your life story God has made you unique. Only you can be you. If you've ever thought you were not needed, that is entirely untrue. Mental illness is a thief and it can rob you of your purpose. While you might feel you are a burden, God says you are needed. What you've gone through (are going through) can be a source of hope and healing to others.

How can I give back Start small and think of one thing you can do today to help someone else.

Affirmations according to God Six affirmations from the Bible.

Resilience As hope dwells at your doorstep, and begins to penetrate your heart, encouragement enters in and a beautiful thing happens. Resilience is born, and it grows in you. Resilience is the ability to keep trying, to keep hoping even in the face of imperfection, discouragement, and setbacks.

Pass it on. You may have started this journey with very little hope. The journey you take will have ups and downs. There might be times of darkness, there might be times of elation even. There will be ups and downs. Try to go through this guided experience with a few other people. Pass it on.

***Prayer for God's Grace** Dear God, help me to remember that I'm never really alone. That You are always with me and You will never abandon me. Father, teach me to lean on You as I travel through this maze of life. I'm scared and it feels like my life has been turned upside down, because it has.*

God I need Your grace. I'm going to need it every day. Remind me when I'm overwhelmed that the plans You have for me include a future and a hope. Even when I am a mess Lord, I am going to claim the promise that You love every part of me, and You will faithfully walk every step with me. You are holding my right hand. You'll carry me when I can't walk anymore.

And God, even as I wrestle with the pain in this process, help me to remember that this is not the end of my story. You have written more chapters that are woven in your incomparable grace, seasons that will bring me new hope and great joy. I choose to use my pain to help others along the way. Thank You for loving me at all times, on the good days and bad days.

F. Chapter 6: A Seven Day Journal

Day One: Gratitude

Day Two: Endurance

Day Three: Renewal

Day Four: Hope

Day Five: Encouragement

Day Six: Faith

Day Seven: Comfort

G. Appendices

Scriptures on:

Anxiety
Comfort
Community
Courage
Depression
Endurance
Hope
Love
Peace
Purpose
Protection Strength
Suffering
Trust

Feelings Word List:

Two pages of words describing feelings

H. Resources

Saddleback Resources

Recommended Resources

Recommended Reading

National Resources

Websites

Mental Health Providers

Insurance Information

IV. DVD: Hope for Mental Health: Pastor's DVD #1

This DVD is aimed at how the Pastor can help with mental health ministries. It includes three parts: A message to pastors: what every church can do; how to launch and lead a support group ministry, part 1; and, how to launch and lead a support group ministry, part 2.

A. A Message to Pastors: What Every Church Can Do.

A presentation by Rick and Kay Warren. [Just under 43 minutes]

The opening segment focuses on what your church can do to make a dent in the pain and the suffering that millions experience; and, how your church can be a hope-filled, life place of giving. Pastor Rick Warren and his wife, Kay, talk about their own family despair: "*we are not going to waste our pain; we are going to use it to help other people.*" Their own son took his life because of mental illness.

What does the video offer?

God has a heart for people living with mental illness.

And, Saddleback Church provides:

- A simple pathway to follow for healing.
- How to launch or expand an existing mental health ministry.
- Six action steps.

They start with the reasons why helping people with mental health issues should be a priority from three vantage points:

1. It's practical to do so: We are already dealing with it; we just haven't been trained

Key statistics according to Saddleback: a) half of all adults will face mental illness in their lifetime; b) half of all chronic mental illness begins at age 14; c) 1 in 5 children will have a mental illness by the time they are 18; d) 90% of all people who die by suicide also had a mental illness; e) 1/3 of all alcohol abusers and 1/2 of all drug abusers also battle mental illness f) 25% of people living in homeless shelters are mentally ill; g) 22 veterans die by suicide every day.

Bottom line: 60 million American adults will face mental illness in the coming year. Therefore, we all (likely) know someone living with this disease.

Studies have shown that people suffering from mental illness first connect with or speak with the church.

71% of clergy feel inadequately prepared to deal with such issues.

How often are church leaders approached for help with mental illness per year?

According to Amy Simpson research (Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church's Mission (InterVarsity Press)):

Once: 16.1%

2 to 5 times: 44.5%

6 to 12 times: 17%

More than 12 times: 15.8%

Never: 6%

There is a role for the church in helping those suffering. The church can help with body, mind and soul issues; caring for the whole person is vital. The church can speak into the soul and personhood of an individual.

2. It's biblically important.

The Bible mandates the church to help peoples need. It includes walking alongside both those struggling and also the families' members of those struggling. Here are some biblical references:

John 15:15 *"but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."*

Those with mental health issues are not "*patients*" they are "*friends*".

Gal. 5:13b *"but through love serve one another."*

We are to serve mental needs not just physical needs.

Rom. 15:13 *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."*

By the power of the Holy Spirit we might all abound in hope.

3. It's historically important.

Historically the church has always cared for the sick, including those mentally ill. The early Christians took their mandate seriously, and we now have a 2,000-year history of ministering to those mentally sick. Indeed, the first hospitals started in almost every country was started by Christian missionaries; because we have a preaching, teaching, and healing faith.

So, how does a church build a ministry. First, do it in stages (not all at once). Saddleback suggest you first crawl, then walk, then you run. The crawl stage requires no money. Walk steps require a little more: training and some financial support. Finally, the run steps require a higher level of commitment. They suggest using the acrostic C.H.U.R.C.H

- **C** *Care for people living with mental illness and their families*

Every church can intentionally do this no matter of size or location. Reach out to others. To have a heart of compassion like Jesus does not require finances or structure. Go out and love!

If there is a cost: it is the cost of letting go of our self-centeredness; our ignorance; our fear; our apathy; and intentionally move toward brothers and sisters with arms extended in friendship and love.

Our notion of friendship is that we are friends with those we like or are friends with those who like the same things as us. But God's view of friendship is that He loves all. He loves us; even though we are broken, pitiful and deep in sin. We were not likeable and we neither had the same interests as He – and yet, He still loved us and still does.

Rom. 5:8 *“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Jesus Himself defines the relationship by calling those who followed: *“friends”*. See John 15.

As He has friended us (though unlikeable, though without same interest) let us friend others.

Love each other the way we've been loved.

If you are aware – you'll care: start noticing people...

Crawl steps: Start referring to mental illness from the pulpit; publically pray for folks and their families. Acknowledge that mental illness exists.

Invite people with mental illness to share their testimony. Humanize our friends.

Engage with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness): for free they will hold a 12-week family to family support group on campus.

Walk Steps: Start a Mental Health Support Group.

Run Steps: Start a lay counseling ministry

- **H Help with the basic needs of people living with mental illness and their families**

Be intentional in tangible ways. What are ways in which we minister to those with cancer? We take a casserole; we offer to take people to the hospital. But how or what do we do for those diagnosed with mental illness? By offering tangible love, the church can speak volumes to those suffering.

Crawl steps: Take a meal.

Walk steps: A companion ministry. Have some in your church have a little training so that they can be companions to others on Sundays; that they can reasonably sit with others and offer companionship. They don't need to offer a final solution; or fix everything; they just need to be a companion: someone who says to another "*I will walk with you while you are here on campus.*"

Run Steps: Organize care teams. Train 3-4 people to make a long-term commitment to help others in greater tangible ways. This team friends others and intentionally looks out for them.

Whatever the step; the role is not to fix them; it is to friend them. Take your friend to a movie; take them to dinner. Folks struggling with mental illness feel isolated; what they crave is the body of Christ.

- **U Utilize volunteers**

Everyone in the family of God is a minister. There are no non-serving Christians. The church can mobilize members to become safe people that can help those struggling.

Mobilize the talent, energy and compassion of the volunteers.

Crawl steps: Get someone to compile a list of mental health services in your community. Having this ready shows your awareness and caring.

Walk steps: Start collecting books on mental illness for your volunteers to read.

Run steps: Start a food pantry.

- **R *Remove the stigma surrounding mental illness.***

Stigma surrounding mental illness is profound and deeply in-grained in our society and in our churches; it will take time for this to be reduced. People are afraid to talk about mental illness. It's not a sin to be sick; your chemistry is not your character; your identity is not your illness.

Mental health sufferers face: disgust, ridicule, exclusion, and fear. We should be tearing down ideas that people are crazy. To stigmatize a person is not only unkind and unbiblical it can be lethal. When those struggling fear that they have to hide their mental illness from others it can actually stop them from seeking the treatment they need. The consequences of which can be worsening symptoms and despair; even suicide. One of the most powerful gifts we can offer those struggling is acceptance. Help others know they are worthy of respect and are to be treated as fully integrated within the community. The upside is that there are no budget needs to reduce stigma; simply make it a priority.

Crawl steps: Preach reducing stigma: being mentally ill is not a sin. We live in a broken world and we are all broken. In fact, we are all mentally ill; sin has affected all our mental health patterns. Offer powerful words of acceptance; these will reduce if not tear down stigma.

Walk steps: Start Celebrate Recovery. This is a great program. <http://www.celebraterecovery.com/> There are groups at One Love and Inspire Church in Hawaii.

Run steps: Create a sanctuary. Create a safe place for folks with severe mental illness when they need to come and take a break from daily life. It might include places for art, music, trained volunteers.

- **C *Collaborate with Community.***

A person with mental health issues is going to need help therapeutically, emotionally, physically, relationally, spiritually. They are going to need this full range of support to adequately manage their illness. Well-being requires a fully comprehensive approach at all levels. The church can build a resource list of mental health professionals; treatment programs, foodbanks, housing referrals, hospitals and job training to help people.

Invite mental health organizations to come and speak to your congregation to inform and educate about mental illness.

Crawl steps: Invite a professional group to come and speak and give a presentation on mental health illness. Go to your local hospital and enquire how they deal with children (or adults) who come with mental health issues (hidden or overt).

Walk steps: Host a half-day training,

Run steps: Become a model church on how to help other churches on what a mental health knowledge church looks like. Another idea is to put together a coalition: a private sector-private sector-faith sector collaboration: no one sector can do it all.

Add the skills of helping with chronic issues to your skills of handling crisis issues. If there was a flood or a death, as pastor, you know how to mobilize people; start developing skills in how to have a church that deals with chronic issues. This is why it is important to develop partnerships and relationships with others.

Take a forward role in community:
enthusiasm will follow.

- *H Offer Hope*

It is the responsibility of the Church of Jesus Christ to offer hope. This is where the church can excel through the promises of God. We know how to offer hope not only in this life, but also in the life to come. [Refer to the book: Journey toward Hope].

A human can live without food, and even water to some extent, but to live without hope is a life of despair.

Conclusion

- Make a commitment to understand that the church is called to minister to the least, the last, and the lost.
- Train volunteers.
- Bring staff alongside.
- Bring mental health professionals on campus to make presentations.
- Be the hands and feet of Jesus; not just the mouth.

B. How to Launch and Lead a Support Group Ministry PT. 1

A presentation by Pastor Tommy Hilliker. [Just under 33 minutes]

Starting a support group ministry is, in many ways a response to the courage, compassion and character that God has built in you. This can be a starting place for you to communicate to others your invitation to have them participate.

This video segment talks about why we need each other; what is a support group; and, a discussion of the power behind a support group.

When you or someone feels discouraged, hope needs to be communicated.

*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. Psalm 43:5*

*The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18*

How does the Lord do that? That is, how does He save the crushed in spirit? One of the ways the Lord does it is through other people.

Here is a theme verse.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Cor. 1:3-4

Why does God comfort? He comforts us so that we can pass on the same comfort to others.

Benefits of a support group.

1. It's a place to share.

The definition of support from the dictionary: It's a place to bear, to hold up, to sustain under trial or affliction.

In support groups people can share, can express emotions and be accepted in an atmosphere of love, encouragement and safety.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal. 6:2

The Lord has commanded us to share one another's burdens – it's a way that we can love one another.

And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecc. 4:12

A support group provides such a place of strength.

2. It's a place of understanding.

Going through mental illness, depression or anxiety is not viewed by the person suffering as just a season; it's mostly thought of as a life-long situation. If the person suffering hears "just get over it" or "you'll be fine" they will further feel isolated. But if there is understanding and empathy the burden is shared.

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. 1 Cor. 12:26

One of the goals of a support group is to help with loneliness and isolation. And, through connection and empathy comes stronger support and help.

3. It's a place to find practical solutions.

When a person first enters a support group they often have many questions but few answers. The Lord tells us:

*Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and the one who gets understanding, Prov. 3:13*

A support group can be a place that provides practical solutions that address what you are going through. The exchange of ideas and reflections will empower the participants. And that will give the participant a sense of hope as they regain some stability over their situation.

A support group can be a place that hosts experts that come to give presentations; a place that has a collection of helpful articles and resources; and a place, where people have already dealt with how to start recovery and even sustain that recovery.

*I have taught you the way of wisdom;
I have led you in the paths of uprightness. Prov. 4:11*

God, Himself, is saying that He wants us to go in the right direction.

4. It's a place that points people to Christ

One of the ways that we can share the love of Jesus is to love one another; helping each other through each other's burdens.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35

Again, referring to the theme verse of 2 Cor.1:3-4, God will bring purpose out of pain.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.” Eph. 1:11-12

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.” Col. 1:16

Everything started in Christ and finds its purpose in Him; and that includes you and me.

To the question, “Can God bring purpose out of your pain?” the answer is yes. God wants to bring you to a place of healing; God wants to bring purpose out of your pain. What we go through does have meaning; and if meaning, then we have hope. Support groups are an answer to hopelessness. More than a concept, idea, or philosophy our hope is in a person: Jesus.

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Phil. 3:7

We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain. Heb. 6:19

God does not want us going through life adrift, he wants us to be anchored: the anchor of Jesus.

5. It's a place for openness

Jesus said this:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 5:3

The Lord wants to give you life, and life in all its fullness. That can happen well in a support group if there is openness. To openly share in a group and be affirmed in what

you are going through is normal, or is what others have gone through gives the sufferer a sense of power and a sense of freedom. Openness leads to healing.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:16

As we express our faults, we begin to experience healing. Secrets on the other hand will, according to research, make us sick. Therefore, be open with others in a support group.

6. It's a place for restoration and reconciliation

Reconciliation, first with God.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:20

Often times people who come to your support groups have never been in a church before and they are looking for help. A starting place then is to help these and others be restored to Jesus. And even for those who have walked with the Lord but have lost their way, they too can have hope.

In addition, foster restoration with others.

leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matt. 5:24

When people experience mental illness, this is often accompanied with strained relationships. Support groups, then, foster healing among each other.

that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. Rom. 1:12

*which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. 1
Tim. 3:15*

7. It's a place for people to journey together

Mental health issues are rarely bound by a season. Instead, people go through their struggle for a life. It's a journey, a long journey. And God never intended for you or I to go through this life alone.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." Col. 3:12

Be compassionate with others, live in humility with others, be meek with one another and be patient with one another in life's journey.

so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Rom. 12:5

God is saying that he does not want us to go through this life alone.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Eph. 2:19

A support group is just one of God's answers. Yet, it is a good answer for hurting people. There may be many problems and issues ahead, but God does not want us to go it alone.

C. How to Launch and Lead a Support Group Ministry PT. 2

A presentation by Tommy Hilliker. [Just under 68 minutes]

The Seven Steps a Church can take to Launch its' Support Group Ministry.

Launching a ministry is different than planting a ministry. When you launch a ministry you are wanting to make an impact; it's starting and it's going to be exciting. Planting a ministry is different in that it takes longer; eventually over a period of time the seeds will grow. Saddleback want to focus on the idea of launching so that the ministries get started and get going! What are the basic?

1. You must have senior leadership support

Everything hinges on leadership. To launch a ministry with the greatest chance of success you need pulpit support. The key here is to get visibility: in bulletins, in boards and in apps if your church has them.

The starting place to get support is by prayer! Seek God for what He wants to have happen; seek God for when He wants it to happen. Determine by His leading what it is that makes sense in your church to have a support group ministry.

Go humbly to your leadership. Ask them if they would be willing to sit and listen to what you perceive God to be leading. They will need to get a sense of what the ministry might be and even an excitement over that ministry – introduce the ideas, humbly.

Then, you must trust. You must keep in step with God – don't get ahead of Him. If the response from leadership is that the timing is not right, that doesn't mean that it won't be right later. Trust the Lord.

Following this there is an acrostic to help understand the next six steps: L.A.U.N.C.H.

See next page.

2. L. Leverage available space

Support groups can meet just about anywhere, restaurants, parks, wherever. But the best place is at your church. Thus, look around and see what spaces are not being used throughout the week. It's generally cheaper than anywhere else. Also, when people come to your church there is a sense of safety. If they then come, it adds to the evangelistic efforts of your church.

You can meet in homes, however there are some practical and spiritual reasons why you may want to yet direct people to the church. The main reason is to protect the leader. What should be a safe environment for the leader in his/her own home might become vulnerable to a person struggling. People can and will turn up at all times of day (and night) and people can and will call multiple, multiple time. People will ask to sleep over, etc., etc. People can meet at home for small groups, but again, steer people to the church for support groups.

Practically speaking, you'll need a space that can accommodate about eight (8) – fifteen (15) people. Experience shows that eight people is a really good group size. If the group size is likely to grow, make sure you plan for multiple leaders and multiple break-out areas.

Make sure there is good lighting, that it is easily accessible, and that you can communicate the directions on how to get to the area well.

Items you'll need are refreshments and Kleenex! Try to create a warm environment. Make the group setting circular, or have comfy couches. Make it so that people can talk easily to each other.

3. A. Assess the greatest needs

Determine what might be the best support groups to start within your church or ministry. As you determine that keep in mind how you might cast the biggest net to catch as many people you can.

Here are some examples:

An Anxiety and Depression Support Group. Lots of people suffer with this – they just don't talk about it. Many will come if you launch it.

A Support Group for Families and Friends that have Members with Mental Illness. This too, will have lots of attendees.

A Grief Support Group. At some point everyone will go through grief!

A Support Group for Survivors of Suicide. Unfortunately, a lot of people have experience of this.

4. U. Utilize and implement the support group pathway

The pathway starts with the **heart of the leader**. Such a leader must be the right person in terms of passion for the particular type of support ministry. This is followed by **training**. The training must be intensive for we must protect the person(s) being ministered to. We want to avoid the sufferer from being hurt even more. Keep in mind that we are not talking about therapy groups, we are talking about support groups. There is a difference. The former will need to be led by professionals. Support groups can be facilitated by people passionate who themselves have already had their own experiences. Remember that God will never waste a hurt. God will bring a purpose from your pain.

Saddleback has a complete package that trains leaders: **Leading and Launching Life-Changing Support Groups**. It is a five-week interactive training in 15 hours. It is available at saddlebackresources.com. It is not intended to be fully comprehensive; it is meant to train the basics and give your church a starting point.

The next step on the pathway is an **interview process**. The assessment evaluates whether the intended leader is actually ready to start a support group. The assessment is part of the resource CD. Sometimes a hopeful leader is not ready. You must be prepared to help that person with a spiritual growth plan. They may need to be a part of a support group – but not lead it.

The next step is for the intended leader to **attend some existing groups**. If you don't already have any groups in place, it's okay for them to attend some secular support groups. A minimum of three groups is beneficial. When the intended leader goes to other groups he/she needs to give the following commitments:

I will allow it to be communicated that I am simply attending for personal training.

I will not take any notes.

I will be cordial.

I will not interject.

I will sit, listen and observe.

Never ever just show up. Make sure you get permission to attend. Most groups will be okay if it is handled well for they know that leaders are needed and leaders need training.

The next step is to **launch** the group, or **co-lead** the group. If it is the latter, have the step of having a meal together with the existing leader and the new co-leader to make sure that everything will work as best as possible.

Then **market** the group.

Then have **on-going** training.

5. N. Narrow your focus when you start a group

The recommendation by Saddleback is to start with just one group for launch (even if there are many potential possibilities). Start with the one that might have the greatest impact and the one that might be best received by the church.

Also, it's okay to start small. You might have only 1-2 people at the beginning (or even none). People need time to process.

Be consistent! Keep at it.

One way of narrowing focus is to think about starting the ministry and not actually start the group. You might want to partner with other churches and if so start there.

6. C. Create a ministry plan

First, **what kind of ministry do we want to be known for?** A ministry that cares for our people, cares for our community? If that is your value, make sure that that is a part of you plan. For Saddleback they've identified that they value help, healing and wholeness. Second, **what is it that God wants us to be?** Third, **develop a purpose statement.** This should combine, by way of a statement, the first two elements. Try to make it into one sentence. Fourth, **what is it that the people in the community need?** They should be fed by your original assessment efforts that you made earlier. You will find that people want to know that they are not alone, that there is someone there for them. They want love, and they want acceptance. Fifth, **what do you need to have to make it work?** This has already been identified earlier (leadership support, leveraging available space, etc.). Sixth, **what do you need to have** to make sure it runs well. [I think what they mean by this: what do you need to do to meet the needs.

7. H. Harness the power of the Holy Spirit

This is the most important step in the process. Without the leading of the Holy Spirit, the formation of a support group can be fraught with problems. You might have a great idea, but the timing might not be right. Rushing ahead is often a critical issue; or rather, waiting upon the Holy Spirit is better.

The training sessions Saddleback offer of five (5) weeks allows space for you to connect with the Holy Spirit to see if you really want to run or lead a support group ministry.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to speak into your life will allow for His commentary that your pain can be used for His purpose and for the good of others.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to speak into your life will allow the Holy Spirit to offer the caution that maybe you should wait before getting involved because you might still need more healing.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to speak into the life of the church will make sure that the right leaders will be available.

V. DVD: Hope for Mental Health: Pastor's DVD #2

This DVD is aimed at how the Pastor can help with mental health ministries. It includes five (5) parts: How to launch and lead a support group ministry, part 3; how to build a safety net and continuum of care; mental health pathway part 1; mental health pathway part 2; how to build a mental health ministry.

A. How to Launch and Lead a Support Group Ministry, part 3.

A presentation by Tommy Hilliker. [Just under 27 minutes]

This segment focuses on leadership; what kind of leader are you looking for in your support group ministry.

Saddleback's first step is to look at the three different components of the heart of a leader.

- Life experience of a leader.
There should be some experience that the leader has in the ministry he/she hopes to lead.
- Health of the leader.
It is important that the intended leader is healthy. That doesn't mean that they are perfect, but that they are in a position to care for other people. That is, they are healed from their own situation; if you cannot take care of yourself, it's unlikely you'll be able to care for others.
- Passion of the leader.
A leader must have a passion for the intended ministry.

What does it look like to be a support group leader?

- A leader needs to be a source of information.

The leader needs to have a level of **competency**. People attending a support group will come if the leader has some level of competency, if they have some authority. This is why an intended leader's life story is so important – they must have some life experience; you understand already what others are now going through.

*Buy truth, and do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding. Prov. 23:23*

The idea here is get all the facts and keep the good sense you attain. Intended leaders must be or become expert in giving information to help others.

- A leader needs to be a source of inspiration.

The leader needs to have a level of **courage**. People attending a support group will come if the leader has some level of courage in taking people to a better place.

*let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matt. 5:16*

Being a source of inspiration takes courage. Courage inspires people to not give up; to have hope. Again, this is where the Lord takes your story of pain to be a purpose in helping others; that takes courage and it will be an inspiration. Your story of how God has worked with you, in faith, will help others.

- A leader needs to be a source of interpretation.

The leader needs to have a level of **clarity**. It is vital to be a person of clarity in support group ministries, because people attending are often in a state of chaos and confusion. Your clarity is vital for ministry; you become a sounding board for others.

The intended leader can help with interpretation of what the Lord is saying; and; of what others might be saying.

This is not to say that you take the place of God and neither do you become the medical advisor or even a legal advisor.

Simply be a sounding board.

Pray with them.

Be a friend.

For the LORD gives wisdom;

from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; Prov. 2:6

- A leader needs to be a source of intervention.

The leader needs to have a level of **compassion**. It is vital to be a person of compassion in support group ministries. To intervene is to come between or to intercede on behalf of someone. In other words, pray.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Rom. 8:26-27

The Spirit is compassionately intervening on our behalf; and, that is something that we can do too! We too, get to compassionately intervene for someone; through prayer. Indeed, we also see that Jesus prays for Peter.

but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. Luke 22:32

Might we also ask Jesus to intervene on our behalf?

Further, we can speak the truth in love to one another.

But speaking the truth in love Eph. 4:15a

The way we can do this is knowing that we have gone through hard times, we have taken the wrong paths, and if there are people in your group in the same situation, then you can speak the truth in love. Acknowledge their pain, be empathetic, yet also speak the truth.

And, of course, we can intercede by actually showing up in critical moments; yes, in hospital, but maybe just by way of a text.

- A leader needs to be a source of instruction.

The leader doesn't need to know everything, he or she just needs to have a level of information to instruct others; even if you are still yourself going through a struggle (such as cancer). There are some cautions though. Saddleback doesn't have leaders teaching counseling about divorce who are currently going through a divorce. Generally speaking, medical or chronic pain support groups are encouraged to support leaders who are concurrently going through struggles to continue their leadership.

This is the idea that the leader needs to construct. If he or she is one step ahead of others, he can help them build.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:6

God, Himself, is in the process of working in us.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Rom. 8:29

Saddleback notes that God has a plan A for our lives: to make us like His Son, Jesus Christ. No matter what has gone in our lives (pain, hurt, heartache, trial or trauma) God is trying to make you more and more like His Son.

As leaders we can instruct and help others make things better and not live in the bitter.

There are three benefits for us in responding to instruction:

- It will bring blessings into our lives

*Listen to advice and accept instruction,
that you may gain wisdom in the future. Prov. 19:20*

When we receive His instruction, we get on with God's life plan.

- It will bring protection and provision in our lives.

*Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;
guard her, for she is your life. Prov. 4:13*

*The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
that one may turn away from the snares of death. Prov. 14:13*

When we follow Him, we are protected and provided for. We will not be alone.

- It will bring guidance into our lives.

*Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it. Prov. 8:33*

When we listen, the Bible tells us that the Lord will give instruction.

*Listen to advice and accept instruction,
that you may gain wisdom in the future. Prov. 19:20*

God wants to instruct us.

The next section deals with making decisions:

- Help making wise decisions.

First, be their advocate.

They need to know that you empathize with them, that you care for them.

Second, be balanced.

What worked for you may not necessarily work for them. Be willing to share what you have gone through, but do not make it necessarily what they should go through.

Third, be compassionate.

The person you are communicating to is on a journey and even if they don't always receive what you offer, be compassionate.

Fourth, be honest.

Be honest with love. If the person is on a destructive path and you know it, gently let them know.

Fifth, be thoughtful with your words.

*The wise of heart is called discerning,
and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness. Prov. 16:21*

Pleasant words promote the right instruction in the right direction.

Be very careful how you direct others in spiritual growth.

Sixth, be a source of influence in their lives.

*By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown. Prov. 11:11*

You, as a leader, might become one of the biggest sources of influence in another person's life. Be a good influence to others in community. Be the hands and feet of Jesus in another's life.

It takes a lot to be a support group leader. It will take some sacrifice. But it will also make a purpose out of the pain that you might have gone through.

B. How to Build a Safety Net & Continuum of Care.

A presentation by Tommy Hilliker. [Just under 25 minutes]

This segment focuses on a continuum of care for people. Saddleback has instituted a safety net process that helps them identify where a person is on their journey.

Saddleback has identified that they can help 90% of people who come to them in need and with a struggle. Their solution involves a 1-to-1 ratio of one person helping that one individual. They have a process and a system that take care of 90% of all folks. Your church will also need to develop some kind of process or system. The goal is to minister to lots of different people at different stages of help needed. Part of this one-touch

support doesn't need to be handled totally by you. If your church partners with other groups you can still effectively minister to a wide body of people in 1-to-1 relationships.

Beyond the 90%, is a further 8% that Saddleback has identified who need more help and this time from more people. They have critical or chronic care issues that need attending to. They need more touches, more love; they need a team.

And, then there is a final 2%. These are folks in acute crisis. They are beyond extreme need. They need even more grace. They will need many, many to help them. It might take many ministries, many outside programs to help them. This is the help needed for the severely mentally ill.

In essence, Saddleback have looked at issues of emotional, mental and spiritual health and have identified that there are low, medium and high factors when it comes to stability. What might this look like for your church and how will you handle the issues that come about in your community?

How Saddleback addresses their issues is through the acrostic C.A.R.E.

One of the first questions that they ask relates to a person's current community status.

- How does this person need to be **Connected**?

Often times, what a person faces is the reality of loneliness. With this in mind ask the question: "what kind of community and connection does this person need?" Do they need to be in a counseling situation? Do they need to be in a small group? Are they connected to the body of believers? Do they need to be in a support group? How does the church get them connected so that they do not have to struggle alone?

The second question is a question of assistance.

- How can we **Assist** this person?

Is there anything practically or physically that they need? Talk with the person and discuss with them where you as the church can help them.

This might take time, resources and energy. This is where partners come in. God will lay His concerns on the hearts of the people. As they hear these concerns of the Lord, they become His resources and in turn, they become the partners needed. If you have folks who can teach English, they become partners; if you have dentists who can offer dental hygiene teaching, they become partners. Outside of your campus there are other partners. Pray for them and work with them.

You don't have to do it all, but do what you can.

The third question relates to recovery.

- How can we help the person **Restore and Recover**

People have lots of different needs, but one area is the need of recovery. One of the most important aspects Saddleback has discovered is that folks are mostly dealing with relational problems. So when it comes to recovery, Saddleback keeps in mind that it is often tied to a relational issue.

In recovery, dual-diagnosis is very important. A person might have both a mental illness and an addiction. Walking with the person to discover those issues is vital. Again, celebrate recovery is a great partner <http://www.celebraterecovery.com/>. Saddleback also welcomes a phone inquiry to see how your church can develop a recovery program.

The fourth question relates to education.

- What kind of **Education** can we provide for this person

What kind of equipping can we provide? This is especially for those who have the gift of teaching; financial teachers; counseling teachers; medical teachers; teachers expert in bi-polar, etc.

Invite outside professionals to teach; such as NAMI.

C. Mental Health Pathway, part 1.

A presentation by Tommy Hilliker. [Just under 15 minutes]

An overview of the Mental Health Pathway. A brief review of the framework developed by Saddleback of what they want their mental health ministry to be. Saddleback encourages you as a church to develop your own framework. You have license to use their framework if you want; or, even use it as a blueprint. The blueprint should note what it is exactly that you as a church want to be known for.

- *Step one is a values step.*

Here you should ask what is it that we need to be and what do we want to be known for as a church?

For Saddleback: They want to extend the radical friendship of Jesus to people living with mental illness and their families by providing transforming love, support and hope through the local church. They've based this on 3 Scripture verses:

"I have called you friends" John 15:15

"serve one another in love" Gal. 5:13

"may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Rom. 15:13

Friends with Jesus, loving one another the same way Jesus loves us, with a real hope; a real hope found only in Jesus.

The pathway (in general terms; later Saddleback offers more specific steps)...

Let people know they are loved. A person's struggle doesn't have to define them.

Let people know they have a purpose. Everyone is significant.

Let everyone know they belong. God doesn't want orphans. He wants us to be a family.

Let everyone know they have a choice. You can follow a pathway that is best; one which God guides.

Let everyone know that you are needed. One of the greatest challenges for a person with mental illness is that they feel that they are not needed.

These five emphases should be lived out in five ways:

Spiritually

Practically

Emotionally

Physically

Relationally.

How does a church help to make this happen? Refer to part A of the DVD: Hope for Mental Health: Pastor's DVD#1 and locate the acrostic C.H.U.R.C.H. Care; Help; Utilize; Remove; Collaborate; and offer Hope.

Remember that the starting place (from part C of the DVD: Hope for Mental Health: Pastor's DVD #1) is to have:

- Senior leadership support.

Then, use the Saddleback resources.

And, go at it at God's pace.

- You also need developed core ministries.

This involves the crawl stage, the walk stage, and the run stage.

- You also need to identify and train volunteers

See who has a heart and passion, get them involved, and get them trained. Saddleback offers such training.

- You also need community partners

The issue of mental health is too big for one group of people to handle. You will need others.

Do you want to be the kind of church that walks with people in their darkest and toughest times?

D. Mental Health Pathway, part 2.

A presentation by Tommy Hilliker. [Just under 28 minutes]

- *Step two is a belief step*

Once you work out your **values** as a church (Mental Health Pathway, part 1); that is, what do you want to be known for, the next step is to work on the question of your **beliefs**.

That is to say, “**what does God want?**” What is it that you sense God is saying from the Bible about the particular ministry you sense should be in place.

So, for example, what does the Bible say that the church should be? The Great Commandment and the Great Commission are informative:

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." [Mat 22:36-40 ESV]

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20*

In these two passages are the essentials for what God wants from us.

- *Step three is a principles step*

Having identified your beliefs the next step is closely related: develop your purpose statement for ministry. If the first question is a question of values, and the second of beliefs, then this is a question of **principles**; make a one-sentence purpose statement. To do so, you might need to identify all the purposes of your community. Here is Saddleback's:

We are to love God – that's **worship**: to magnify

Love your neighbor as yourself – that's **ministry**

Go to all – that's **evangelism / missions**

Baptizing others – that's **fellowship**: membership

Teaching others – that's **discipleship**: maturity

These are elements of what has already be stated in part C of the DVD: Hope for Mental Health: Pastor's DVD #1 under the L.A.U.N.C.H category (specifically item C.)

If you don't define the purpose of the ministry, it won't make a lot of sense to you and it won't make a lot of sense to others (leadership, volunteers, or those you are trying to minister to). Note, one way of getting that statement made is to involve a few key people

to help you articulate the statement. Further: It could take as long as 2-3 full days of thinking about it before it finally comes to shape. Here's Saddleback's purpose statement:

To bring people to Jesus and **membership** in his family, develop them to Christ-like **maturity**, and equip them for their **ministry** in the church and their life **mission** in the world in order to **magnify** God's name.

Note that all five purposes are found in their purpose statement. Now, for their mental health ministry, here is their purpose statement:

Extend the radical friendship of Jesus to people living with mental illness and their families by providing transforming love, support, and hope through the local church.

It is based on John 15:15 and Rom. 15:13

And, here is their support group purpose statement:

We want to provide help for today and hope for tomorrow for life's trials, traumas and tragedies.

- *Step four is an assessment question.*

Here we ask: what is it that people need from you? Look at which groups/segments of people have needs and then assessing the needs of this group. Remember that, in general, people have five key needs: spiritual, practical, emotional, physical, and relational. To do this look at the greatest needs first but keep in mind the necessity of what might appear to be lesser needs.

Remember, again, to keep in mind that it takes time. And over time, God will eventually reveal different needs. Crawl first, then walk, then run.

- *Step five is a question of structure.*

Here you answer the question: what we must have to be able to do this ministry?
This will look different for different ministries.

One need might be the absolute need for having the senior pastor's support. You might need a group of volunteers. You might need training. You might need community partners. You might need a budget.

- *Step six is developing your ministry pathway to its completion.*

This is a question of action. That is: What do you need to do to meet the needs of your community? Again, this is a repeat of item C. Create a ministry plan in section C: How to launch and lead a support group ministry Pt.2. Note: This step is normally where folks actually begin: they want to begin at the 'do' point. But, it is important that the other 5 steps are done first. One thing that can happen if you don't do the first five steps is that when volunteers arrive (without the first five steps) everyone will go off and do their own thing! People want to be a part of something, but it needs to be clear to them what is being offered.

Saddleback offer 5 benefits of building a ministry pathway.

- It gives people serving a very clear direction

This will minimize the phenomena of drifting. People will drift if there is no clear direction. Having a pathway will help.

- It defines your ministry and allows you to cast a vision

A good reminder of these issues and benefits is the story of Nehemiah and the people building the wall. About half way through their project, people got discouraged. Discouragement often comes, and often around the half-way point. Nehemiah understood these issues and his response was to re-cast the vision. He got people reorganized (after 26 days in fact) and back to the project of rebuilding the wall. Principle here: Recast the vision (every 26 to 30 days). Why? Because people get discouraged. People quit.

- It sets expectations for your volunteers and your leadership

People are often down on what they are not up on! Give them a clear direction; give them clear expectations; clear defined boundaries and a framework to work within – life will be made easier. This will also let them have the opportunity to be a part of the ministry or not.

- It creates a common language which in turn impacts the culture in a positive way

Creating a common language fosters the opportunity for a lot of momentum and a lot of impact.

- It moves people from being an audience into mobilizing them into an army

People, often, want to be a part of something that is beyond themselves; but we just don't ask them. Yet, asking them just isn't enough. To ask them requires that you be ready once they've said yes. According to Saddleback, upwards of 40% of people will say yes to a ministry if you offer it to your church. People want to serve; people want to be significant.

If you face issues where people want to contribute but not commit it might be because you've not given them a pathway. Create a pathway for your people; they likely will walk and work along it. Remember, the chicken contributes, but the pig commits!

E. How to Build a Mental Health Ministry

A presentation by Tommy Hilliker. [Just under 20 minutes]

Here, Pastor Tommy walks you through the process of how to develop your ministry.

- *Step one: what do you want to be known for as a church in your community*

This is the question of values. For Saddleback they want to be as a second chance grace place; whether that be the chance to overcome addiction, or broken relationships. They also want to be known as an all nation congregation; they want to look like heaven. They want to be known as a people with a do-able faith; biblically based that shows the love of Jesus. Also, that they are kid and family friendly. Mostly, they want to be known as a church that loves and cares; through preaching, worship, being a place where people can contribute, through family programs; through the emphasis of being cared for.

[Curiously, they only deal with step one ???]