Texas Baptist Women in Ministry

Rethinking Mental Health and the Church

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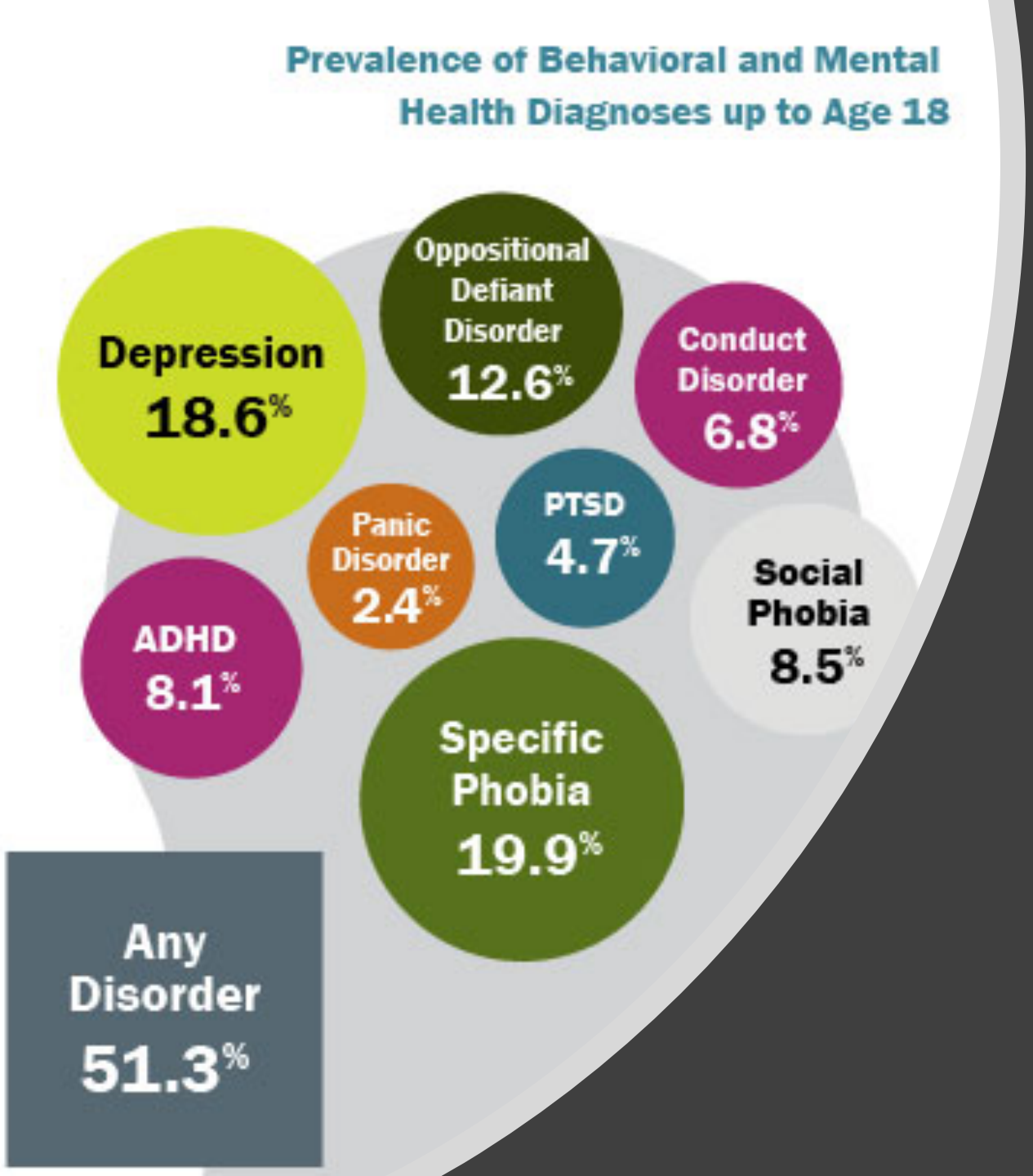
nbcc Board Certified NCC

On Mental Health and the Church



Prevalence of Mental Health in the Church

Current Trends

Prevalence of Mental Health in the Church

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance Abuse
- ADHD/ADD
- Grief
- Trauma/PTSD
- Bipolar Disorder
- Behavioral Issues (Children & Adolescents)
- Suicide
- Schizophrenia
- And much more

(CDC, 2018)

Prevalence

- Adults aged 18 + who experienced serious psychological distress during the past 30 days was **3.9%** - higher than the 2017 (3.4%)
- Number of visits to physician offices with mental, behavioral and neurodevelopmental disorders as the primary diagnosis: **56.8 million**
- Number of visits to emergency departments with mental disorders, behavioral, and neurodevelopmental as the primary diagnosis: 5.5 million
- Suicide - Number of suicide deaths: 47,173
- Suicide deaths per 100,000 population: 14.5

Most Prevalent

- **Anxiety disorders** - are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older, or 18.1% of the population every year.

- **Depressive Disorders** - The leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15 to 44.3.
- MDD affects more than 16.1 million American adults, or about 6.7% of the U.S. population age 18 and older in a given year.

- Percent of persons aged 12 years and over with **depression** in any 2-week period: 7.6% (2009-2012).

Contributing Factors

- Genetical Predispositions
- Environmental
- Trauma Related Issues
- Biological
- Violence
- Socio-economic
- Poor coping skills
- Stress
- Relationship Problems
- Medical Conditions

“Mental health is one of the great societal issues; it demands a response which is both pastorally motivated and theologically grounded.”

—

(Ben Ryan, 2018)

Mental Health Impact our Congregations

When people come to church

“I’m nervous and worried all the time”

“I need help, my daughter has schizophrenia”

My husband is Bipolar

My son has ADHD

I’m Sad all the time

I’m in Panic

Stigmas

Stigma refers to attitudes and beliefs that **lead people to reject, avoid, or fear** those they perceive as being different.

“Public Stigma” refers to the attitudes and beliefs of the general public towards persons with mental health challenges or their family members.

5 types of Stigma

- Public - The process in which the general public stigmatizes individuals with mental illness, consisting of processes of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.
- Institutional - Institutional practices that work to the disadvantage of the stigmatized group or person.
- Self - When an individual takes publicly acknowledged stereotypes held by society and applies them to him or herself.
- Family - When stigma is experienced among those who are related by kinship to labeled individuals
- Religious – religious believes about those who suffer mental illness attribute it to sin or demon possessed.

(Mascayano et al., 2016; Wesselman & Graciano, 2010)

Positive Reframing

Myths: What people think about Mental Health

- “I’m not crazy” So, I’m not going to Counseling or the Psychiatrist
- “Medications make you an addict”
- Don’t tell anyone
- If you have depression you don’t have enough faith
- I’m not going to a “Crazy-House” (Manicomio)
- Mental Illness is the result of sin

Truths: A Wake-up Call

- You are not crazy, “The head is part of the body”
- Medications, when taken as prescribed do not cause addiction.
- Counseling is confidential. But in order to get help, we need to talk to a professional.
- Faith is not Depression related or MH related everytime.
- Inpatient Facilities are only for higher level of care
- Mental illness is not sin, it is an illness.

The Role of the Church

Individuals go to the church first to seek help

The embrace of spirituality (Zygon)

Church & Spirituality Impact on Mental Health

“This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ”

1 Timothy 2:3-4 NIV

Church's Positive Impact

On families - strengthening positive family processes to protect against negative future outcomes for adolescents.

Decrease symptoms of Depression

Improve Anxiety

Very Religious/Spiritual Americans Report Less Depression and Worry

(Gallup, 2010)

The research suggests that individuals with strong spiritual beliefs but who lacked a defined religious affiliation are more likely to have poorer mental health.

(Bonelli et al., 2012; Leurent et al., 2013)

He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.
Psalm 147:3

The church is a healing agent

- “He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted. The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Isaiah 61:1).

Education is Key

There is a need for **mental health** education and training for religious leaders in ethnic minority communities to help them properly respond to community **mental health** needs.

(Bonelli et al., 2012; Leurent et al., 2013).

Symptoms of Depression

knowmedge

Mnemonic: "A SAD FACES"

A

- **A**ppetite (Weight Change)

SAD

- **S**leep (Insomnia / Hypersomnia)
- **A**nhedonia
- **D**ysophria

FACES

- **F**atigue
- **A**gitation / Retardation
- **C**oncentration Diminished
- **E**steem (Low) / Guilt
- **S**uicide / Thoughts of Death

Intellectual Property of Knowmedge.com

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) Symptoms

Excessive anxiety and worry

Increased muscle aches or soreness

Impaired concentration

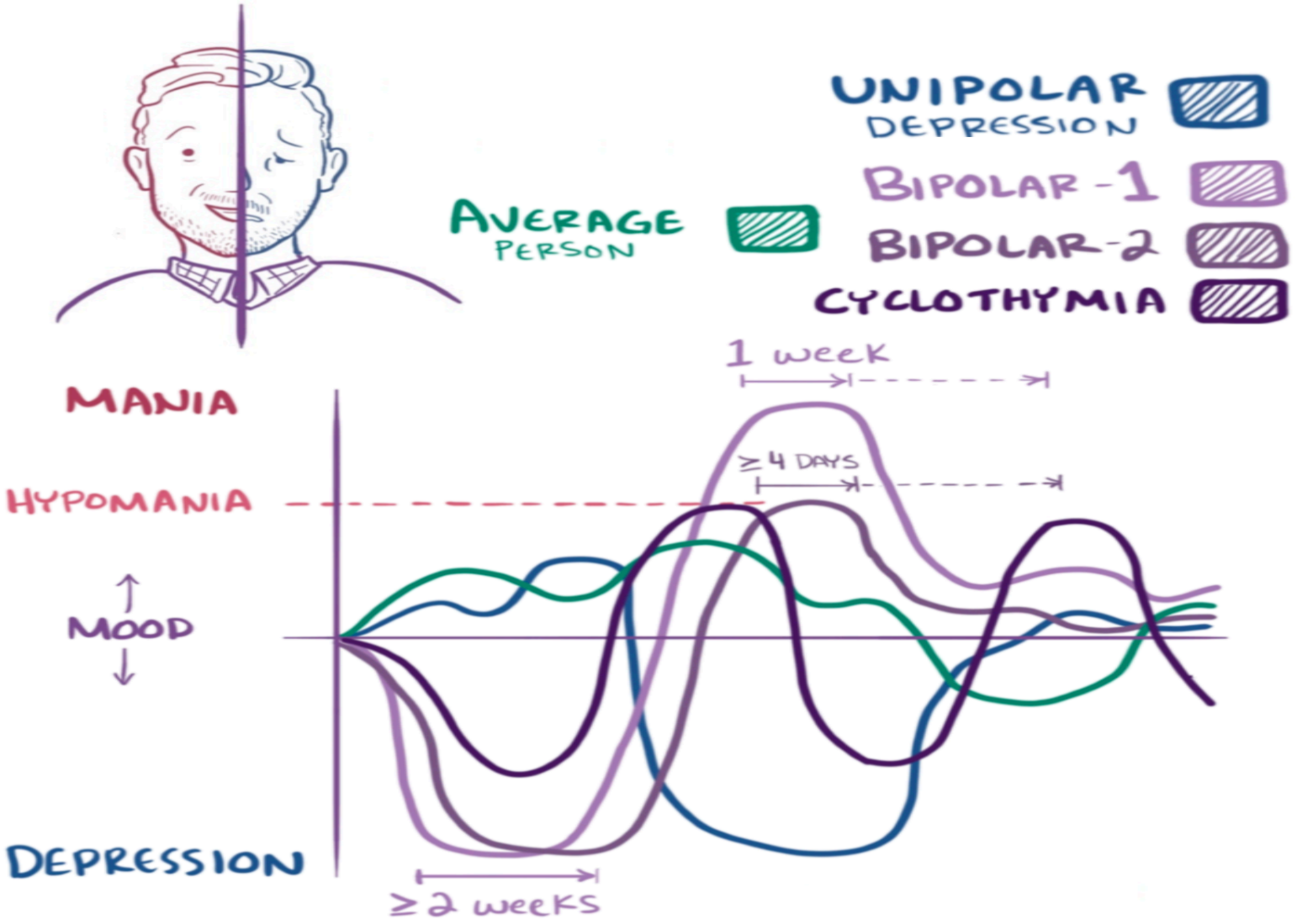
Fatigue

Irritability

Restlessness

Difficulty sleeping

verywell


UNIPOLAR DEPRESSION
BIPOLAR-1
BIPOLAR-2
CYCLOTHYMIA
AVERAGE PERSON
1 week
MANIA
≥4 DAYS
HYPOMANIA
MOOD
DEPRESSION
≥2 weeks

Schizophrenia

Empirically Supported Treatments

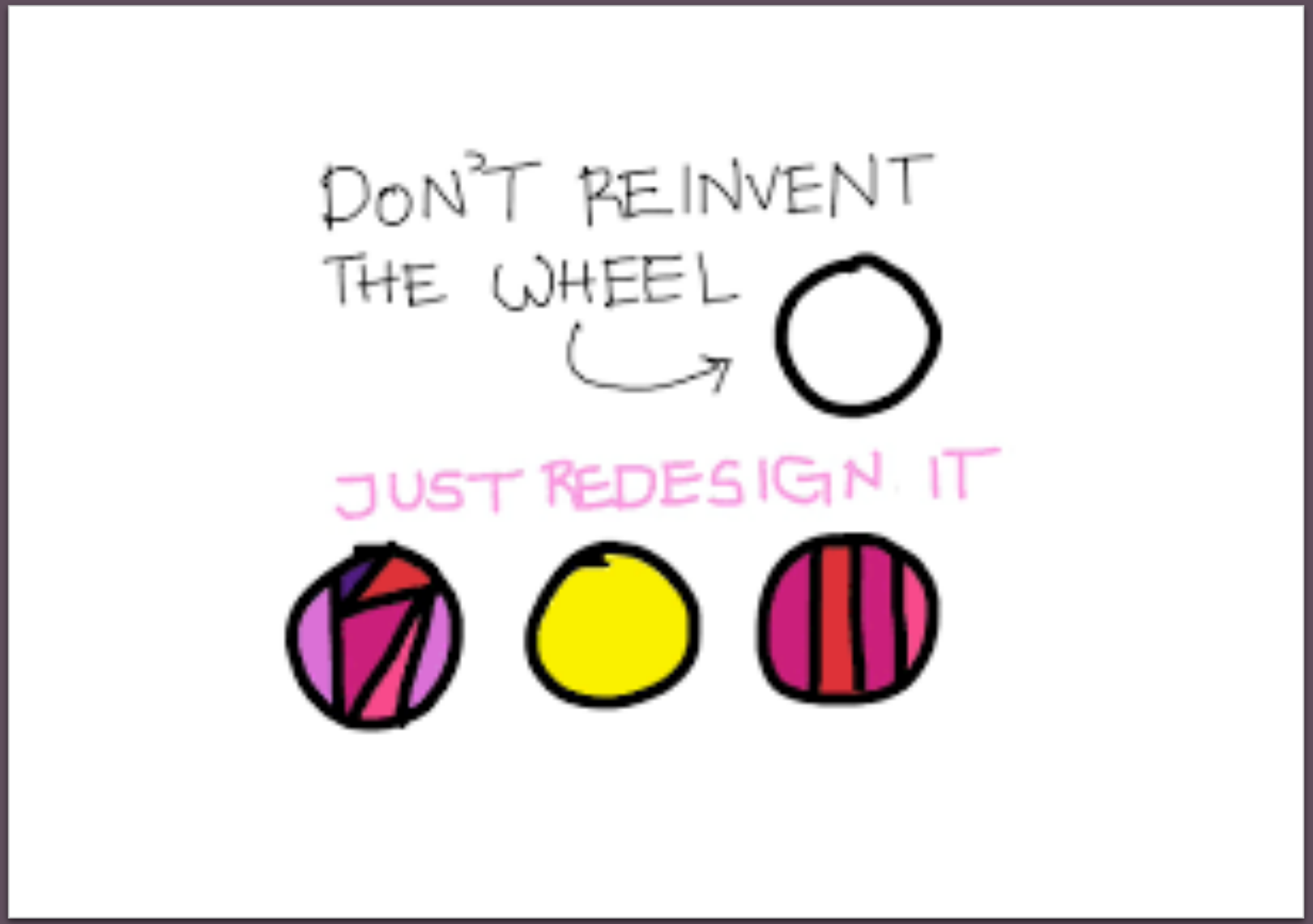
- Counseling & Psychotherapy
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- Spiritual Support
- Positive Social Support
- Medication Management
- And more…

Be an agent of…

- Acceptance
- Compassion
- Grace
- Understanding
- Support

Recommendations for the Church

Strategies for Ministry



Use Your Already Established Ministry Platform

Religiousness and spirituality is positively associated with **better mental health and positive psychosocial functioning** in adolescents and young adults.

(Sanders et al., 2015)

Reframe

Replace

Rewire

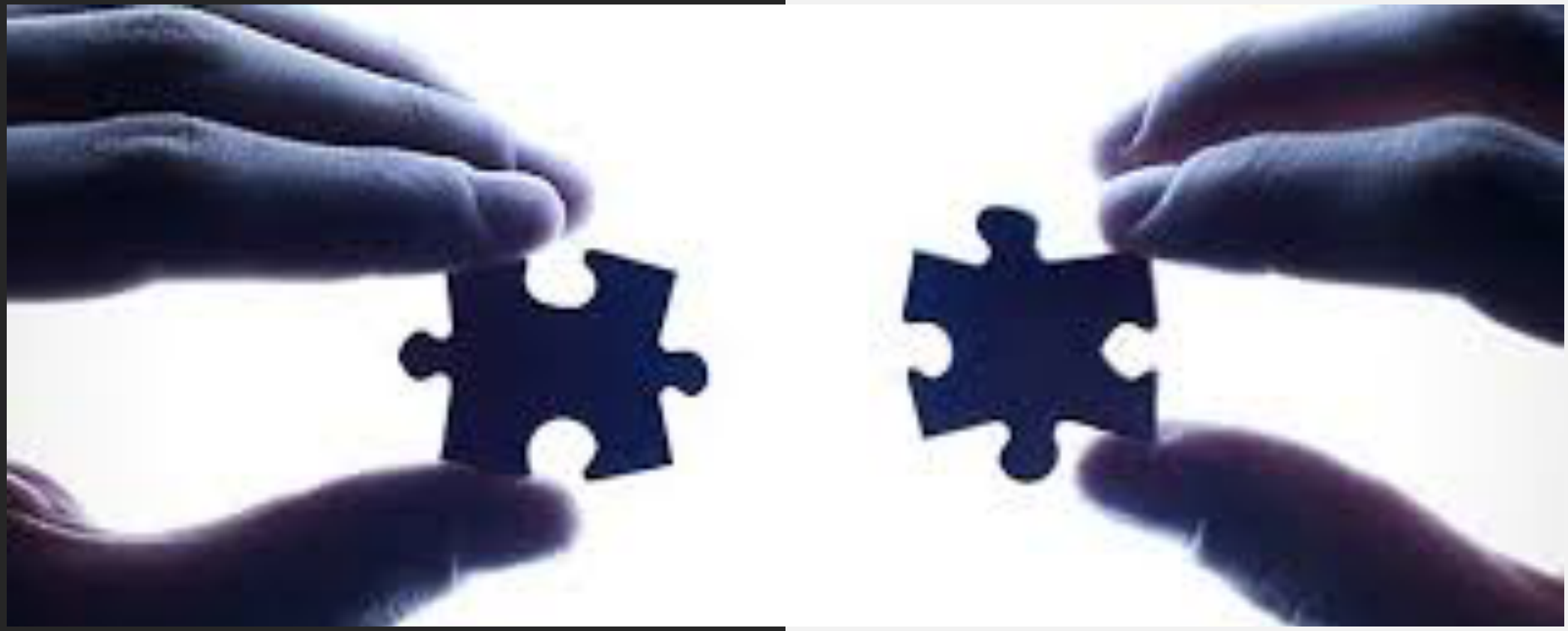
People rely on their church for emotional support

Use bible study groups (Payne & Hays, 2016)

Having a relationship with God can serve as a coping mechanism and promote a healthier psychological well-being.

Collaborative Partnership

Church, Health and Community Services



Potential for Ministry

Church Counseling Center

Mental Health Ministry

Support Groups

Grief

Divorce Recovery

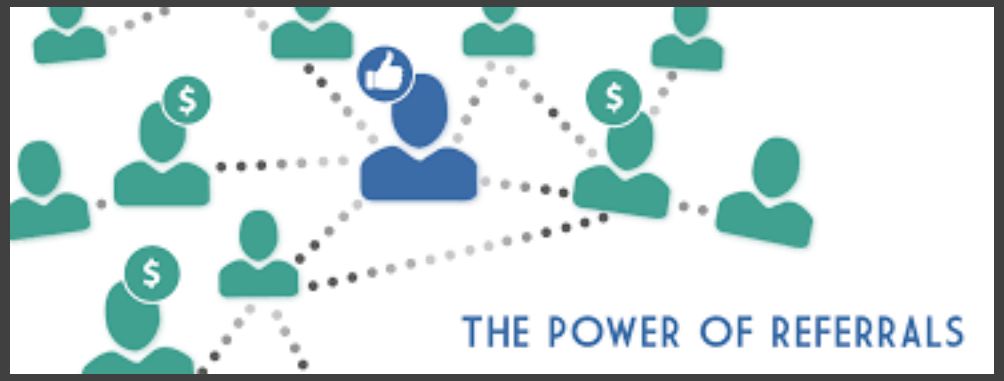
Health/Fitness

Financial Wellness

Celebrate Recovery

Stephen Ministries

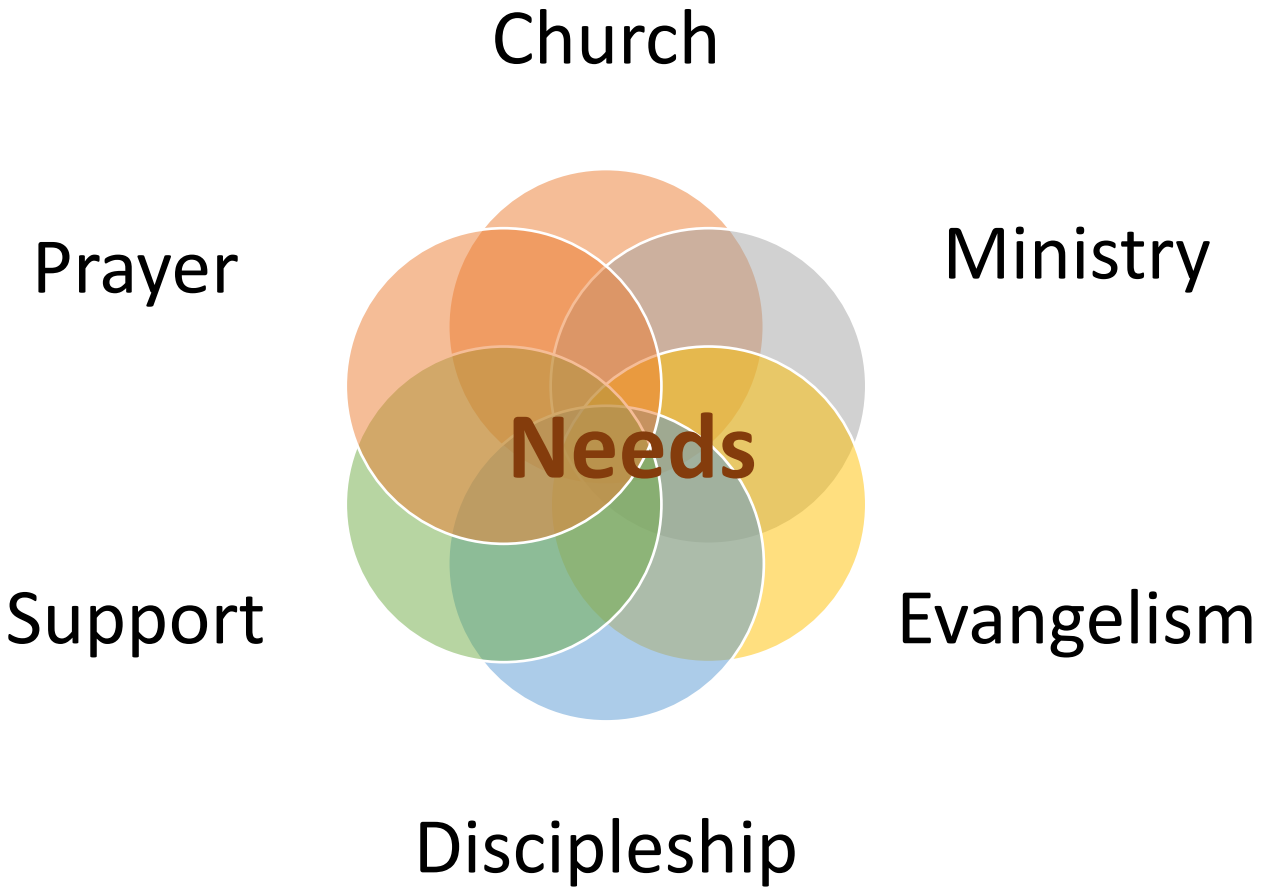
Provide Training for Lay Leaders



Referral Sources Available

Key findings include that church staff rarely made referrals to mental health professionals. When they did make referrals, it was because they did not feel qualified to deal with the problem. They reported that they were not trained to recognize mental and emotional illnesses and that they needed continuing education to help people with their personal problems.

Woven Together



A Balancing Act of Integration

Thank You!

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