

Week 1: Why Talk About Mental Health?

⇒ Mental Health challenges are real (sources below).

- In any given year, **1 in 5** Canadians experiences a mental illness.
- By the time Canadians reach **40 years of age, 50%** have, or have had, a mental illness.
- **60%** of people suffering from mental illness will not seek because of the stigma associated with these issues.
- Nearly **4 in 10** young Calgarians rate their mental health as poor or below average.
- Mental health disorders are now the **leading cause** of disability worldwide.
- The World Health Organization reports the rates of anxiety and depression have increased **25% since 2020**.

Have you seen this to be true in your own life? How has your life been impacted by mental health challenges?

⇒ Reasons to talk openly about mental health:

1. The world needs to become a safer place to talk about their struggles with mental health.

Why is it so important for us to create a safe place for people to talk about struggles with mental health?

2. Not talking is not working. We can bring this conversation out of the darkness and expose it to the light...like the Bible does.

Read Psalm 6:6; 13:2, 69:2-3.

What encouragement do you find from David's example of expressing his struggles to God?

What are some other examples from the Bible of people who experienced mental health challenges and what can we learn from their inclusion in Scripture?

3. As a church family we can extend grace to our fellow strugglers.

How can being the presence of Christ for each other (instead of trying to fix each other) offer real hope to real people with real problems (see Romans 12:15-16)?

4. Revealing brings healing.

Why is our first instinct normally to conceal our weakness from others?

Share some examples of how revealing some of your struggles have brought about healing.

⇒ Confronting some of the lies around mental health:

"I must keep quiet" is a lie. *How has seeking help in the past led you down the path of freedom?*

"I am my struggle" is a lie. *Why is it important to know that your diagnosis is not your identity?*

"I'm a bad Christian" is a lie. *What is something you can do on a regular basis to be reminded of just how much God loves you?*

"God is not close" is a lie. *How do verses like Psalm 34:18 and Romans 8:35-39 combat this lie and bring you peace and comfort?*

"There is no hope" is a lie. *What makes hope real to you? When have you experienced some hope recently?*

⇒ Pray for one another

Further Resources: www.bvcchurch.ca/grow/lets-talk-about-it

<https://alberta.cmha.ca/mental-illness-in-canada/>

<https://calgaryunitedway.org/our-work/mental-health/>

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/from-bad-to-worse-mental-health-declining-among-youth-since-2019-stat-can-1.7033012>

<https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/the-crisis-is-real/mental-health-statistics>