

# Wellspring



*A Publication of the Health & Healing Council of the Eastern PA Conference of UMC  
Spring 2020*

## **Abundant Health in a World Changed by Coronavirus**

**By: Deaconess Barbara Drake RN, MSN**

**Chairperson of EPC Health and Healing Council**

United Methodist Global Ministries has challenged churches to get involved in health ministries focusing on four areas: healthy eating, exercise, tobacco and drug-free living, and mental health. Many churches have worked creatively on the first three but have been hesitant to deal with the fourth, perhaps due to the stigma associated with mental illness.

Now that the coronavirus is spreading around the world and causing a major change in our way of life, we have a growing need to think about how the virus is affecting our mental health as well as our physical health. We have been well-educated as a nation about the physical symptoms of cough, fever, and difficulty breathing caused by coronavirus, but we may not know that digestive symptoms, such as loss of appetite and diarrhea may also occur, or that early warning signs may be loss of the sense of smell or taste. We know how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds, avoiding touching our faces with unwashed hands, coughing into a tissue or sleeve, keeping 6 feet away from others, not gathering in groups of more than ten, and staying home if we are sick or at risk. Our churches are already dealing with the restrictions imposed because of the virus by us-

ing technology to keep our congregations connected, but what should we know about the effect of COVID-19 on mental health and what we can do about it?

The closing of schools and businesses, the need for social distancing, the empty shelves in grocery stores, and the plummeting value of stocks cause many of us to experience worry, fears, and anxiety. What is the difference between these emotional states? How can we deal with them? These are issues that churches need to understand and work on.

The members of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Health and Healing Council are focusing this edition of the Wellspring newsletter on ways that churches can focus on mental health to help folks cope with the challenges of the coronavirus and all the other anxiety-producing events of our world.



## 10,000 Church Challenge: Diet & Nutrition

### Lentils are tops!

By Ruth Thornton and Barbara Mitchell  
(First United Meth. Church of Germantown)



You have heard nutritionists say to eat more beans, but we have questions: Which are best? Do we have to use canned if we don't want to soak and cook for a day?

Enter the **Lentils!** Of 20 beans listed by US Dept. of Agriculture, Lentils are a powerhouse! A cup of lentils has 56% of the Daily Value for fiber, 16% of DV for potassium, 90% of DV for folate, and on and on...leading to one of the two top beans, according to Nutrition Action newsletter.

They taste great, and they take less time to cook than most other beans. They don't need to be soaked before cooking, and take only 20 minutes to cook in water, without anything added. Then they can be used in any recipe, and won't be mushy. Brown and green lentils are less mushy than yellow, red, or orange, but the latter are fine in soups.

At this time when everyone in the country is experiencing a stay-at-home quarantine, we are providing several lentil recipes that you can start from just cooking a large pot of lentils. Since everyone is at home, these can be fun things to do with your children.

The most familiar recipe is **Lentil Soup**. Basic lentil soup consists of vegetable, chicken, or beef stock or water. Then add things—onions, carrots, celery are imperative, along with your favorite herbs and spices, and salt and pepper. This can be delicious as is. However, it's fun to

add other things you like. We like kale, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, maybe cabbage, spinach, leeks, potatoes, and lemon or a tsp. of vinegar. If you want to have your family try something new, try Baby Bok Choy. It is more tender and milder than Chinese cabbage or kale. Cook all your vegetables together in water or broth and olive oil, then stir in 2-3 cups of the cooked lentils at the end so they won't get mushy. Let the soup boil no more than 10 minutes longer. This pot should feed around 6 people. This is a great meal with just whole wheat bread or cornbread.

**Loaded Sweet Potatoes:** Bake 2-4 small to medium sweet potatoes ahead of time. Rewarm them by flattening and crisping the potatoes without the skins in a skillet until lightly charred. For a dressing, heat coarsely chopped peanuts in oil about 2 minutes to toast them. Transfer to a small bowl, and add red pepper flakes and a pinch of salt. Stir in lemon juice. Place the sweet potatoes on each plate, add the cooked, drained lentils, citrus (cut up oranges or grapefruit), and crumbled feta cheese. Drizzle the peanut dressing over, and you can add cilantro leaves or parsley to the top. Yum!

**Lentil Burgers:** Here you want to drain about 2 cups of cooked lentils let them cool, then partially mash them. In a small bowl, combine unflavored yoghurt, lemon zest, lemon juice, and cut up garlic. Season with salt. Finely chop mushrooms and transfer to a medium bowl. Add 2 Tbsp miso (substitute soy sauce or even steak sauce), ¼ tsp paprika, 2 Tbsp olive oil, and about 2 cups of cooked and drained lentils, partially mashed. Vigorously stir in about ¼ cup flour (oat, gluten-free, or all purpose) until it holds together. Form into 6 patties about ¾" thick. These can be stored in plastic wrap for later use. Heat a nonstick skillet (only a nonstick skillet will work) with oil and cook the patties until deeply browned and very crispy on the bottom. Spread the reserved yoghurt mixture on buns, top with the burgers, then add sprouts, pickles, or anything else you like on burgers.

# 10,000 Church Challenge: Mental Health

## Dealing with Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

**Barbara Drake RN, MSN, study leader preparing for Mission u**

: (The United Methodist Women's summer mission program, which has been cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19)

The Coronavirus is producing fear, worry, and anxiety in a growing number of people, and the longer we must deal with isolation and daily rises in the number of cases and deaths, the larger the number of people who will experience mental health challenges. The book "Finding Peace in an Anxious World", edited by Erin James-Brown, which is the Spiritual Growth study book for Mission u, provides many insights to help us understand what we and our neighbors are experiencing and what we can do about it. "Fear is the emotional response to real or perceived impending danger. Worry is repetitive thoughts or emotions as the brain analyzes risks and threats of danger, whether real or perceived. Anxiety is a physical and emotional response to fear and worry that is disproportionate to the threat of danger."

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that approximately 18% of people in the United States, or 40 million people, suffer an anxiety disorder, the most commonly diagnosed mental health ailment. The World Health Organization reports that 10% of the world's population is affected by depression and/or anxiety. Humanitarian disasters and other conflicts increase

this rate to at least 20% or 1 in 5 people. These statistics only account for diagnosed and reported anxiety. Add in millions who have intermittent fear and worry over relationships, retirement accounts, or the coronavirus, and you can see the major issue that anxiety is in our world today and the need for churches to help people deal with it.

We see the effects of anxiety in physical symptoms such as queasy stomach, finger-nail biting, sweaty palms, and nights spent tossing and turning, as well as emotional signs such as going over and over an event in our minds, playing out every possible future scenario to its worst case, and then living like it's inevitable. Anxiety decreases our awareness of others and makes us less able to see what's happening from their perspective. Many people will try to relieve their anxiety with alcohol, nicotine, food or drugs. These may delay but not alleviate the suffering associated with anxiety, and may result in harm to physical health and worsening of mental health through addictions.

The writers who contributed to "Finding Peace in an Anxious World"

suggest using the book of Proverbs to better understand our anxious habits and develop new habits which can bring us peace. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight our paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6) They also suggest using the "Serenity Prayer" to manage anxiety through serenity, acceptance, courage, and wisdom. "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." And finally, they describe spiritual disciplines which can serve as strategies for coping with day-to-day anxiety. Prayer, scripture reading, telling Jesus about your day verbally or in a written journal, and meditating while walking a labyrinth are some of the ways that we can find peace in an anxious world. I suggest you read the book in order to gain a greater understanding of the message of this book and the wisdom of Proverbs.



*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight our paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

# 10,000 Church Challenge: Mental Health

## Understanding Mental Health versus Mental Illness

By: Barbara Drake, RN, MSN, Deaconess & Parish Nurse at Union UMC, Havertown



The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities,

can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

Mental health does not stand alone. Our physical, spiritual, and mental health are as intertwined as the honeysuckle growing on my spirea bush. I keep trying to cut out the honeysuckle, but it has encircled every branch of the spirea.

Mental health and mental illness are not “either-or” conditions. There is a continuum between the two, and we move back and forth along that continuum as we experience the stresses

and joys of daily living. Healthy eating, regular exercise, enough sleep, and our faith in God’s promises help to keep us closer to the healthy end of the continuum, while crisis situations, long-term hostile environments, physical illness, and spiritual distress push us along the continuum toward mental illness.

In 1980, the Nurses Christian Fellowship brought together Christian leaders in psychiatric/mental health nursing to share their expertise. Supported by grants from several foundations, they worked for two years sharing ideas, writing papers, and evaluating each other’s work, with the end result of a book published in 1983, “*Spiritual Dimensions of Mental Health*,” by Judith Allen Shelly, Sandra D. John & Others. They defined mental health, from a Christian perspective, as “a state of dynamic equilibrium characterized by hope, joy and peace, in which positive self-regard is

developed through the love, relationship, forgiveness, meaning and purpose resulting from a vital relationship with God and a responsible interdependence with others.” And they stated, “Mental illness can result from any number of environmental, chemical, relational, biological and hereditary factors, as well as from personal choices or lack of choices.”

The United Methodist Church’s Abundant Health Program of the General Board of Global Ministries, in its booklet “Mind, Body, Spirit” reports that 50% of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 24, and that 1 in 5 adults in America experience a mental illness. These statistics should alert churches to the need to focus more intentionally on promoting mental health in children, youth and adults. Some of the suggestions for nurturing Abundant mental health include time management and stress reduction workshops; death, grief, and loss support groups; divorce or single parent support

gr  
ou  
ps;

## *Psalm 91: 14-15*

“Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;

I will protect him, because he knows my name.

<sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble;

I will rescue him and honor him.





## Good Reads

by Barbara Mitchell and Ruth Thornton

It has been a long time since our last column on Books for Children, but we are happy to be able to share with you some thoughts about a few books we have been reading. As we are now in stay-at-home quarantine throughout the state, it is a good time and a very healthy practice for families to read together. We want to suggest some books on a similar theme for people of all ages.

This past year our church, First United Methodist Church of Germantown in Philadelphia, conducted a racism audit in which members and some regular attendees completed a survey to determine where our organization stands in working toward being anti-racist. Briefly, the audit has four organizational types: All White Club, Token/Affirmative Action Organization, Multi-Cultural Org, and Anti-Racist Org. Each has a set of descriptions that define the model, and the survey takers make selections on each section about where their organization is currently. Although our results were mainly in the multi-cultural organization model, the survey generated about 800 additional questions about how the church is really organized. The discussion now explores ways we can answer these questions as a congregation, have more transparency in our operations, welcome more diversity to the church, and have a better understanding of “anti-racism”.

Each year FUMCOG has a “One Book, One Church” read and discuss program. This year as part of this exploration of anti-racism our Conversations on Race Committee will select one of several recent books. One book we have found enlightening is How to be an Anti-racist by Ibram Kendi, a graduate of Temple University and a historian who teaches at American University. He helps us to rethink some deeply held beliefs and develop new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. The book reviews our policies and interracial social arrangements and asks us how we can develop and contribute to a truly just and equitable society. This book follows his 2016 National Book Award for Nonfiction titled Stamped from the Beginning. This book explores the history of how racist ideas were created, became entrenched in American society and are still alive and well in our country today.

Kendi collaborated with children’s author Jason Reynolds to publish Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism, and You this year. This book for children ages 12 and up tells the stories of the original Stamped. This is a history book but not a history book. Reynolds uses language that appeals to teens. He makes the past come alive. He introduces the concept of “race” like an R-rated film. Can we really talk about this? They give the teenager the tools and vocabulary to understand terms like “segregationist” and “anti-racist”. This book may not make every kid a historian, but it surely will help her/him like history. Readings for younger children generally focus on healthy self concepts and interactions and healthy foods that help them to grow into thinking and well adjusted young adults. A Is for Activist by Innosanto Nagaro (7 Stories Press, a Triangle Square Book for Young Readers). “Activist. Abolitionist. Ally. Actively answering a call to Action. Are you an Activist?” “B is for Banner. Bobbing the sky. Billowing in the Breeze ‘cause you’re not shy.” And so it goes through the entire alphabet with wonderful rhymes and wild colors for children from 5 to 8 years old.

Plate Full of Color by Georgia Perez, illustrated by Patrick Rolo and Lisa Fifield is a book about eating vegetables. Have you ever had to fight with your children or grandchildren over eating vegetables? Published by the CDC, this is one of four books produced for teaching indigenous children who are diabetic. Native American children learn from Mr. Eagle, a real eagle, helped by a rabbit to recognize foods that are good for them. It is full of colorful illustrations and fun reading for all children ages 4-6. Now that we are home with our children during this quarantine, it gives us the opportunity to work out new and tasty menus.

These books may look at problems we face as a nation, a people and a culture, but they emphasize positive responses we can make for us all to live better together.

## Preventing Burnout

Here are some ideas from “Spiritual Dimensions of Mental Health” by Judith Allen Shelly, Sandra D. John & Others. Burnout happens after extended



periods of a lifestyle that is out of balance resulting in physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion. During the current coronavirus

pandemic, health care providers and first responders are at high risk for burnout, but the rest of us are at risk while we are isolated at home worrying about loved ones and indulging in unhealthy practices while away from our usual daily routines. Watching the TV news all day is emotionally traumatizing and too sedentary for our health.

The ways of preventing burnout can also be used to help people recover from the burnout they were unable to prevent. The steps are simple things that we all know but don't always implement in our lives. First, get enough sleep, which for most adults is 7-8 hours, and for teens is longer. Second, eat right. This includes not skipping meals or overeating, and including a good balance of proteins, fruits and vegetables, and avoiding too many high-sugar foods. Third, have some fun with leisure activities which take our minds off our problems. Fourth, exercise regularly to work off tension, feel healthier, gain energy, and relieve the physical effects of emotional stress. Fifth, cultivate a good support system. Find friends or family members who are good listeners, and talk to them about your concerns. Sixth, make time for God. Spend some quiet time reading the Bible, praying, and listening for God's guidance. Each of these six steps is important, and they need to be started now.

**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
STOP  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE**

## **Domestic Violence and Coronavirus**

Jody Anderson, from West Lawn UMC and a member of the Conference Domestic Violence Committee, would like you to know that there has been a major increase in reported cases of domestic violence since coronavirus has produced stay-at-home orders. The national statistics tell us that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will experience physical and emotional violence by a partner during their life time. Also, be aware that if there are children in the home, they will be traumatized. If you know of someone experiencing the terror of domestic violence, you can refer them to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-SAVE (7233), which has advocates able to speak to people in over 200 languages.



## Some Thoughts on Mental Health

By Barbara Drake, RN, MSN, Deaconess & Parish Nurse at Union UMC, Havertown

At Laity Academy in 2017, Joseph Bene, Jr., Psy.D, a clinical psychologist in private practice in Eastern Pennsylvania, and a member of the Conference Health and Healing Council, shared the following thoughts during the course on health ministries.

1. Mental health can be pictured as a three-legged stool. The 3 legs are genetics, social support, and stress. Genetically, the family mental health history helps determine the risk an individual has for developing mental illness. Social supports enable individuals to cope with mental health challenges. Stress can negatively impact mental health until individuals learn techniques for managing their stress.
2. Depression affects about 20% of people at some point in their lives. The death of a spouse is the biggest stressor leading to depression. Signs of depression include feeling sad, empty, or "down in the dumps" nearly every day; lack of interest in the things that were previously enjoyed; difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much; fatigue and lack of energy; difficulty concentrating or making decisions; loss of appetite or overeating causing a 5% decrease or increase in weight in a month; and restlessness with inability to sit still. Depression is not something to be ashamed of or to be ignored. Depression that is severe enough and lasting long enough to be clinical depression needs to be treated by professionals. Medication and counseling or therapy can manage depression effectively. Other helpful things in the management of depression include making a simple schedule for the day with regular times for meals, going to bed, and getting up. Exercise a little every day with a walk outdoors. Talk to someone on the phone each day if unable to get out and be with others. Avoid taking on new or difficult projects.
3. Generalized Anxiety Disorder may be mild and manageable or severe and debilitation, with the severity coming and going from one level to another. To be diagnosed as a mental illness, constant worry lasts at least six months. Mental signs of anxiety include constant feelings of dread, apprehension, and worry; feeling overwhelmed and avoiding related situations; difficulty concentrating; and no tolerance for uncertainty. Physical signs of anxiety include nausea, diarrhea, heart palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, feeling lightheaded or dizzy, numbness or tingling sensations, or difficulty breathing. One of the things that can help relieve anxiety is deep breathing, which involves breathing in through the nose and slowly breathing out through pursed lips, as if trying to whistle.
4. Churches need to help overcome the stigma associated with mental illness by learning about mental illnesses and talking openly about mental health issues. Resources are available from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).



## *Wellspring: A Publication of the Health & Healing Council*

**OUR VISION:** To be a vessel for promoting God's intention of wellness for all people.

**OUR MISSION:** To serve as a resource and communication link to promote physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being in the churches of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and the communities which they serve.

### **Health and Healing Council Steering Team:**



Barbara Drake, RN, Chair

bedrake15@aol.com

Donna Bonney, RN

dbjenjer@aol.com

Nancy Kraft, RN, BS

nkraft@comcast.net

Barbara A. Mitchell, PhD

baruth51@aol.com

Ruth D. Thornton, PhD

RuthT5418@gmail.com

Mary Wilson, RN

mary.g.wilsonrn@gmail.com

The Health & Healing Council presents the information in this newsletter in good faith. We do not endorse websites, but insert links for convenience. Nothing in this newsletter is intended to constitute, nor should it be considered, medical advice. One should always consult with one's physician or other qualified health care provider.

The Health & Healing Council welcomes ideas and article submissions on health topics. We reserve the right to select and edit articles for publication. For additional information please contact:

Nancy Kraft, RN, BS  
Barbara Mitchell, PhD

nkraft@comcast.net  
baruth51@aol.com