

MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND FAITH

Below you will find a short, readable, and accessible bibliography on the exploration of mental health issues from a faith perspective. You will notice that they come from a variety of perspectives, particularly the perspective of lived experience in the context of people's faith and understanding of their mental health issues as being part of their life as religious people or people with a profound spirituality. Their reflections often explore what healing means for them and how often that healing consists not in a simplistic cure of their mental health issues but in being accepted, included, heard, and respected and that recovery for them, rather than healing, is being able to manage successfully their mental health issues so as to live as fulfilling and flourishing life as possible with their unique gifts, as all our gifts are, of insight, empathy, and courage being acknowledged by their faith communities and world in which they live.

I say 'they' in terms of some of the books I list, but I do not mean 'they' in terms of a particular group of people who live uniquely with mental health issues. All of us, from the very fact of being human, and being subject to the diversity of human experiences that can bring on a period of mental illness, experience a spectrum of feelings and struggles that can be described as a mental health problem of greater or lesser severity. We may need therapies of one kind or another including medication and, very rarely, we may need hospital care and support and the support of the mental health services in the community. We especially need from our faith communities a healing space of acceptance and affirmation and people of faith to walk alongside us as well as a community that can work with us in challenging stigma and discrimination. We may ask for prayer that God will give us the strength and the courage to face honestly and painfully experiences that can be deeply challenging and, often, terrifying. What we don't need is insensitive and damaging 'prayers for healing' as if prayer, or the laying on of hands, or deliverance can somehow miraculously and simplistically take away a mental health problem without addressing the diversity of causes that might causing be the crisis in our lives. This kind of 'ministry' can be immensely damaging and I have personally encountered people in my own ministry as a mental health chaplain who have suffered grievously at the hands of such faith-based interventions and, as a result, have been made much worse and have been made to feel guilt and shame because the 'healing' hasn't worked. I do not doubt the power of prayer, of healing hands and appropriate touch, even, in very, very, rare cases, deliverance ministry(and only exercised by a authorised specialist diocesan minister), but they have always been therapeutic when they have been used in collaboration and dialogue with the orthodox mental health services and community support organisations.

Above all, the most important aspect of faith communities engagement with the complex landscape of mental health issues is to realise that those of us who may experience mental

health issues of a variety of kinds deserve to be listened to and honoured in the listening and that our laments as well as our joys, our despair as well as our hope, our darkness as well as our light, can be times not only of great struggle but also of profound insight and faith.

Here is the short bibliography. I do hope you might find one or two of the publications helpful. It's a very personal and selective choice but they may help nevertheless.

Phil Barker, Peter Campbell and Ben Davidson(ed), *From the Ashes of Experience: Reflections on Madness, Survival and Growth*(London: Whurr, 1999)

Phil Barker and Poppy Buchanan Barker(ed), *Spirituality and Mental Health Breakthrough* (London: Whurr, 2004).

Thurstine Bassett and Theo Stickley (ed), *Voices of Experience: Narratives of Mental Health Survivors* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

Jonathan Baxter, *Wounds that Heal: Theology, Imagination and Health* (London: SPCK, 2007)

Dinesh Bugra (ed), *Psychiatry and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Mary Louise Bringle, *Despair: Sickness or Sin? Hopelessness and Healing in the Christian Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

Isabel Clarke, *Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God* (Winchester: O Books, 2008).

Jim Cotter, *Brainsquall* (Sheffield: Cairns, 1997).

Kathy Galloway, *Walking in Darkness and Light* (Edinburgh: St.Andrew Press, 2001).

Susan Gregg-Schroeder, *In The Shadow of God's Wings: Grace in the midst of Depression* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1997).

Kathleen Greider, *Much Madness is Divinest Sense* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2007).

Stanislav and Christina Grof, *Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation becomes a Crisis*. (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1989).

Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

H Newton Malony(ed), *Wholeness and Holiness: the psychology/theology of mental health* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1983).

Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma ,A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2010).

Salomon Resnik, *Glacial Times, a Journey through the world of madness* (Hove: Routledge, 2005).

John Swinton, *Spirituality and Mental Health Care* (London: Kingsley, 2000).

Jean Wearn Wallace, *Through my valley of shadows* (London: Creative Energy, 2002).

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