

Chai and Chat: What is mental health? What is mental illness?

What is Mental Health?

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" (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>).

How do you know when you have good mental health?

Here is a short check list.

- Self-esteem: Feeling good about who you are
- Managing emotions: Recognizing and expressing a wide range of emotions constructively
- Responding to stress: Managing and coping well with stress
- Mindfulness: Being aware of the details of this moment
- Relaxation: Being able to unwind and calm the body and mind
- Getting help: Seeking or accepting help from others when needed

(<https://wellness.asu.edu/explore-wellness/mind/emotional-well-being>)

Early Warning Signs

Not sure if you or someone you know is living with mental health problems? Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends

(<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>)

Where is your local mental health clinic?

What are their phone numbers?

What is Mental Illness?

The Mayo Clinic defines it as, "a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior. Examples of mental illness include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviors."

Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function.

When should you seek help?

- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

What can I do to keep my mental health strong?

Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media.

Take care of your body

- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals
- Exercise regularly
- Get plenty of sleep
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol and tobacco

Make time to unwind — Try to do some other activities you enjoy

Connect with others—talk with people you trust about your concerns

Connect with your community or faith based organizations

<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/cope-with-stress/index.html>

A Biblical perspective; is it ever right to be angry?

Jesus Christ may be best known for saying things like, "Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5: 43). However, you might find it hard to believe that at times, Jesus Christ was angry. Yes, certain things made him very angry. One of those things was how the temple in Jerusalem was used shamefully. The Jewish temple was the place where animal sacrifices were made both as a sign of thanksgiving and as a symbol of forgiveness. In the first century, before 70 AD, Jews came from the region to Jerusalem to worship. Upon arriving in Jerusalem they needed to exchange their money into the local currency. And, and of course, since it was impossible to bring animals with them, they needed to purchase animals for sacrifice. In earlier times, these markets were outside of the temple area. But in Jesus' time, they had moved their stalls to the temple. This is what upset Jesus. It was not right that instead of a place of reverence, worship, and prayer, it had become a noisy market due to the bleating of sheep and goats and voices raised in bargaining. Here is what happened according to the St. John.

"It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"

Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me" (John 2:13-17).

Retell the story in your own words.

Does anything in the story surprise you?

What does this passage teach us about Jesus Christ and righteous anger?

Loving your enemy and standing up to those who promote injustice seems contradictory. How do we do both?

Hint...think about what it means to love someone.

Chai and Chat: What is Anger?

Anger is the feeling of strong annoyance, exasperation, or irritation. It is the feeling that may sometimes lead to behavior we regret. We might say things or do things that hurt others.

There are four kinds of anger: justifiable anger, annoyance anger, aggressive anger, and temper tantrums. It is wise to pay attention to all of these kinds of anger. Recognizing our anger can alert us to good actions to correct an injustice, but anger can also destroy our personal tranquility if we do not handle it correctly.

Justifiable anger is the outrage we feel when we see the wrongs of this world like people fleeing oppressive governments, children who are abused in their own homes, or victims of violence. This kind of anger can be useful if we channel it into action that will bring about a change.

*What are the situations in this world that make you angry?
How have you or others you know addressed these wrongs?
What kinds of things would you like to do to change things?*



John Steuart Curry. John Brown, 1939. Met, NYC.

John Brown was an American who fought to free slaves. He believed that violence was the only solution. Thus, he led armed revolts against those supporting slavery. He was feared by southerners but admired by those in the North. In the end, he was hanged for treason against the United States.

Do you think violence is ever necessary to promote justice?

Activity based on **Picture This, by Molly Bang**

Choose three colors of the geometric shapes and make a picture that is related to the discussion or Bible