

A Place to Be: mental health and Christian leadership

Programme details

Plenary Sessions

1. Faith community leaders and the mental health issues of congregants: What can we learn?

Revd Josiah Anyinsah MBACP

What do church leaders say about their role and the problems they encounter when helping or offering pastoral care to their members with mental illness or problems? Research has shown the prevalence of mental health issues within Christian churches, and their leaders wonder how they should engage with mental health ministry.

Josiah's talk explores the pastoral care for church members living with mental health issues in Christian communities, and the importance of the Christian minister's role and involvement in the care of members with mental illness.

Revd Josiah Anyinsah is a UK Board Accredited Chaplain. He has been a chaplain for people living with learning disabilities and mental health problems for over 19 years. He is currently the deputy team leader and Chair of the Spirituality and Faith Forum, Staff Network at Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. He is also a newly-accredited Baptist minister, pastoring Boston Road Baptist Church. Josiah has a special interest in the interface between spirituality and mental health, and workplace spirituality. He likes African music, African movies, West Indian music and dance.

2. Christian theologies of mental illness.

Dr Tasia (Anastasia) Scrutton

Tasia explores theological approaches to the issues posed by mental illness, including the concept of sin and the "potentially transformative" views. She draws on traditional understandings, and the work of writers and thinkers, to evaluate what is helpful and what is unhelpful, pointing towards some promising emphases and their impact on pastoral contexts.

Dr Tasia Scrutton is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Leeds. Her research interests include healing and religious practice, philosophy of psychiatry and emotion, and theology and mental health. Recently she has been writing a book, *Christianity and depression*, forthcoming with SCM Press. The book examines and evaluates different Christian interpretations of depression, and the difference these make to people's experience of depression, and is aimed at people with pastoral roles in churches, and mental health professionals.

3. Panel Discussion

The panel discussion affords an opportunity to explore some of the issues raised in the two keynote sessions. There will be the chance to ask questions about what you have heard, or about other related issues.

Chair: Revd Virginia Thomas, National Chaplaincy Director, New Testament Church of God

Virginia is an Associate Minister at New Testament Church of God, Northampton. She works as a chaplain in a private mental healthcare hospital and has contributed towards developing a UKME Mental Health Toolkit for Anglican churches. Virginia is a course facilitator with NTCG Leadership Training Centre and appointed as National Chaplaincy Director in 2018, involved with training and embedding chaplaincy within church ministry.

Virginia has an MA in Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies. With 20 years' background experience as a social worker, staff development officer and practice educator, Virginia remains passionate about servant leadership, in her vocation as minister and chaplain.

Panel members: Revd Josiah Anyinsah

Dr Tasia Scrutton

Revd Cassandra Howes

4. Reflective Practice

Revd Mark Stobert

Mark Stobert is Lead Chaplain to Cambridge University Hospitals and came into post in November 2018 having been a healthcare chaplain for over 25 years at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley with responsibility for chaplaincy at Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust.

He is a registrant and chair of UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC) which is the register of healthcare chaplains accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). Mark was part of the UKBHC task group that produced the successful application for accreditation.

He was president of College of Health care Chaplains (CHCC), the professional body for health care chaplains.

Mark is currently studying for a Doctorate in Practical Theology (DPT) using critical reflection to explore the chaplaincy practice of creating 'Safe Space for Slow Questions' with patients, visitors and staff of CUH.

"A 'Slow question' is a question that can't be replied to by a fast answer. Sometimes there are no answers but in asking it can be enough just to be understood. Sometimes the slow question is simply, 'Why?' Sometimes it is the nagging or delicate thought that can only be voiced when it is safe to do so."

Mark is also a registered member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

He is married and has two sons. His interests are varied and include cycling and mountaineering. His favourite mountain is Clach Glas and Bla bheinn on the Isle of Skye.

Mark's earlier career was as an agricultural engineer working for the Ministry of Agriculture researching into the design of cattle feed barriers and flooring systems with the British Standards Institute.

My favourite quotation is:

'Create peace within yourself and thousands will find salvation around you' – St. Seraphim of Sarov.

Workshops

Each workshop will run twice, from 1.45 – 2.30 p.m., and from 2.35 – 3.15 p.m.

All attending will be able to take part in two of the four workshops.

We will register workshop choices on arrival.

1. What in heaven's name is mental health? An introduction to mental health awareness and first aid.

Carol Wilson

This 40-minute workshop offers an opportunity to think about mental health and wellbeing, and how we can support those who may be experiencing mental distress, whether ourselves or others. As a first step, we need to be building communities that are committed to stamping out the stigma, discrimination and often silent shame that prevents people from getting the help that will enable them to recover and stay well. Come along and find out how to spot the signs that someone might be struggling, what to say and where to get help. There will be practical information, signposting to further training such as Mental Health First Aid courses, and ideas to help you make your community a safe place of welcome for all.

Carol Wilson is an accredited Mental Health First Aid Instructor and the Head of Spiritual Care with Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. She is passionate about empowering communities of faith to be places of welcome for all; places to be where it's safe to say "actually, I'm struggling with my mental wellbeing, and I could use some help". Carol brings unique insights into the role of faith and belief in the recovery and maintenance of mental wellbeing, alongside practical ideas that build confidence in supporting others.

2. Students and mental health

Revd Cassandra Howes

Concerns about the mental health of young people at University have been much in evidence in recent news articles. Cass speaks from her experience as a University Chaplain and explores ways in which we can support students in our own congregations, or who have gone away to study.

Revd Cassandra Howes is a Methodist minister and a former psychiatric and general nurse. She is the Co-ordinating Chaplain for the University of Bedfordshire, at the Bedford Campus, Milton Keynes Campus, Aylesbury Campus, and study hubs in London and Birmingham. She formerly held chaplaincy roles at Aston, Birmingham City and Sheffield Hallam Universities, and the University of the West of England.

3. Taketime Meditations – facilitating encounters with Jesus

Revd Clive McKie

Taketime Mediations are based on Ignatian Spirituality. They guide listeners into Gospel stories to give them a chance to pray more effectively in the presence of Jesus. Founded by Revd Clive McKie through his Prison Chaplaincy work, these meditations are available online, at local church-run groups, and in various types of chaplaincy. Many users have mental health problems and have testified to the positive long-term results of Taketime.

Revd Clive McKie is a Methodist Minister who has been in Circuit ministry for 25 years. He has a wife, four children and an honorary foster daughter. He has also served as a sessional Prison Chaplain, the last 18 years of which have been spent working in a women's prison. Having founded Taketime, Clive is currently employed full-time by the Church to pioneer it as a Fresh Expression and global mission project.



4. Why caring for ourselves is not being selfish, OR the art of relaxation

Revd Meg Burton

It is a gospel imperative that we should love ourselves, but how many of us were brought up to put other people first and ourselves last? This workshop will focus on the need to properly care for ourselves so that we are then able to care for others, and it will give participants the chance to experience one or more relaxation techniques.

Revd Meg Burton has recently retired as Head of Chaplaincy for the Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust. She moved to this post in October 2012, having previously served as Lead Chaplain and Deputy Chaplaincy Manager for 6 years, based at Bassetlaw District General Hospital, Worksop, and 6 years as Chaplain based at Doncaster Royal Infirmary. While a Methodist Minister in Circuit in the 1990s, she was Free Church Chaplain at Rampton Hospital.

Meg completed her MA in Healthcare Chaplaincy at the University of Leeds in 2004. Her dissertation was entitled *The Role of the Chaplain in the Multi-disciplinary Palliative Care Team*. Part of her research was based at Peel Memorial Hospital, Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

She was Editor of the Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy, and is currently Editor in Chief of Health and Social Care Chaplaincy. She is Joint Secretary for Health Care Chaplaincy for the Free Churches Group.

NOTE: it would be helpful to have a small pillow and blanket if you wish to participate in this workshop, although you may still take part if you are not able to bring these with you.