

Books Recommended by the Mental Health Task Force

***A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability*, By Kathy Black, 1996**

The landmark volume that introduced how to preach the healing narratives through a disability hermeneutic. A practical and revelatory way to read scripture.

Paperback & Kindle

***Visiting Hours: A Memoir of Friendship and Murder*, by Amy Butcher, 2015**

In this powerful and unforgettable memoir, award-winning writer Amy Butcher examines the shattering consequences of failing a friend when she felt he needed one most. Four weeks before their college graduation, twenty-one-year-old Kevin Schaeffer walked Amy Butcher to her home in their college town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Hours after parting ways with Amy, he fatally stabbed his ex-girlfriend, Emily Silverstein. While he was awaiting trial, psychiatrists concluded that he had suffered an acute psychotic break. Although severely affected by Kevin's crime, Amy remained devoted to him as a friend, believing that his actions were the direct result of his untreated illness.

Paperback, hardcover, Audiobook, Kindle & MP3CD

***Bipolar Faith: A Black Woman's Journey With Depression and Faith*, by Monica A. Coleman, 2016**

Spiritual autobiography and a memoir of mental illness. Author shares her life-long dance with trauma, depression, and the threat of death. Citing serendipitous encounters with black intellectuals like Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Angela Davis, and Renita Weems, Coleman offers a rare account of how the modulated highs of bipolar II can lead to professional success, while hiding a depression that even her doctors rarely believed.

Paperback, hardcover & Kindle

***Risking Connection in Faith Communities: A Training Curriculum for Faith Leaders Supporting Trauma Survivors*, by Day, Vermilyea, Wilkerson, Giller, 2006**

This curriculum explains the effects of trauma, focuses on the need for growth-promoting relationships, explores the connection between trauma and spiritual distress, recognizes the value of spirituality in recovery, addresses the impact of trauma on the helper and looks at how faith communities can promote healing.

Paperback

***The Meaning of Faith and Mental Illness*, By Greg Denniston, 2006**

This is a book about mental illness. This is a book about faith. Taken together, this book is about the psychospiritual unity of human being that finds expression in human being's primary character as a maker of meaning. As such, this book can be read as one consumer's attempt to come to terms with his experience of severe mental illness. It can also be read as a small contribution to the emerging perspectives that construct theology from the locale of disability.

Paperback

Sparks of Redemptive Grace: Seeking and Seeing God Amid a Loved One's Mental Illness, by Catherine Downing, 2016

Mental illness impacts millions of families each year. *Sparks of Redemptive Grace* provides an authentic view of one family's transparent hope in God's unfailing love, hewn in the fires of fear and faith.

Paperback & Kindle

The Cure for the Chronic Life, by Deanna Favre & Shane Stanford, 2010

Deanna Favre, a breast cancer survivor and wife of NFL legend Brett Favre, and Shane Stanford, an HIV-positive minister, have both lived such a life. Chronic hopelessness was part of their everyday lives as it is for many people. But Deanna and Shane discovered the transforming grace and strength of a God who provides answers for questions and possibilities for uncertainties. This is a guide for the journey out of hopelessness. In its pages, discover the power of redeeming love and the hope of living in Christ.

Paperback, hardcover, Kindle, Audiobook, Audio CD

Working in the Dark: Keeping Your Job While Dealing with Depression, by Fitter & Gulas, 2002

Problems concentrating. Loss of energy. Feelings of worthlessness. Difficulty making decisions. Each year, an estimated 11 million Americans experience a major depressive episode. Keeping a job while struggling to regain one's health is one of the most difficult and delicate aspects of recovery from depression. Authors Fawn Fitter and Beth Gulas provide a reassuring, informative guide to dealing with depression on the job. They address questions such as: Should I ask my boss for time off? Should I tell my colleagues about my depression? Are my treatment records confidential? With self-assessment tools and decision-making guidance, this book is a first-of-its-kind resource.

Paperback

Darkness is My Only Companion, by Kathryn Greene-McCreight, 2015

Where is God in the suffering of a mentally ill person? What happens to the soul when the mind is ill? How are Christians to respond to mental illness? In this brave and compassionate book, theologian and priest Kathryn Greene-McCreight confronts these difficult questions raised by her own mental illness--bipolar disorder. With brutal honesty, she tackles often avoided topics such as suicide, mental hospitals, and electroconvulsive therapy.

Paperback & Kindle

Show Me All Your Scars: True Stories of Living with Mental Illness, by Lee Gutkind, 2016

Every year, one in four American adults suffers from a diagnosable mental health disorder. In these true stories, writers and their loved ones struggle as their worlds are upended. What do you do when your father kills himself, or your mother is committed to a psych ward, or your daughter starts hearing voices telling her to harm herself—or when you yourself hear such voices? Addressing bipolar disorder, OCD, trichillomania, self-harm, PTSD, and other diagnoses, these stories vividly depict the difficulties and sorrows—and sometimes, too, the unexpected and surprising rewards—of living with mental illness.

Paperback & Kindle

The Lifesaving Church: Faith Communities and Suicide Prevention, by Rachael A. Keefe, 2018

Churches can have a great impact on youth who would otherwise feel unloved and hopeless, providing a place to belong and be nurtured. Keefe skillfully weaves together her own story with practical guidance. The appendices are handy and very helpful.
Paperback & Kindle

Wrestling with Our Inner Angels: Faith, Mental Illness, and the Journey to Wholeness, by Nancy Kehoe, 2009

A compelling, intimate, and moving story of how she brought her background as a psychologist and a nun in the Religious of the Sacred Heart to bear in the groups she formed to explore the role of faith and spirituality in their treatment – and in their lives. Through fascinating stories of her own spiritual journey, she gives readers of all backgrounds and interests new insights into the inner lives of the mentally ill and new ways of thinking about the role of spirituality and faith in all our lives.

Hardcover

The Bible and Disability, by Sarah Melcher, Mikeal Parsons, Amos Yong, et al. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017

Review: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=51631>

Fourteen contributors on disability wrestle with the meaning of disability in various sections of the Bible. Two points of interest are that disability and diversity become part of the everyday world, and a call for justice with equality echoes throughout. Paul's writings proclaim a revolution in social thought that is good news for people with disabilities.

Paperback, hardcover & Kindle

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies, by Resmaa Menakem, 2017

An exploration of the ways racial trauma impacts us all regardless of race. The author interweaves personal stories with factual information and shows us ways to recover.

Paperback, Audiobook & Kindle

Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality, by Thomas Reynolds, 2008

As parents of a son with disabilities, Thomas E. Reynolds and his wife know what it's like to be misunderstood by a church community. In *Vulnerable Communion*, Reynolds draws upon that personal experience and a diverse body of literature to empower churches and individuals to foster deeper hospitality toward persons with disabilities. Reynolds argues that the Christian story is one of strength coming from weakness, of wholeness emerging from brokenness, and of power in vulnerability. He offers valuable biblical, theological, and pastoral tools to understand and welcome those with disabilities.

Paperback & Kindle

***Fifteen Steps Out of Darkness: The Way of the Cross for People on the Journey of Mental Illness*, by Rose, Wenner and Rose, 2016**

A book to inspire, encourage, and reassure, *Fifteen Steps out of Darkness* offers personal stories and profound meditations on the Stations of the Cross for the more than 350 million people suffering from depression and other mental illnesses, and for those who love and care for them. The stories are accompanied by 18 full-color illustrations of great sculptures by artist Homer Yost that portray Jesus's journey to the cross and his resurrection from the dead.

Paperback & Kindle

***Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church's Mission*, by Amy Simpson and Marshall Shelley, 2013**

Many people with mental illness are sitting in churches week after week, suffering in stigmatized silence. In *Troubled Minds* Amy Simpson, whose family knows the trauma and bewilderment of mental illness, reminds us that people with mental illness are our neighbors and our brothers and sisters in Christ, and she shows us the path to loving them well and becoming a church that loves God with whole hearts and whole souls, with the strength we have and with minds that are whole as well as minds that are troubled.

Paperback, Audiobook, Kindle & MP3CD

***Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness*, by Matthew Stanford, 2017**

Why has the church struggled in ministering to those with mental illnesses? Each day men and women diagnosed with mental disorders are told they need to pray more and turn from their sin. Mental illness is equated with demonic possession, weak faith, and generational sin. As both a church leader and a professor of psychology and behavioral sciences, Matthew S. Stanford has seen far too many mentally ill brothers and sisters damaged by well-meaning believers who respond to them out of fear or misinformation rather than grace.

Paperback, Audiobook, Kindle & audio CD

***Resurrecting the Person*, by John Swinton, 2000**

John Swinton argues that while mental illnesses are often biological and genetic in origin, the real handicap experienced by individuals is imposed by the types of reactions, values, and attitudes which are typical of contemporary western society. In other words, how a mental illness is experienced has much to do with how it is socially constructed. How will the church react to this suggestion? Swinton suggests that the key to the effective pastoral care of individuals with severe mental illness lies not only within the realms of psychiatry, therapy, and pharmacological intervention, but in the re-humanization which is borne within the relationship of friendship.

Paperback

***Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges*, by John Swinton, 2020**

With the depth and innovation that Swinton brings to the field, in this book he calls for the church to take the lead in showing compassion and providing a place to belong for those who face mental illness. Deep and thorough, this book provides a foundation for action.

Paperback & Kindle

Madness: American Protestant Responses to Mental Illness (Studies in Religion, Theology, and Disability), by Heather Vacek, 2015

Madness is a sin. Those with emotional disabilities are shunned. Mental illness is not the church's problem. All three claims are wrong. The author traces the history of Protestant reactions to mental illness in America. She reveals how two distinct forces combined to thwart Christian care for the whole person. The professionalization of medicine worked to restrict the sphere of Christian authority to the private and spiritual realms, consigning healing and care—both physical and mental—to secular, medical specialists.

Hardcover & Kindle

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma, by Bessel van der Kolk, 2015

A scientific study shows that trauma leaves changes in the brain, mind, and body. The author also shows us pathways to healing. The author also explores innovative treatments—from neurofeedback and meditation to sports, drama, and yoga—that offer new paths to recovery by activating the brain's natural neuroplasticity.

Paperback, hardcover, Audiobook, Kindle & audioCD

The Collected Schizophrenias: Essays, by Esme Weijun Wang, 2019

An intimate, moving book written with the immediacy and directness of one who still struggles with the effects of mental and chronic illness, *The Collected Schizophrenias* cuts right to the core. Schizophrenia is not a single unifying diagnosis, and Esmé Weijun Wang writes not just to her fellow members of the “collected schizophrenias” but to those who wish to understand it as well. Opening with the journey toward her diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, Wang discusses the medical community's own disagreement about labels and procedures for diagnosing those with mental illness, and then follows an arc that examines the manifestations of schizophrenia in her life.

Paperback, Audiobook, Kindle & MP3CD

First, We Make The Beast Beautiful: A New Journey Through Anxiety, by Sarah Wilson, 2017

In this book, the author directs her intense focus and fierce investigating skills onto her lifetime companion, looking at the triggers and treatments, the fashions and fads. She reads widely and interviews fellow sufferers, mental health experts, philosophers, and even the Dalai Lama, processing all she learns through the prism of her own experiences. Wilson offers readers comfort, humor, companionship, and practical tips for living with the Beast

Paperback, hardcover, Audiobook, Kindle & MP3CD

Depression in African-American Clergy, by Wynnetta Wimberley, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Review : <<http://flyingkittymonster.blogspot.com/2020/02/review-depression.html>

This study of mental health in African-American communities, focusing on pastors, has lessons for everyone. Depression and similar conditions are also linked to historical trauma. The prophetess Hulda of 2 Chronicles 34 provides a model for understanding and action in understanding mutual needs through shared caregiving.

Paperback, hardcover & Kindle

When Someone You Love Has a Mental Illness; a Handbook for Family, Friends and Caregivers, by Rebecca Woolis, 2003

This indispensable book about love and mental health addresses the short-term, daily problems of living with a person with mental illness, as well as long-term planning and care. Of special note are the forty-three "Quick Reference Guides" about such topics as: responding to hallucinations, delusions, violence and anger; helping your loved one comply with treatment plans and medication; deciding if the person should live at home or in a facility; choosing a doctor and dealing with mental health professionals; handling the holidays and family activities; managing stress; helping siblings and adult children with their special concerns.

Paperback