Session 2: Mental Health and Addictions in the Midst of COVID-19

Chaplain Malisha Brown
Agenda

Addictions
Group Discussion
Check In
Church Connections
Introduction

Today we are going to journey within world of Addiction as well as Mental Health. We will explore many aspects in a short time!
Topic One

Basic Addiction and the Church
Poll #1 - What is the number one Addiction?

1. Alcohol
2. Illegal Drugs
3. Nicotine (Cigar, Cigarettes, Vaping)
4. Electronics (Computers, phones, TV, Tablets)
5. Prescription Drugs (Legal drugs)
6. Pornography (Sex Issues)
7. Strange Addictions (Eating tissue, bathing in bleach, binge eating, etc.)
8. Police Brutality and Killings
What are Addictions?

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), the largest professional society of doctors dedicated to treating and preventing addiction, has released a new definition of addiction, calling it a chronic brain disorder, not just a behavior problem. The medical group announced the new definition after a four-year process that involved more than 80 experts.

Two decades of neuroscience have uncovered how addiction hijacks different parts of the brain, to explain what prompts those behaviors and why they can be so hard to overcome. The society’s policy statement, published on its web site, isn’t a new direction as much as part of an effort to translate those findings to primary care doctors and the general public.
What is Addictions?

The abuse of anything can lead to physical dependency, addiction, or both. Physical dependency is a person’s body requiring the drug in order to function. Not being able to do the addictive behavior may lead to significant withdrawal symptoms. Addiction is compulsive use despite the harmful consequences. Addiction can include a physical dependency.

The abuse of alcohol and other drugs can have devastating effects on individuals, families and communities. Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and alcohol is a significant contributing factor to many risky behaviors that cause tragedy and illness. Gambling addiction harms not only the individual, it harms families and the community.
WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

Support
Non-judgmental language
Do something special for them
Teach the church about addictions
Group Discussion - What does the group say?

**Group 1**
I have heard of a youth pastor kicking a teen out of youth group for vaping or smoking at a high school football game, instead of coming alongside the teen. What should the youth Pastor do?

**Group 2**
What about the organist who went through chemo treatments and became dependent on the opioids she had taken as prescribed?

**Group 3**
What happens if a pastor struggles with a sex addiction, when he never set out to have sex excessively, but started use sex to cope—and it has gotten out of hand?
Topic Two

Check In >>>

Tell me how are you doing during this COVID times?
Poll #2 –
What are you doing to de-stress yourself?

1. Staycation
2. Sister or Brother Circle
3. New or Old Hobby (including exercising)
4. Rely on Electronics (Computers, phones, TV, Tablets)
5. Self Medicating
6. Therapy / Bible Study
7. Papering Yourself
8. Nothing – just coping day by day
The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.
-Walt Disney

What are you doing for you?
What self care are you taking for yourself?
What hobbies have you taken up?
Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety.

Learning to cope with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and those around you become more resilient.
- Check in
- Be creative with activities (Messenger)
- Check in on other members of your family
- Ask how you are feeling
- Monitor Screen time (talk about sex and bullying)
- Get counseling for them (School counselors, Personal Counselors)

Video

https://youtu.be/pui3Pm-P2Hg
**Stress can cause the following:**

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
Stress can cause the following:

- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are ways that you can help yourself, others, and your community manage stress.
Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including those on social media. It’s good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.

- **Take care of your body.**
  - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditateexternal icon.
  - **Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.**
  - Exercise regularly.
  - Get plenty of sleep.
  - Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.
  - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider.
  - Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available.
Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

• **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.

• **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

• **Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations.** While social distancing measures are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.
Helping Others In Your Congregation Cope

CHECK IN’S

1. ZOOM
2. BALLOON DRIVE BYS
3. PALM CROSSES
4. GREETING CARDS
5. RENT A PARK PICNIC
6. RETREAT
7. YOUTH – CHECK IN OR CHAT AND CHEW

It’s the little things that means a lot

WHAT ELSE ......
Summary

Survival of Addictions in and during Covid-19 and/or any Crisis is essential.

Using coping techniques as well as resiliency techniques is essential. Seeking support with family and friends not only help you but others as well.

*Find YOU!!
Thank You

Malisha Brown, Chaplain
Mrb.consultants@gmail.com