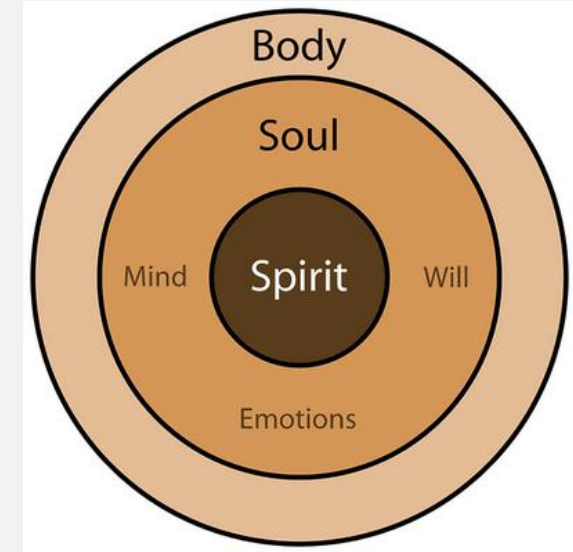


THE MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AMID A PANDEMIC: A CRITICAL COLLABORATION

C. GUY ROBINSON
@BISHOPGROBINSON (IG)
@BISHOPCGR (T)

THE PSYCHOSOMATIC (MIND-BODY) CONNECTION

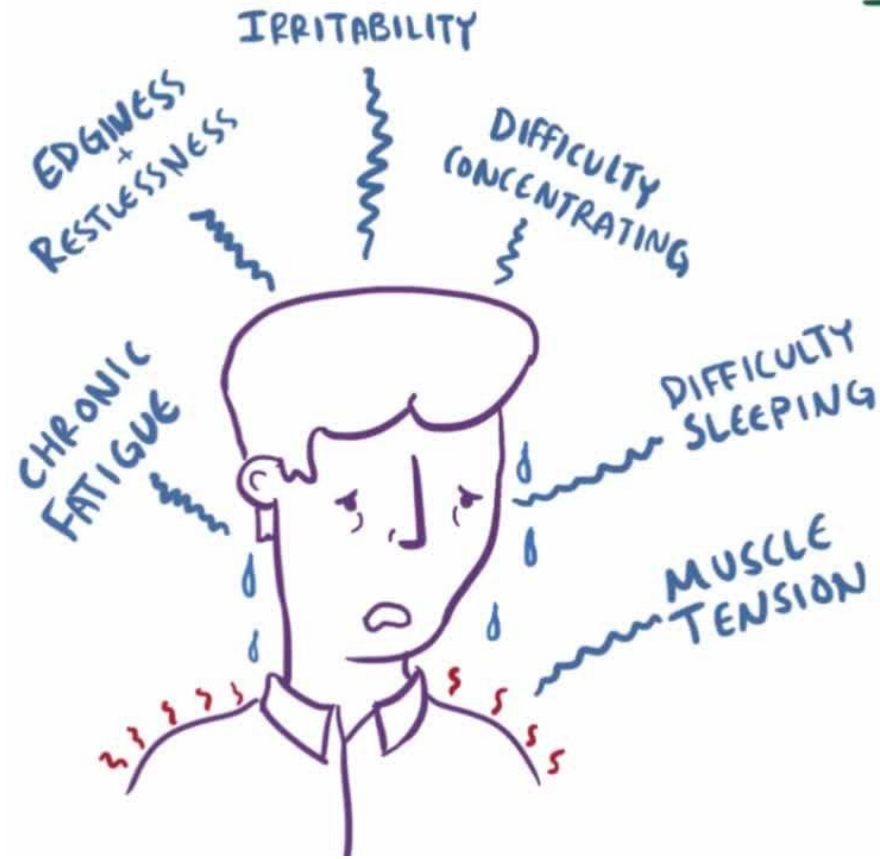
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23** – Now may the very God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved...
- **Hebrews 4:12** – For the word of God is quick and powerful...to the division of soul and spirit, and joints of marrow...
- What happens to one can affect the other(s)



PANDEMICS LIKE COVID-19
ARE MEDICAL CRISES THAT CAN AFFECT
MENTAL HEALTH

- **Anxiety**
- **Bereavement**
- **Anticipatory Grief**
- **Misplaced Grief**
- **Xenophobia**
- **Social Stigma**
- **Isolation**
- **Depression/Despair**

SYMPTOMS



GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD)

EXCESSIVE ~ more than someone else

PERSISTENT ~ doesn't go away

UNREASONABLE ~ shouldn't be worried

DIAGNOSTIC & STATISTICAL MANUAL
of MENTAL DISORDERS ^{DSM-5}

1. Excessive anxiety present
more days than not for 6 MONTHS

90 or more

Depression Symptoms

Emotions

- *Sadness*
- *Anxiety*
- *Guilt*
- *Anger*
- *Mood swings*
- *Irritability*

Thoughts

- *Self-criticism*
- *Impaired memory*
- *Indecisiveness*
- *Confusion*
- *Thoughts of death and suicide*

Physical

- *Chronic fatigue*
- *Lack of energy*
- *Sleeping too much or too little*
- *Weight gain or loss*
- *Loss of motivation*
- *Substance abuse*

Behavior

- *Withdrawal from others*
- *Neglect of responsibilities*
- *Changes in personal appearance*



CORONA AS COMPOUNDED TRAUMA

(NAMI 2016-2019)

- **African Americans are 20% more likely to experience undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues, including depression and PTSD**
- **The manifestation of physical illnesses related to mental health occurs at a rate of 15% for African Americans, compared to 9% for white Americans**
- **Socioeconomic conditions** often serve as an indicator for the likelihood of developing a mental illness. African Americans are more likely to experience such conditions.

CORONA AND THE CHURCH

- **African Americans tend to rely on family and the faith community for emotional support**
- **African Americans who are actively involved in a church/faith community have an increased average life expectancy of 13.7 years**
- **The social gospel orientation of the historically African American church is innately therapeutic and influential**



COMBATING
CORONA IS
CALLING FOR US
TO DO SOME
THINGS THAT ARE:

Counter-Intuitive: (as human beings): We are instinctively social beings

Counter-Cultural: As Americans, we value autonomy and freedom of mobility

Counter-Cultural: As African Americans, we look to and go to the church building in crises

THE CHURCH MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE!

- **Psūche** – Soul
- **Mind, Will, Emotions**
- **“Psychology”**
- **“A Word About the Soul”**
- **Genesis 3** – Shame, fear, avoidance
- **Mark 5:15** – The demon-possessed man... clothed and in his *right mind*...
- **II Corinthians 10:4-5** – The weapons of our warfare... bringing into captivity every *thought*...

PHYSICAL DISTANCING VS. SOCIAL ISOLATION

- **Human beings are social beings by divine design; it is not good for us to be alone (Genesis 2:18).**
- **Yet, combatting a pandemic calls for something that is counter-intuitive, but necessary.**
- **Physical distancing has been deemed best to “flatten the curve,” or lower the spread of the disease.**
- **But physical distancing does not have to mean isolation.**
- **Technological connectivity is essential!**



COVID-19: REALIZE WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

One of the most frustrating things about COVID-19 is that so much about the virus and the limitations on where you can go are out of your control. However, there are things that you can control, and focusing on those things can provide you with some comfort. Some of the things you can control include:

WHAT CAN WE DO?

YOUR MIND AND BODY



- Keep a healthy diet
- Exercise at home
- Get enough sleep
- Do not smoke or drink alcohol excessively
- Take care of your mental health
- Maintain self-care and personal hygiene

YOUR IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT



- Your house, your bedroom, your closet, your kitchen – now is the time to clean and get organized
- Make responsible choices about when to leave the house and only go out if necessary
- Limit the number of people you come into contact with
- Work from home if you are able to

WHAT YOU CONSUME



- Don't overdo your news and information intake
- Get your information from reliable sources like the CDC or WHO
- Watch TV, movies, and videos that make you feel good

HOW YOU PREPARE



- Keep 2-4 weeks of food on hand
- Avoid overstocking on supplies that are in high demand so other people can have enough of the essentials too
- If you take medication, get refills and keep a month's supply at home if possible

HOW YOU PROTECT YOURSELF



- Regularly wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid greeting people by shaking hands, kissing or hugging
- Keep 6 feet of distance between you and anyone who is coughing or sneezing

HOW YOU PROTECT OTHERS



- Stay home if you are sick aside from getting medical care
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces

COLLABORATE

- Embrace the reality and role of pastoral leaders and ministry workers as first/sole responders to mental/emotional health concerns
- Develop relationships with faith-based and culturally competent mental health service providers
- Recognize thresholds of referral



AND OF COURSE,
WE CAN AND
SHOULD:

- **PRAY**
- **PRAISE**
- **SERVE**

IF **MY** PEOPLE,

WHO ARE CALLED BY **MY** NAME,
SHALL **HUMBLE** THEMSELVES,
& **PRAY**, & **SEEK** **MY** FACE,
& **TURN** FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS;
THEN I WILL **HEAR** FROM HEAVEN,
& I WILL **FORGIVE** THEIR SIN,
& I WILL **HEAL** THEIR LAND.

2 CHRONICLES 7:14
