



Mental Health Ministry  
Seven Sorrows BVM

## Understanding the Importance of Mental Health & Mental Wellness

We hear people speak about Mental Health, Mental Illness and Mental Wellness but what do each of these topics really mean and are they relevant to you? The answer in short is Yes. Below is a description of each topic so to better understand how they impact our lives.

### Mental Health

Mental Health is more than the absence of mental disorders. It is a state of mental *well-being*. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. It is how we realize our abilities and it assists us in our capacity to learn well and work well and contribute to our community.

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. How you feel can affect your ability to carry out everyday activities, how you connect in your relationships, and your overall mental health.

### Mental Wellness

Emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life's stresses and adapt to change and difficult times. Mental wellness is about prevention; coping with life's adversity; and being resilient when we face stress, worry, loneliness, anger or sadness. Yet, mental wellness can move us toward a deeper, richer and more meaningful life.



## Mental Illness

Mental illnesses are brain disorders that are biologically based medical problems. Untreated, they can cause severe disturbances in thinking, feeling and relating. This results in substantially diminished capacity for dealing with the ordinary demands of life. Mental illness can affect persons of any age and occur in any family. They are not caused by bad parenting and not evidence of weakness of character. (NAMI)

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly **1 in 5 adults** live with a mental illness.

Many factors contribute to mental health conditions, including:

- \*Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- \*Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- \*Family history of mental health problems

Despite common misperceptions, having a mental illness is not a choice, a weakness, or a character flaw. It is *not* something that just “passes” or can be “snapped out of” with willpower.

### Common Mental Health Conditions

Antisocial Personality Disorder  
Anxiety Disorders  
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)  
Bipolar Disorder  
Borderline Personality Disorder  
Depression  
Eating Disorders  
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders (OCD)  
Schizophrenia  
Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)  
Self-Harm  
Substance Abuse Disorders

