

Good night everyone. I hope your day has been going well so far. Thank you to sister Yolanda and her team for leading the devotion, it was a blessing.

So, tonight we will be zooming in on our mental health, with a special focus on suicide.

Now, to kick off the session, I'd like us to share what our mood is like right now. Whether it is an overall mood, or just a snippet of what is happening.

I'd now like 3 individuals to tell me what depression means to them.  
Thank you.

(CHANGE)

Just before we head into the presentation, let's take a look at this video  
[https://youtu.be/60qEynNnt\\_g](https://youtu.be/60qEynNnt_g)

(CHANGE)

With that, let's start this presentation. So, surprisingly, more than 700 000 people die due to suicide every year. And for every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds.

And in jamaica alone, there are at least 47 to 56 deaths per year due to suicide.

(CHANGE)

Many may wonder, what is the cause of suicide, and the truth is, we may never get a definite answer. But what we do know, there is a link between suicide and mental disorders (particularly, due to depression and drug usage).

Many suicides happen impulsively in moments of crisis with a breakdown due to inability to deal with life's stresses, such as financial problems, relationship break-up, decreased quality of family dynamic or chronic pain and illness.

In addition, experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation are strongly associated with suicidal behaviour.

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In January of this year, a woman attempted to hang herself from an overpass in Half-Way-Tree, but some civilians saw and stopped her. The well-known jamaican comedian Juliet 'Julie Mango' Bodley, has tried committing suicide 3 times before she sought out help from a therapist.

Psalm 42:5 says 'Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God', mental illness, specifically depression, is a respecter of no one, so we must hope in God.

(CHANGE)

As mentioned before, there are factors that predispose an individual to suicide, namely:

- mental health issue like depression, anxiety, or trauma
- family history of suicide, violence, or substance abuse
- stressful life events -such as school, breakups, or family trauma
- bullying or discrimination
- Grief
- long-term physical pain or illness
- adjusting to a big change, such as retirement or redundancy
- Isolation or loneliness
- feeling inadequate or a failure
- Postpartum depression, childbirth, or pregnancy
- As well as abuse - not just physical abuse, but emotional abuse, psychological abuse, and mental abuse

(CHANGE)

For many, it is difficult to see what actually drives a person to take their own lives, but a suicidal person is in so much pain that they see no other option. Attempting suicide is a desperate attempt to escape suffering that has become too unbearable for them. These individuals are blinded by feelings of self-hatred, hopelessness, and isolation, they can't see any way of finding relief except through death.

However, despite their desire for the pain to stop, most suicidal people are deeply conflicted about ending their own lives. They wish there was an alternative to suicide, but they just can't see one.

(CHANGE)

Stigma too is associated to why persons commit suicide. Due to the stigma associated with suicidal thoughts, many believe that they may not be taken seriously, may be judged and be told that 'they have everything to live for', or even that they should be grateful for life and that its not hard.

The stigma associated to suicidal thoughts make help-seeking very hard for them. Here are a few misconception about suicide, and the actual truth about them.

Here are a few misconceptions about suicide:

**Myth:** People who talk about suicide won't really do it.

**Fact:** Almost everyone who attempts suicide has given some clue or warning. Don't ignore even indirect references to death or suicide. Statements like "You'll be sorry when I'm gone," "I can't see any way out,"—no matter how casually or jokingly said—may indicate serious suicidal feelings.

**Myth:** Anyone who tries to kill themselves must be crazy

**Fact:** Most suicidal people are not psychotic or insane. They are upset, grief-stricken, depressed, or despairing, but extreme distress and emotional pain are not necessarily signs of mental illness.

**Myth:** If someone is determined to kill themselves, nothing is going to stop them.

**Fact:** Even a very severely depressed person has mixed feelings about death, fluctuating between wanting to live and wanting to die. Rather than wanting

death, they just want the pain to stop—and the impulse to end their life does not last forever.

(CHANGE)

**Myth:** People who die by suicide are people who were unwilling to seek help.

**Fact:** Many people try to get help before attempting suicide. In fact, studies indicate that more than 50 percent of suicide victims had sought medical help in the six months prior to their deaths.

**Myth:** Talking about suicide may give someone the idea.

**Fact:** You don't give someone suicidal ideas by talking about suicide. Rather, the opposite is true. Talking openly and honestly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can help save a life.

(CHANGE)

It is important that we take any suicidal talk or behavior seriously. It's not just a warning sign that the person is thinking about suicide—it's a cry for help. They actually want help, they just don't know how to ask for it, or to even have faith that it will help.

The best way to prevent suicide is to recognize these warning signs and know how to respond if you spot them. Major warning signs for suicide include:

- Talking about suicide – Any talk about suicide, dying, or self-harm, such as “I wish I hadn't been born,” “If I see you again...” and “I'd be better off dead.”
- Seeking out lethal means – Seeking access to guns, pills, knives, or other objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.

- Preoccupation with death – Unusual focus on death, dying, or violence. Writing poems or stories about death.
- No hope for the future – Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and being trapped (“There's no way out”). Belief that things will never get better or change.
- Self-loathing, self-hatred – Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, shame, and self-hatred. Feeling like a burden (“Everyone would be better off without me”).
- Getting affairs in order – Making out a will. Giving away prized possessions. Making arrangements for family members.
- Saying goodbye – Unusual or unexpected visits or calls to family and friends. Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again.
- Withdrawing from others – Withdrawing from friends and family. Increasing social isolation. Desire to be left alone.
- Self-destructive behavior – Increased alcohol or drug use, reckless driving, unsafe sex. Taking unnecessary risks as if they have a “death wish.”
- Sudden sense of calm – A sudden sense of calm and happiness after being extremely depressed can mean that the person has made a decision to attempt suicide.

(CHANGE)

If we are being honest, thinking about suicide is scary. Thinking that someone we love is about to commit suicide is scary. Thinking that people around you may one day get up and decide that today is their last day, is scary. But we have to push through that fear and reach out to help, and help them seek help.

So, just in case you may need to help someone, here are a few ways you can help someone if you think they may want to commit suicide:

### 1. Tip 1: Speak up if you're worried

If you spot the warning signs of suicide in someone you care about, you may wonder if it's a good idea to say anything. It's natural to feel uncomfortable or afraid. But anyone who talks about suicide or shows other warning signs needs immediate help—the sooner the better.

Talking to a friend or family member about their suicidal thoughts and feelings can be extremely difficult for anyone. But if you're unsure whether someone is suicidal, the best way to find out is to ask. You can't make a person suicidal by showing that you care. In fact, giving a suicidal person the opportunity to express their feelings can provide relief from loneliness and pent-up negative feelings, and may prevent a suicide attempt.

### 2. Respond quickly in a crisis

If a friend or family member tells you that they're thinking about death or suicide, it's important to evaluate the immediate danger the person is in. Those at the highest risk for committing suicide in the near future have a specific suicide PLAN, the MEANS to carry out the plan, a TIME SET for doing it, and an INTENTION to do it.

If a suicide attempt seems imminent, call a local crisis center, emergency services number 911, get in contact with a counselor, your pastor, or take the person to an emergency room. Remove guns, drugs, knives, and other potentially lethal objects from the area, but do not, under any circumstances, leave a suicidal person alone.

### 3. Tip 3: Offer help and support

If a friend or family member is suicidal, the best way to help is by offering an empathetic, listening ear. Let your loved one know that they're not alone and that you care.

(CHANGE)

Here is another video that i'd like us to take a look at

[https://youtu.be/4q\\_b6Otq3aU](https://youtu.be/4q_b6Otq3aU) first 5 mins

(CHANGE)

Hope is attainable...for those of us who are actually depressed right at this moment, but haven't contemplated suicide, you are just as important. Your life is just as valuable. You too, deserve an improved quality of life, one that you may just receive if you allow someone to know what you are going through.

Many times we keep this information to ourselves, thinking that no one cares, thinking that our mental distortions (misconceptions) of ourselves are true, thinking that we do not deserve to be loved. And we allow depression to eat us from the inside out, willing us into isolation, willing us to not eat, not sleep or even sleep too much, willing us to withdraw and be alone with our thoughts.. The thoughts that got us here in the first place.

It is important for us as christian to remember that depression (one of the main cause of suicides), is not a sin, and just like suicidal thoughts, needs to be dealt with-with more than prayer. We all know the phrase 'prayer without work is dead?', well it applies to this too.

Many times, if after we have tried socialising, talking to friends, and a therapies of nature, we will need to turn to a counsellor or therapist that may be able to further help us with our situation. Our pastor is also our next best bet.

Depression or suicidal thoughts are not punishments from God, and it is not due to any unconfessed sin. It is not the fault of the person who is suffering. It is definitely a difficult trial that can help to refine our faith, but it's not a punishment for sin.

Even in Jesus' day, people were eager to ascribe blame for illness and disability, but He challenged their assumptions. Here in John 9:1-3 As Jesus was walking along, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," His disciples

asked Him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?”

“It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.

When we are experiencing a mental health crisis and feeling isolated, it’s very easy to forget that God is within us believers. It was in John 16:12-15, (New International Version) that Jesus promised His followers the gift of the Holy Spirit— God within them— as His way of providing peace and guidance to them every day of their lives. If He has promised peace and guidance to His disciples, why would He forsake us?

Lastly, when we are at our lowest, it is hard to see life clearly as it is, or as it was for that matter. We are now viewing life through a distorted lens. But because we serve a living and powerfully gracious God, we can find comfort in knowing that it does not depend on our changeable emotions. God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.” (Hebrews 13:5, NLT)

And because of that we can proudly repeat (Romans 8:38, NLT) that says, I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, nor our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow— not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.

This concludes my presentation for tonight, thank you guys for listening.