

Interview questions for Rob and Brian

General

Tell us a bit about yourselves and what you do...

How do you define mental health and mental illness?

Mental illness seems to be a big problem today. It is increasingly a topic of public discourse and there is increasing pressure on the government to allocate more money to our mental health system. Is mental illness becoming more common, or is it becoming more acceptable to disclose, or is there another explanation?

- How widespread is mental illness?
- Are we better or worse than other countries?

Christian perspective

There is a view that Christians shouldn't struggle with mental illness (or not for very long). What would you say to that view?

I'd like to look at some Scriptures with you and ask you to comment on what is going on in these verses:

- Psalm 13:2—David—mood is low – is this depression?
- Mark 14:34—Jesus—extreme distress – is this anxiety?
- 2 Corinthians 1:8—Paul—extreme despair – are these suicidal thoughts?

What hope should it give us that such prominent people in Scripture struggled with mental illness?

A few weeks ago we talked about the nature of the spiritual battle that is going on around us in the spiritual realm. How does this relate to mental illness? How can we balance between under-spiritualising and over-spiritualising these struggles?

Where is God in relation to mental illness? He can seem very absent.

What difference does having a Christian faith have when we experience mental illness?

Is full recovery from mental illness a realistic expectation as Christians?

Specific issues

Depression—watch video to introduce (Black Dog) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc>

If someone is struggling with depression, or thinks they might be, what advice would you give them? What help can they seek?

What advice would you give parents worried about the mental/emotional health of their children (e.g. anxiety issues)?

There are women in our church who are pregnant at the moment and may be worried about post-natal depression. What would you say to them?

Church

What Christian/church responses to mental illness are unhelpful?

As a church community, how can we care for those among us struggling with mental illness?

How can we learn to talk about this more openly and honestly, and journey with each other better?

Wrap up

Rob—tell us about the mind & soul foundation website (with video) <https://vimeo.com/217624665>