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## Healing through Our Catholic Faith

### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND SUICIDE IDEATION**

Common signs of both include but are not limited to the following:

- Rapid mood changes
- Excessive sleep
- Noticeable diet changes (increase or decrease for food eaten, binging on certain foods, hiding food, restricting food, etc.)
- Noticeable weight gain or loss in a relatively short time period
- Overall negative attitude about self and their life
- Increase in anger, easily agitated or frustrated
- Overly sensitive to most things, people or situations
- Playing the victim and taking little to no responsibility for themselves
- Anxious on a daily and/or multiple times a week basis
- Full on panic attacks that may be for “no reason”
- Isolating self from family and friends
- Difficulty keeping a job
- Unresolved past trauma
- Substance abuse or other addictive disorders such as gambling or pornography
- Self-mutilation
- Prior suicide attempts

### **SCRIPTURE AND MENTAL HEALTH/ILLNESS**

Psalm 34:17-20	Romans 12:12	Romans 8:6
Phil. 4:6-7	John 14:27	Romans 12:1-2
Psalm 23:1-6	Romans 8:18	John 10:10
Matthew 11:28-30	Matthew 6:24	Psalm 9:9

### **CATECHESIS AND SUICIDE**

2280-2283

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“We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.” (2283)

### **LITTLE T AND BIG T TRAUMA**

**“little t”** This form of trauma would be something that happens in your life that causes a mild to moderate disturbance but not to the level of severe consequences. Examples are divorce, moving, car accident, getting lost, abandonment, attacked by a dog, falling off or down something, a break-up, losing a job (just to name a few). Keep in mind that although some of the examples could be “BIG T” trauma, I am referring to the mild to moderate forms of each.

**“BIG T”** This form of trauma would be something that happens in your life that causes a great deal of disturbance and/or negative consequences in your life. Examples are war combat, rape, sexual assault, molestation, death of a parent/child/other close family member, suicide, house burning down, financial ruin, physical/verbal/emotional abuse, severe poverty, etc.

### **TRAUMA → WOUNDS → RESPONSES → CONSEQUENCES**

When a trauma occurs in your life, you will develop an emotional wound. The wound can be shallow (meaning the pain is manageable) or deep. When this happens, the outcome is your response to your trauma and your wounds, which then leads to the consequence. An example:

Your mom dies when you are 11 (trauma) which results in abandonment issues (wound). You never receive therapy to deal with your trauma, which leads to you having negative responses most things in your life. The consequence becomes your inability to be happy in life.

### **UNHEALTHY COPING SKILLS (most common)**

- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Sleep
- Video games/phone games
- Emotional eating
- Bing eating especially on sugar
- Pornography
- Gambling
- Isolation
- Anger outbursts
- Abusive behavior
- Victim mentality
- Irresponsibility

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- Excessive spending
- Self-mutilation
- Tobacco
- Excessive exercise
- Infidelity
- Defensiveness
- Blame game

### **HEALTHY COPING SKILLS**

- Prayer
- Meditation
- Exercise
- Journal
- Learn to set healthy boundaries (usually through therapy)
- Write and release exercise
- Therapy and/or talking to a trusted person in your life
- Reading uplifting books
- Putting good things into your mind (beware of what you listen to, read and watch)
- Volunteering
- Going for a walk
- Deep breathing
- Sitting in stillness and silence
- Uplifting music
- Anything artistic (drawing, coloring, painting, collages, etc.)
- Building or taking apart
- Needle point or other forms of sewing
- Using your fine motors to create
- Working in your garden/flower bed/lawn
- Walking outside in the grass barefoot
- Challenging yourself to “feel the fear and do it anyway”

### **THE FIVE KEY ANSWERS IN OUR CATHOLIC FAITH**

1. Daily mass. Going to daily mass is simply a wonderful and joy-filled way to begin your day. I like to call daily mass the “meat” of the mass because it is just the Word and the Body, all you need to armor yourself for the day. Beginning your day with daily mass will

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put you in a Christ-centered mindset that over time will compound and bring about more peace and calmness into your life.

2. Praying the rosary. The rosary is one of our greatest defenses against the wickedness and snares of the devil. Satan wants you to believe that you are worthless and therefore should hurt yourself. He is the master of deceit and fear. He also hates when you pray the rosary so pray it repeatedly as you imagine him shrieking away in fear.
3. Confession. Going to confession is kind of like a “mini” therapy session. You are able to go any day Monday through Saturday, unload your heavy burdens in a safe space and then truly repent for your sins. Confession lightens the burden of guilt and shame. Confession reminds you of God’s love and mercy. Confession is light to the darkness of sin.
4. Adoration chapel. I cannot tell you enough how much I love popping in to see Jesus on any given day at any given time. I will literally drive across town if time permits in my day to simply say hi to Him. If no one else is there, I will speak aloud to Him. Adoring our Lord is humbling, grounding, peaceful, encouraging, fulfilling and joyful. I promise, you will walk away feeling more alive.
5. Holy Eucharist. Although this speaks for itself, I want to remind you that receiving our Lord’s Body, soul and divinity is literally feeding your mind, body and soul all that is good and holy. The more you receive Him, the more space He fills inside your heart and mind, the more joy you experience, the less pain you feel, and the giant hole of emptiness that once took up too much space inside you slowly begins to close up to a mere pinhole.