

## Church Mental Health Conversation Starters

These conversation starters are designed for leadership teams, small groups, classes, and retreats. They help people speak more openly about the connection between faith, feelings, and mental health.

### Section A: Personal experience

- When you hear the words mental health, what comes to mind first from your own story or your family story?
- What helps you notice that you are approaching your limit emotionally or physically?
- Growing up, how did your church or family talk about sadness, worry, or anger?
- What is one practice that has helped you stay grounded in a hard season?
- When you are struggling, what makes it easier or harder to ask for help?

### Section B: Scripture and faith

- Which stories in Scripture feel honest about human pain or despair?
- How do you understand the difference between spiritual struggle and a mental health condition?
- Where do you see Jesus or the early church caring for people who were isolated or misunderstood?
- What spiritual messages have helped you when you were struggling, and which ones have not helped?
- How might our prayers sound if we brought our whole emotional life honestly before God?

### Section C: Leadership and culture

- What spoken and unspoken messages does our church send about strength, weakness, and asking for help?
- Where in our church life do people have space to talk about mental health without shame?
- How are our leaders doing emotionally and spiritually, and how do we know?
- What fears or concerns do we have about talking more openly about mental health in our congregation?
- If we became known as a church that cares well for mental health, what might that look like over time?

### Section D: Next steps and action

- Who are the people in our congregation who may be carrying heavy emotional loads right now?
- What is one small step we can take in the next three months to support mental health in our church?
- Which community partners or professionals could we learn from or collaborate with?
- How might we make it easier for people to find help when they are in crisis?
- What do we want to pray for regularly regarding mental health in our congregation and community?