

Ask your  
questions



# Mental Health

and the church

**“How to respond practically?”**

Steve Midgley (BCUK)



ST COLUMBA'S  
FREE CHURCH

**newgrowth**  
Christian Counselling



**Biblical  
Counselling** UK

Ask your  
questions



## MENTAL HEALTH AND THE CHURCH

**Steve Midgley**  
Executive Director, BCUK

# MENTAL HEALTH AND THE CHURCH

1. A Biblical Perspective

2. A Practical Response



Ask your  
questions



# AMBITIONS FOR CARE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

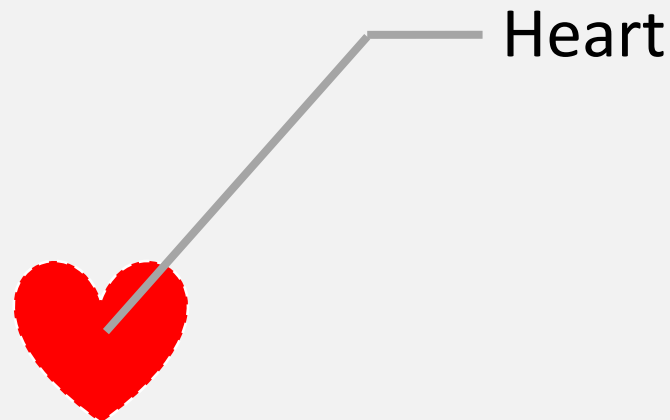
- **Eager**, not reluctant
- **Compassionate**, not critical
- **Gospel shaped**, not worldly
- **Wise**, not reckless





## A MODEL: THE HEART

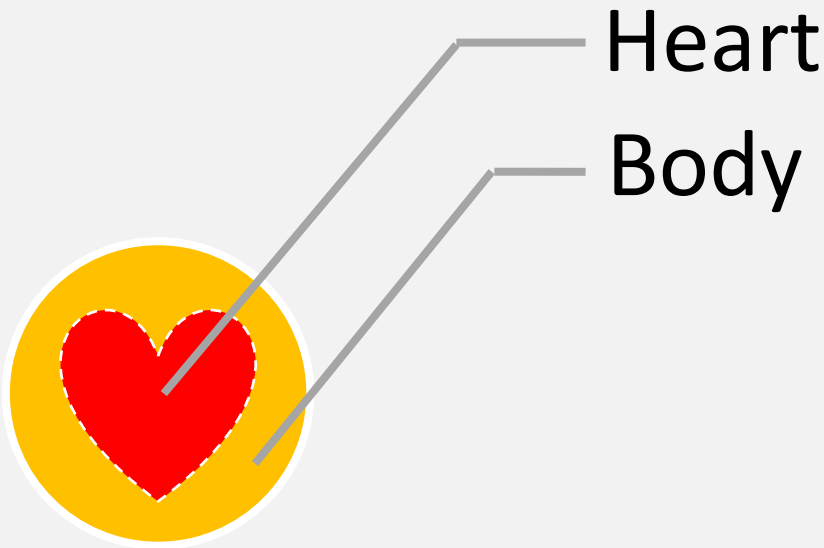
*A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his **heart**...for the mouth speaks what the **heart** is full of. (Luke 6:45)*





## A MODEL: EMBODIED

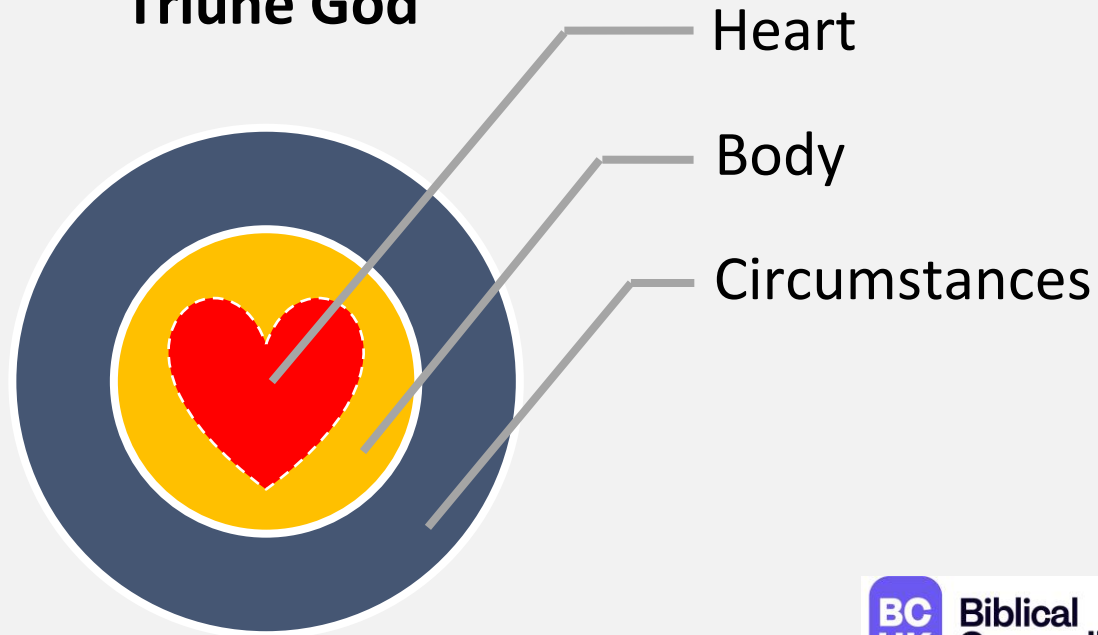
*Though our **outer self** is wasting away, our **inner self** is being renewed day by day.  
(2 Corinthians 4.16)*





## A MODEL: EMBEDDED

**Triune God**



Heart

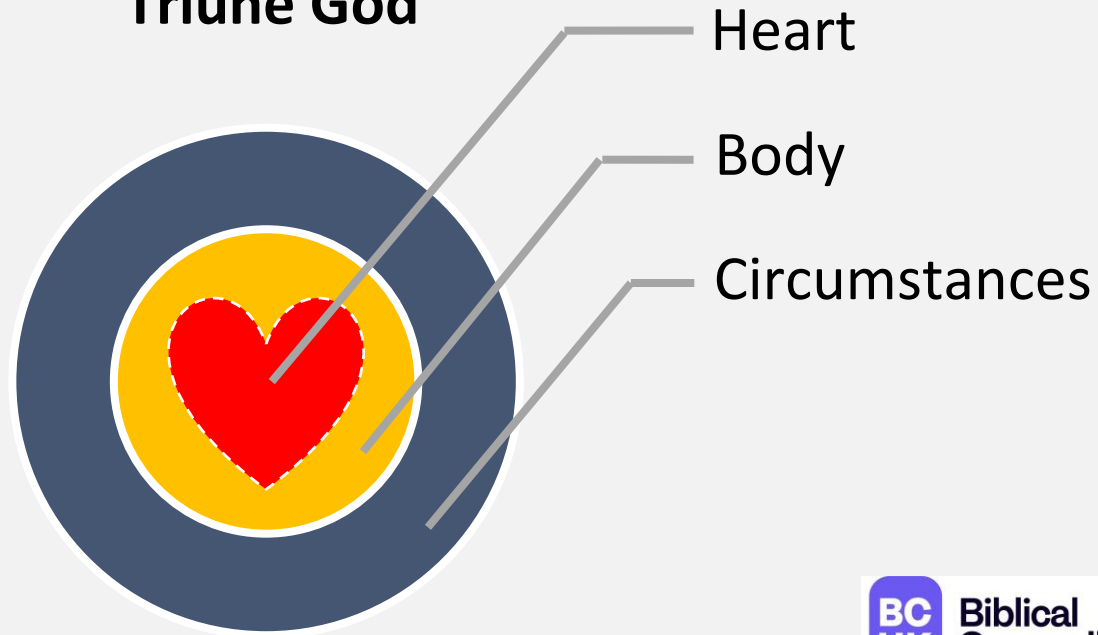
Body

Circumstances



# SUZY WITH ANOREXIA

**Triune God**



Heart

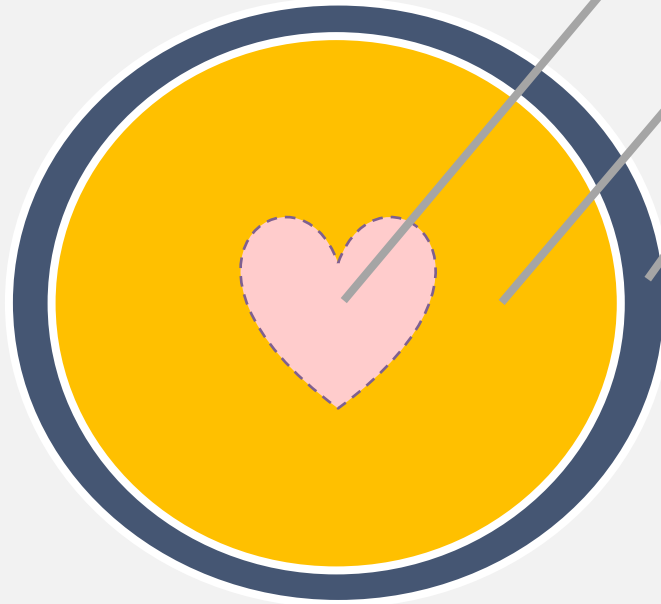
Body

Circumstances



# NATURE: AN EMPHASIS ON BODY / BIOLOGY

Triune God



Heart

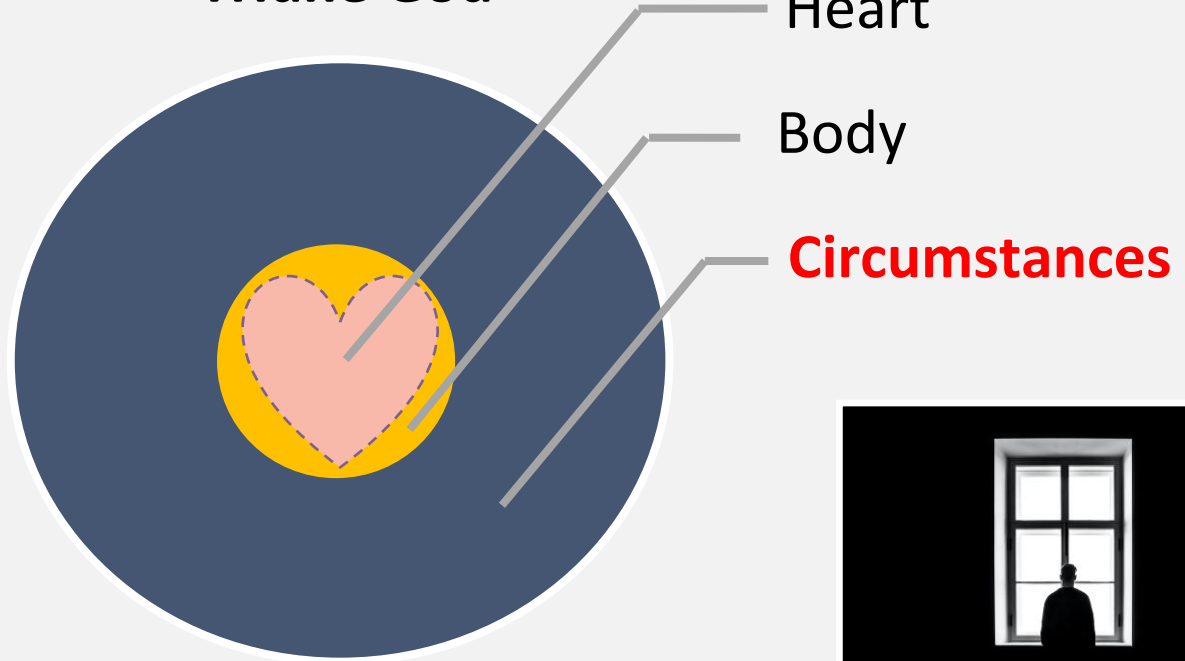
**Body**

Circumstances



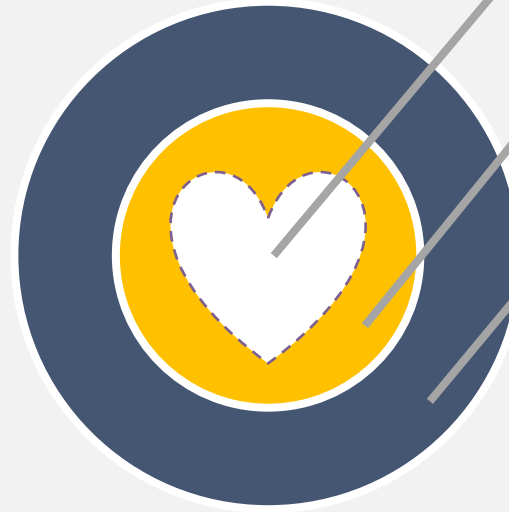
# NURTURE: AN EMPHASIS ON CIRCUMSTANCES

**Triune God**



# STRANGE OMISSION OF THE HEART

**Triune God**



Heart

Body

Circumstances





# DISCUSS

Does this model make sense?

Does it help in working out whether mental illness is either spiritual or biological?

# WHAT DO PEOPLE IN YOUR CHURCH BELIEVE?



*Mental illness is a spiritual issue;  
the solution is repentance & faith*

*Mental illness is a brain & biology issue;  
the solution is medication*





## DISCUSS

Does this model make sense?

Does it help in working out whether mental illness is either spiritual or biological?

## FIVE STEPS

1. Listen really well
2. Attend first to suffering
3. Be practical
4. Bring encouragement by reminding of essential truths
5. Persevere & pray



# DISCUSS

What gets in the way of church engaging well with those struggling with their mental health?





# STIGMA

**Discuss:** what can we do in church to reduce the stigma people feel about mental health struggles?





## OVERCOMING STIGMA

- Be careful with humour
- Mention from the front



## RAISING AWARENESS

- Testimonies at the front
- Books on the bookstall
- Booklets available



## RAISING AWARENESS

- Seminars and teaching evenings
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Addictions
  - Eating disorders

## DISCUSS: WHY IS THIS SO?

*“With my mental health struggles the people who’ve shown most interest and been most ready to talk and simply been there for me have been my non-Christian friends.”*



## CULTURE OF CHURCH

- Culture of success
- Culture of efficiency
- Culture of 'sortedness'

# CHANGING CULTURE

- The gospel is for the needy...

*But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.  
(1 Corinthians 1:27)*



## CHANGING CULTURE

If I must boast, I  
will boast of the  
things that show  
my weakness  
(2 Corinthians  
11:30)





DESKILLED / OUT  
OF OUR DEPTH

**Discuss:** how can  
we best respond  
when we feel  
these things?





## OUT OF DEPTH...

**Ask**, don't pretend

**Involve others**, don't go it alone

**Read**, don't stay ignorant

**Invest**, get some training



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Counselling<sup>UK</sup>

## RESOURCES

*Also...*

Mike Emlet, *Descriptions and prescriptions*

Helen Thorne, *Hope in an anxious world*

Ed Welch, *Side by Side*

From the author of  
*Hope in an Anxious World*

# MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUR CHURCH

A handbook for Biblical care

Helen Thorne &  
Dr Steve Midgley

Ask your  
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# Certificate Programme

in Conversational Ministry and Biblical Counselling



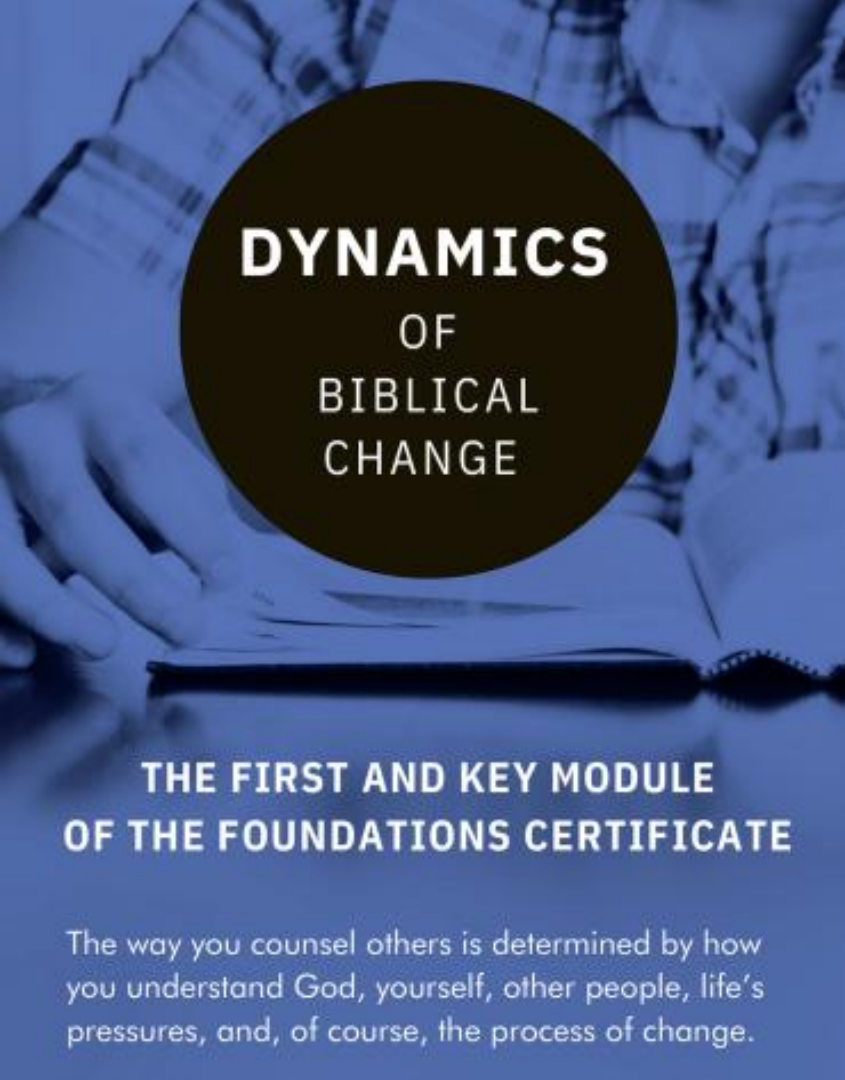
Equipping students  
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# **DYNAMICS OF BIBLICAL CHANGE**

## **THE FIRST AND KEY MODULE OF THE FOUNDATIONS CERTIFICATE**

The way you counsel others is determined by how you understand God, yourself, other people, life's pressures, and, of course, the process of change.

## **THE 3-MONTH OPTION**

Term 1 of the Foundations Certificate  
as a stand-alone module.

Next intake September 2023.

[biblicalcounselling.org.uk/certificatecourse](https://biblicalcounselling.org.uk/certificatecourse)

## **THE 6-MONTH OPTION**

A more flexible introduction to  
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Next intake in January 2024.

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## **THE SABBATICAL OPTION**

Take Dynamics of Biblical Change  
as part of a ministry sabbatical.

Flexible start times. Get in touch at

[courses@biblicalcounselling.org.uk](mailto:courses@biblicalcounselling.org.uk)



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## A WORKED EXAMPLE

Cath, who is 55 and single, became a believer in her mid 20s and has been a member of her local church ever since – she usually comes to church on Sundays and attends a small group midweek. She loves little children and has been a loyal helper in the church creche for many years. Cath has also struggled with depression on and off for many years and she's in a bad phase at the moment. The local mental health team are involved, and she is being seen occasionally in out-patients. Her depression expresses itself with a mix of low mood and anxiety. She finds it hard to get out and when depressed she begins to neglect herself – she also struggles with sleep and finds everyday tasks increasingly difficult.

**Discuss:** What could her church do to support Cath?

