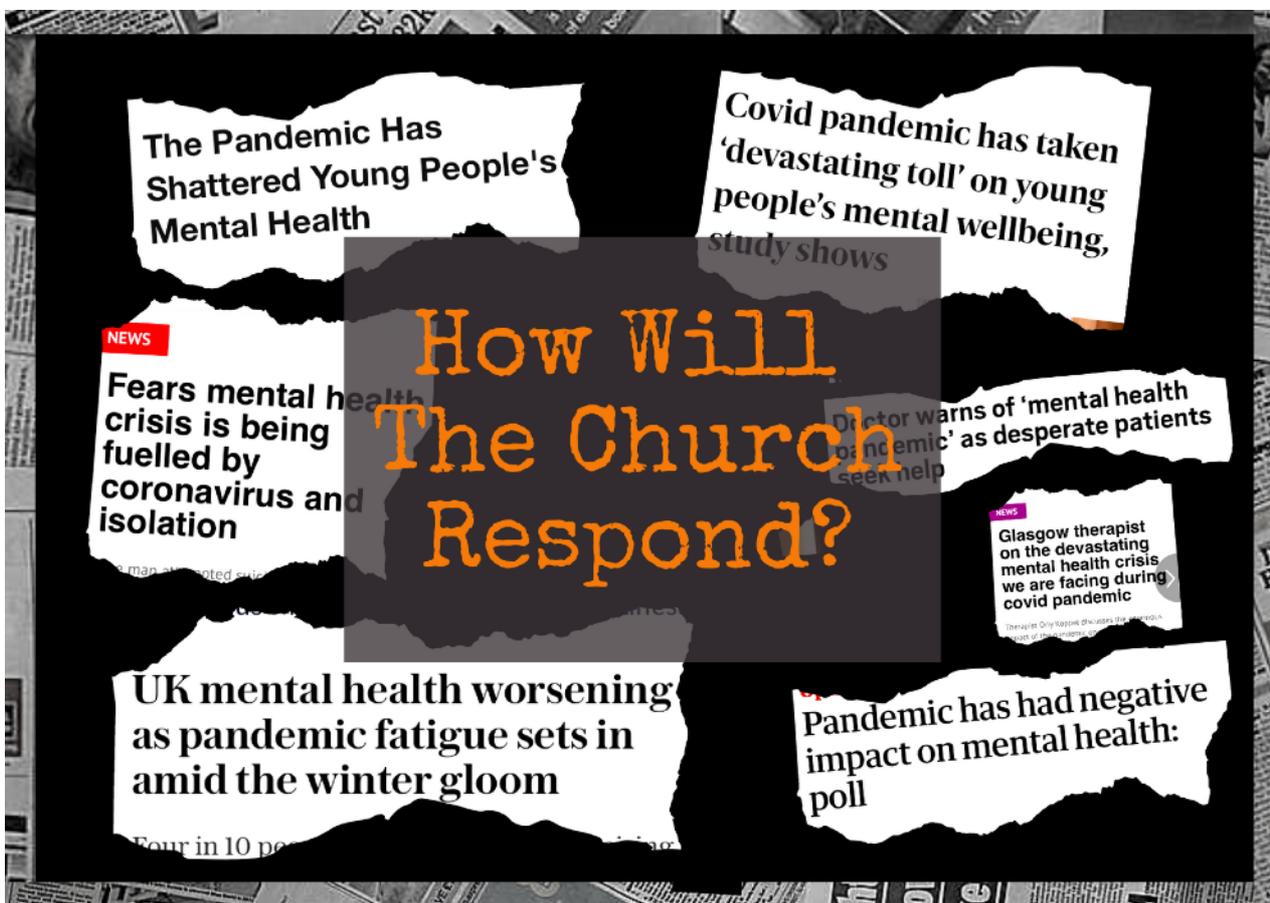




MENTAL HEALTH PANDEMIC



Through isolation, uncertainty, bereavement, stress, and loss of income, the Covid-19 crisis has led to an increase in anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems. At the time of writing, Mind's website headline describes the coronavirus pandemic as 'a mental health emergency'.

How can the church help? Churches aren't psychiatric hospitals but they have a message of hope, and the resources to make a difference. Attending a support group was one of the exceptions to the 'stay at home' lockdown message - so recognised are support groups for people's well-being. Celebrate Recovery provides these crucial groups. Even better, the ministry points people to Jesus Christ who binds up broken hearts, comforts those who mourn, and brings hope and peace.

Could your church run Celebrate Recovery and bring hope to the hurting?

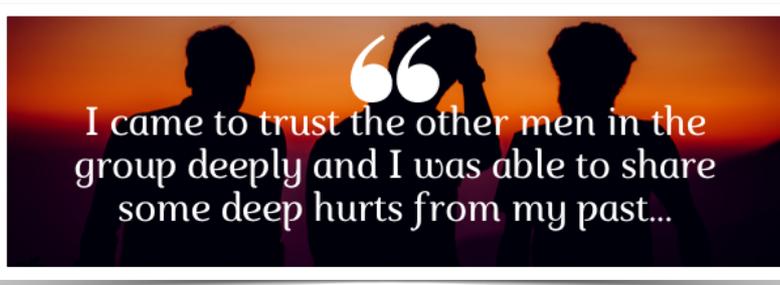
Testimony: Comfortable with who I am

Ian shares how Celebrate Recovery supports him and has helped him understand his mental health struggles better.

I'm Ian and I struggle with depression and anxiety.

Despite having put off going to Celebrate Recovery for many months and refusing to accept that I had a problem, I eventually gave in and found the courage to walk through the door. I found those few steps some of the scariest of my life despite having walked through the doors of the church hundreds of times before. What I found on the other side were warm, welcoming faces, some of which I recognised, some I didn't. I expected to be faced with questions and judgement but, instead, I had a chat with a friend I hadn't seen for some time and a cup of tea. I didn't really know what I was wanting to get from Celebrate Recovery but despite this, I felt comfortable being there.

I had been struggling for years but kept it a secret outside of home. My first meeting followed the now familiar outline, and I found myself sitting in a small group of men who were sharing some very deep and emotional experiences. I was surprised at the openness in the group, especially as some of the men were known to each other outside of Celebrate Recovery (CR). Weren't they concerned that someone outside of CR would find out what they were saying? I soon realised that one of the most important things about the programme is that whatever is shared within the group stays within the group. Not even the fact that someone else goes to CR can be shared with anyone else. This simple rule has made a huge difference to me in feeling that I can share anything there without fear.



Over a very short period of time I came to trust the other men in the group deeply and I was able to share some deep hurts from my past without being judged. My depression and anxiety had led me to a point where my self-esteem was very low. I've acknowledged through Celebrate Recovery that I am prone to dwelling on things and not expressing my feelings, which leads to outbursts of frustration. I am also prone to co-dependency (people-pleasing) and I have realised that my anxiety is particularly debilitating in social situations. I am learning to recognise the warning signs when this is happening, and I am supported, comforted and encouraged by CR members as well as by my family.

With the help of Celebrate Recovery and the support and encouragement of the men I share with, I am more comfortable with who I am.

Pour on God's Weedkiller



Some garden weeds are resilient and persistent - and so are some character defects!

After years of low confidence and anorexia, I became bulimic. Only with bulimia did I recognise something was wrong. By this stage I had allowed low self-worth to grow for years - like dandelions re-seeding and growing in a lawn.

I tried to tackle the part of the problem or 'weed' that I could see - the bingeing - with self-made rules to control food intake but I failed over and over. God showed me that my tugging at my 'dandelions' was only succeeding in snapping off the heads. Weeds grow back unless the roots are pulled up or killed. God wanted to go after the root - low self-worth.

Celebrate Recovery's Principle 5 is 'Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.'

I had to cooperate with Him on replacing wrong views of self with God's view of me by believing what the Bible said - that I am loved, gifted, on the path to wisdom, redeemed...

God's Word to low self-worth was like weedkiller to dandelions; it got the root!

My 'garden' is in pretty good shape now. However, those persistent dandelions of low self-worth can reappear on occasion but I've learned to pour God's truth onto self-doubts and keep better on top of the weeds!

Could you use some weedkiller on any persistent weeds in your life?

Catherine Robinson

Add It To The Tool Bag



Sarah Stanton is Celebrate Recovery’s US National Mental Health Champion and shares with us how Celebrate Recovery provides a safe space, hope and support to all.

Since being a part of the Celebrate Recovery family, I’ve heard the analogy on many occasions that the Church is the hospital and Celebrate Recovery is the emergency room (or A&E!).

As both a CR Ministry Leader in the Seattle, WA area, and a Licensed Mental Health Clinician in my day job, I often refer my clients who need additional tools in their tool bag to Celebrate Recovery. Should the global church also refer people to CR? It’s a ministry that serves people experiencing more than just drug and alcohol addiction. It is a ministry devoted to creating a safe place for any hurt, hang-up, or habit.

In the last several years CR has been intentional with rolling out ‘Mental Health Champions.’ The hope is that Mental Health Champions would be within each local CR ministry. These individuals are intentional about creating a safe, de-stigmatised refuge for individuals who have felt marginalised from their mental health challenges.

Celebrate Recovery wants the church to know that we are a ministry that supports and advocates for mental wellness. We support mental health through working a Christ-centred 12-Step programme with accountability and sponsorship. We believe freedom in Christ is something that can be complete, even without physical healing.

CR wants to bring awareness and believes that individuals with mental health challenges can live healthy, whole, and rewarding lives. Our mental health is an integral and essential component of our overall health and well-being. Having mental health challenges can make it difficult to live everyday life and maintain recovery. But it IS possible!! 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV), God tells us, "My grace is sufficient for YOU, for my power is made perfect in weakness."



Celebrate Recovery is not intended to be a replacement for counselling, therapy, and/or medical treatment. It is an additional source of hope and support in a small group support setting. There is no denying that living with mental health issues can be difficult. However, it does not have to be a lifelong sentence to misery.

As the global churches and CR continue to team up, individuals can experience the freedom that comes when we truly allow God to stand in the gap for us. CR offers healthy relationships and tools to help cope with mental health challenges. We believe there is hope for a better tomorrow. By living one day at a time, one moment at a time, we can find that peace that surpasses all understanding and live an extraordinary life!

Sarah Stanton, US National Mental Health Champion



What a Legacy!

It is with sadness that we pass on the news of Pastor John Baker’s death. John founded Celebrate Recovery with his wife, Cheryl, in 1991. What started as a support group at Saddleback Church became a world-wide movement of hope bringing Christ’s love and healing power to millions of hurting and broken people - and will continue to do so! We will miss him but we are so thankful for his obedience to God’s call and for his amazing legacy in Celebrate Recovery.

Churches, Let's Share God's Grace!



Robert Burns is a long-time friend of Celebrate Recovery UK. Here, he shares his own recovery story and his heart to see more churches run Celebrate Recovery.

My name is Robert and I'm a believer in Jesus Christ as my Saviour, who struggles with alcoholism and mental health disorders.

I was born and raised around Edinburgh in a working class family. I had a so-called "normal" childhood, was involved in various church youth activities and played a great deal of football. To say I was passionate about "fitba" would be an understatement. I was a good student academically but always felt a great deal of pressure to be the best in everything! Deep down inside I never felt good enough for anyone. I experienced traumatic, abusive physical and mental treatment in youth football which I believe

was where my problems with alcohol and depression really began.

In the mid-sixties I emigrated to the USA. Here, I achieved in studies and work, married and had a son. However, my Christian beliefs were not reflected in my lifestyle, business practices and priorities. My use of alcohol and mental health issues continued to the point where my life was totally out of control; I was dying physically, mentally and spiritually.

I stepped into Alcoholics Anonymous, sought more intensive psychiatric and medical support, and survived traumatic family relationships separation. I tried to pick up the pieces of my broken life. The familiar recovery stories of 90 meetings in 90 days, concentrated step studies, spiritual retreats, and mentor guidance followed. I returned to Scotland, and my recovery has progressed thanks to God's grace and love.



In 2002, a small group in my church became aware of the Celebrate Recovery programme from Saddleback Church. We were inspired by the teachings of the principles of recovery based on the Beatitudes, and that the programme was Christ-centred and Bible-based.

On my Celebrate Recovery journey, I have been witness to many "miracles". One young man's life was in ruins as a result of an alcohol and drug lifestyle. Now, he is an ordained minister in the Church of Scotland. Another elderly gentleman who came along to check Celebrate Recovery out, came to believe in Christ, was baptised, and died with peace in his heart.

My prayer is that the Celebrate Recovery will be embraced by church leaders especially in Scotland and most notably during these extremely difficult times when our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing is so dramatically affected.

Robert Burns

Find Out More



Our 'Introducing Celebrate Recovery' meeting on Wednesday 9 June at 7pm will help you understand what's involved in setting up Celebrate Recovery at your UK church. Email enquiries@celebraterecovery.co.uk for Zoom details.



Learn how Celebrate Recovery can help your church bring Christ's healing power to people's lives! Strengthen your Celebrate Recovery ministry! Be encouraged in Christ-centred recovery! Get 1-2 October marked in your diary!