



Resources

Recent Christian books on Health and Healing

- Gift or Given - A Theology of Healing for the 21st Century John P Atkinson Circle Book 2012
- Well-Being by Alison Webster SCM Press 2002

Healthcare Information and Community Projects

- Spiritual Care Matters www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/spiritual-care
- Co-Production in Health and Social Care www.govint.org/good-practice/publications
- Community Chaplaincy Listening – available at www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/spiritual-care/areas-of-education/ccl-scotland.aspx
- Ripple Project www.rippleproject.co.uk Example of church and local community working together

Rev Jenny Williams is available to support churches with issues related to health and healing with regard to ministry and/or community development.
jennywilliams@morningsideunitedchurch.org.uk

Discussion Points

1. Take a few moments to remember an experience in your life which was healing for you. Share it with your neighbour. Then collate the answers in a larger group. Reflect on similarities and differences between your own examples.
2. Take any Gospel healing story and notice the different aspects of healing and health that are present. What language would be used currently in our society and health care to express the different aspects you have identified?
3. Using a broad understanding of health and healing list the group and activities going on in your congregation and in your church buildings that are contributing to health, healing, spirituality and well-being. Include anything that contributes towards hospitality, listening, building confidence, pastoral care, support groups as well as worship and prayer.
4. Healthcare in Scotland now recognises spirituality as part of health, this is understood as helping individuals and communities (re) discover meaning and purpose in their lives?
How, if at all, does that affect your mission to the local community?

Keep in Touch

Church and Society Council
The Church of Scotland
121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN
Telephone: 0131 225 5722
churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353
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www.churchofscotland.org.uk



The Church of Scotland
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Why Health Matters for Ministry

Healing is more than physical healing





Jesus turned, and seeing her he said “Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well.” Matthew 9 v22

HEALTH and HEALING in MINISTRY

CONTEXT

Since the Reformation medicine and theology have developed as two different professions. Health and healing seem to mirror this separation, health being seen as the domain of medicine and healing as part of prayer. Current scientific studies have shown that physical, emotional and spiritual health are deeply inter-related – so how can we integrate health and healing in our ministry?

CHANGES

Healthcare in Scotland is shifting the balance of care away from hospitals to primary care and community care contexts.

The focus is moving away from doing things to patients (or rather to parts of people), and towards empowering people to take responsibility for living as fully as they can. Instead of seeing just the sick individual, healthcare is now taking into account how much close relationships and community involvement support health. Spiritual care is now part of the health agenda in our country, helping individuals and communities (re) discover meaning and purpose in their lives.

OPPORTUNITIES

This broader understanding of health, that includes spiritual care and community support, offers the possibility for churches to reconnect with local healthcare - making a strong contribution towards supporting our nations health and well-being.

CHALLENGE

Yet this is challenging for churches because there has been neither a theology to connect the healing stories in the Gospel with healthcare nor a recognition that much of our current pastoral care and social activities actively support health. This raises the question –

How can congregations reintegrate health and healing into our understanding and presentation of ministry and mission?

According to Sir Harry Burns “Health inequalities are the biggest issue facing Scotland just now, because not only are health inequalities a problem but [they] are really a manifestation of social inequality.” Report to Scottish Parliament’s audit committee 2012

CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE ON HEALTH

- From fixing ill-health to promotion of well-being
- From professional expertise to co-production of well-being
- From individual treatment to relational and communal cohesion
- From dependency on professionals to empowering self-management
- From acute institutional care to primary and community care

CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE ON HEALING

- healing is more than physical healing
- health offers a language of connection with people
- health and healing are mission
- empowering people is healing
- self-esteem and confidence promote health and well-being

RECONNECTING HEALING STORIES with HEALTHCARE

Healing stories in the Gospel affirm individuals and help them to be at home with themselves. Jesus listens to them, conveys that he understands their pain and their yearning for better health. He is deeply hospitable to them in a way that meets their longings and makes a difference. He enables them to participate in work, gives them back control over their own lives and also gives them the potential to become a useful member of their community. In this way he promotes coping and self-esteem, as well as restoring their physical health. In the society of his day those people watching the healing take place would go on to support the individual through encouragement and inclusion back into the community.

In many healing stories Jesus directly confronts the authorities, whose judgmental and legalistic attitudes create inequality, exclusion and poor health. In our present day Scotland we are still struggling to face the huge disparities of life expectancy, which is dependent on location and quality of housing. We are facing increasingly stretched health resources to be shared across the population, yet with a growing proportion of elderly people.

CONNECTING CHURCH LIFE with HEALTH POLICY

Viewed from this wider perspective, our church communities are already significantly contributing to health and well-being within our congregations and in our local communities.

- through pastoral care
- any contexts where people have their stories heard
- in support groups in which people can find meaning and hope
- in opportunities for reflection and prayer
- at bereavement services
- through many different forms of hospitality
- through healing services.

There are resources to help congregations link their healing work with the local community. Faith in Community Scotland has published “Faith Endeavours: How public agencies and faith communities can work better together”.

The Joint Improvement Team of the Scottish Government is already looking at the contribution of faith communities to care for older people. The resources overleaf give more information and practical examples of larger projects already working.