

It's Okay Not to Be Okay: Faith and Mental Health Can Coexist



There's a quiet pressure to always be "good," especially when you're used to being the strong one. You keep showing up, handling things, even when something inside feels off. Mental health doesn't always show up loudly, sometimes it's just exhaustion, irritability, or feeling disconnected. And somewhere along the way, many of us started believing that struggling emotionally means we're doing something

The Tension Between Strength and Honesty

Mental health challenges don't always look like crisis. They can show up in subtle, everyday ways that are easy to dismiss. Over time, ignoring those signals can lead to burnout, anxiety, or depression that feels harder to name and even harder to address. For many, especially in faith-centered environments, there's an added layer of pressure to stay positive, pray more, or "shake it off." While helpful, they are not meant to replace emotional awareness or practical support. The idea that you have to choose between faith and mental health is a false one. Even within scripture, we see moments of deep emotional expression. In Psalms, David openly wrestles with fear, grief and distress. His honesty was not condemned; it was preserved. That alone challenges the idea that struggling makes you less faithful.

Why it matters

Studies show that many individuals in Black communities lean heavily on faith-based coping while underusing traditional mental health support, often due to stigma or limited access. While faith is a powerful source of resilience, it is most effective when paired with safe spaces, honest conversations and practical support, shifting the narrative from "just be strong" to "it's okay to process" and making room for both emotional and spiritual growth.

What you can do

- Create space to reflect instead of constantly distracting yourself.
- Talk to someone you trust, whether that is a friend, therapist, or mentor.
- Engage in faith-based practices as support, not as avoidance.
- Set boundaries that protect your mental and emotional capacity.
- Give yourself permission to not have everything figured out.



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