



# Your (Unofficial) Guide to Advent

## Supporting Mental Health and Wellness

The pressure to feel happy and be hopeful during the Advent season can be overwhelming, harmful, exhausting, isolating, and so much more—especially for people who are living with mental health challenges. Here are a few tips on ways to support our own mental health or that of others during this holiday season.

- **Be a friend:** “A friend loves at all times...” (Proverbs 17:17a). Listen without judgment. Provide companionship. Offer a ride or a meal. Share some cookies. Respect confidentiality. Avoid shame and guilt. Remember that we all have and we all are impacted by mental health.
- **Remember that words can hurt:** “Rash words are like sword thrusts...” (Proverbs 12:18a). Pay attention to the words you use and how they affect the people around you. Avoid labelling and stereotyping people. Avoid stating how people “should” feel.
- **Stop the stigma:** “We, who are many, are one body in Christ” (Romans 12:5). Challenge negative attitudes toward mental health and neurodiversity whenever you encounter it. Question your assumptions. Correct misinformation about mental health challenges, substance use disorders, trauma, and brain differences.
- **Educate yourself:** “Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?” (Proverbs 8:1). Learn the facts about the various challenges that can affect mental health, including substance use disorders, neurodevelopmental difference, trauma, and brain disorders. Realize that mental health is physical health.
- **Thank God for neurodiversity:** “Wonderful are your works” (Psalms 139:14) Be aware that we all process the world around us differently. Celebrate and affirm neurodiversity and the many gifts that each person brings.

*Adapted from Mental Health and Wellness: Worship Resources for All (you can find this resource in the Mental Health Sunday section on the United Church website)*

