

For Such A Time As This

For almost two years, NC Family has been discussing crafting a feature article to address the declining state of mental health in America. With suicide rates the highest that they have been since World War II, we all understood there was something dire going on in our nation that we needed to share with our audience. Yet, we constantly faced various setbacks in this process; there would be another hot-button issue that required our immediate attention, or the potential authors we contacted were unavailable.

Now, I realize that our heavenly Father's timing in this has been perfect, as His timing always is. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already critical issue of mental health in our nation. More people than ever are reporting declines in their mental health as they face fear of the virus, loneliness in quarantine and isolation, and sadness and desperation brought on by the conflict in our country.

I personally have felt my mental health suffer over the past year, despite a close family—both geographically and relationally—maintained employment, and sustained physical health. I have still felt afraid, alone, anxious, and at times, apathetic. Yet I know I am far more fortunate than millions of other Americans who truly feel alone, who have lost their jobs, and who do not know the hope of Jesus Christ, who is the only way to true health and healing—physically, spiritually, and mentally.

So I am incredibly thankful that God worked to prevent our writing this feature until now. I pray everyone who reads the statistics, wisdom, and first-hand insights in “Mental Health & the Church: Seeking the Whole Story” will have their eyes opened to the real struggles of so many suffering around us. More importantly, I pray they will act as the Church, as God's hands and feet, to seek the whole story and to foster acceptance, support, and lasting healing.

We are also aware, however, that many positive and joyful things have happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in regards to more time with our families. The NC Family Staff happily shares our silver linings of this strange time in “Seeing the Savior in a Pandemic.”

Finally, the 2021-22 legislative session of the North Carolina General Assembly has just begun, and there are sure to be many bills introduced that directly impact North Carolina families. Three top experts in the areas of life, school choice, and gambling share their insights into the upcoming legislative session in “On the Horizon at the NC General Assembly.”

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Family North Carolina* magazine! Please feel free to pass this issue along to others, and you are welcome to contact NC Family to request some extra copies to pass out to friends, family, and your communities. 🏠

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