

Mental Emotional Health of Pastor's & Congregations

THERE IS TRAUMA IN AMERICA

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In a year that has been marked by uncertainty, distance and trauma, pastors are likely facing even greater pressure to support and guide their people—perhaps while their own mental and emotional well-being are also suffering.

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Barna Research, Praxis Labs, and Tony Morgan have contributed to my thoughts in this presentation. There are 3 key insights that I want to review regarding the care for congregations and pastors.

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Few Pastors Feel “Very” Well-Equipped to Help with Trauma

Here are the numbers for this reality.

15% Of Pastor's feel well equipped for Trauma Care

73% of Pastor's feel somewhat equipped for Trauma Care

12% of Pastor's do not feel equipped at all for Trauma Care

One-Third of Pastor's do not feel their formal training has served them in helping people in this pandemic season of life. This data set is not that encouraging. In a season of Trauma, we need to have a confidence in our ability to care for people – not somewhat, maybe, I think I can.....

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Three in 10 Practicing Christians Distance Themselves from Church During Crisis

Data shows that while pastors might feel somewhat equipped to help their congregants work through a challenging time, it's not a guarantee that practicing Christians will turn to the Church during their struggle.

Seven in 10 practicing Christians say they have grown closer to a church because of a personal crisis (69% vs. 31% who have not). On the other hand, more than eight in 10 can recall someone who has distanced themselves from the church they lead as the result of a personal crisis (83% vs. 17% who say they do not know of someone for whom this is true).

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Sadly, the top reason given by practicing Christians who have distanced themselves from a church is “I felt I couldn’t be honest about myself and my life” (35%). Other reasons center on relational discord, including disagreement with church teaching (17%), disliking treatment by church leaders (15%) and disliking treatment by other congregants (16%).

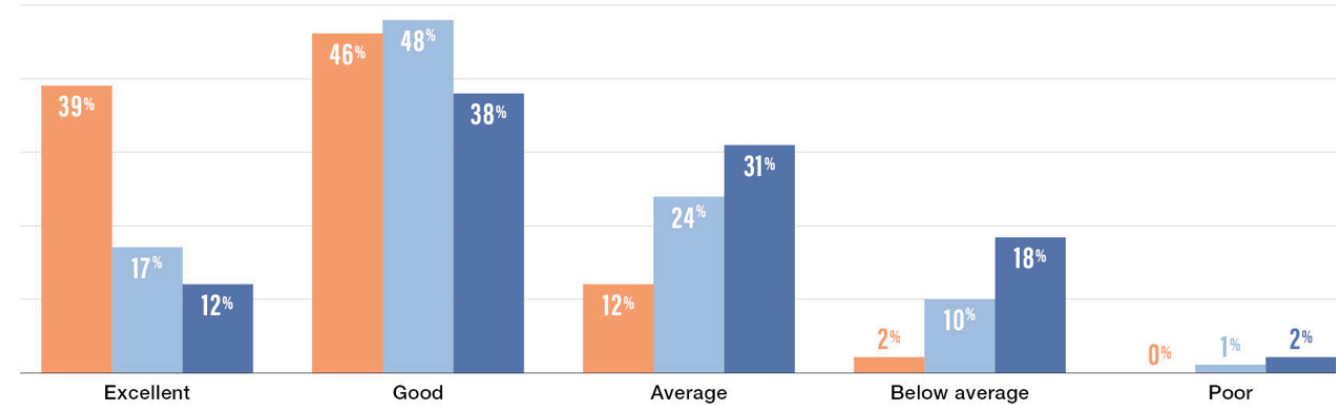
Per a Barna pastor survey taken early in the pandemic (**April 7-13, 2020**), a vast majority of U.S. church leaders (89%) says they at least somewhat (65%) or definitely (24%) understand the immediate needs of their congregations regarding mental and emotional health. Even so, during that same survey pastors shared that they were largely not talking about mental or emotional health during their Sunday sermons—while two in five (39%) had broached this topic within the past month, a greater portion either had not (58%) or cannot recall (3%). These percentages did not statistically shift even four months later (August 2020), when Barna asked the same question of church leaders.

PASTORS' MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING-2016-2020

Barna

WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, HOW ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW?

● State of Pastors, 2016 ● As of April 13, 2020 ● As of August 17, 2020



n=511 U.S. Protestant pastors; April-December 2015.
n=246 U.S. Protestant pastors; April 7-13, 2020.
n=336 U.S. Protestant pastors; August 13-17, 2020.

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One in Five Church Leaders Ranks Their Mental & Emotional Health as Below Average

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When you're feeling a strain on your mental or emotional well-being, what steps do you take to address that tension? Do you adequately balance the care of your soul with your care for your congregants?

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