**How naturopathy can help adolescents and young adults find healing and inner peace from depressive symptoms**

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**Abstract**

This research looks at naturopathy and faith-based approaches to treating depression in young people. Further, the study emphasizes the importance of tackling depression and anxiety before drug abuse, delinquency, and suicide become a reality for young people. The root causes of depression and general anxiety are many.

However, naturopathy's eclectic approach and faith-based interventions provide a wide area of promise in curing and preventing this devastating illness. These conditions rob youth and young adults of hope and life. The report is disheartening. Nonetheless, the healing practices offered by naturopathy provide a beacon of light for those needing help.

**DEDICATION**

To Willard Laurence Flores

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**EPIGRAPH**

 And I again wish to say that the best converts, the clearest converts, the most intelligent converts we have ever had have been the young ones!

Spurgeon (1834-1892).

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

Naturopathic treatment is a unique form of therapy that shifts the focus from treating anxiety and depression to addressing the underlying issues affecting an individual's mental health (Graham et al., 2022). Practitioners of naturopathy can make progress in restoring peace and balance for those struggling with these conditions. Naturopathy takes a holistic approach to therapy, focusing on treating the individual rather than just their condition. The premise of naturopathy emphasizes the connection between the body and environment (Graham et al., 2022). According to Sadowski et al. (2022), naturopathic doctors, practitioners of naturopathy, and therapists use effective mind-body intervention treatments to improve mental health.

This study investigates how a Christian worldview and spiritual practices can augment naturopathic treatments to create a more wholesome and comprehensive treatment for adolescents and young adults. By considering the spiritual and moral dimensions of a patient's well-being, naturopathic techniques can help nurture the complete person—their physical, mental, and spiritual health—rather than target specific symptoms.

## Problem Being Addressed

An increasing proportion of adolescents and young adults suffer from the silent crisis of depression and anxiety. According to the National Institute of Health (2020), clinicians define a major depressive episode as the inability to meet basic needs such as eating, sleeping, and concentrating. Anxiety is a mood disorder that intensifies depending on the situation. A shy individual may feel uneasy when surrounded by strangers, while someone fearful of heights might experience panic upon encountering an elevated space. Regardless of the context, this disorder tends to fluctuate more than depression (Burns, 2020).

Anxiety and depression display adverse effects, which may explain their comorbidity. Low positive affect is a major component of depression, and excessive excitement is a major anxiety component. Anxiety is another factor that can increase the likelihood of developing depression (Sumbe et al., 2022).

The weight of depression and anxiety is often overwhelming for young people, prompting them to attempt desperate coping skills that can wreak havoc on their physical and mental health. This silent struggle forces many into a cycle of addictions and suicidality as they desperately search for solace from the looming darkness of hopelessness (Leone, 2022).

## Background of the Problem

 More than 4 million 12 to 17-year-olds in the United States suffer from depression. (NIH, 2020). The rate among adolescent females is more than double that of teenage males, rated 10% versus 25%. Nearly a third of those who identified with two or more races experienced major depressive episodes, according to studies (NIH, 2020). An extensive nationwide survey of over 160,000 adolescents aged 12-17 found an alarming increase in major depressive episodes (MDE). MDE rose from 8.1% to 15.8% between 2009 and 2019 (Daly, 2022)

Teenage anxiety disorders appear widespread. Nearly a third of young adults were affected by the condition. Under DSM criteria, 8.3% of these individuals exhibit severe impairment, significantly diminishing their day-to-day activities. Females appear to be affected more than males, but the prevalence was comparable across all age groups (NIH, 2020).

According to researchers, the COVID-19 pandemic devastated the mental health of young adults and adolescents (AYAs). AYAs with the risk for depression rose three times the pre-pandemic level by June 2020 (Alzueta et al., 2023). Understandably, depression and anxiety affect the individual and those around them. Families who witness this condition hinder their loved ones in all aspects of life also suffer. Depression and anxiety drive many young people away from the church. As a result, the church and society will remain without the strong leadership it needs to thrive.

## Thesis Statement and Structure of Capstone

A naturopathic approach centered around Christ offers a path to recovery for young adults grappling with depression and anxiety, enriching their mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. This type of approach creates the best possible results and encourages lasting improvements in young people's lives.

To substantiate this thesis, this Capstone project will provide a literature review to explore a deeper understanding of depression and anxiety, how to identify harmful dysfunctional strategies, and how naturopathy can provide long-term solutions (Chapter 2). Following that, Chapter 3 explores how a Christian worldview, values, and spiritual. The conclusions and interpretation of the research analysis will provide valuable insights into how these factors interact to create a holistic lifestyle (Chapter 4), which will to recommendations and suggestions for further research (Chapter 5). In the culminating recommendation of the Capstone, the naturopathic CHRIST program, developed by the researcher, merges a Christian worldview with naturopathy to provide support for those tending to individuals with anxiety and depression. Leaders can empower teenagers and young adults to cultivate inner peace while pursuing wellness by providing a CHRIST-centered naturopathic program.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

The researcher uncovered the themes that require further attention through a thorough investigation utilizing Google Scholar, ProQuest, recent books, and seminal literature to source material from within the past five years (2003-Present). The themes of this literature explain naturopathy and faith-based mental health coaching mitigative methods. These methods can alleviate the adverse effects of the unhealthy coping styles of AYA’s suffering from depression and anxiety. According to the literature provided, supportive Christians can implement the Christian faith to effectively deal with these psychological issues. Finally, the review identified areas where additional study is required to close gaps in the body of knowledge.

## Major Depressive Disorder, Anxiety and the Use of Self-medication

Insomnia, changes in appetite, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness, persistent images of death or suicide, and suicidal ideation consist of major depressive episodes (MDE; Daly, 2022). People struggling with mood disorders often self-medicate with nicotine and cannabis (Sumbe et al., 2022). Self-medicating with cannabis is a major risk factor for cannabis use disorder because it increases the likelihood that the user may become dependent on the drug (Wallis et al., 2022). Nicotine increases the release of dopamine from dopamine-containing neurons in the brain's central reward system. Nicotine's short-term stimulation of the brain's reward system is followed by withdrawal symptoms alleviated by consistent smoking (Wulandari et al, 2022).

 Research supports the hypothesis that heavy drinking is associated with MDE symptoms and other substance use. (Adzrago et al, 2022). Binge drinkers are typically male, non-Hispanic whites between the ages of 18 and 34, with no college education and a household income of $75,000 or more (Adzrago et al., 2022). Anxiety disorders are the most common form of mental illness. They are extremely harmful and are often mishandled as a result. Anxiety disorders are poorly understood despite the growing body of evidence connecting poor nutrition to a variety of mental illnesses, including depression (Cardozo et al., 2021). Depression is becoming more widespread among teenagers, and it poses a significant threat to their mental health. Depression is a serious issue for adolescents. (Li et al., 2022). Anxiety and depression symptoms increased slightly, while stress perception remained high, during the COVID-19 pandemic (Clendennen et al., 2023).

## Naturopathic Philosophy and Therapeutic Method

In 1901, Benjamin Lust defined naturopathy as an approach that leverages the body’s natural ability to heal through food, exercise, lifestyle changes, herbals and avoiding drugs or invasive procedures (Whorton, 2003). Naturopathic medicine revolves around six core principles. These include the healing power of nature, doing no harm, treating the whole individual, addressing the root cause of an ailment, the naturopath as a teacher, and prevention (Hechtman, 2019). By embracing these principles, naturopaths assist their patients in preventing illnesses and achieving optimal health. Naturopathic medicine employs various approaches to develop customized treatment plans. Practitioners consider a patient’s overall physical and emotional health when selecting remedies from various options (Myers & Vigar, 2019).

  Naturopaths emphasize nature as a source of health. Canadian provinces regulated and credentialed this practice. Some aspects of naturopathy offer clinical nutrition counseling, acupuncture, botanical medicine, and other approaches, while prescription substances are also within its scope (Aucoin et al., 2021).

   Sadowski et al. (2022) argue that the naturopath approach to mind and body therapies treats and prevents chronic illnesses like depression. Mind therapies integrate techniques which consist of controlled breathing, meditation. Meditative practices recommend specific calming words to relax the diaphragm and promote mindful awareness known as *BMW meditation.* Consistent use of calming phrases or mantras can effectively quiet the mind and achieve a meditative state, promoting a sense of calm and inner peace (Pawa, 2020).

If socialization is an inflammatory trigger, learning to spend time alone will drastically improve one’s mental well-being (Cole, 2019). According to Willard (2009), Christian meditation involves retreating into solace and prayerfully concentrating on the scriptures. The practice centers on God, allowing the scriptural message to resonate in the believer’s heart, mind, and soul in the presence of God.

Healthy gut microbiome nutrition and anti-inflammatory diets can effectively alleviate depressive and anxiety symptoms in young adults. These nutritional interventions are promising for managing mental health, illuminating the vital connection between mental and digestive health (Cole, 2019). Naturopaths suggest using probiotics and prebiotics to enhance beneficial gut bacteria, reducing inflammation and contributing to depression. In fact, within the last two years, researchers published recent studies on the efficacy of prebiotics and probiotics to treat depression and anxiety (Liu et al., 2019).

Hormones, neurons, neurotransmitters, and immune mediators influence the gut and the brain. Neurotransmitters such as serotonin and the connection between the gut and the brain illustrate the connection between the gut microbiota, depression, and anxiety. Thus, modifying the gut microbiota through diet and lifestyle can improve mental health (Chakrabarti et al, 2022).

Further, 2017 research asserted that naturopathic remedies, such as herbals and nutraceuticals, reduced anxiety and depression (Myers & Vigar, 2019). Nutraceuticals offer potent health benefits and therapeutic value for many acute or long-term ailments, such as depression. Fusing nutrition and pharmaceuticals brings promising remedies to mitigate disease risks from nutritional inadequacy. (Suryawanshi, 2020).

   St. John’s Wort (SJW) is a popular herbal remedy that regulates brain neurotransmitters, making it a highly effective treatment for neurological disorders. Unlike other SSRIs, SJW offers better safety and fewer side effects, making it a viable choice (Zhao et al., 2022). R. rosea is another medicinal plant that impacts the central nervous system. R. rosea causes neuroglial cells to make and release neuropeptide-Y, which controls over 50 brain genes that regulate behavior, mood, depression, and anxiety (Stojcheva & Quintela, 2022). S-Adenosylmethionine (SAMe), a natural compound produced in the liver, can enhance the production of norepinephrine and serotonin when taken as a probiotic supplement. Probiotic microorganisms, also called psychobiotics, can positively affect mental illnesses like depression. (Ullah et al., 2022).

  Mental well-being is a team effort. Participation from family and friends of young people living with depression can impact their care. Support centers lean heavily on the participation of loved ones to plan services that cater to the needs and well-being of the afflicted by focusing on positive outcomes (Rickwood et al., 2019). Practical team support is crucial to the success of CHRIST therapy, as is the social support recommended by naturopaths. This collaborative approach, developed by the researcher, fosters interaction and enhances the overall effectiveness of the treatment. More information on the CHRIST program will be provided in chapter 5; however, it is important to note that, for the researcher, CHRIST is an acronym representing the following principles: Commitment and Culture, Health, Rest, Integration, Supplication, and Training. These values guide individuals toward a holistic and balanced lifestyle for personal growth and success.

  Physically active youth experience less anxiety and other mental disorders than inactive peers. The study demonstrated that regular exercise contributes to better mental health. Although the study linked walking with improved psychological health, the highest benefits demonstrated that the most active individuals reported lower rates of depression and chronic anxiety. (Denche-Zamorano et al, 2022) However, vigorous exercise five to six days per week can help eliminate depressive symptoms and lift one out of a depressive state. While 60 to 90 minutes of exercise at least three times weekly alleviate anxiety and depressive symptoms (Towery, 2016). Physical activity is a crucial element of the health pillar of the CHRIST program. Naturopaths recommend physical activity. It contributes to physical well-being and plays a key role in improving mental health.

People diagnosed with depression are more likely to experience sleep disturbances than those without a depression diagnosis. (Leone, 2022). In young adults, sleep hygiene is crucial for mental wellness and fighting depression. Teens require 8 to 10 hours of rest due to their brain’s developmental stage. Sleep deprivation causes symptoms of depression. The blue light emitted from screens on devices like laptops and cell phones mimic daylight, inhibiting the production of melatonin that regulates sleep. Individuals must disconnect from screens at least an hour before bedtime to achieve a regular melatonin rhythm. (Towery, 2016).

 Although lack of sleep is not solely responsible for depression, it profoundly affects one’s mental health and mood. According to studies, people with depression experience sleep deprivation at least one year before the onset of depression. (Towery, 2016). Rest is a fundamental aspect of the CHRIST method of healing. Thus getting enough sleep promotes better mental health.

By confronting negative thoughts, cognitive behavioral therapy is the best way for the young to overcome negative emotions. Negative thoughts that cause depression are usually irrational. Once one learns to identify and eliminate mental distortions that cause feelings of inadequacy, moods improve. To boost their self-esteem, it is vital for young people battling depression and anxiety to challenge the irrational thoughts that lead to feelings of inadequacy (Burns, 2020). The afflicted must write the automatic negative thoughts that run through their head on a three-column piece of paper. In the first column, they should jot down only the negative thoughts, excluding emotions. In the second column, they should identify the corresponding cognitive distortion in these thoughts —an overgeneralization, all-or-nothing thinking, or negativity dominance. While in the third column, they must write a truthful and rational response to their thoughts (Burns, 2020).

There is a necessity of TEAM in therapeutic work. Practitioners emphasize that TEAM can help people who are depressed or anxious. *Tests* assist clients and therapists in evaluating therapy sessions, whereas *Empathy* assists therapists in creating a caring environment. *Assessing* change resistance and highlighting change barriers motivates patients. While therapist suggested, *Methods* that transform depression and anxiety into happiness. Burns' (2020) pragmatic approach shows therapists can use real-world, evidence-based techniques with genuine care and support.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle of CHRIST. It's an effective way for young people to relieve stress and quiet the mind without turning to medication or drugs. By incorporating natural practices (naturopathy), individuals can learn valuable techniques to help them relax and manage their thoughts more effectively.

**The Therapeutic Spiritual Application of Naturopathy**

Multiple factors, including their spirituality, determine a person's well-being. Unlike traditional healthcare, naturopathy considers all of these elements when providing treatment, holistically assessing their patients' lifestyles to encourage optimal health and balance. (Pizzorno et al., 2006). The CHRIST program is a fulfilling life thrived on a nutritious diet, regular exercise, sufficient rest, and a nurturing community — be it family, society, or spirituality — to complement and fortify it. Supplication through prayer and experiencing the healing of nature designed by God also contribute to overall well-being. The program addressed as a recommendation in Chapter 5, provides naturopathic therapy that integrates Christ as a focal point, utilizing scripture meditation to stimulate natural healing. Naturopaths recommend meditation to foster curative experiences through Yoga. Yoga has roots in Indian philosophy and was an integral part of traditional spiritual and medical practices. Not only can yoga help ease stress, but it also decreases the secretion of cortisol, the primary hormone responsible for stress. A study confirmed its ability to promote relaxation (Dalal & Giri, 2022).

Further, research indicates that spiritual practices can benefit individuals who struggle with depression. The study found that religious or spiritual intervention improved depressive symptoms in at least 61% of patients, surpassing the reduction of depressive symptoms offered by standard care. (Koenig, 2017).

Understanding Scripture, theology, mission, mental health, and effective intervention can help Christians alleviate a significant portion of the mental health crisis. Transformation can begin with Christian faith. By making this adjustment, they can now bring Christian compassion to all services. It shouldn’t be a form of Christian nationalism in which Christians only look after their own at the expense of the rest of society. Instead, Christians should share the good news of God’s redemptive and reconciliatory mission through the sciences of human care. (Grcevich & Grcevich, 2021).

There is a substantial body of evidence demonstrating that active religious participation is associated with better mental health, particularly in terms of depression, suicide, and substance abuse. Studies indicated that 30% of people with a mental disorder reported having negative church experiences, such as being abandoned. Although stigmatization exists in all cultures, inclusion provides a sense of belonging (Lehmann et al., 2022). According to Austin (2021), suffering in silence by hiding in the pews persists when congregants and church leaders do not feel vulnerable enough to express their pain. The support by the church body to its own initiates healing and combats stigmatization.

God ordained the Church to bridge the gap between how individuals perceive themselves and whom God created them to be. Thus, the proclamation of the gospel assists individuals with low self-esteem to become closer to what God envisioned them to be. The Church’s discipleship role is attainable by upholding and embodying the narrative of God’s grace and Christ’s atonement for sin. (Cook & Hamley, 2020). Families dealing with mental illness remain silent out of fear of church judgment. Although many of these families have members with mental illness and a diminished sense of faith and religious practices, they still seek the Church’s assistance (Lehmann et al., 2022).

 Churches of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) lead others to Christ. The research indicates that necessary and applicable models apply the Great Commission mandate by means of discipleship. Through the example of (C&MA), the ministry demonstrates a model and method of effective discipleship by which churches can put their faith into action to aid those struggling with depression (Alvarado, 2022).

## What is Depression and Anxiety

Depression’s etiology is multifaceted; inflammation, gut flora disruption, genetics, stress, cannabis use disorder, and internet gaming disorders can all play a role. Recent research highlights the importance of the gut microbiome in the relationship between physical and mental health (Sun et al., 2020). Furthermore, the permeability of the blood-brain barrier can lead to ‘Leaky Brain Syndrome,’ which can cause inflammation within the brain cells when exposed to food intolerances and sensitivities (Cole, 2019). Those who use marijuana may increase their risk of depression. Long-term use can lead to psychotic disorders like schizophrenia (Berenson, 2019).

Moreover, a study proved that regulation of the stress response correlated with three primary hormones: Ghrelin, serotonin, and dopamine. (Sun et al., 2020). In addition, Video gaming attributes to depression in adolescents and young adults due to gaming salience, loss of interest in daily activities, helplessness, endless online gaming, unhappiness, and social anxiety. (Salleh, 2022). Further, Video game addiction exacerbates or causes depression, leading to addiction and social isolation (Fan et al., 2022).

Many teens and young adults rely on unhealthy coping mechanisms for depression and anxiety. Further, self-medicating with tobacco products has become increasingly common**.** And, manufactures often lace these cigarettes with THC. THC is a psychoactive ingredient in marijuana that triggers dopamine release in the brain. (Sumbe et al., 2022).

  Individuals with Major Depressive Episodes (MDE), as defined by the DSM-IV, may resort to binge drinking as a coping mechanism, according to research. MDE patients who have previously required substance abuse treatment are more likely to engage in frequent alcohol consumption. (Adzrago et al., 2022)

Cigarette, e-cigarette, and marijuana use is increasingly associated with mental health issues – a worrying prospect in times of global crisis such as the current pandemic. (Clendennen et al., 2023). A 2019–2020 US study found that vaping E acetate-poisoned THC and other cannabinoids caused 2,807 hospitalizations and 68 deaths. This article helps demonstrate the devastating effect of vaping cannabinoids on people’s health, especially the young afflicted with depression. This study supports the claim that unhealthy coping mechanisms used by young people battling depression and anxiety dismantle their health and may lead to death. (Sadowski et al., 2022).

   Most young adults use cannabis to treat anxiety, insomnia, depression, and pain. (Wallis, 2022). According to this research, Cannabis self-medication is a risk factor for Cannabis Use Disorder. The article examined 290 young adults (CUD). 76% of young adults with CUD used cannabis to treat anxiety, insomnia, depression, indicating self-medication and complex cannabis use.

 In addition, adolescents and young adults experiencing depression can often turn to video games as an outlet, only to find themselves struggling with addiction and withdrawal from social activities. Thus, it is noteworthy to highlight the danger of using these forms of coping mechanisms as a means of solace to relieve emotional distress. (Fan, 2022).

Another study shows that female adolescents are especially susceptible to mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. Research demonstrates that young women struggle with mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and eating disorders.

Consequently, it is crucial that intervention planning takes into account this increased risk when implementing prevention strategies (Sander et al., 2021).

  The increasing incidence of anxiety and depression has led to a 57.4% rise in suicide rates among adolescents and young adults in the U.S. between 2007 to 2018. (Daly, 2022). In despair, author Steve Austin succumbed to anxiety and depression and committed suicide. (Austin, 2021, as cited in Austin, 2021).  Alarmingly, adolescents face up to six times the risk of premature death and suicide than any other age group. Further, this age group has fourteen times higher odds of suicidality than any other. (Leone, 2022).

         A Christian Worldview coupled with naturopathic treatments can profoundly impact mental health by offering hope and healing to those struggling with anxiety and depression. The church can show grace by embracing individuals as they are, particularly those who have a mental illness, and reinforcing that God wants them to find solace in Him (Austin, 2021). Naturopathy combines meditation practices that neutralize negativity and promote a calm mind. When partnered with the church, it offers a pathway to spiritual healing for those struggling with anxiety and depression. Thus, the church becomes part of the tapestry of community support that helps individuals recover.

# Chapter 3: Summary of Research and Christian Worldview Analysis

In this chapter, the researcher will summarize the research of the literature review and analyze it from a Christian Worldview perspective.

## Summary of Research

Mental illnesses can often leave people feeling isolated and overwhelmed. The literature review emphasizes the importance of the church leadership forming stress management teams to support individuals with depression and anxiety and introducing scriptures through prayer and meditative practices. Using a Christ-centered approach, mentorship, and coaching can make all the difference in helping those struggling. When the affected person's family joins hands with the church community, they reflect the unity of the body of Christ. (*Holy Bible English Standard Version*, 2001, 1 Corinthians 12:12). By providing a CHRIST-centered naturopathic program, teenagers and young adults can foster inner peace and begin the healing process.

For those suffering from anxiety and depression, naturopathic treatments grounded in a Christian worldview can be a lifeline of hope and healing. Moreover, the church should prioritize recruiting members for ministry and foster family-focused ministries that can be primary connectors between congregants. According to the literature researched, supportive Christians implementing the Christian faith can effectively deal with these psychological issues.

## Christian Worldview Analysis

 In this section, the researcher will perform a Christian worldview analysis on the problem. Topics that will be covered are the influence of a Christian worldview in healing, the role of the Church in discipleship ministries, family discipleship, Christian leadership, and mentorship and coaching.

***The Influence of a Christian Worldview in Healing***

After delving into the principles of naturopathic philosophy, the researcher became compelled to reveal divinity, bolstering practitioners' faith and enhancing leadership skills, improving patient well-being. The researcher scrutinized the research context and knowledge claims precisely, utilizing the *Five Tests of Truth*. The five test truths include:

* Consistencies – practically structured and non-contradictory data.
* Capability – the research applies the knowledge to solve the issue or generates ideas for additional related sources.
* Conscience- The literature must demonstrate morality.
* Cohesiveness- indicates that the literature presents the most effective way to comprehend everything.
* Correspondence provides historical evidence of hypotheses. (Ward, 2014)

When Naturopathy integrates Yoga into its treatment philosophy, it recognizes the importance of cosmic humanism. Originating in India from the Hindu religion, practitioners of Yoga believed that they invoke a higher state of consciousness. As Basavaraddi (2015) asserted, by accessing the brain's parasympathetic nervous system, Yoga allows practitioners to enter a calm and reflective state, promoting relaxation. Furthermore, by emphasizing that nature is the ultimate source of healing, naturopathy excludes the idea that God is the ultimate provider in nature. Pizzorno et al. (2006) asserted that humans comprise matter, energy, and spirit. Natural health experts observe patterns of health and illness in nature, revealing a natural inclination toward well-being (Pizzorno et al., 2006).

 However, the Christian worldview is rooted in a divine self-existing entity who created the world to restore humanity to Himself. The fall of man necessitated God's offer of redemption through Christ, with the ultimate goal of reconciling people to God. Christians reveal God's love and care by loving God with all their hearts and loving their neighbors as themselves. As God created nature, the principle of naturopathy is that all healing must glorify Him. Practitioners should introduce spirituality through meditative practices by meditating on the Word of God, receiving Christ for comfort and direction, and giving glory to God (Gen 1: 30-31; John 5:39).

The researcher employs the following literature to shed light on the Church’s responsibility in helping youth and young adults who suffer from symptoms of depression and anxiety. The authors’ insights further showcase the significance of this role to enhance naturopathic spiritual treatment.

Austin (2021) highlights the tragic reality of mental health in churches: those with depression and anxiety often suffer alone, even amongst a congregation of believers. He points out that pastors, leaders, and dedicated advocates succumbed to suicide after struggling without support or understanding for too long.

 Furthermore, it is concerning that churchgoers may be causing hurt – knowingly or unknowingly – to people who are already dealing with immense pain from their illnesses (Austin, 2021). Christian leaders must strive to create an environment where individuals suffering from depression and anxiety can rest comfortably (Matthew 9:35). It is essential to remember that even if Christians lack understanding, it does not negate the light burden of Christ's easy yoke. By embracing this way of life, all can find proper rest. (Willard, 2009)

Leaders must start simply by providing space so the voices of those hurting do not fall on deaf ears. Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. Scripture is not merely a story to be passively read or heard but urges all to live out. It takes root within persons and influences their narrative through the living word, filling each person’s life with purpose and identity (Cook & Hamley, 2020).

When believers actively engage with Scripture and allow its teachings to guide them, they become better versions of themselves and the church body, able to lead and lead others to more fulfilling lives. Thus, Christians should not just read or listen to Scripture, but truly live it out and allow it to transform them from the inside out (Cook & Hamley, 2020).

 Mental health is an issue that affects many people in communities, and having a solid support system can make all the difference. Allowing individuals with depression and anxiety to learn from their mistakes and celebrate their small victories helps them achieve greater independence by setting boundaries. Furthermore, churches can act as resources by creating wellness teams of members who can guide congregants seeking help (Clinton, 2019). A Christian worldview offers dual healing in naturopathic medicine, provided through God's grace.

***The Role of the Church in Discipleship Ministries***

Naturopathy emphasizes holistic hygiene that considers community influence. The church’s discipleship, guide young people on the path to healing through their faithfulness to God. The all-encompassing nature of the gospel is akin to that of naturopathy. It permeates a person's private life and shapes their outlook on existence and its significance.

Local churches can provide a beautiful tapestry of spiritual resources in the many churches scattered throughout. From larger congregations to smaller faith-centered communities, these churches can offer tailored teachings such as biblical stewardship and parenting classes that create solid foundations for their congregants (Clinton, 2019). Further, churches can join the fight against suicide by becoming a Crisis Incidence Stress Management (CISM) team. Each member must possess prior disaster response experience and either a Masters in Mental Health or another related field – even if they are not practicing. With their help, the body of Christ could work together towards lowering suicide rates at alarmingly high levels, currently at 90% (Clinton, 2019). The written word of God declares: “And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helpers, administrations, various kinds of tongues.” (1 Cor 12: 28). Knowing God is an emotional relationship; therefore, he strengthens human relationships that glorify him through his work (Packer, 2021).

***Family Discipleship***

The family approach to naturopathy therapy recognizes the interconnectivity of a person's various aspects (Hechtman, 2018). Far from the disease-centric approach of conventional medicine, this approach views each individual as a unique individual with their own story to tell. According to Kim (2019), fellowship with God is a joint effort of family and church that perfectly complements each other rather than competing against one another.

 Rickwood, (2022) proposed family support for depressed teenagers via a three-level family model. The first level involves staff encouraging the participation of loved ones while prioritizing the young individual’s right to choose, privacy, and confidentiality. The second level involves family and friends in designing and evaluating support services. Finally, significant others help run the center at the third level, setting development goals and deciding how to manage the center.

***Christian Leadership***

 Church leaders need to understand mental illnesses like depression and the importance of those affected connecting within the body of Christ. A Religion/Spirituality (R/S) study on depression indicated that half of the studies noted a slight reduction in depression. Present data emphasize the significance of doctors and therapists evaluating the R/S of depressed and those at risk (Braam & Koenig, 2019). The relationship between R/S and depression is complex and involves a person’s beliefs about the meaning and significance of existence, often influenced by religious customs and communities. R/S is a personal journey of self-discovery that might encompass positive aspects, religious conflicts, or both (Braam & Koenig, 2019).

***Mentorship and Coaching***

Implementing a Christ centered coaching team will help the youth deal with anxiety, sadness and negative thoughts that provoke them daily. Thus, coaching and mentoring through Christian supportive methods is better suited to motivate depressive behaviors.  A study show that religion and the understanding of a higher power promotes a lasting sense of belonging for depressives (Koenig,2017). Lehmann et al. (2022) acknowledges, that a Jesus-style hospitality can foster belonging. It builds church membership and builds community.

Through participation in a mentor program, at-risk youth receive positive training in life skills (Squilla, 2022). Similarly, mentoring programs can assist mentally ill individuals in acquiring the essential skills for success. Mentorship encourages the formation of community and church mentoring programs to alleviate depression and anxiety.

Willard (2004) asserted that, through meditation, a person prayerfully concentrates on a word, allowing its meaning to surface as God works within them. By studying scriptures, the believer seeks to encounter God through His word.

Christian leadership and coaching encouraging community support, training, prayer, rest, and family backing, collectively known as the CHRIST-centered program, promotes mental health. As a result, the union of leaders cultivates a nurturing environment that improves society.

Rather than working alone, leadership should seek out teamwork to administer a wellness program for those suffering from depression and anxiety. As modeled in the early church by Christ, his disciples, and the triune God, a team working together to help the afflicted feel accepted and cared for strengthens each other for the glory of God. (Clinton, 2019).

   For pastoral staff to be able to assist and care for individuals with mental illness, they must receive leadership training and spiritual equipment. Also, a solid theological vision should be adopted to support the full inclusion of people with mental health issues into the church. Everyone will learn from those who experience the reality and mental illness struggle daily.

Theology seems to have lost its edge recently, failing to perform its fundamental duty of keeping the church grounded in the gospel’s core principles (Packer, 2021). Thus, leaders who acknowledge the faith of those suffering, and meet them where they are spiritual, can provide access to Christian teachings that offer a greater sense of hope. “Mental health is spiritual health” (Austin, 2021).

A faith-based family and community ministry program aims to bring Christ to those struggling with hopelessness. Through mentoring and coaching from a supportive group, adolescents will rediscover the joys of life and God’s intended purposes. The church, the family, and the community should unite, living the new hope and purpose in Christ. Naturopaths understand that optimal health encompasses more than just physical well-being. They emphasize the importance of achieving spiritual balance and encourage individuals to explore personal growth and inner peace. By recognizing the intricate link between the mind, body, and spirit, naturopathic medicine aims to enhance harmony and promote holistic health (Hechtman, 2018). A Christ-centered naturopathic principle acknowledges and attributes God's provisions and omnipotence to treating depression and anxiety. In contrast, the fundamental principle of naturopathy upholds nature as the instrument of disease cure.

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# Chapter 4: Conclusion and Interpretation

After conducting a literature review and analyzing it from a Christian perspective, the researcher will share insights and interpretations regarding the possible influence of naturopathy on the psychological well-being of the youth.

## Conclusion

Mental health sufferers are often left to cope silently with self-stigma and social marginalization. Personal stigma, manifested through bias and self-discrimination, can translate into feelings of low self-worth among these marginalized groups (Kaushik, Kostaki, & Kyriakopoulas, 2016). According to Mckeague (2015), people with mental health issues feel the burden of being different and often perceive themselves negatively as a result. A recent study showed that individuals with mental disorders confront stigmatizing attitudes more frequently than those with physical health conditions, even on social media platforms (Dempsey et al., 2019).

 Depression and anxiety amongst young people are a growing concern in today’s society, and it’s not uncommon for these individuals to turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as addictive behaviors as a result of stigmatization. Sadly, suicide ideation and attempts are also becoming more prevalent.

However, naturopathic treatment has the potential to bring significant relief to those suffering from depression. By focusing on anti-inflammatory diets, improving sleep patterns, increasing physical fitness, and incorporating herbal remedies, practitioners of naturopathy can provide healthy ways of living that address the root cause of depression. The church can also play an important role by educating its members about mental illness and acting as a first responder to those in need. Naturopaths recognize that true wellness entails more than one's physical state alone. Indeed, they stress the importance of spiritual equilibrium, and this is an area in which the Church bears great responsibility.

## Interpretation

People flock to Jesus to partake in His miraculous feedings, but few are willing to share in His pain and suffering. (Kempis, 2007). Naturopathic practitioners customize treatments to each patient’s unique needs. At the core of naturopathy lies a reverence for the healing power of nature, as well as the belief that practitioners should educate patients on treating the root causes of depression and anxiety. With a focus on preventive care, this philosophy imparts an ethical responsibility on the practitioner to prioritize their patients’ well-being.

 Church institutions have almost no provisions to aid families coping with mental illness. Lay members and church leaders lack the training and skill set to recognize the signs of mental illness or how to help those suffering from it. However, it is the church’s duty to its congregation and the wider community to destigmatize mental health issues through outreach, education, and collaboration with existing mental health resources (Clinton, 2019). This literature and analysis demonstrated that non-profit churches and Christian organizations need a systematic mentoring and coaching program to help them minister to young people struggling with anxiety and depression. Naturopaths argue that a hostile environment is incompatible with true health. By embracing a spiritual community and culture, a balanced lifestyle is maintained through Christian mentoring.

# Chapter 5: Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher will outline a system for assisting young adults in their recovery from depression and anxiety with an action plan.

## Recommendations

A non-profit organization that helps depressed youths manage their depression with alternative treatments, as opposed to self-medicating with alcohol, drugs, or prescriptions, is a crucial resource for aiding depressed youngsters in society. Adzrago et al. (2022) suggested that drug usage beyond marijuana has the potential to impact one’s mental health in different ways.

A helpful team will train and guide adolescents about their illness and use numerous resources to enable them to effectively manage their health. Adzrago et al. (2022) further suggested that those concerned about the well-being of depressives revise their strategies and programs. Specifically, to sociodemographic groups prone to binge drinking. According to surveys, youth depression in the United States and other nations has reached a crisis level, asserted Kroning & Kroning (2016).

 A non-profit organization administering CHRIST principles through a Christian worldview can help American youth overcome depressive behavior and lead them to salvation. By utilizing naturopathic practices and focusing on the whole person, practitioners provide the necessary care and relief from depression and anxiety.

The Capstone project researcher designed a CHRIST program to assist those ministering to people with mental illness. The program could make a significant difference in the lives of individuals struggling with mental health problems. The CHRIST program is a pioneering, naturopathic approach emphasizing a hygienic lifestyle as key to a patient's successful treatment. Nutritious food, regular exercise, rest, family bonds, communal support, Christian faith, prayer, and nature's restorative effects synergistically bolster health and well-being.

The program will undoubtedly provide a greater sense of community and support to those who need it most, helping ministries to serve their communities in a better and more compassionate way. Every ministry must pass His test; anything that doesn’t glorify Christ isn’t of the Holy Spirit (Spurgeon, 1997). Consequently, an established non-profit community program will utilize research, experience and training in mental health coaching. Due to this abundance of knowledge and teamwork, leaders will inspire the youth to return to the proper course. When a group envisions team cohesion success and facilitates care for individuals, the mustard seed grows exponentially. This action fulfills God’s kingdom purposes (Roach, 2016).

By bringing the crisis of teen depression to the attention of the public through a youth center, depressed adolescents will realize that they are not alone and can function daily. Furthermore, the crisis organization offers a beacon of hope to parents with afflicted children, providing them a place to gain awareness about their condition, receive peer support, and seek therapy.

 The company's brand instills a sense of accomplishment in adolescents who take the initiative to join and engage with the Team/Cognitive Behavioral Training (CBT) program, empowering them to overcome mental health challenges. The program encourages teens to manage their conditions and become proud contributors rather than mere patients stigmatized by society. Through targeted literature, proposed treatments, training, and teamwork, teenagers become equipped with knowledge and self-awareness to overcome depression and self-stigmatization.

The nonprofit could take advantage of new technology of reaching participants online. Allowing teens to interact with referred counselors and training staff using online applications via their smart phones. Digital psychotherapy is effective method to give high-quality therapy to patients, as per data suggestion. Weighman (2020) suggests:

1. Opportunities could arise where a skilled manager may be able to take advantage of new marketable strategies.
2. There is a huge possibility of growth because of the high incidence of depression throughout the world especially ones that offer this unique type of service that is wholistic in nature.
3. The company could seek to promote the program in schools. Capitalize the social media markets with advertisements and find ways to get interviews in television and radio at the local level.
4. The local churches could be a market to promote the training and program initiatives.
5. The company can allow public speakers, psychiatrist and psychologist and social worker trained in CBT and Team CBT to give talks and promote the nonprofit community program.

## The CHRIST Program for Mentoring and Coaching

The CHRIST program is a unique approach to Naturopathy that focuses on the hygienic/ lifestyle factor of patients as a determinant of treatment (Pizzorno et al., 2006). This program stresses that a healthy lifestyle, bolstered by a nutritious diet, regular exercise, and proper rest, works hand-in-hand with a supportive community via familial ties, community, and Christian leadership. Additionally, supplication through prayer and exposure to nature as created by God positively impacts overall health and well-being. For a patient's likelihood of success, they must adopt principles that avoid the harmful effects of "violating natural living laws." (Pizzorno et al., 2006) This researcher's approach to CHRIST recognizes the vital role of spirituality and God in the healing process.

***Commitment and Culture***

Understanding an individual's social networks and community is a fundamental aspect of naturopathy that helps young adults identify significant others and shape their cultural identity (Hechtman, 2018). A leader exhibiting commitment and fostering a spiritual culture embody a sense of devotion toward the well-being of young people. Naturopathic practitioners focus on building a deep relationship with their patients, one that is based on trust and mutual respect (Hechtman, 2018). This approach enables practitioners to understand the unique needs of each patient and to tailor their treatment plans accordingly.

Similarly, a mentorship program should include a leader's commitment to implementing innovative techniques to assist depressed adolescents. Additionally, mentors and coaches should devote their time and energy to the program and manage the pressures connected with different personalities, challenges, and symptoms. Leaders must be responsive to cultural differences, such as working and interacting with persons from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and non-fluent English speakers. According to studies, a substantial number of minorities suffer from depression. Early life stress and low socioeconomic status disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic youth (Patil et al., 2022).

***Health***

  As part of their whole heart, mind, and body therapy, naturopaths recommend natural approaches such as physical activity, which can also be beneficial for youth struggling with depression (Sadowski et al., 2022). Cardio workouts, running, and martial arts training benefit juvenile mental health, especially anger, and stress. Exercise improves depressives’ mental health. Denche-Zamorano et al. (2022) suggested that by analyzing Spain’s youth, it was discovered that the highest rates of depression, chronic anxiety, and other mental disorders were found within the group of physically inactive individuals. Research showed that the gut microbiota can have a significant impact on diet and is considered a key factor in the development of depression (Chakrabarti et al., 2022).

***Rest***

One of the components of the Hygienic/Lifestyle Factors. Rest allows the body to recover and rejuvenate, improving overall health (Pizzorno et al., 2006) Young adults and teen get enough rest also positively impacts mental health, promoting improved focus, mood, and well-being. Therefore, naturopathy practitioners recommend rest as integral to a natural and holistic well-being approach. Towery (2019) stated that sleep is another important factor that promotes and stabilizes the moods of persons afflicted with depression.

Research suggests that earlier bedtime routines and more adaptive coping strategies should be used to assist the most vulnerable young adults in recovering from depression symptoms. (Zhao et al., 2022). In addition, encouraging low stress activities such as walking, journaling stressful thought and stressful commitments are other sources of calm for depressive behaviors. The introduction of a Daily Mood Journal to get a deeper understanding of one’s thoughts and emotions.

Burns (2020) Thus, an effective coaching and mentoring programs encourage improved relaxation techniques such as journaling. By confronting negative thoughts, cognitive behavioral therapy is the best way for the young to overcome negative emotions. Negative thoughts that cause depression are usually irrational. Once one learns to identify and eliminate mental distortions that cause feelings of inadequacy, moods improve (Burns, 2020).

***Integration***

  Naturopathic practitioners often engage family members to better gauge a patient's wellbeing, seeking their support and input (Hough et al., 2001). Integration of family as additional support system is pertinent to supporting those afflicted by mental illness. Wuandari et al (2022) and Friedman (2010) both agree that a family support system is necessary for the progression of mental health well-being.

A family plays a crucial role in healthcare by identifying the health development disorders of each family member, making decisions for appropriate health measures, providing care when they’re unwell, and fostering an atmosphere at home conducive to the health and personality growth of all its members (Friedman et al., 2010).

 Depressed individuals require appropriate family support to renew their purpose and focus on what matters most. In contrast, inadequate support can aggravate their emotional burden, further impairing their mental well-being (Wuandari et al., 2022). Parent–child bonds help prevent childhood emotional abuse. Since deviant peer affiliation mediates (CEA) and teenage depression, educators and practitioners should reduce it (Li et al., 2022).

  Family thrives when pastors and parents join forces to spread the gospel. An impactful family ministry cultivates informed and committed disciples, applying the Bible’s life-changing teachings to bolster faith within the family and church communities. (Kim, 2019).

***Supplication***

Yoga and meditation enhance overall well-being in Naturopathic health by creating balanced physiology and psychology (Talreja & Tiwari, 2021). Yoga includes body postures and breathwork to promote harmony, while meditation cultivates mindfulness for calm and grounding. The biblical text asserts that all should live, breathe and exalt the Lord; worship and praise must exhibit His name (**Psalm 150:6).**

A Christian based mentorship program supportive of depressive adolescents must incorporate prayers. Christ taught his disciples how to prayer in (Matt 6: 9-13). God commands prayer to him as Christ taught in scriptures. To embody true Christlikeness is not to turn away supplicants but to respond as Jesus would have. (Willard). Adolescents plagued by negative intrusive thoughts and suicide ideation need encouragement from leadership to cast their thought and anxiety upon God. The biblical text of Philippians encourages one not to worry under any circumstance but instead to pray, praise God, and seek Him (Phil 4:6). Following these steps can help believers find peace amidst chaos and uncertainty.

 ***Training***

Naturopathic therapy combines preventative techniques to ward off ailments like depression and anxiety with curative measures to address existing problems. In preventive treatment, patients are educated about the root causes of their symptoms and trained to incorporate healthy lifestyle habits to improve their psycho-social-biological health.

The Naturopathic CHRIST program trains individuals to mentor adolescents using the principles of Christian instruction. In (1Tim 4:6). Paul mentored Timothy by providing him with key pastoral and ministerial tasks that empowered him to become a more effective leader within the church. Christian leaders ought to seek and train champions for Christ allowing leaders to participate in the Great Commission Christ mandated in (Matt 28:16-20). Coaching and mentoring should advise the young of CBT’s benefits that involve treatment management, diet, and exercise. Learning about the benefits of sleep, exercise, meditation, and cognitive strategies will not yield results alone. It is vital to implement them effectively (Towery, 2019).

In a therapy plan or organization targeting the young with mental illness like depression, the idea is to motivate everyone to obtain the support they need rather than to use what they perceive as help. Christ transformed Paul from a persecutive soul to an apostle of God (Acts 9:18 – 20). Paul’s reconciliation with God through believing in Christ made him a warrior for lost souls. Mentoring and coaching these young adults should include being leadership soldiers for the lost and depressed, educating them on God’s ability to change lives. Therefore, this training comprises methods for spiritual enlightenment and cognitive development.

Integrating a CHRIST-centered coaching team can aid youth in managing daily challenges of anxiety, sadness, and negative thoughts. Mentoring and coaching through Christian supportive methods can serve as powerful motivators toward positive behaviors. Studies have shown a strong correlation between religion and improved mental health. Additionally, A Jesus-style hospitality can foster greater belonging and build church membership and community. (Lehmann et al., 2022). More optimistic perspectives towards mental illness help build church belonging and reduce stigma.

Coaching these young men and women to establish a life-worthy character by showing them that God gives life is a good start. Building a foundation of Godly qualities and unhinging the secular framework of cultural disappointment will help youth see themselves in God’s sight rather than humanities. Coaches must convince them that their unique suffering is for God’s glory. Moreover, the church should prioritize recruiting individuals for ministry to serve all members effectively (Clinton, 2019).

God’s love and acceptance demonstrated in the Bible also comfort depressed people who feel alone. Some believers struggle to internalize that truth. During persecution and exile, the psalmist sought help, and God answered his prayers because he was faithful. The Bible repeatedly promises that forgiveness will be abundant if one seeks redemption on the cross (Cook & Hamley, 2020). It is part of a believer’s calling, through the discipline of service, to treat people with kindness and trust. By understanding that their lives are ultimately in God’s hands, believers can be humble and kind without feeling obligated to serve or worry (Willard, 2009).

Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice demonstrated how family ministry serves as a preparation for home and church leadership and spiritual influence in the lives of congregants and church members (2 Tim 1:5). Family-focused ministries can become primary connectors between congregants, offering comfort, guidance, and strength – truly uniting hearts with hope (Kim, 2019). The importance of examining social withdrawal as an indicator of adolescent depression is highlighted by research. Youth may conceal depressive symptoms by isolating themselves from their environment, peers and family (Achterbergh et al., 2020).

## Suggestions for Future Research

Mental health promotion is critical to ensuring the overall well-being of adolescents and young adults. However, without proper funding and support, it can be difficult to provide the interventions and services needed to promote and maintain good mental health. This study highlights the need for more investment and dedication to adolescent mental health and stresses the importance of promoting early intervention for mental health issues. By investing in mental health promotion services and interventions, we can help provide young people with the support and resources they need to thrive and achieve their full potential. It’s time to prioritize adolescent mental health and invest in their future.

The connection between faith and mental health has been a topic of discussion for decades, and many have turned to Christian spiritual aid as a means of finding solace and healing. However, when it comes to using spirituality as a tool for coping with depression, there is a surprising lack of literature and research on the subject. Despite this, the potential benefits of combining mental health treatment with Christian teachings cannot be ignored, and many still find comfort in turning to their faith during times of distress. Despite the limited resources available, exploring the role of Christian spirituality in treating depression is important for understanding the potential benefits of holistic healing.

In the current pharmaceutical age, natural supplements for treating mental illnesses such as depression are often overlooked in favor of psychotropic drugs. However, there is a growing interest and need for natural treatments that provide relief without harsh side effects. Unfortunately, there is a lack of information and understanding surrounding these phytomedicinal options. Many who suffer from depression are not aware of their potential benefits and may turn to traditional medication out of uninformed habit. Further research and public education are necessary to promote the popularity and utilization of natural supplements as a viable and safe alternative to psychotropic drugs.

The facets of the CHRIST program, when combined, can have a positive impact on individuals and communities. Research demonstrated that individuals who feel a strong sense of belonging and connection to their community and culture tend to make healthier lifestyle choices. Moreover, those who practice meditation and prayer enjoy improved mental well-being and health. And access to mental health training, education, and a supportive family can lead to professional and personal fulfillment. To make a positive impact in society, naturopathic practitioners must incorporate all aspects of the CHRIST program in their holistic treatment. By combining the healing power of naturopathy with Christ-centered therapy, young adults and teens can effectively combat depression and anxiety.

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