

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH

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CHRISTIAN FAMILY

- A group of people who are related to each other through marriage, birth or adoption and are committed to the person and work of Jesus Christ, faithfully witnessing to the love, power and forgiveness of God to a watching world in its unique time and place.
- Sin prone people living in a sinful world deal with the consequences of leaving in a sinful world (John 16:33)

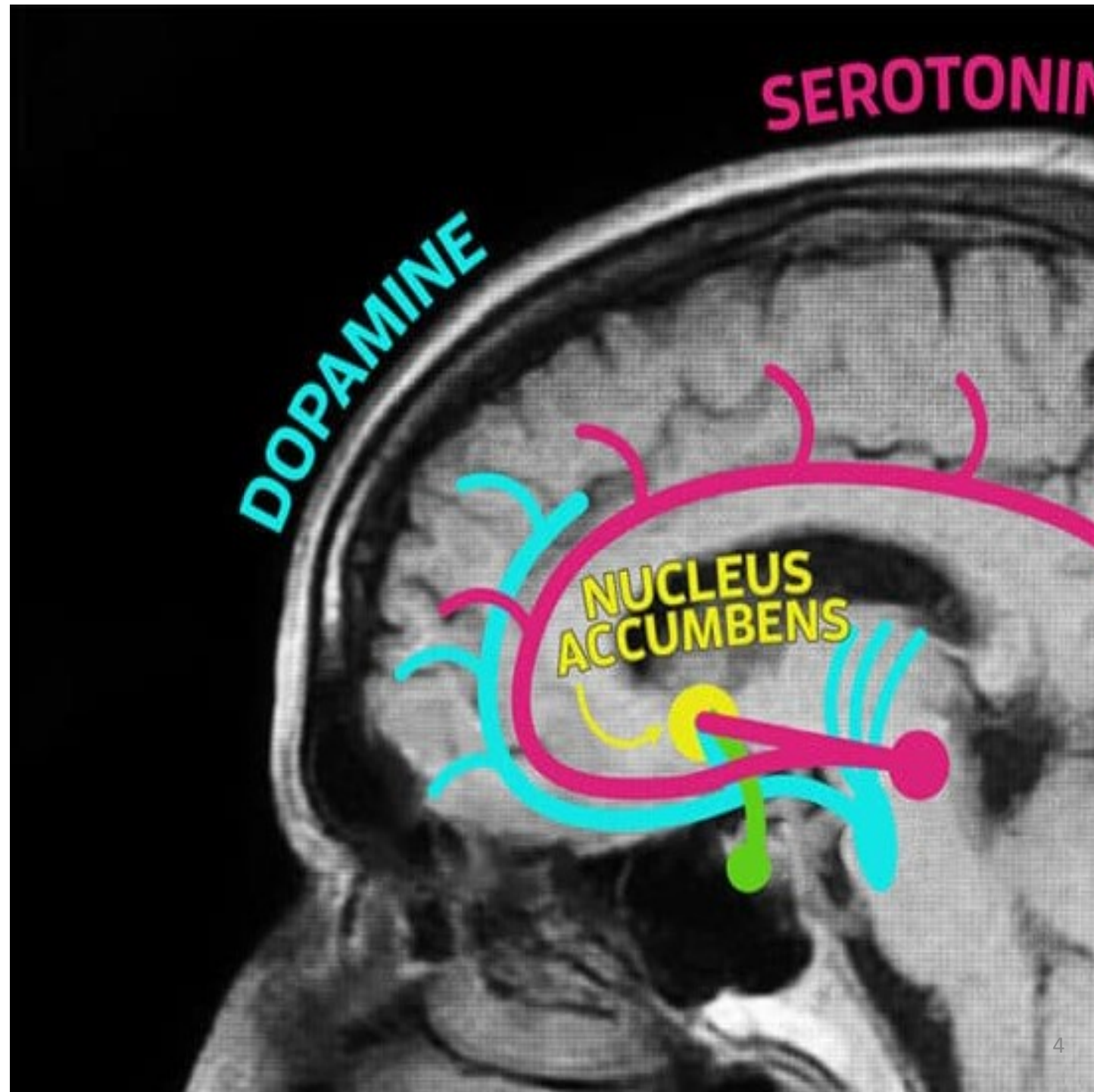


MENTAL HEALTH

- A state in which an individual **realises his/her own potential**, is able to **cope with the normal stresses of life**, **works productively** and **makes meaningful contribution to his or her own community**.
- Emotional, cognitive and behavioural wellbeing

Mental illness

- A group of illnesses that affect thinking, feeling and behavior



Common mental health Disorders

Depression

Anxiety disorder

Substance abuse/
dependence

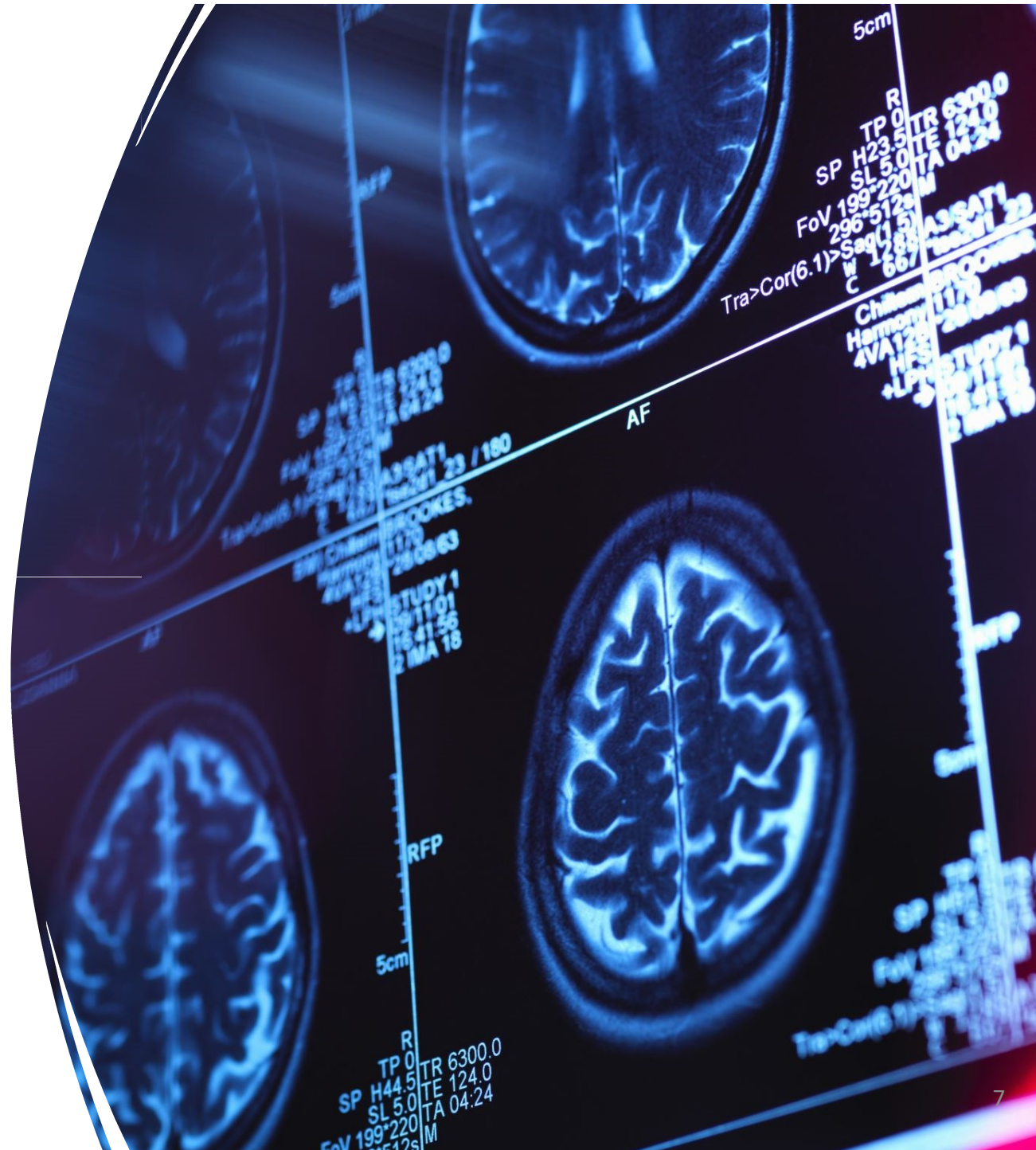
Post Traumatic stress
Disorders

causes

- Psychosocial stressors
 - Loss
 - Rape
 - Displacement
 - Abuse
 - Social status
 - Migration
 - etc



Symptoms



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- Mood symptoms
 - Feeling sad or down
 - Excessive fears or worries
 - Mood lability
 - irritability



Thought symptoms

- Confused thinking
- Inability to concentrate
- forgetfulness
- Disorganised thought
- Suicidal thoughts

Behavioural symptoms

- Change in appetite
- Change in sleep
- Social withdrawal
- Aggression/ violence
- Poor self care

Other symptoms

- Change in libido/ sexual drive
- Alcohol/drug use
- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress

Detachment from reality

Signals in a marriage

- Diminished/ non-existent sex life
- Feeling hopeless about your relationship
- Acting out- drinking, affairs, withdrawal, shutting your spouse out.
- Feeling dominated or criticized
- Your partner always telling you what to do
- Persistent or undue anxiety

Causes of mental health issues in a marital relationship

- Passive partner
- Abusive partner
- Controlling partner
- Irritable partner
- “my way or the highway” partner

Causes of depression in a marital relationship II

- Prolonged or severe stress
- Financial problems
- Big loss or change
- Birth of a child
- Health challenge
- Marriage “post nuptial depression”

Effects on marriage

- Impacts on quality of a marriage relationship
- Increased risk of relationship disruptions
- Can affect the whole family
- Causes a lot of fatigue and exhaustion
- Consequences on children
- Depressed couple are 9 times more likely to get divorced

Risk for mental health issues in children

- Witnessing domestic violence
- Bullying
- Being abused
- Parental separation/divorce
- Loss
- Dysfunctional parenting styles
- Mental health of parents

Signs in children

- Poor school performance
- Frequent complains of physical symptoms
- Sleep or appetite problems
- Regressive behaviours
- Aggression
- Increases risk taking behaviours
- Self harm

Impact of mental health conditions on families

- Tension
- uncertainty
- Emotional response- guilt, fear, anger, sadness
- Family dysfunction
- Abuse

Right response of a Christian family

- Take care of yourself- Spiritually, physically, mentally.
- Understand that you don't understand
- Do not judge or condemn
- Offer support not solutions
- Fight stigma
- Avoid enabling unhealthy behaviours
- Focus on family relationships outside of mental illness



The church family

- Acknowledge – no shame, no stigma (Proverbs 18:2, I John 4:18,)
- Provide counselling- answer questions, talk through issues, reconcile, help people to heal. (Romans 12:15, 2 Galatians 5:13, Galatians 6:2)
- Encourage people to seek professional help (Isaiah 38, I Kings 19:1-8)
- Pray – Philippians (4: 6-7, John 15:5)

Family preventive strategies

- Never lose sight of why the family was created
- Have established family values built on the scripture
- Have healthy routines and boundaries
- Encourage all family members to exercise their spiritual gifts
- Provide a family environment that encourages free but respectful expression of emotions
- Raise resilient children
- Trust God

CONCLUSION

- The family is Gods plan and design
- If we must possess the gates of our enemies we must have sound minds which God intends for us to have (2 Timothy 1:7)
- Our families play a pivotal role in our mental wellbeing as individuals , and in the treatment and recovery from mental health disorders.
- We must intentionally and prayerfully take deliberate steps to ensure that our families are conducive environments for the development of healthy and well balanced minds as we continue to fight and wait In hopeful expectation and hope of a new heaven and earth and our new glorified bodies that will be devoid of all forms of corruption