



Study Guide for Groups  
**Episode 8: Understanding Mental Illness**  
Topic: Mental health

Listen to the interview with Amber about her struggle with her husband's mental illness and her own depression, and then engage with the following discussion questions.

- Amber said, *"A lot of people just don't understand that you can be very intelligent and have a mental illness ... and it was hard, because the first time you take a beloved family member to a psych ward and they lock them up, and the doors shut, and then they take their clothes off, and they go in the shower and you know, it depersonalized him."* What were your reactions after hearing Amber's story? What thoughts, comments, or questions do you have after hearing it?
- Is there someone in your life, past or present who has been diagnosed with a mental illness? What was the nature of their illness? Was it obvious at first or did you have to get to know them? What was your experience in being with, living with, or working with them? How did your thoughts about them and their illness change over time?
- There is still a strong stigma regarding mental illness in many places around the world and in the U.S. What are your experiences with the "stigma" of mental health? Have you ever experienced this or have you known anyone who has dealt with it? If so, what was that like for you/them? How might we work toward further reducing this stigma?

Listen to this week's "My Turn" segment with Harvey Yoder, a professional counselor, who offers a few quick thoughts about mental illness. Discuss this segment and use the following questions as a guide.

- Harvey said, *"[We] can't easily be separated into one of two neat categories: the mentally ill and the emotionally well. Instead, we all live our lives on a continuum, sometimes closer to the wellness end, and sometimes closer to the illness end."* Where would you place yourself on this continuum?
- Harvey also said, *"I've come to believe that the fine line between wellness and not-wellness really runs right through each of us. And that we all belong to each other, and need each other, as priceless children of God."* How does this view of mental illness change your view of those with a mental illness?