

*Mind ~ Body
Soul ~ Spirit*

911 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
TO MENTAL HEALTH

Counselor 911

- AUTHOR -

Debbie Harris

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by Debbie Harris

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Designed by Ghuzzala F. Malik
www.faithgraphicsdesign.com
Editing Services by Writing Solution Firm
writingsolutionfirm@gmail.com

www.xulonpress.com

DEDICATION



*I dedicate this book to my beloved mother,
Joyce McCloud Harris, without whose persevering belief in me,
this book would never have become a reality.*

*I also dedicate this book to all the children that lost their lives to
firearms and to everyone that suffers from mental health issues.*

~ Author: Debbie Harris, CEO-Counselor911, Inc.

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DISCLAIMER



THIS BOOK IS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO PRACTICE MEDICINE OR PROVIDE SPECIFIC MEDICAL ADVICE, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION ADVICE REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS.

Scripture passages were incorporated to give the reader spiritual references. However, as the author, I encourage you to read your Bible for an in-depth understanding of each of the questions. The spiritual references are just starting points.

INTRODUCTION



With so many people plagued by mental illness, one can't help but wonder why this is the case. Statistically, research indicates that an estimated 26.2% of Americans, about one out of every four adults, suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. This figure translates into approximately 57.7 million people suffering from mental health disorders.

Ironically, these disorders do not function in isolation; they can coexist with the presence of one or more disorders, in addition to the primary disorder. Disorders that are commonly diagnosed include the following: Mood disorders, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, eating disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. Schizophrenia alone affects 2.4 million adults and results in alarming rates of suicide (approximately 11 per 100,000). Today, according to new studies, suicide takes more American lives than any other form of injury. Many of our military men and women return home with extreme cases of post-traumatic stress disorder; our children are being diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder like never before; and depression is the leading cause of disability. What can be done to help alleviate all this suffering?

As a mental health clinician, I have often wondered if seeking to make a diagnosis has become more important than the symptoms themselves. Psychiatrists have been trained to prescribe medication to help with mental illness. Is it solving the problem?

Clinicians, psychotherapists, counselors and psychologists have all been trained to therapeutically treat the patient to help with mental illness. Is it working? Mental health is very complex due to the myriad intricacies of human beings. Our cognitive and emotional development is shaped by our experiences and the unique perceptions within our “minds” or mental frameworks. Clinicians should consider treating the “mind” with the highest level of detail that reflects the uniqueness of each human being. It is important to understand that every human has four components: Mind, body, soul and spirit. I created this book based on the core value of understanding the whole person. With the help of the Counselor 911 team, I have explored a broad range of factors that can influence the mental well being of people. This was done by collecting together 911 questions from everyday people and answering them from a non-biased approach. This book sheds light on concerns that plague countless people regarding mental health issues, as well as general wellness concerns. *Mind~Body~Soul~Spirit* addresses each question from a theoretical as well as a biblical perspective. I believe strongly that the four components (mind, body, soul and spirit) must be holistically integrated in order to completely heal and/or restore health. If the whole being is not considered, then the root cause is not addressed.

CHAPTER 1

~ Abandonment ~



1. What is child abandonment?

Theoretical Perspective: Abandonment is a legal term as well as a non-legal term. Simply stated, legally it means the parent has deserted their child/children and has refused to provide support for them. In the non-legal sense, a child can be abandoned by their parent(s) through divorce and death. Even though death isn't considered a legal abandonment, many children experience strong feelings and fear of abandonment following the death of one or both parents.

Biblical Perspective: *The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Deuteronomy 31:8*

2. What is the root cause of abandonment?

Theoretical Perspective: The origin of abandonment issues often begins very early in life. Even an infant may feel the fear of being left alone with no one to care for her. Other root causes of an abandonment issue may include the loss of a parent or a

teenage relationship breakup. These situations can be cumulative and contribute significantly to our relationships with others as an adult.

Biblical Perspective: *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 3:13-14***

3. When do I call a doctor for my child's abandonment issues?

Theoretical Perspective: You should call a doctor if any unusual behavior exists for a long period of time or gets worse. You should also consider psychological counseling to help the child get an understanding of abandonment and to help him cope with it. Please seek medical help if the abandoned child inflicts injury upon himself or if he talks about or threatens suicide.

Biblical Perspective: *For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up. **Psalm 27:10***

4. How do you comfort a child that has been abandoned?

Theoretical Perspective: Abandonment can have lifelong effects on a child. No matter his or her age when abandoned, he or she will likely feel some aftereffects from the abandonment, such as trust and self-esteem issues. Strong, compassionate support from his or her existing family members or guardians is vital to repairing some of these issues. Relationships in later life can be damaged by fear of trusting the important people in his or her life.

Biblical Perspective: “Am I only a God nearby,” declares the Lord, “and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the Lord. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the Lord. **Jeremiah 23:23-24**

5. What happens to the adolescent who is feeling abandoned?

Theoretical Perspective: The abandoned adolescent can experience feelings of betrayal, guilt, loneliness and lack of self-esteem. People in general can be most fearful when it comes to abandonment, but in adolescents this fear is greatly increased.

Biblical Perspective: *I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. Leviticus 26:11-12*

6. What goes through the child’s mind when she feels abandoned by her parents because they are getting a divorce?

Theoretical Perspective: This is often a time when children may experience confusion, sadness and anger with high levels of emotional conflict. Their self-esteem is impacted due to the emotional toll that it has on the child. Consequently, when the child does not see one of the parents consistently after the divorce he/she tends to develop behavioral issues due to the negative effects emotionally of losing the relationship with one of the parents. Sometimes the emotional scarring can last for an extended period of time.

Children may react in different ways, depending on contributing factors related to their situation. Some of these factors include the following:

- Family relationship before separation.
- The ages of the children.
- How the parents handle the situation.

Biblical Perspective: *The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Isaiah 58:11*

7. Can adults suffer from abandonment issues?

Theoretical Perspective: Yes, adults can experience the emotion of abandonment, separation, or bereavement, whether real or imaginary. Abandonment is about the emotional hurt suffered from the loss of a loved one and a loss of feeling connected.

Biblical Perspective: *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9*

8. What are some common problems associated with abandonment?

Theoretical Perspective: Some common problems associated with abandonment can include the following: feelings of disloyalty, chronic fatigue, trouble sleeping, crying, hostility, anger, resentment, difficulty focusing or concentrating and problems with friends or at school.

Biblical Perspective: *For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath. Deuteronomy 4:31*

9. Can prior abandonment issues cause a person to withdraw from other people?

Theoretical Perspective: Yes, because withdrawal is one of the five stages of abandonment. When a person withdraws from others, it helps them feel protected and in control, because it is a defense mechanism. Moreover, less risk of abandonment is involved when they withdraw or separate from others.

Biblical Perspective: *The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Psalm 34:7*

10. Can someone feel abandoned in an emotionally abusive family even if the family is together?

Theoretical Perspective: Yes, you can feel abandonment even if your family is together. The dynamic of “pushing away” actually begins as a benign defense in childhood when, confronted with your parents’ anger and criticism, you say, if only silently to yourself in frustration, “Stop!” All you want is for the abuse to stop. But then this initial protective act grows into an aggressive act. You slowly transition from passively trying to stop the abuse to actively getting revenge by emotionally pushing away anyone who offends you.

Biblical Perspective: *Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord. Psalm 27:14*

11. Did my children and I deserve to be abandoned by my spouse?

Theoretical Perspective: No one deserves to be abandoned. But you must look at the mental state of your spouse. Your spouse

may be the victim of abandonment and have issues that were not resolved.

***Biblical Perspective:** But, my eyes are fixed on you. O Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge. Psalm 141:8*

12. Do I have an anger problem because I have been abandoned?

***Theoretical Perspective:** Anger can be a secondary emotion. Many people, particularly males, are trained to accept the feeling of anger, but not to accept the feelings that may have preceded it, such as feelings of hurt, fear, or vulnerability. Sometimes when we feel hurt or vulnerable, we immediately jump to anger because that's more acceptable to us. In this context, it becomes a secondary emotion; it is the feeling we can tolerate rather than such feelings as hurt or vulnerability.*

***Biblical Perspective:** For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. Isaiah 41:13*

13. Do I struggle with fitting in because of the abandonment?

***Theoretical Perspective:** Yes, one can struggle with fitting in when abandonment has been a prior issue, because self-esteem has been affected. Isolation then becomes a result for the person that has experienced abandonment.*

***Biblical Perspective:** The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18*

14. Does abandonment cause a person to lose self-value?

Theoretical Perspective: One of the most important symptoms of this disorder is that the person will have a very low sense of self-worth and self-esteem. He will make constant efforts to perfect himself when he is around his loved ones. He will not trust his own judgments and will be indecisive about critical issues until someone else's perspective comes into play. He is likely to go overboard, catering to the needs of others, even if they don't deserve it.

Biblical Perspective: *The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. Deuteronomy 28:9*

15. Does abandonment lead to resentment toward others?

Theoretical Perspective: Yes, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness and resentment can all be factors contributing to abandonment.

Biblical Perspective: *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1*

16. Does abandonment lead to loneliness?

Theoretical Perspective: Most people deal with a feeling of abandonment at some point in their lives. Whether you experience a death in your family or the end of a serious relationship, you are likely to feel a sense of loss and loneliness for a period of time.

Biblical Perspective: *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Isaiah 40:29*

17. How can I believe that I won't experience abandonment again?

Theoretical Perspective: There are no guarantees that you won't experience abandonment again. If you are coping with abandonment, it will be important to be up front about it in your relationships.

Biblical Perspective: *Wait on the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Psalm 27:14*

18. How do I heal from abandonment issues?

Theoretical Perspective: In order to heal from your abandonment issues you must do the following:

1. Identify and confront the earlier experiences that underlie your issues (often child abandonment).
2. Identify your beliefs, feelings and unmet needs that formed in connection with those earlier experiences.
3. Build the new, life-enhancing, coherent beliefs, feelings and needs that will bring you inner power and deep, lasting growth.
4. Create a "shift" in your energy field from the old to the new. This requires more than the usual "talking/thinking/understanding/problem-solving" of the left side of the brain.

Biblical Perspective: *O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me. O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit. Psalm 30:2-3*

19. Is the person struggling with abandonment issues more sensitive to rejection than the average person?

Theoretical Perspective: Individuals with abandonment issues are highly sensitive to rejection, reacting with anger and distress to such mild separations as a vacation, a business trip or a sudden change in plans. These fears of more abandonment seem to be related to difficulties feeling emotionally connected to key people in the life of the individual when they are physically absent, leaving the individual feeling lost and perhaps worthless.

Biblical Perspective: *I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation. And arrayed me in a robe of righteousness. Isaiah 61:10*

20. Can abandonment be a disease of spiritual brokenness such as diseases of the physical body?

Theoretical Perspective: Diseases that are incurable or of unknown etiology may constitute a spiritually rooted “dis-ease”, a disease that comes from the “condition of the heart.” Diseases start at a breakdown in a relationship with someone. If we restore those areas of relationship that are not perfected in love, I can guarantee that you will find your peace. Peace produces homeostasis that can produce good health. You do not need to know the “root” of a disease to find peace; by restoring our relationships with God, self and others, we are producing better health to deal with the dis-ease you may have.

Biblical Perspective: *But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:11*

21. Why is it so hard to love after being abandoned?

Theoretical Perspective: The main outcome of abandonment in relationships is the resulting fear that's created. That fear of being left alone and having to deal with everything by yourself becomes such an integral part of your life that it starts affecting the love relationships you're in. It can create a distance between people and deter the abandoned person from leading a normal and healthy life. Abandonment issues in relationships can get very complicated because they can be driven by betrayal. Therefore, the grief that one experiences after going through abandonment in relationships is more difficult to get over.

Biblical Perspective: *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18*

22. Is being abandoned a contributing factor to feeling insecure?

Theoretical Perspective: Many individuals who have survived childhood abandonment have been rejected and thus cast out into a world only to repeat this painful pattern. For these people, the abandonment issues they live with unfolded into a repetitive cycle of pursuing partners they must feel insecure about; because if they don't feel insecure about their mate, they can't feel loved by them or love for them.

Biblical Perspective: *Direct my footsteps according to your word. Psalm 119:133*

23. Does abandonment contribute to fear of being intimate?

Theoretical Perspective: Fear of intimacy is at the heart of co-dependency. We have a fear of intimacy because we have a fear of abandonment, betrayal and rejection. We have these fears because we were wounded in early childhood. We could have these fears because we had an experience of feeling emotionally abandoned, rejected and betrayed by our parents.

Biblical Perspective: *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 1 John 4:18*

24. What mental health disorder can come from abandonment?

Theoretical Perspective: Borderline personality disorder is common for people who have been abandoned. It is a condition in which people have long-term patterns of unstable emotions about themselves and others due to feelings of abandonment and an unstable sense of self.

Biblical Perspective: *God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7*

25. What did I do to cause the abandonment?

Theoretical Perspective: The abandoned person, especially a child, had nothing to do with the abandonment. It is only the result of the other person's mindset and past experiences.

Biblical Perspective: *In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me? Psalm 56:10-11*

26. What is the result of a mother abandoning her own child?

Theoretical Perspective: Maternal abandonment leaves the children to deal with significant emotional, mental and psychological aftereffects. A mother doesn't have to pack her bags and physically leave the house in order to abandon her children. It can take place emotionally and psychologically as she withdraws, either because of her own childhood issues or from other mental health issues.

Biblical Perspective: *Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me. Isaiah 49:15-16*

27. When a male suffered through abandonment, why does it make it hard for him to trust others?

Theoretical Perspective: Men with abandonment issues are less likely to trust without professional treatment. They become vulnerable to breakdown during "crises" involving separation because they have been burdened with a lifelong dread of abandonment due to very early traumatic experiences. Also, they have suffered serious problems in individuation and possibly have not remained happily married.

Biblical Perspective: *Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. Lamentations 3:32*

28. If I was abandoned as a child, does that mean I will abandon my own future child?

Theoretical Perspective: Parents are their children's strongest role models and greatest influences. Your children will adopt many of your values and types of behavior. Parents with unresolved abandonment issues may carry those feelings throughout their life.

Biblical Perspective: *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23*

29. Is it unhealthy that I felt anger when my parents abandoned me?

Theoretical Perspective: Parents leave for a variety of reasons. However, when a parent leaves with so many unanswered questions those who are left behind may feel a range of emotions, everything from sadness, to grief, to anger, and back again. It's understandable that you have feelings of anger towards both your mother and father. Anger is a normal human emotion, which can have negative or positive consequences. On the one hand, experiencing anger can act as a helpful signal letting a person know that she/he is hurting inside. Anger can also act as a motivation, enticing a person to place her/his energy on healing. On the other hand, holding on to anger can have real, long-term physical and emotional consequences.

Biblical Perspective: *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28*

30. Why do men find it so easy to abandon a relationship?

Theoretical Perspective: One of the contributing factors to men abandoning a relationship is unmet needs. If he does not get his needs met within the home, he will seek them outside the home.

Biblical Perspective: For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. **Matthew 19:5-6**

31. How can a father abandon his children for another woman?

Theoretical Perspective: A father may abandon his family or children for a number of reasons. Listed below are some of the more common reasons:

- Oftentimes men are caught up in their immediate selves.
- They have a distorted view of love for their children
- A man might think he was not good enough.
- He might not know what it means to be a father due to the absence of his own father.

Biblical Perspective: Guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge... **1 Timothy 6:20**

CHAPTER 2

~ Abuse Victim Recovery ~



32. What is domestic violence?

Theoretical Perspective: Domestic violence is known by other terms, such as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence and intimate partner violence (IPV). It is a blueprint of violent behaviors by one partner against another in a loving relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation.

Biblical Perspective: For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.
Matthew 15:19

33. How can I tell if it is really domestic violence?

Theoretical Perspective: Domestic violence is demonstrated in many ways, such as physical assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), harassment, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, controlling behavior, intimidation, stalking, passive/covert abuse (neglect), economic deprivation, endangerment, criminal coercion, kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment and trespassing.

Biblical Perspective:** O Lord, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever. The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men. **Psalm 12:7-8

34. What is physical abuse?

***Theoretical Perspective:** Physical abuse is an act of one party imposing contact upon another party, which is intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury or other bodily harm.*

Biblical Perspective:** For man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. **James 1:20

35. Can children learn abusive behaviors from their parents?

***Theoretical Perspective:** A violent home is a “nursery school” for abusive behaviors to be learned. Children who see a parent rage “out of control” do not learn positive ways to express their emotions. He/she is taught specific techniques to humiliate and intimidate others instead of learning kindness and consideration. Many children who are continually put down or who witness constant criticism learn how to devastate others with words. For other children, this parental criticism becomes self-criticism and self-hatred.*

Biblical Perspective:** You will give justice to the orphans and the oppressed, so people can no longer terrify them. **Psalm 10:18

36. Can emotional and verbal abuse cause mental health issues?

***Theoretical Perspective:** Yes, it definitely can, but in various forms of intensity; and it would all depend on each individual's*

personal experience. Over an extended period, name-calling and teasing can produce damaging psychological effects. In fact, prolonged mental abuse is a form of brainwashing and can lead to serious mental health issues.

Biblical Perspective:** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. **Proverbs 15:1-4

37. Do childhood traumas cause mental health issues as an adult?

***Theoretical Perspective:** The trauma a person faces during childhood could have a severe and long-lasting effect. When childhood trauma is not resolved, this fundamental sense of fear and helplessness carries over into adulthood, setting the stage for further trauma that can cause moderate to severe mental health issues.*

Biblical Perspective:** And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. **1 Peter 5:10

38. When someone has been abused, how can they learn to trust again?

***Theoretical Perspective:** It is human nature to desire close relationships. Trust is a must in a close relationship; however, you must trust that you will be okay if you are betrayed. In many cases, the fear of trusting another person is more about your*