

HOLD ONTO

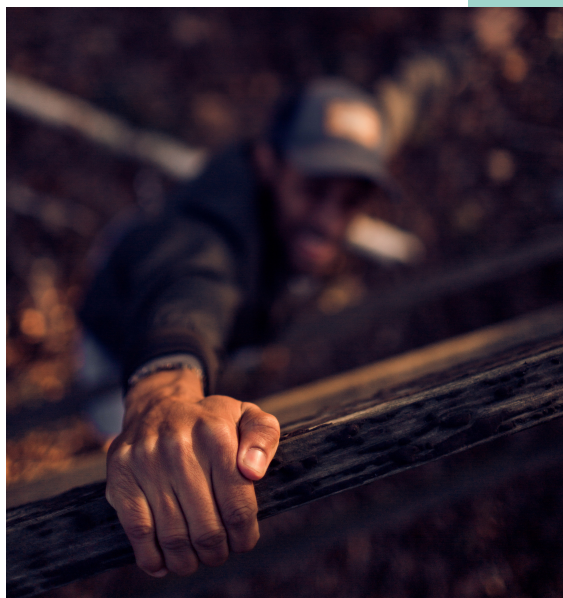
HOPE!

**Heidi Vermeer-Quist, Psy.D.**  
Clinical Director & Psychologist at  
Heartland Christian Counseling Center

*Hope: a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen, a feeling of trust.*

Hope is huge. From an emotional perspective, it may be the most important feeling or emotional outcome people pursue in counseling. When asked about the mental health crises in our communities, I find (and oodles of research suggest) that most mental health problems (including suicidal thoughts, self-harm behaviors, deep depression, paralyzing panic and others) stem from a common core problem: Hopelessness.

In the field of mental health “instilling hope” is critical. So, yes, hope is critical. But then I think we ought to ask, “What are we hoping for?” I asked Anna, my 11 year-old daughter, “How would you define ‘hope’?” She said, “Well, it’s kinda like faith. It’s really important to hold onto through tough times.” So, What or Who are you holding onto during those tough times?

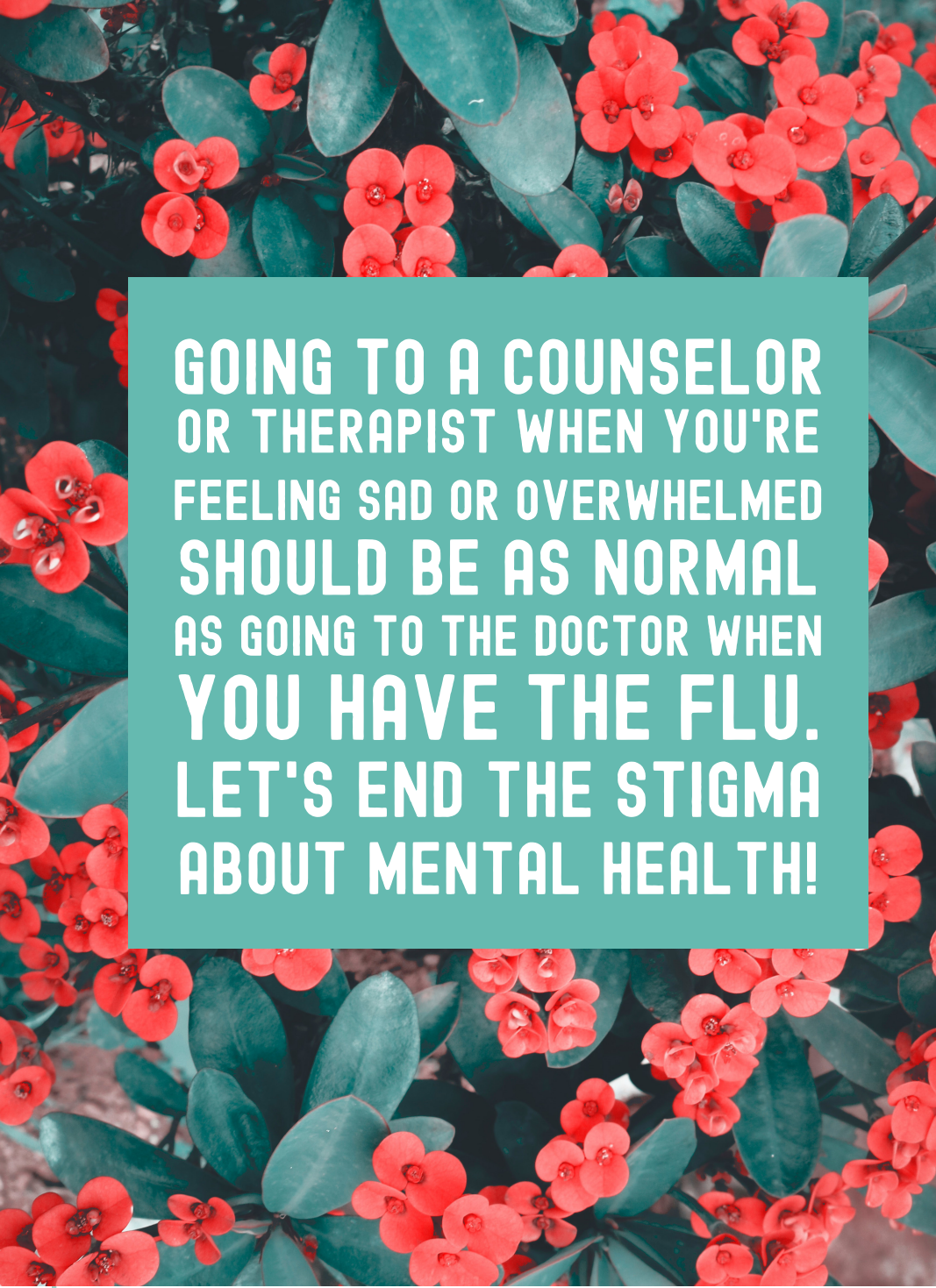


A well-known verse from the book of Jeremiah came to my mind: “For I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans for prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

This is truly a bold, kind of confusing yet deeply comforting statement for the time it was written. Jeremiah was an Old Testament prophet, who lived during a time when the people of Judah were turning away from God and were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. They did not have the options or the freedoms we take for granted every day. Yet, Jeremiah reminded them that God was their ultimate Provider. Jeremiah urged them to put their trust and hope in God.



Now zoom ahead to Jesus...who showed us a whole new level of living with hope. He took on all of our sin and shame, conquered death for us, and promises to be Emmanuel (God with us). Jesus invites us to simply abide in His love and receive His wisdom in each present moment.



**GOING TO A COUNSELOR  
OR THERAPIST WHEN YOU'RE  
FEELING SAD OR OVERWHELMED  
SHOULD BE AS NORMAL  
AS GOING TO THE DOCTOR WHEN  
YOU HAVE THE FLU.  
LET'S END THE STIGMA  
ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH!**

People feel hopeless when they are faced with losses... usually loss of things or of people whom they had put their hope in...but were never guaranteed to keep anyway. These losses may include external losses like death, life changes, unmet expectations, OR internal losses like obsessive criticisms of my own shortcomings and habitual “stinking” thinking in my own mind’s eye.

You and I have choices, every moment. Do we get sucked into the pit of hopelessness? If so, where are we putting our hope? Do we choose to despair about losses...and for how long? OR do we grieve those losses (work through the emotions with support) and commit to acceptance and to renewal of hope? We cannot control the Others, the Outcomes or the Old stuff of life (I like to call that the “O Zone”), but we certainly can choose the thought life we adopt. We can certainly cry out to the God of Hope, and we can commit to a posture of HOPE.

“NO GUILT IN LIFE. NO FEAR IN DEATH.  
THIS IS THE POWER OF CHRIST IN ME  
FROM LIFE’S FIRST CRY TO FINAL BREATH.  
JESUS COMMANDS MY DESTINY  
NO POWER OF HELL. NO SCHEME OF MAN.  
CAN EVER PLUCK ME FROM HIS HAND  
TILL HE RETURNS OR CALLS ME HOME  
**HERE IN THE POWER OF CHRIST I’LL STAND.”**

IN CHRIST ALONE - STUART TOWNEND



Now, let me talk with those of you who have been stuck in a pit of hopelessness for quite some time. If you've been stuck there for many days or even weeks, get help! There are certain mental health conditions that truly prohibit people from physically accessing Hope. See your doctor. Start some counseling. Get help. Don't go this alone! God may be providing for you in and through the process of asking for help.

God made you. God loves you. God is providing everything for you right now. He was, He is and He is to come. More than that, we have been given a hope in and through the love and life of Jesus. We are all invited to abide in Jesus and follow him, our Good Shepherd, who leads us away from fear and into hope and freedom.

Try this: If you feel hopeless, catch yourself. Stop and choose Hope. Grab it. If it is hard to take it, then ask for help from God and from supportive friends and professionals who can help you! Pursue hope and receive hope in the precious present moment.

May the God of all HOPE fill you with love, life, wisdom and joy as you turn your eyes upward and outward to Christ Jesus.



Dr. Heidi Vermeer-Quist is a licensed clinical psychologist with over 20 years of clinical, teaching and consulting experience. She provides clinical services through Heartland Christian Counseling ([www.heartland-christiancounseling.com](http://www.heartland-christiancounseling.com)), as well as, family business and organizational consulting services.

Heidi has released the first two books of a three-book personal growth series called Gardening Your Life ([www.gardeningyourlife.com](http://www.gardeningyourlife.com)). Faith and family come first, and Heidi enjoys singing, raising their three amazing kids with her husband, Chad, and the joy of each God-given moment.



For more information, please contact Heidi.  
[VermeerQuist@Heartland-ChristianCounseling.com](mailto:VermeerQuist@Heartland-ChristianCounseling.com)

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle.” - Ian MacClaran