

Sickness Health and Healing



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Serving the Health of our Community

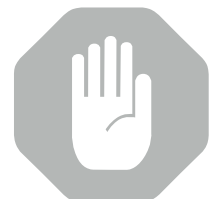
Enhancing our understanding, to provide care and support for those who need it.

an initiative of the SCWA Coalition

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Sickness, Health, and Healing — Serving the Health of our Community

Workshop for enhancing our understanding about sickness and healing, to be better able to provide care and support for those who need it.

Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. — Isaiah 58:9–10.

Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, ... for I was sick, and you cared for me.” Then these righteous ones will reply, “Lord, when did we ever ... see you sick ... and visit you?” And the King will say, “I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!” — Matthew 25:34–40.

INFORMATION AND GUIDE FOR FACILITATOR

Welcome

The overall aim of this teaching tool and training workshop is to equip church leaders and those in their churches and communities to help individuals, families, and community groups to develop a Biblical understanding of sickness, health, and healing, and also to address the issue of witch accusations (against children or adults) arising from sickness and death. Our desire is to see people protect the most vulnerable members of their communities and to grow in their relationship with God and with one another through Jesus Christ.

Purpose

By the end of this training, it is hoped that attendees will have a better understanding of:

- what the Bible says about sickness, health, and healing;
 - what the Bible says about how to respond to sickness and death;
 - wise ways to seek healing;
 - appropriate ways to respond should they or someone in their families or communities become sick.
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Overview

Context

In many communities around the world, sickness, and death may be attributed to the work of occult forces and more specifically to witches who are perceived to work in secret, often at night to bring misfortune to others through their innate, malevolent powers. Consequently, when someone becomes sick or dies, the question is not, “why has this happened?” but rather, “who has done this?” Family or community members – children and adults alike – may be accused of being the ‘witch’ behind the misfortune, and consequently brutally victimised and abused, leading to yet more suffering, tragedy, fear, suspicion, and broken relationships.

In other cases, if someone becomes sick, the help of traditional healers and their cures may be sought rather than that of trained medical practitioners and mainstream medicine which may be viewed with suspicion. While some traditional healers have extensive knowledge of herbal cures that are effective in helping to bring about healing, others may cause harm through their motivations, approaches, and the cures that they suggest, or may or be limited in what they are able to do to help. Many health conditions require the help of trained medical doctors and nurses in a clinic or hospital context if the person who is sick is to have a chance to recover.

It is the prayer of SCWA that this *Sickness, Health, and Healing* training course will give participants the opportunity to discuss these important issues and to be guided towards new learning and understanding that will lead to a reduction in fear and harm, an increase in loving care and support to those who are sick, and ultimately an improvement of health and wellbeing in communities.

How to Use

This *Sickness, Health, and Healing* (SHH) training material can be used as a standalone resource, or else as a supplementary module of *The Heart of the Matter* (HoM) training resource. HoM is a seven-module course which aims to contribute to a significant change in thinking and actions in local churches and communities in relation to the phenomenon of witchcraft accusations, especially against children.

- HoM can be accessed here:
– <https://stop-cwa.org/resources/45>

This SHH resource is designed so that you can organise the teaching sessions in whatever way is best for you and your group or community members. For instance, you may want to break the training down into two, half-day sessions or to do it all in one day. We suggest that you discuss with your chosen participants what would work best for them and when and where the teaching should take place. There is no need to hire out community halls or to have expensive materials. The sessions can take place in the usual community meeting place (under a tree, in a church hall). You do not need to provide food, but you will probably need to provide water. Each session is very participatory so

Sickness, Health, and Healing

that those attending can share their own experiences and discuss the important issues raised in this resource.

Before the Workshop

Before the workshop, be sure to prepare fully as follows...

- Read through the whole SHH resource to familiarise yourself with its contents.
- Think about who could help you to facilitate the training workshop, and share SHH with them so that they too are familiar with it.
- Prayerfully think about which groups of people you want to invite to your meeting. The aim is to equip church and community leaders to pass on the teaching to their congregations or communities.
- Consider whether to use a local language and if so, which one. This may mean organising an interpreter. This will depend on whom you choose as participants.
- Prepare the materials for each activity in advance.
 - For example, write out verses and prepare flipchart sheets.

During the Workshop

There are instructions throughout the resource which help the facilitator guide to the participants through it. Make sure that you clearly understand what you are being asked to do or say at each stage.

Do all you can to ensure that the participants are engaged and that they have the opportunity to fully participate. So, this may require some careful thought around who to put together for small group work, which language to use, ensuring to have clear readings of Bible verses (especially if there are mixed levels of literacy), and other similar considerations. It is helpful to print the Bible verse references and questions on a slip of paper, to save the group from having to write everything down.

Ensure the groups are not too large or too small. Encourage all attendees to contribute to the discussions, and don't allow one or two persons to dominate. On each occasion, ensure the groups select one or two different persons to provide feedback on behalf of the group.

- **Discussions All Together:** Even in the activities with everybody together, try to ensure that all the participants are engaged. Invite interaction and draw out responses from those who perhaps do not so naturally promote themselves. Make sure that people have the opportunity to contribute and ask questions but do not allow any participants to 'take over' the session.
- **Reading Out Loud:** Some of the activities (such as reading Bible passages) require participants to read out loud to everyone. Ensure you have a person who can speak up in a clear, measured voice for all to hear.

- **Writing on the Wall:** Some activities require items to be written on a flip-chart page displayed on the wall or stand. Find a volunteer with clear handwriting to write in big text for all to see. (Using a volunteer each time will keep you free to engage with the workshop participants.) These pages, along with other feedback, plus any charts or diagrams, can be left for the participants to read at the end.

Familiarity with the workshop material will give you confidence to keep each session running smoothly.

After the Workshop

The purpose of the training is to bring change in thinking and to prevent harmful practices from continuing, such as witchcraft accusations and some 'healing' rituals. It is important to follow up with the participants to ensure that they are able to put into practice what they have learned. They may need help and encouragement with this.

Personal Action Plans

- Provide each participant with a Personal Action Plan (provided in Appendix 1) to fill in. It is good to encourage them to commit to taking some practical steps based on the learning they have gained from the training workshop. You should ask them to keep this Personal Action Plan to help them remember and use what they have learned.
- Ask the participants for permission to take a photo of each of their Personal Action Plans so that you have a record. You should tell them that you would like to discuss them with them in three months or six months or a year's time to find out what progress has been made over the coming months.

Follow-Up Meetings

- When you meet up with participants, you may need to remind them of key messages from the material. Try to measure any positive changes that have occurred, through case studies, and by noting different practices and thinking. Pass these results on the communities and congregations involved, to encourage them to continue along this path.

Certificates

- At the close of the day, present each attendee with a certificate to remind them of their participation in the *Sickness, Health, and Healing* workshop.

Ready to Go!

As you lead this workshop, may God equip you for it and give you blessing, wisdom, and favour!

Sources

The following useful sources were consulted in while producing this resource:

Theological

- Judith Hill, “Health, Sickness, and Healing in the New Testament: a brief theology” in *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, issue 26.2, pages 151–195, 2007, available online here:
– https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/26-2_151.pdf

Practical

- For contextualised teaching resources on the biblical view of disability and impairments, see *Transform Disability*, published by the Bethany Children’s Trust, accessible here:
– <https://bethanychildrenstrust.org.uk/resources?category=2>
- SCWA’s *The Heart of the Matter (HoM)* training resource to help change thinking and actions in relation to accusations of witchcraft, especially against children:
 - accessible here:
– <https://stop-cwa.org/resources/45>
 - supplementary audio:
– <https://stop-cwa.org/resources/55>
– <https://stop-cwa.org/resources/56>

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