



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
GRACE ALLIANCE

Donor Report 2023



# MENTAL HEALTH GRACE ALLIANCE

Mental Health Grace Alliance is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization focused on seeing God's grace transform lives affected by mental health challenges (individuals, couples, and families).

## “To love them well.”

The Grace Alliance's mission is to equip the Body of Christ with evidence-based mental health resources and support to transform lives (science + Scripture). We are creating a new, simple mental health ministry (frontlines) response.

In 2011, Mental Health Grace Alliance (“The Grace Alliance”) was founded to create practical and grace-filled resources for those living with mental health challenges (individuals + marriages/families). Grace Alliance curriculums utilize a whole-health (i.e., holistic) approach,

Today, we have grown to over 1100 Grace Alliance groups (Grace + Thrive Groups) and have seen thousands of individuals utilize our Grace Alliance resources in all 50 U.S. states and 25+ countries.

integrating evidence-based science (neuroscience, psychology, biomedical, etc.) and Biblical scriptures/faith experience for mental health recovery (resilience).

The remarkable impact of the Grace Alliance programs and training was published in four journals, with results showing:

1. Participants saw a reduction in mental health symptoms.
2. Participants were aided in overall mental health recovery.
3. Participants experienced a renewal of their faith.
4. Training increases confidence and skills to respond and minister to mental health challenges.

## “King or cripple,” He loves infinitely the same.

*“I’d love to hold the hand of One who healed the blind and saw the leper run into the arms of love ... And king or cripple, they were the same to You ... You take a broken man and treat him like a king.”*

These lyrics from the 90’s Christian band Delirious? still resound today because it’s the heart of Jesus when He began His ministry by reading and fulfilling the ancient prophetic words, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, He has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted” (see Isaiah 61:1-3).

In this report, you will see how this ministry has continued to grow and stretch to new parts of the globe. Still, our heart in our work (the groups and its leaders), our team, and our continual prayers are to see Isaiah 61 in its Kingdom fulfillment. Jesus is still mending the brokenhearted, and His grace is still transforming lives.

It’s difficult for us to record every detail, every comment, and every testimony, but we’ve tried to give you a good snapshot of how your donation empowers this growing work. We hope this report reads as a praise and celebration of what we’ve been

able to do with your generosity, and we hope you find great encouragement in it.

## Every great work has a team behind the scenes that helps build and shape it.

Thank you for being part of our donor team, partnering with us, and believing in God to fulfill His purposes through our growing work. We are so thankful to serve those Jesus has never forgotten. He sees their pain, hears their cry, and ministers life. Thank you for playing an essential role in this, and may you be immensely blessed by your giving.

Now, explore the story of what we accomplished in 2023.

### **Joe Padilla**

Cofounder  
**Mental Health  
Grace Alliance**



## Donor-supported resources, training, and hope for thousands.



### **Mental Health Community Groups** (discipleship-growth transforming lives)

#### **Grace + Thrive Groups** (individuals, couples, and families)

Community lay-led groups utilizing Grace Alliance's affordable curriculums blending science and faith (Scripture). The curriculum works on improving mental health wellness and well-being through a whole-person approach. Published results show that group participants had:

1. **Reduction of difficult symptoms**
2. **Mental health recovery and trauma healing**
3. **Spiritual renewal**

Grace + Thrive groups work alongside and aid professional intervention; they do not replace them.



### **FREE Group Leader Training + Support** (frontlines ministry support)

#### **Grace Academy + Network** (Christian mental health equipping)

Our **FREE** online video training with ongoing equipping support removes cost barriers to start groups anywhere, anytime. With no leader training or subscription fees, we can provide group leaders worldwide with the following:

1. **Free online training (videos)**
2. **Free, ongoing leader support videos, emails, and downloads**
3. **Free online events on relevant topics for the front-of-care**

With no training and subscription fees, the average cost savings per leader is \$720 (annually).



### **FREE Christian Mental Health Insights** (reaching thousands with hope)

#### **Resources + Blog Articles** (an innovative response to pain)

Our **FREE** educational guides, devotionals, and blog articles cover some of the most challenging mental health questions and topics not discussed in Sunday service. These resources help group leaders and participants reach thousands who are in pain and searching for answers.

1. **Resources filled with science and Biblical faith perspectives**
2. **For anyone searching for hope**
3. **Great for church leaders needing materials for ministry and sermons**

Churches, ministries, organizations, and mental health professionals promote these resources.

## Your giving to see new groups start anywhere, anytime.



A donor-supported movement of mental health groups.

Since 2011, with the help of our donors, Mental Health Grace Alliance has helped create one of the largest Christian mental health small group networks worldwide.

### 97+

New groups in 2023

**(-20% from 2022)**

The new Family Grace, Living Grace, Redefine Grace, and Thrive Groups registered their new groups in 2023. **Cumulative growth is 1100+ groups.**



### 2.5+

New Groups Weekly.

On average, how many new Grace and Thrive Groups are starting weekly, mainly in the U.S., but also worldwide.

### 25+

 (Ukraine refugees + Hong Kong)

Countries + the U.S.

New pilot groups for Ukraine refugees, Liberia, and continued groups in Hong Kong. Groups and Grace Alliance workbooks have been distributed to 25+ countries.

## A growing momentum impossible to count.

### 1100+

Grace + Thrive Groups.

Since 2011, Grace Alliance has seen over 1100 Christian mental health small groups start worldwide.

### +

**“+” means there’s more growth we can’t count!**

We only count the groups that officially register with MHGA. Our data indicates that for every group registration, 2-3 other groups are starting (but not registering). Thus, we show this “unregistered” growth as a “+.”

# Changing lives. Stories that matter.



## Living Grace Group participant:

*"It was through our Living Grace fellowship that I was able to open up and ask questions where I felt accepted and not judged where I found courage to find the professional help that I needed. Living Grace provided me with the tools that I needed to navigate the sometimes complex process in finding a therapist. Due to the complexity of my situation, it took patience and faith until I finally found the help I needed. I could not have done this without the support that I received from my Living Grace Group. ... I never thought that I would see the day where this broken mind and body could see how God could use me again. Living Grace gave me reason to Hope again.... Today, I remain in my Living Grace Discipleship Group. I am attempting to get the graduate degree I always wanted ... I would never have believed you if you had told me this almost 4 years ago when I started with this group. Hebrews 13:5 says, 'God will never leave you or forsake you.' I am so grateful to tell you that this really is true in my life."*



## Family Grace Group Leader:

*"We have enjoyed seeing people feel and express that they no longer feel alone. They feel heard and understood ... Group members have also appreciated how the material respects the dignity of the person suffering with the mental health needs and encourages us even in the group meetings to talk about them with love and respect."*



## Thrive Group participant:

*"The workbook has been very helpful. I appreciate a resource that combines doctrines of the Christian faith with science, in particular neuroscience."*



## Thrive Group leader:

*"We have new group members coming in once a month. Easy to order and they come within the week. Great curriculum that allows us to dive into God's word so beautifully."*



## Living Grace Group leader:

*"We start out series Grace Group (September 2023). The team and I are looking forward to the tools you provide to serve our community with Grace. We all had a meeting and watch your videos (free training videos) you provide and can't wait to see what the Lord will do."*



## Living Grace Group (personal use):

*"I didn't expect to receive my book so quickly. I started working in it right away and I'm getting a lot from each lesson that is helping me not only see my mental illness as an illness that God can and will use. I have recommended using your program to start a group at our church."*



## Family Grace Group leader:

*"We use these workbooks for our Family Grace small group at our church. The curriculum is amazing and it touches every member that has come to us. I have found nothing else out there that compares to it. We thank Grace Alliance for this curriculum. Praise God!"*

# 2023 Website with answers to tough mental health and faith questions



## 59K website visitors (-24% from 2022)

Before talking to a church leader, people often search for “biblical answers” to their mental health challenges. We aim to provide helpful insights and answers to many of these mental health and faith questions.



### Blog article response (“What the Bible says about depression and anxiety”):

*“Awesome! I’m glad I came across this article just at the right time thank you.”*



### Blog article response

### (“What the Bible says about depression and anxiety”):

*“Just discovered Grace Alliance in the last 2 days while experiencing an OCD relapse. Definitely feel it was spirit led for me to find this group! Feeling so blessed! Absolutely loving the merge of psychology and Christianity. Thank you!”*



### Blog article question about suicide and our response (“Is depression a sin? No!”):

*“A friend and I are looking into whether or not people who commit suicide go to heaven, and had a question. The Bible mentions many times that the innocent go to heaven, like little children for example, so we were wondering if those with mental health disorders that cause suicidal thoughts and actions have reverted to a state of childlike innocence in where they cannot differentiate between right and wrong.”*



### Our Grace Alliance response (suicide):

*This is an excellent question in which you will find many various interpretations. In general, we at the Grace Alliance would subscribe to the thought that, in Christ (cross/resurrection), “suicide” is forgivable as any other sin. Christ’s cross/resurrection covers the full spectrum of victory over sin and death (1 Cor. 15:57). **OBVIOUSLY, suicide is not God’s desire – as God desires to give us abundant life (John 10:10) and grace to overcome our pains (1 John 5:3-5). There is hope – even in our despair (1 Peter 1:3-9).** In short, the reasoning or motive behind suicide is best explained by neuroscience and psychological factors – this would give us more compassion. **Anyone struggling with hopelessness and despair leading to suicidal thoughts or intentions, please call or text 988.***

# Equipping and supporting the frontlines of mental health ministry ... Grace + Thrive Group leaders.



## **\*2000+ leader email list and 640+ on Leader Facebook page.**

We engage with group leaders through periodic emails and a private Facebook page for leaders. There is an excellent exchange of leader support on the leader's Facebook page. Along with many experienced lay leaders, some of our leaders are made up of mental health pros and certified mental health specialists.



## **\*9 monthly live + interactive online meetings (FREE).**

Each month, Grace Alliance CEO, Joe Padilla, hosts a live, interactive meeting with group leaders across the globe. The agenda is simple: ask any question, and other leaders and our Grace Alliance team responds with their incredible experience and knowledge.



## **2 New Educational Guides and 3 New Devotionals (FREE).**

Joe Padilla (MHGA CEO) authored these five new resources for a two-fold purpose. First, to provide new supportive resources for group leaders and group participants. Second, to provide anyone worldwide with helpful answers and resources for the mental health and in Christ journey.

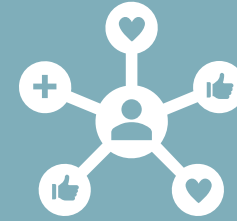
**This new resource page (with free resources) was the fifth most popular page on our website in 2023.**



## **Baylor University Internship Program (Religion Dept.)**

As part of the Religion department's "Intro to ministry" class, Joe Padilla facilitates Baylor students interested in mental health ministry each semester. Alongside various organizational tasks, Joe trains and provides the students with hands-on group experience.

**The oversight professor has been impressed with the program and the students have also commented how the program both stretched them, but seeing the Biblical integration with the science was helpful.**



## **Why is this important? It's shaping the future of ministry care.**

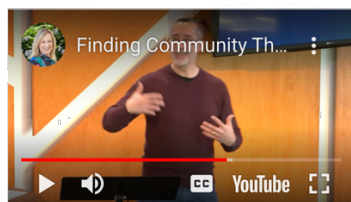
Throughout many studies, the Body of Christ is ill-equipped to respond to mental health needs.

Alongside mental health professional intervention, we provide an innovative frontline ministry response to mental health challenges.

Your support is helping us shape a new future for the frontline ministry of the Body of Christ.



# Inspiring hope and influencing a new future for mental health and the Church.



**Reimagining mental health support into discipleship growth experience (March 2023)** – Saddleback Church | Hope for Mental Health



**The New Mental Health Shift in the Church (Jan. 2023)** – Live interactive webinar event by Remedy Live + Lutheran Foundation.

## \*5 Inspiring Speaking Events in 2022

We often get requests to speak at mental health conferences, podcast interviews, church events, seminaries, and universities. Due to scheduling, we had to turn down several requests, but here are the events we were able to participate in:

- + Remedy Live + Lutheran Foundation (Online event – January 2023)
- + Saddleback Church, Hope for Mental Health (California – March 2023)
- + Thrive and Cultivate Mental Health Summit (Online event – May 2023)
- + Church and Mental Health Summit (Online event - October 2023)
- + Bent Tree Church, Mental Health Leader workshop (November 2023)



**7600+ worldwide email subscribers (+8% since 2022) with the above avg. open rate.**

At least once a month, we provided short and insightful emails to subscribers worldwide. Approximately 40% of our subscribers opened to read our encouraging emails (with many of the emails being forwarded to others).



### **Email response to “The God of comfort in mental health challenges”:**

*“Thank you so very much for sending me this message again. I feel it ministered peace to me today.”*



### **Email response to “Brokenness doesn’t define you.”:**

*“Thank you for this beautiful encouragement.”*



### **Email response to “NEW and FREE resources”:**

*“I just want to thank you so much for all of these great resources!”*

## Collaboration for worldwide impact.



### Collaborating with results (Hong Kong)

In 2021, we partnered with the Baptist Oi Kwan Social Services (BOKSS) in Hong Kong to translate and implement our Living Grace Groups. They implemented and evaluated 10 Living Grace Groups (in-person and online) showing above average results (right).

#### **What's next:** Family Grace and possible research.

With the transformational stories they shared with us and these unique outcomes, they're looking into potential studies with one of the universities in Hong Kong. They translated and launched Family Grace Groups in June 2023.

### Hong Kong Grace Group Results

+ **100% of the participants agreed** that the group helped them become aware of their physical, emotional, and spiritual condition.

+ **94% of the participants agreed** that the group helped improve their overall physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

+ **83% of the participants agreed** they learned useful tools in the group.

+ **77% of the participants believed** they could live a fulfilling life after joining the group.

## Collaborating for trauma healing (Ukraine refugees)

### **Life Chaplains**

### **Voice of Persecuted Christians Poland**

### **Mental Health Grace Alliance**

In 2023, we partnered with **Life Chaplains** (with **Voice of Persecuted Christians Poland**) to translate and pilot six chapters of our Living Hope\* (trauma healing group resources) for Ukrainian clergy refugees. The pilot project went well, with good feedback from the participants. *\*Living Hope has published results for trauma healing and recovery.*



**Your donations help facilitate and provide these projects with FREE materials ... to remove international barriers to transformative mental health support.**

### 2024 Ukraine Focus

1. Complete full translations of Christian and secular versions.
2. Conduct more groups with clergy and utilize the secular version to reach more refugees.
3. Conduct psycho-spiritual studies (with published results as available).

## \*Our life-changing Grace + Thrive Curriculum.



**Family Grace:** 16-week topical curriculum for families/marriages supporting a loved one's mental health wellness.

**\*Living Grace:** 16-week topical curriculum for individuals' mental health wellness.

**Redefine Grace:** 10-week topical curriculum for students' mental health wellness.

**\*Thrive (course):** 20 topics - in-depth, whole-health course/curriculum for mental health wellness (resilience, mental health recovery).

*\*Evidence-based in group use and coaching (Thrive), published in psychological journals showing mental health symptom reduction, renewed faith, and overall mental health recovery.*

### Donor-supported .... to provide affordable workbooks.

We set the price of the workbooks to cover their production (printing costs), shipping, and handling fees (all U.S. orders include free shipping and 50% of int'l shipping costs). All proceeds from the workbooks go back into Mental Health Grace Alliance.



Thank you for being a Grace Alliance donor-partner ... making history and empowering a new future for mental health in the Church and communities across the globe.



# MENTAL HEALTH GRACE ALLIANCE

## Your generosity in action - Thank you.

Ensuring your investment goes toward reaching individuals, families, churches, ministries, and communities worldwide with MHGA resources and training.

## Percentage of funds | time and resources.

**+ Professional Accountability.** In 2023, our team focused on building a strong foundation for the organization after over a decade of operations and growth. This included new accountability systems with a CPA team, a higher-performing donor management system, and more (Operations).

**+ Accessible and Reachable: Removing Cost Barriers.** We also expanded our Outreach and Group Leader Training and Support by transferring all e-books to Amazon and offering free U.S. shipping (50% off international shipping) on ALL orders (no matter the size!). An increase in international interest in our resources led us to opportunities for translations of our resources and international reach into Hong Kong and with Ukrainian refugees.

**+ Equipping, Connecting, and Collaborating to impact thousands.** Other focus areas for the organization included group leader network support (for the movement), partnerships with Baylor University and other organizations, and outreach (emails to subscribers, connection meetings with church leaders, speaking events, etc.).

