

Eight of us gathered together. We did not have a set topic for the evening but waited for the spirit to take us somewhere. Out of a silence we had a round of check-ins. Many of us are feeling busy and overwhelmed - some physically and some mentally. Family difficulties relating to addiction came up with the check-ins. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, many of us have been touched by this tragedy within family, friend and work circles. The question of why naturally came forward.

There seem to be many factors. The frequent prescribing of pain medications is certainly a cause. But our concern rose for young people who experiment with non-prescribed opioids and seem to lack the fear of these drugs that many of us older people grew up with. Or perhaps they have the fear and know the dangers but do not care. We seem to have a society that promises happiness and instant gratification all the time and yet does not offer the positive coping mechanisms that allow us to deal with sadness or dissatisfaction. Social media presents us (especially young people) with an unrealistic view of life and many risk having their self identity linked to what other people think. Many families are broken or lack the time or commitment to teach young people how to grapple with difficult emotions and learn a strong independent sense of self.

Some in our group have experienced the immense benefits that 12 step programs provide in teaching strong coping mechanisms. A wish that mindfulness meditation could find its way into our schools came forth as well. This became a heavy topic for the evening but the faith and openness that we hold for each other in the gathered group kept us centered and we closed with silence and gratitude.

Our next gathering is planned for Monday, July 11, 2016 at 7pm in the Community House. All are welcome.

Randy Wirth