

HOPE

MENTAL HEALTH AND THE HOPE OF JESUS

RESOURCE GUIDE

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Blacktown Anglican Church
www.bac.org.au
Version 1.11 July 2023
Luke Thomson
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There is a deep hope to be found in Jesus. But sometimes there can feel like a disconnect between faith and our life experience in the real world.

For both sufferers and carers, this sermon series will ground us in the many riches of God that are available to us, and the immense hope we can have even in the darkest seasons of our lives.

This resource offers a guide to sources of information, advice, support, and services that can help both sufferers and carers. I pray it will assist you in drawing upon the hope that Jesus provides—both now and for eternity.

Luke Thomson
Senior Minister

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TEN TIPS TO HELP YOU GET BACK ON TRACK

<https://www.thinkmentalhealthwa.com.au/supporting-my-mental-health/tips-and-tools/>

1. Look after your body

Getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising regularly and avoiding harmful levels of alcohol and other drug use can reduce your stress levels and help you cope with your everyday life.

2. Stick to your routine

Try to resist the urge to stay in bed all day. Keeping up your daily home and work routine can help to take your mind off your worries.

3. Keep a diary

Make a list of the things you'd like to get done each day, and cross them off as you do them. Try and focus on doing things that are positive or make you feel good. If you don't get everything done, it doesn't matter, there is always tomorrow.

4. Value yourself

Treat yourself with respect and kindness, and try to avoid self-criticism.

5. Manage your stress levels

- Identify what triggers stress: If you know what your triggers are, you can prepare for them. Examples of triggers for stress may include deadlines, relationships or seeing a particular person, lack of sleep, money, work, exams etc. Try calming techniques, writing down your thoughts or if you can, change/avoid/remove them.
- Be aware of the warning signs: Everyone has different warning signs that indicate they may be starting to feel unhealthily stressed. These may include tensing your jaw, grinding your teeth, getting headaches, or feeling irritable and short tempered.

- Establish a routine that suits you: Having routines in your day or week, such as regular times for exercise, relaxation, meal times, visiting friends, waking in the morning and going to bed at consistent times etc. Once this becomes your normal routine, it's easier to accomplish everything because it becomes a good habit.
- Looking after your health and wellbeing: Eating well, exercising, getting a good night's sleep, avoiding or reducing alcohol and other drug use, taking time out for yourself, spending time with friends, loved ones, and people you trust, relaxing and doing activities you enjoy or practising mindfulness may all help you to reduce or cope with stress.

6. Learn what to look out for when your mental health and wellbeing takes a dip

Symptoms such as disturbed sleep, withdrawing from social activities, feeling irritable, stressed, not eating well, or finding it hard to concentrate can be signs that you are not going so well. If these symptoms last for more than a few weeks, are not going away and are interfering with your day-to-day life it may be useful to try the tools below or seek help.

7. Talk with someone you trust

That you know will listen and help you work through your issues. You may also find it helpful to talk to your GP or call a support line.

8. If you need to cry, then cry

Don't feel embarrassed. Crying relieves tension and may help.

9. Keep communicating

If you are having a problem with a family member or partner, try talking to them about what is bothering you. Some tips to consider when having a difficult conversation include:

- Choose the right time to talk - when you have time to talk and the person you are talking to is not in a rush or stressed.
- Pick the right place to talk – such as doing an activity together or over a cup of tea without other distractions.

- Explain what is bothering you – using ‘I’ not ‘you’. For example “I feel upset when you interrupt my stories because I feel like you aren’t taking my concerns seriously” instead of “you always interrupt my stories”, which can be interpreted as aggressive.
- Stick to the facts - avoid exaggeration and keep to the point of the conversation.
- It is a two-way conversation - listen when the other person speaks and avoid interrupting.
- Repeat their key points back to them - check that you have understood them correctly.
- Ask them what they think could have been done to resolve this situation - discuss what the best option would be to resolve the problem.
- This problem may not be sorted out the first time you speak about it. Be prepared to try again.
- If you are unable to resolve the issue, it may be helpful to talk to someone from a specialist organisation such as Relationships Australia.

10. Seek help when you need it

It is important to remember that there are people who can help you. This may be a family member, friend or someone you trust, a GP or a support service.

TEN TIPS TO SUPPORT SOMEONE STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

By Sarah Condie

<https://mentalhealthinstitute.org.au/mental-health/ten-tips-mental-health/>

1. Ask how they are feeling

Often when people are experiencing difficulty, others know about it, but say nothing. This simple question communicates care.

2. Listen to what they say

Put your phone away and put your focus completely upon the other person. Let them tell you how it is and use non-verbal cues to show you are fully present. Don't start talking about yourself, but try to reflect back what they are saying in different words to let them know you are tuned in.

Listening is an act of love because it focuses on the other. James commands us to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). When interacting with those struggling with mental health, listening can be a first step in moving forward.

3. Be a safe person for them

It's okay to say, "Tell me more," but don't push them to share more than they want. Let them go at their own pace. It takes courage and trust for them to open up. Such trust is earned through gentleness and kindness.

4. Check that they are safe

You do no harm by asking, "Are you thinking about taking your life?" Asking this question shows you care and will decrease their risk.

5. Seek professional help if needed

Ask them if they have seen their GP. If they haven't, encourage them to do this and offer to help them. If you feel out of your depth, ask for help.

6. Ask if you can read God's word and pray

They need hope. They need to be reminded that they have a God who is sovereign, all loving, all caring, all seeing and knowing and that He can hear their silent groans in that tunnel and is with them. Ask them if you can read a couple of verses from the bible with them – share something that has recently encouraged you as a start, or a few verses from Psalms, and then ask if you can pray. Focus on who God is and how much he loves them and what he has graciously done for them. They need God's word of comfort and consolation.

7. Encourage wise behaviour

Good habits of exercise, diet and sleep promote wellbeing. Another good habit is thankfulness. Give them a nice blank book and suggest they think of three things every day they are thankful to God for and to write them down. They might find this hard to do, but over time, this will help them begin to notice the positives in their life. Encourage them to connect with others – at church or in their local community – and to do things they enjoy.

8. Follow them up

Offer to meet up for a coffee or for a walk in a park to find out how they are getting along. It's easy for them to think that no one could be bothered to spend time with them.

9. Put appropriate boundaries in place

Personal boundaries help define our identity. When we have a clear sense of our values, beliefs, abilities, needs, feelings, etc, we know who we are and are able to make choices that are helpful for us and for others.

Good boundaries enable us to love others better because rather than operating from our insecurities (such as a "need to be needed") and blind spots we can consider what is truly in the best interests of the other. They are good for us; good for them.

Love is not the same as being nice. Love acts in the best interests of the other – will say 'no' when necessary.

Appropriate boundaries will involve thinking carefully about how often we respond to texts or meet up, or the type and amount of practical assistance we provide. It is not loving to enable selfish, irresponsible or overly dependent behaviour.

These are matters that require wisdom, which is worth praying for (James 1:5)!

10. Take care of yourself

Caring for another carries a physical and emotional cost. You care for your own wellbeing not to be selfish, but to enable you to continue to love others.

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When we are struggling with our mental health, it can be difficult to contemplate approaching God. Sometimes we are not able to find words that capture what we are feeling—there is simply emptiness and darkness.

The Psalms are God’s invitation to us. God has provided them in the Bible to give us words to say—especially when we have none of our own.

You may not feel that you can echo all the words of a particular Psalm at a particular moment. That is okay. The Psalms are teaching us and we are learning as we read them.

The following short devotions and Psalms are by no means a cure for mental ill-health or mental illness. But there are many treasures of hope here.

These treasures are rich in comfort, direction and clarity.

And the beginning of hope is the beginning of health.

Psalm 13

¹ How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts

and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"

and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing the LORD's praise,

for he has been good to me.

Have you ever found yourself struggling to come near to God because of your circumstances? Where you feel hurt, forgotten or ignored, and inside you feel a long way from how you imagine you are supposed to feel for prayer?

Psalm 13 confronts us with its questions, complaints and demands. It's unlike how we typically hear people pray. And yet God has provided these words as a gift to us—words for when we lack our own.

When Christians are dealing with negative emotions, often they can be accompanied with feelings of spiritual failure, guilt and shame about having those negative emotions. We may feel that something is wrong with us for feeling this way.

But over and over again the Psalms both affirm that these emotions can be very appropriate for our circumstance, and they invite us to bring these emotions to God. Not in fear or guilt. But in the raw honesty of frustration, sorrow and longing.

We may not receive the answers we desire, but that ought not prevent us from bringing every feeling to God. Let us not add to our suffering by worrying that there is something wrong with us for feeling bad.

Psalm 43

¹ Vindicate me, my God,
and plead my cause
against an unfaithful nation.
Rescue me from those who are
deceitful and wicked.

² You are God my stronghold.
Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy?

³ Send me your light and your faithful care,
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you dwell.

⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and my delight.
I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.

⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

The darkness is an awful place to live. The inner turmoil experienced by many who suffer with mental ill-health can drain us of all desire and hope.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Very often we are unable to answer that question. We simply don't know why we feel the way we do. And that can make us feel utterly hopeless, at the mercy of our bodies.

In response, the psalmist changes his self-talk. *Put your hope in God.* Not because it will remove the darkness. But because he has confidence that, even in this darkness, God is present. His light, his delight and his saviour.

Psalm 61

¹ Hear my cry, O God;
listen to my prayer.

² From the ends of the earth I call to you,
I call as my heart grows faint;
lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

³ For you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the foe.

⁴ I long to dwell in your tent forever
and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.

⁵ For you, God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

⁶ Increase the days of the king's life,
his years for many generations.

⁷ May he be enthroned in God's presence forever;
appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.

⁸ Then I will ever sing in praise of your name
and fulfill my vows day after day.

There are all kinds of rocks that people attempt to build their life upon. The stability of a well-paying job, a social group, a well-to-do family, a reputation. Sometimes these rocks crumble under the weight we place upon them. They break, or are taken from us through ill-health, circumstance or death.

Psalm 61 encourages the faint-hearted to seek refuge in the rock that is higher than ourselves. A rock and fortress that cannot be shaken.

Sorrow has a remarkable power to wear away the masks we so often present to the world. In pain we are often freed from the burden to impress others. We can acknowledge our brokenness as we search for a higher, firmer, surer rock.

Ultimately, our hope is not only a future dwelling in the presence of God. But, in Jesus, God has come to dwell with us. In Jesus is a promise that God has heard our cries and has listened to our prayers. And he cares.

Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
² My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
³ He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
⁷ The LORD will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

What are we to make of those times where it feels that God is *not* helping us?
Or if he is watching over us, why are we not kept from harm?

The many Psalms of lament remind us that these thoughts are not uncommon to those who follow God. Psalm 23 echoes the sentiment: *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.*

Here in Psalm 121 is not a promise of a pain-free life. Rather, in the midst of trials and suffering, God will keep you safe and close to him. We do not know the reasons why God allows us to suffer. He can and does bring good through it, but that is not the same as knowing why he allows it.

Psalm 121 does give us confidence to rule out two common misconceptions. It isn't because he doesn't love us. And it isn't because he is unable to prevent it. We cannot unpack the mind of God. But that ought to give us all the more reason to lean into him with faith that he knows what he is doing. What we do understand about God's work gives us confidence to trust him when we don't.

Psalm 130

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.

³ If you, LORD, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

⁶ I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

⁷ Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.

⁸ He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

In Mark 2, when Jesus is met by a paralytic lowered from the roof, his first act is to forgive him—much to the astonishment of the crowd. But Jesus knows that his sin is an even greater problem than his inability to walk.

Both sin and sickness are evil. They are not part of God’s intention for order in the world. But they are separate concepts. Sin is a moral evil and an offense against God. Sickness is not. Sin needs forgiveness. Sickness does not.

Out of the depths the psalmist cries out to God, and celebrates the forgiveness that God offers. And if God cares for us in our sin, how much more in our suffering. We may at times feel that darkness in suffering is overwhelming, but we can be confident that the darkness will one day cease. And we eagerly await that day even more than watchmen wait for the morning in the midst of the dangers present in the night.

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A prayer in times of distress

Lord,
You have promised to give us rest when we turn to you.
Please Lord, in my anxiety, give me peace.
In my sadness, give me comfort.
In my distress, grant me rest.
Help me to know I am safe with you.
Sustain me and keep me near to you.
Strengthen me to get through today.
Guide my heart toward you.
Amen.

A prayer to feel God's love

Father,
You have promised to never leave me or forsake me.
Help me know my worth to you in Christ.
Help me to see myself as you see me.
Thank you that you delight in me does not rest in my capacity.
Thank you for your steadfast love shown to me in Jesus.
Grow my heart to feel what I know to be true.
Strengthen me with your Holy Spirit and fill me with your love and mercy,
That I may walk closely with you.
Amen.

A prayer for the weary

Gracious Lord,
I am weary and burdened, overwhelmed and uneasy.
Grant me peace in my afflictions, relief from my anguish,
And rest for my exhaustion.
Open my eyes to see your love.
Open my ears to hear your voice.
Heal and strengthen my mind,
And allow my heart to find rest in you.
Amen.

A prayer for all people

God of love,

make your way known to the people of our world,
your saving power among all nations.

Guide and govern your church by your Holy Spirit,
so that all who call themselves Christians may be led in the way of truth
and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace,
and in righteousness of life.

We commend to your fatherly goodness all who are afflicted or distressed in
body, mind or circumstances.

Relieve them according to their needs,
giving them patience in their sufferings, and deliverance from their afflictions.

This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

A prayer for protection in danger and temptation

Merciful God, you know that we live in the midst
of many dangers and temptations,
and that because we are weak and frail
we cannot always stand firm.

Grant us strength and protection
to support us in all dangers
and carry us through all temptations,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The prayers on this page are from Common Prayer (Anglican Press Australia, 2012).

A prayer for the lonely and hurt

Loving God,
we pray for those who are hurting or lonely,
through bereavement, divorce, or abuse, and for those struggling with
unhappiness in marriage or singleness.
Where repentance is required, make us willing.
Where reconciliation is needed, make us quick to forgive,
as you in Christ have forgiven us.
Be our strength and comfort in every difficulty and struggle.
Enable us all to experience your generous love,
and be renewed in our relationship with you, through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

A prayer in times of distress when our only hope is in the Lord

Eternal God, shepherd of your people,
we feel the fleeting passage of life,
and know how fragile our existence is on this tiny planet.
We confess with the prophet Isaiah: 'All flesh is grass, and all its glory is like
the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall . . .'
Yet we also confess: 'The word of our God stands forever'.
Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
In our human frailty, we look to you as frightened children look to their
mother, for you alone can comfort and sustain us.
Have mercy on us, O God.
Hear our cries to you our loving Father and lead us all, as pilgrims,
through the darkest valley into the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
your Son, our Lord.
Amen.

The prayers on this page are from Common Prayer (Anglican Press Australia, 2012).

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Lifeline

Crisis support and suicide prevention service.

www.lifeline.org.au

13 11 14



NSW Mental Health Line

24-hour telephone service that puts you in touch with your local mental health service, including the mental health crisis or acute care team if necessary.

1800 011 511



Kids Help Line

Confidential and anonymous, telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 and 25.

www.kidshelp.com.au

1800 55 1800



Headspace

Online service that supports young people aged between 12 and 25.

www.headspace.org.au

1800 650 890



Suicide Call Back Service

Phone & online service for those at risk of suicide, carers for someone who is suicidal and those bereaved by suicide.

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

1300 659 467



National Sexual Assault, Domestic & Family Violence Counselling Service

Online and phone information, counselling and support service.

www.1800respect.org.au

1800 737 732



MensLine Australia

Online and phone counselling service for Australian men.

www.mensline.org.au

1800 78 99 78



Open Arms

Mental health support for personnel in the armed forces, veterans and their families.

openarms.gov.au

1800 011 046



Butterfly

Phone and online support for those concerned about eating disorders or body image issues.

butterfly.org.au

1800 33 46 73

These online resources offer a variety of information, practical advice, and access to professional care.

The Mental Health + Pastoral Care Institute (page 32) speaks into the experience of mental illness and ill-health from a Christian perspective.

The remainder offer advice and information in a more general nature.

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mentalhealthinstitute.org.au

Summary

The Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute provides Christians and churches with online mental health and marriage courses.

There are lots of helpful resources on mental health, wellbeing, relationships and care. What sets this apart from other resources is that it seeks to apply a Christian response and hope into the mental health space.

About the site

The MH+PC Institute was founded by Keith and Sarah Condie. It is an institute of Mary Andrews College, based in Sydney.

HEAD TO HEALTH

headtohealth.gov.au

Summary

Head to Health helps all Australians access the mental health and wellbeing services that are right for them. It makes it easier to navigate and choose the most suitable care options, whether that's face-to-face, via phone, or online.

By completing an online quiz, the site can help point you in the right direction to a variety of resources that you may find helpful for your particular circumstances and feelings.

About the site

Head to Health is a free confidential service from the Australian Government.

SANE

We're people like you.

sane.org

Summary

SANE is for people with recurring, persistent or complex mental health issues and trauma, and for their families, friends and communities.

It is an excellent source of information for:

- easy-to-read facts sheets and guides on many mental illness diagnoses (including anxiety, depression, bipolar, eating disorders, psychosis, trauma, personality disorders and more);
- overviews, symptoms, treatments and management;
- tips on caring for someone with a mental illness;
- how to respond in crisis situations.

About the site

SANE is a not-for-profit based in Victoria, Australia.



mindspot.org.au

Summary

MindSpot supports Australian adults experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD, and chronic pain. All services are free, confidential, and online, and provide optional access to qualified therapists (for those living in Australia and covered by Medicare).

There is also an excellent resource library, with plenty of material on developing strategies to cope and stay well when facing a variety of difficulties.

About the site

Mindspot are part of MQ Health, Macquarie University, and are funded by the Australian Government.



Conversations Matter

conversationsmatter.org.au

Summary

Conversations Matter is a practical online resource to support safe and effective community discussions about suicide.

It has some very helpful practical advice on how to respond in situations where:

- you are worried that someone you know may be thinking about suicide;
- you are talking to someone who has had a friend or family member die by suicide;
- you need to inform a child about a suicide.

About the site

Conversations Matter is managed by Everymind, with funding from the Mental Health Commission of NSW and NSW Ministry of Health.



blueknot.org.au

Summary

Blue Knot is the National Centre of Excellence for Complex Trauma.

If you or someone you care about is living with the effects of abuse, neglect, or violence, Blue Knot has information and support for you.

Blue Knot provides information and support for anyone who is affected by complex trauma. Complex trauma is repeated, ongoing, and often extreme interpersonal trauma (between people) – violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation experienced as a child, young person and adult.

About the site

Blue Knot is an independent organisation that receives significant government funding.



butterfly.org.au

Summary

Butterfly Foundation is the national charity for all Australians impacted by eating disorders and body image issues, and for the families, friends and communities who support them.

Butterfly operates a National Helpline that includes support over the phone, via email and online, reaching 20,000 people each year. The Helpline is staffed by trained counsellors experienced in assisting with eating disorders and body image issues. We also provide a wide range of programs for service providers and recovery groups.

About the site

Butterfly is an Australian charity. Butterfly coordinates the National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC) for the Commonwealth Government Department of Health, and we are committed to collaboration across the sector.



thiswayup.org.au

Summary

THIS WAY UP is an Australian provider of evidence-based, internet-delivered Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT) programs.

There are a large number of programs that are tailored for various conditions. You can enrol in a program yourself (for a fee), or speak your GP or other healthcare provider to get free access with a prescription.

About the site

THIS WAY UP is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care under the Telephone Counselling, Self Help and Web-Based Support Programs.

It is a joint initiative of St Vincent's Hospital and the University of New South Wales.



beyondblue.org.au

Summary

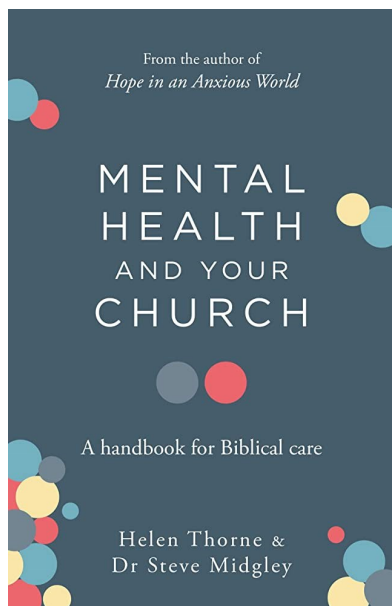
Beyond Blue offer information on supporting your mental health and maintaining wellbeing, including finding the right support person to speak to. They provide a good overview of mental health professionals, and can help point you in the right direction according to your needs.

They offer free phone and online counselling services, as well as a forum to read, share and learn from others.

About the site

Beyond Blue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation supported by the Federal Government and every State and Territory Government in Australia.

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Mental Health and Your Church

by Helen Thorne and Dr Steve Midgley

Summary

This is a superb book that combines clear and concise medical science with very thoughtful and practical advice for Christians. In part 1, the book presents a clear perspective on understanding mental illness. Part 2 provides a wealth of advice on what churches and Christians can do. Part 3 provides some very concrete and practical examples of how to care for people with a variety of conditions.

Who should read it

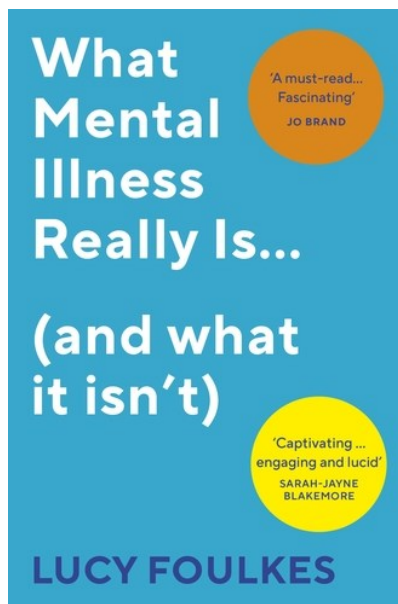
Published in 2023, this will likely become one of the most significant books on the topic in the coming years. An excellent book that is worthy of reading for any Christian who would like to grow their knowledge, capacity and effectiveness in caring for those in need.

About the author

Helen Thorne is a counsellor, author and trainer. Steve Midgley is the Executive Director of Biblical Counselling UK, and has worked as a psychiatrist and pastor.

Difficulty to read





What Mental Illness Really Is... (and what it isn't)

by Dr Lucy Foulkes

Summary

This is an excellent overview of the scientific knowledge—and its limits—around mental health. It explores in detail the complexities of biology and environment, as well as the challenges facing the life stage of adolescence, and the rise of social media. Lucy unpacks what research does (and does not!) tell us so that we can be better informed.

Who should read it

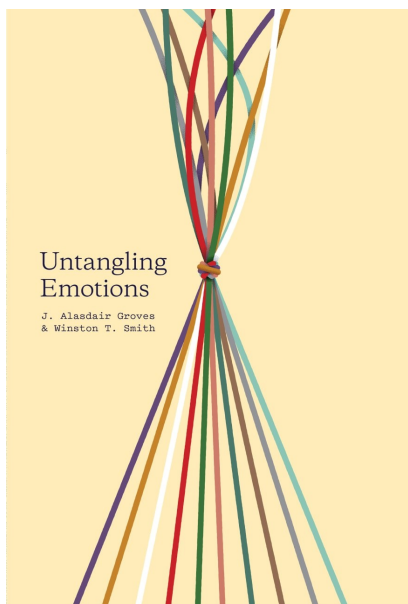
This is an excellent book for those wanting to explore the scientific complexities of mental health, how it is identified and diagnosed. Lucy also provides some great insights to critique the popular understanding of mental health in our community, and how it falls short.

About the author

Dr Lucy Foulkes is a psychologist, researcher and lecturer based in London.

Difficulty to read





Untangling Emotions

by J. Alisdair Groves & Winston T. Smith

Summary

This book provides a rich understanding of emotions that is grounded in both the Bible and in psychology. It shows us how to engage with both the positive and negative emotions as Christians, with much insight and practical advice. It is an excellent book on this topic from a Christian perspective.

Who should read it

Because our lives are full of emotions every day, this would be a great read for anyone, and is bound to help you understand both yourself, and the gift of emotions that God has given you. A very informative and worthwhile read.

While it doesn't directly speak to the topic of mental health, it speaks to many parallel topics, including grief, guilt, and the role of negative emotions.

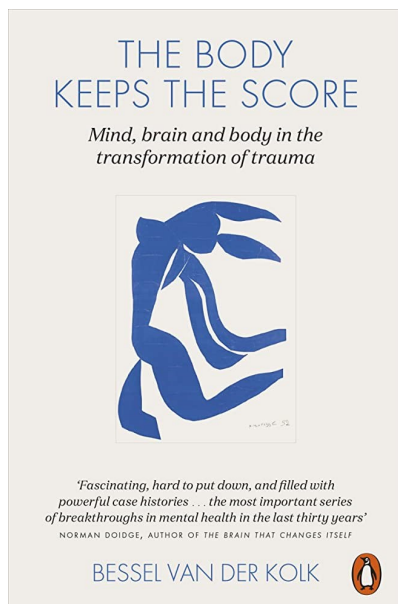
About the author

J. Alisdair Groves is the executive director of Christian Counseling & Education Foundation (CCEF) School of Biblical Counseling.

Winston T. Smith is a church pastor and a counsellor at CCEF.

Difficulty to read





The Body Keeps Score

by Bessel Van Der Kolk

Summary

This is a fascinating book drawing on more than 40 years of experience of working with people suffering trauma. It is a long yet fascinating read of the science and history in understanding trauma, its effects, and various treatments that are currently available. With a mixture of personal stories, scientific studies, patient diagnoses and historical insight, it has earned its place as the go-to book on the subject for a broad audience.

Who should read it

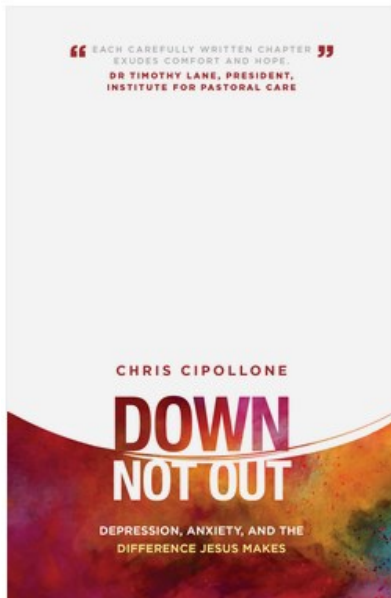
Although it's very well written and easy to follow, it is also a very confronting read as it shares various snippets of personal stories of patients and their traumatic backgrounds. It is not for the faint-hearted. It would be a worthwhile read for anyone looking for a well-researched read on trauma and the current scientific knowledge of our brains and minds.

About the author

Bessel is a psychiatrist, researcher and educator, and has served as a leader of numerous organisations in the field of trauma.

Difficulty to read





DOWN NOT OUT

by Chris Cipollone

Summary

Chris offers a brilliant, easy to read book on how we can understand the hope of Jesus in the midst of mental illness. Chapters are short, with a blend of science, theology, personal testimony and practical advice.

Who should read it

Chris writes for both sufferers of mental illness, and for those seeking to care for loved ones. He shares first-hand his own experience of depression and anxiety in a way that provides helpful insights for those who may feel they don't quite understand what the experience is like.

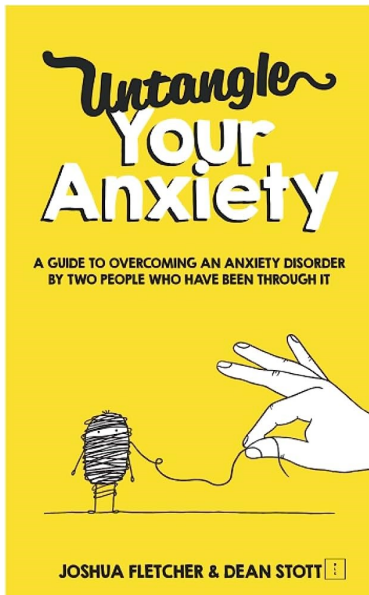
This is a great book for Christians looking to understand how their faith speaks into and shapes our view and response to mental illness, whether you are a sufferer, or caring for someone who suffers.

About the author

Chris is a pastor, speaker and teacher in Sydney, and the Founding Director of Biblical Counsellors Australia.

Difficulty to read





Untangle Your Anxiety

by Joshua Fletcher and Dean Stott

Summary

This book provides a clear and engaging understanding of anxiety. It particularly has a great chapter explaining exactly how the brain works to create an anxiety response, and how it misfires in the case of anxiety disorders. It's a worthwhile read for that chapter alone.

Who should read it

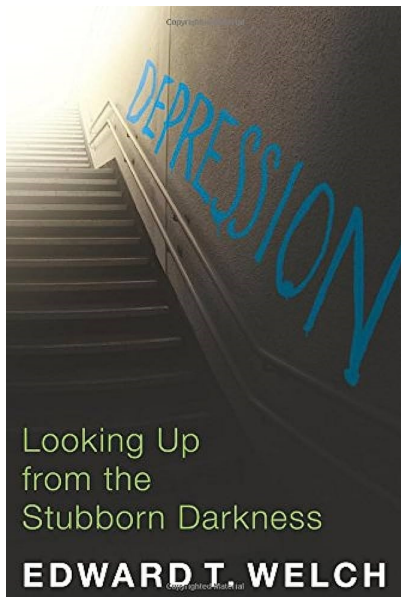
This is a good book for those who are new to learning about anxiety. It's very easy to read and very practical.

About the author

Joshua Fletcher is a psychotherapist specialising in anxiety-related conditions. Dean has training in psychology, and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

Difficulty to read





Looking Up from the Stubborn Darkness

by Edward T. Welch

Summary

Edward writes a rich biblical guide to understanding depression, and offers much practical advice for both those with depression and their carers. Chapters are fairly short, and he is not afraid to raise difficult but important questions. Overall, it is a very good exploration of depression from a Christian viewpoint. One short—but extremely helpful—chapter at the end includes reflection from many sufferers about the kinds of advice that did or did not help them.

Who should read it

This is a book for those struggling with depression, and those caring for a sufferer. It provides clarity around the struggles of depression, and how to view it as a Christian. It could be a worthwhile book that both carer and sufferer can read together, chapter at a time.

About the author

Edward is a psychologist and member of the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation.

Difficulty to read





FIGHT, FLIGHT AND FAITH

by Nikki Florence Thompson

Summary

This book is a biography/memoir. Nikki tells the story of her first experiences of anxiety and panic attacks, and how they crossed with significant life events of her brother's death and struggles with pregnancy. It's a captivating and well written, raw and honest story with many insightful personal reflections.

Who should read it

This is a great book to read for anxiety sufferers who need to be reminded that their journey is not unique or isolated. Many people suffer the same challenges and feelings. Nikki offers great hope through her story, and reading it should be a comfort for those who suffer.

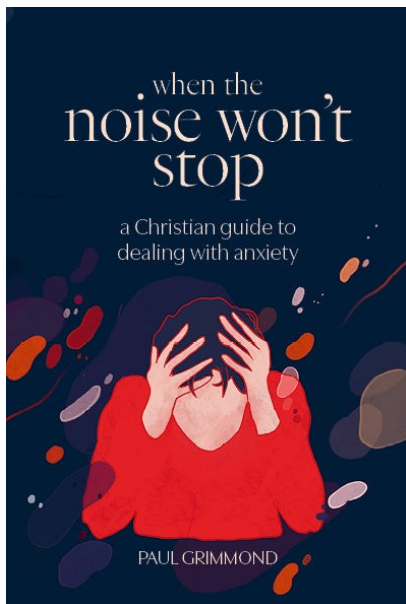
It is also a useful book for those caring for loved ones who struggle with mental health. Although everyone's experience is unique, Nikki paints an elaborate and insightful picture of the kinds of struggles people go through as she shares her own experiences. You will better understand something of the experience of those you love through reading this book.

About the author

Nikki is a Christian writer who grew up in Sydney, attending her local Anglican Church.

Difficulty to read





When the Noise Won't Stop

by Paul Grimmond

Summary

Paul offers a thoughtful biblical understanding of anxiety. A good portion of the book goes toward understanding how the gospel message shapes our understanding and response to anxiety. Paul also briefly shares from his personal experience, and offers some practical advice for sufferers of anxiety and their carers.

Who should read it

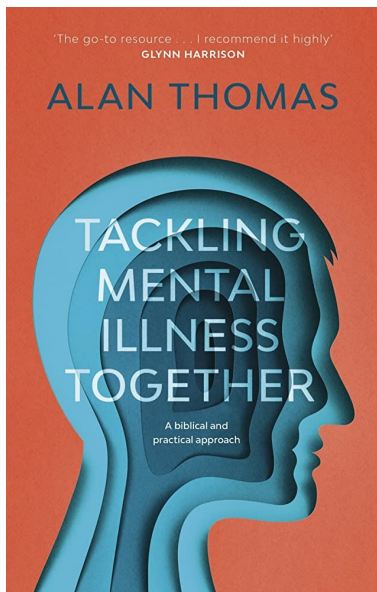
This is a worthwhile book for those looking to strengthen their biblical perspective on mental health. Paul provides a useful framework for understanding the complexity of mental health, and how the truths of the Bible bear on these complexities. While Paul offers helpful insights from the medical world, the strength of this book is in building a biblical foundation, with a particular view toward anxiety.

About the author

Paul is the Dean of Students at Moore Theological College in Sydney.

Difficulty to read





Tackling Mental Illness Together

by Alan Thomas

Summary

This book is a good overview of understanding mental health through a biblical lens, and how Christians and churches can be significant in caring for those with various mental health conditions.

Who should read it

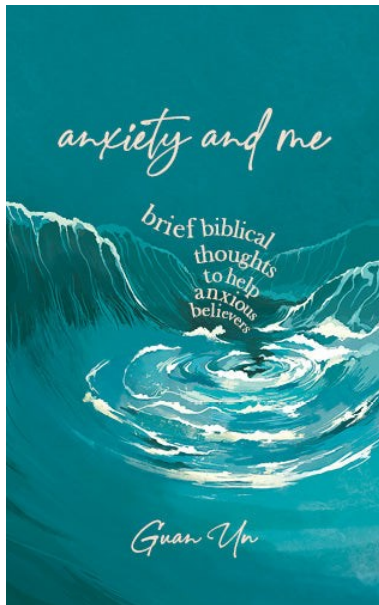
This is a useful book for those who would like to better understand mental health and/or psychiatry, including the common medical treatments available. It's a no-nonsense book that corrects many common misconceptions people have, as well as providing clear examples and practical actions that Christians can take to care well for others.

About the author

Alan is a Professor of Old Age Psychiatry in the UK and a consultant psychiatrist with the National Health Service. He is also an elder and preacher in his church.

Difficulty to read





Anxiety and Me

by Guan Un

Summary

Guan offers a short reflection on the comfort that Christians can have in the face of anxiety by looking at Psalm 131. It's a very short and easy-to-read book that provides a clear and comforting encouragement.

Who should read it

This book is particularly aimed at those who suffer with anxiety, though anyone could find this book helpful and encouraging. It may be especially useful for those who find reading longer books difficult, but would like to engage with a well thought out piece of writing.

About the author

Guan is a Christian living in Sydney.

Difficulty to read



TIPS
DEVOTIONS
PRAYERS
PHONE
ONLINE
BOOKS
COURSES
SERVICES



mhfa.com.au

What is it?

MHFA is one of many organisations that run mental health first aid training. Similar to physical first aid training, it seeks to help you gain an understanding of a first response approach to assisting an adult experiencing mental health concerns.

MHFA offer a 12 hour course that can be completed either in person over 2 days, or online with a mix of self-paced learning and video conferencing sessions. They also offer a number of specialised courses that target specific concerns or demographics.

Why its recommended

It's a great way to upskill yourself, and build your confidence to recognise, connect and respond to someone experiencing a mental health problem or mental health crisis.

You can search online for many other providers of mental health first aid.

Yale

★★★★★ 4.9 (36K) | 4.5M Students

The Science of Well-Being

coursera

coursera.org

What is it?

The Science of Well-Being is a free course offered through Yale university by Professor Laurie Santos. It will help you understand how to increase your well-being and happiness. The course reveals misconceptions about happiness, annoying features of the mind that lead us to think the way we do, and the research that can help us change.

It is delivered through a series of online lectures, with short quizzes and tools for you to put into practice what the latest science tells us is good for our bodies.

Coursera is an online platform that delivers many free and paid-for courses.

Why its recommended

This is a great course to help you not only understand, but also build some practical changes in your life. This course aims at the positive side of improving well-being and is suitable for anyone.



★★★★★ 4.8 (3.3K) | 246K Students

Positive Psychiatry and Mental Health

coursera

coursera.org

What is it?

Positive Psychiatry and Mental Health is a free course offered through the University of Sydney.

This course explores different aspects of good mental health as well as provide an overview of the major kinds of mental disorders, their causes, treatments and how to seek help and support.

It is delivered through a series of online lectures by many leading Australian experts, with short assessments along the way.

Coursera is an online platform that delivers many free and paid-for courses.

Why its recommended

This course provides a good overview of psychology, psychiatry and mental health. It is especially helpful for those who prefer a more interactive learning style than simply reading material.

TIPS
DEVOTIONS
PRAYERS
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SERVICES



anglicare.org.au

What they offer

Anglicare offer counselling services by trained professionals. Counselling offers privacy and safety for people to speak about their concerns to someone who is professionally trained and impartial. This can help you to understand what is happening, clarify goals and consider options for change.

Why its recommended

Professional counselling can be of great assistance to help you navigate through some of life's challenges – depression, anxiety and stress. Counselling can help:

- improve communication
- enhance family functioning
- enrich relationship
- improve emotional and mental health
- improve parenting skills
- enhance self-awareness
- life transitions e.g. Separation and Divorce, Loss and Grief, Work Changes and
- provide support for people experiencing family and Domestic Violence



bridgescounselling.com.au

What they offer

A wide range of psychological services and counselling, including Adult, Couple, Child & Family Therapy.

Located in North Parramatta & Norwest.

Why its recommended

There are many good psychology and counselling services available. Your personal connection to a professional is very important, and you don't necessarily need to find a Christian one.

However, sometimes it does help to speak to someone who understands your situation from the same faith perspective as yourself. To quote their website:

“All our team members are committed Christians who have a personal relationship with Jesus. Our Christian faith complements and shapes how we view and care for all our clients — with compassion, acceptance and respect.”

I have heard several recommendation for this service from trusted people. And so I offer it as a suggestion if you are in need of psychology services from a Christian professional.

