

5 Days Toward Mental Health Wellbeing

By Jacqui Cousins, Community Health Nurse



Day 1 - Prayer and Thankfulness

"Go to the throne, not the phone" is something preacher Joyce Meyer has said over the years. This is not because emotional support from others is wrong, but because the most important thing Christians can do for their mental wellbeing is to spend time in prayer. The Bible is full of examples of how God's people called out in prayer, especially during difficult time. The Psalms, Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and when the disciples asked Jesus how to pray are some examples. 1 Peter 5:7 is a favourite which tells us to "cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you".

Including thankfulness in our prayers also helps shift our mindset from what is troubling us, to what God has done for us. The world also embraces this timeless Biblical principle through "gratitude journals", which is now an evidence based strategy for improving mental wellbeing. How good is that!

If you want to further develop your prayer life, the Prayer course is an excellent resource. This free course was created by 24-7 Prayer, an international prayer movement equipping the church to pray. Some of our Connect groups have worked through this already, look up resource [here](#).

For those who want to develop a contemplative silent prayer, check out this resource from 24-7 prayer [here](#)

Day 2 - Nourish



"God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you ..." Genesis 1:29 (HCSB).

Many of us have heard the saying, we are what we eat. There is a growing evidence base showing us there is a correlation between food and mood.

"Studies show that a Western diet, or one that is higher in processed foods with plenty of added salt, sugar and fat, can be more likely to lead to symptoms of depression and anxiety." ([Better Health Channel](#)).

For improved physical and emotional wellbeing, it is important to maintain a healthy diet (the food God provided us!), adequate water intake and exercise. And most importantly, these 3 common sense strategies not only improve our mood, but help prevent constipation! Win win! 🍌

Day 3 - When two or more are gathered

Reaching out for support is so important when we are feeling low in mood or are stressed. It can be hard to be vulnerable with our friends and family when we are struggling, but when we do, God can minister to us through them.

During this period of lockdown, reach out for support if you need it.

Organise a cuppa over

Zoom, a prayer chat over the phone or a socially distanced walk (with mask!) for those who live locally. See up to date information on restrictions [here](#). Don't suffer in silence but reach out to someone you trust.

For those wanting to provide support to their work colleagues and teams, check out this [website](#)

Also, the verse in Matthew 18 (v20) about two or more being gathered has a broader meaning about church life, check it out [here](#)!

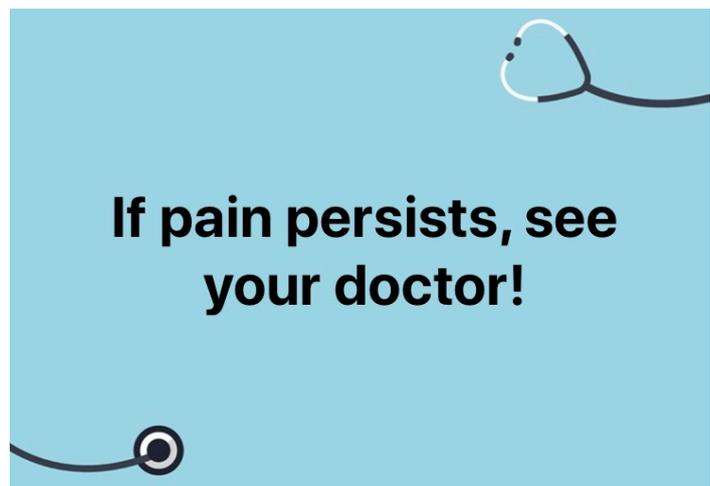
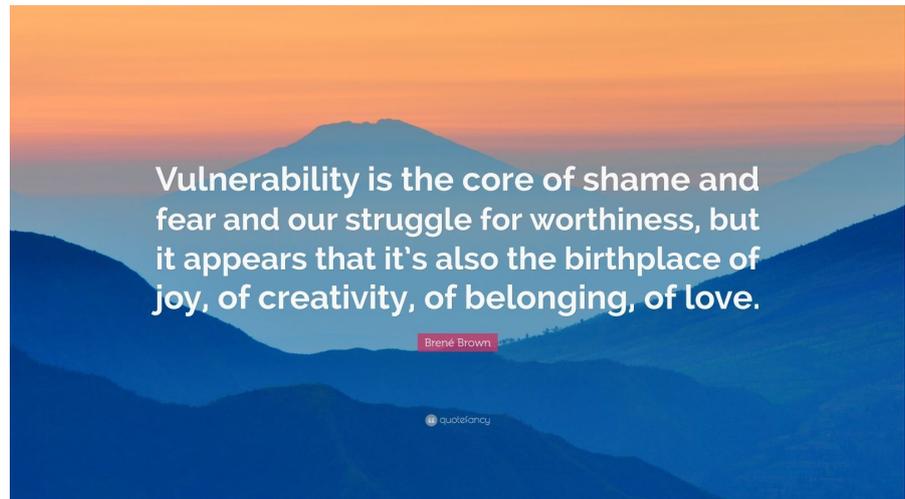
Day 4 - Health supports

If pain persists, see your doctor!
Whether the pain is in your leg or in your soul, when the pain persists, we need to see our GP.

When low mood, anxious feelings or stress lasts for more than a week or 2, it is so important to see your GP. Untreated, these mental health problems can become more difficult to manage so best to treat them as soon as possible. For information on depression and anxiety, see Beyond Blue [website](#).

Just like physical health issues like diabetes, heart problems and injuries need to be treated, we need to also actively treat our emotional health needs. Recovery is possible when we actively engage with the support of a GP, counsellor and other health workers.

For those with mental stress related to COVID-19, please check out this resource from **Beyond Blue**.



Day 5 - Generosity

It is better than to give than to receive right?! Acts 20:35 reminds us that we experience joy when we are generous. This is because it shifts our mindset from our problems to blessing someone else. Studies show that even thinking about being generous can boost our mood! Amazing!

So during this period of lockdown, boost your mood by being a blessing to someone else. Make a mask, bake a cake, donate some food to [Bayside Community Care](#) or write a word of encouragement for someone. It will bless you and the other person, a double blessing!



And finally, as you step out each day with the intention to love God, and love and care for yourself and your neighbour.

Wear a mask 🤒

Wash your hands 🙌

And keep your distance! 📏 📏 ♀

See you for church [online](#) this weekend



Disclaimer: this is general information only. To discuss your specific situation, see your General Practitioner. For urgent mental health concerns, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or local mental health triage service.