

During this time of restriction caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic, all of us have been affected in one way or another. Some of these restrictions, especially those for the more vulnerable, can have a detrimental effect on our mental health. The lack of social interaction, not going to the shops, no communal prayer or missing our daily exercise; a change in one or two of these can leave us feeling low.

If you recognise that you are feeling low at this time, there are some simple steps that you can take to improve your mental wellbeing, remember the mnemonic CHIME.

CONNECTEDNESS

- **Having good relationships and being connected in positive ways to other people.** This includes people who are in a similar position to yourself, as well as relationships with carers, friends, and family. Positive connections with health professionals and community involvement are also important. Have you spoken with someone today? Ensure that you stay in touch with family and friends; a telephone call will not only help the person that you ring but will give you a real boost yourself. That phone call that you make to the other may be just what they need right now.

"What you do to the least of these my brothers you do unto me" Matthew 25:40.

HOPE AND OPTIMISM

- **Hope and optimism are widely acknowledged as key to recovery.** There can be no change without the belief that a better life is both possible and attainable. Hope and optimism can be characterised by:
 - Belief in recovery
 - Motivation to change
 - Hope-inspiring relationships
 - Positive thinking and valuing success
 - Having dreams and aspirations

As Christians, we are the people of hope. We are witnesses to the Risen Lord Jesus and by the way we live our lives we show others the Love of God. Today then, look forward to the good things that are happening during the day. It may be just cooking a new recipe or going for a walk and seeing nature.

IDENTITY

- **Regaining a positive sense of Self and Identity;** overcoming stigma and being recognised as a whole person – rather than being defined by illness or diagnosis – is another common theme of recovery.

When we stop working or performing a role, we can experience a feeling of loss of identity; but we are more than our jobs, our roles, our illness even. None of these things defines who are. Our true identity lies in Christ Jesus, and through our Baptism, God our Father calls each one of personally by our name. With the gift of the Holy Spirit we are given power from on high to connect with that immortal diamond that dwells within us and be our true selves.

St Catherine of Siena said, "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."

MEANING

- **Living a meaningful and purposeful life is important for our wellbeing.** We all find meaning in very different ways. Some people may find that they can express themselves spirituality through their faith, prayer and song. Singing has been scientifically proven to release feel-good chemicals in the body and did you know that when sing together our hearts actually beat in rhythm with each other? Some find that serving others can make them feel more fulfilled and give their life more meaning. Many people describe the importance of feeling valued and contributing as active members of the Church community gives them meaning and purpose.

EMPOWERMENT

- **Focusing on strengths, taking personal responsibility and control of your life** can be hard at this time but these are important for an improvement in wellbeing. Empowerment is supported by the inclusion of people with experience of being isolated at this time. Knowing that we are being listened to and that our prayers are being answered is part of our Christian life. Never underestimate the power of prayer. Why not set yourself some daily tasks to achieve and tick them off when they are done? Breaking down goals into small achievable pieces can help us to realise our full potential.

"That is why I am reminding you now to fan into a flame the gift of God that you possess through the laying on of my hands. God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1: 6-7

If you would like some more ideas on how to stay Mentally Well, then following websites may be helpful.

For Children

<https://stjosephsacademy.org.uk/contact/keeping-mentally-healthy/>
<https://stbedesacademy.org.uk/information/keeping-mentally-healthy/>

For Young Adults

Remember: stay safe on line!

<https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

Adults

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>