

editorial

This edition of *Spotlight* is on mental health. It seems all of us, or people close to us, are affected at some stage of our lives by poor mental health. As nurses, we may be particularly vulnerable to depression or burnout due to both our personality types and the highly demanding nature of our jobs. You can read more about this in my article *self-care for the carers*.

Kathryn, a student in Scotland, makes mental illness real and personal as she bravely writes about her own battle with depression and anxiety.

Other contributors to this edition include Esther Chevassut, who in her article *stress: friend or foe?* expounds how and why stress affects us so much. Rachel Denno, a final year dual student of adult and mental health (MH) nursing, suggests how the holistic 'recovery' approach (which focuses on hope, agency, opportunity and self-care) can be applied to general nursing and to our own faith journey. Philippa Taylor, CMF Head of Public Policy, assesses the effect of abortion on mental health.

The Mental Health Foundation recently focused on the need for relationships to help improve mental health. They tell us that we urgently need a greater focus on the quality of our relationships to prevent and help alleviate mental health breakdowns. We need to understand just how fundamental relationships are to our health and well-being. We cannot flourish as individuals and communities without them. In fact, they are as vital as better-established lifestyle factors, such as eating well, exercising more and not smoking.

As Christians, we recognise this need for relationship as being fundamental. God created us for relationship, as evidenced from his early words about mankind in Genesis 2:18 'It is not good for man to be alone.'

We reflect the Trinity (Genesis 1:26). In his book, *The Good God*, Michael Reeves writes: 'The very nature of the triune God is to be effusive, and bountiful; the Father rejoices to have another beside him... As the Father, Son and Spirit have always known fellowship with each other, so we in the image of God are made for fellowship.'¹

No wonder poor relationships and lack of fellowship can adversely affect mental health.

As we give out in our workplace, our families, and our communities, let's remember to carve out some time for our own health and well-being; in Paul's words from Hebrews 10:25, 'let us not give up meeting together.'

If it would help you to meet with other Christian nurses and midwives in your area, those who truly understand what challenges you face, please consider joining a local CMF group if you're not already connected.

Email nurses@cmf.org.uk and I can let you know where your nearest group is. If there isn't yet a group near enough to you, we can explore starting one. But let's work at finding faithful friendships, those we can share with, pray with and be encouraged by. 🙏

Peppiatt

1. Reeves M. *The Good God: Enjoying Father, Son and Spirit*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012



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Pippa trained as a nurse. She has planted a church for students with her husband, set up a charity for street kids in Uganda, and has been a Friends International Student Worker.

PS. Are you a budding writer who would be keen to write for *Spotlight* in the future?

If so, our *nurses writers' day* might be good training for you. It's held at our London office on 16 March 2019. If you're interested in being considered for this, please email me at pippa@cmf.org.uk



New!
CMF Prayer
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