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Calendar of events

Wednesday 19 February - BTS Support Meeting

7-9pm, will be held in the new Uniting Community building "UCity" 43 Franklin St (cnr Pitt St) on Level 1. Parking is available on street or in Franklin St or Pitt St car parks.

The meeting is for those bereaved through suicide and is facilitated by trained support workers who have themselves been bereaved through suicide. The meeting offers the opportunity to express one's feelings in an environment that is caring and safe. Besides providing the opportunity to share experiences, the meeting presents information about the process of loss and grief, and strategies to heal.

Please call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287 if you wish to attend or require further information.

Wednesday 15 April - BTS Support Meeting

7-9pm, will be held in the new Uniting Community building "UCity" 43 Franklin St (cnr Pitt St) on Level 1. Parking is available on street or in Franklin St or Pitt St car parks.

Please call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287 if you wish to attend or require further information.

Sunday 3 May - BTS Coffee Morning 10am -12:30pm Botanic Gardens

Botanic Gardens Café (by the lake). This is an opportunity to catch up with others who have lost someone to suicide, in a less formal setting than our regular monthly meetings. Join us for coffee and cake while chatting and listening to others and then take a stroll through the beautiful surroundings of the Botanic Gardens. BTS volunteers will be on hand.

Should you be thinking of attending please call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287.

A Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the first edition for of the BTS Newsletter 2020.

As I sit down to write my page for the newsletter I reflect on the events that have taken place since the last edition. These events shape our lives, change who we are, alter our perspective on life in general. Some of these are of such magnitude, such as the loss of someone who has taken their own life, that they are traumatic, life altering events.

In the early days whilst we struggle to understand the event itself, little do we realise the immense change that our bodies go through, how our physiology changes. We may think we are OK, we may lock things away, but inevitably at some point in time we have to address those changes.

Recently I have met people who have lost someone some 3, 4, 5 years ago (and a lot longer) and are only starting to look for resolution of the changes that have taken place within themselves. This has seen an immense struggle in these people in trying to come to grips with understanding these changes. Some people are able to do this on their own but most need the support and care of a network of people that may include family, close friends, support network, doctors, psychiatrist, psychologist and social workers. This journey can be long, arduous, draining and have many 'ups and downs' but with the right support and understanding one can find that whilst their world as they knew it has changed they can find ways to live in their new world.

This makes being involved with Bereaved Through Suicide a worthwhile undertaking. As a friend said to me many years ago 'Give to give, not give to get' and this will be something many of us can undertake in our daily lives.

Looking into 2020 the support meetings on a bi-monthly basis rather than quarterly with the first meeting on 19th February. The move to the new Ucity building on Franklin St has greatly improved the 'feel' of the meetings and parking is readily available in nearby carparks or on the street. We would ask that if you feel like attending a support meeting please call the BTS support line.

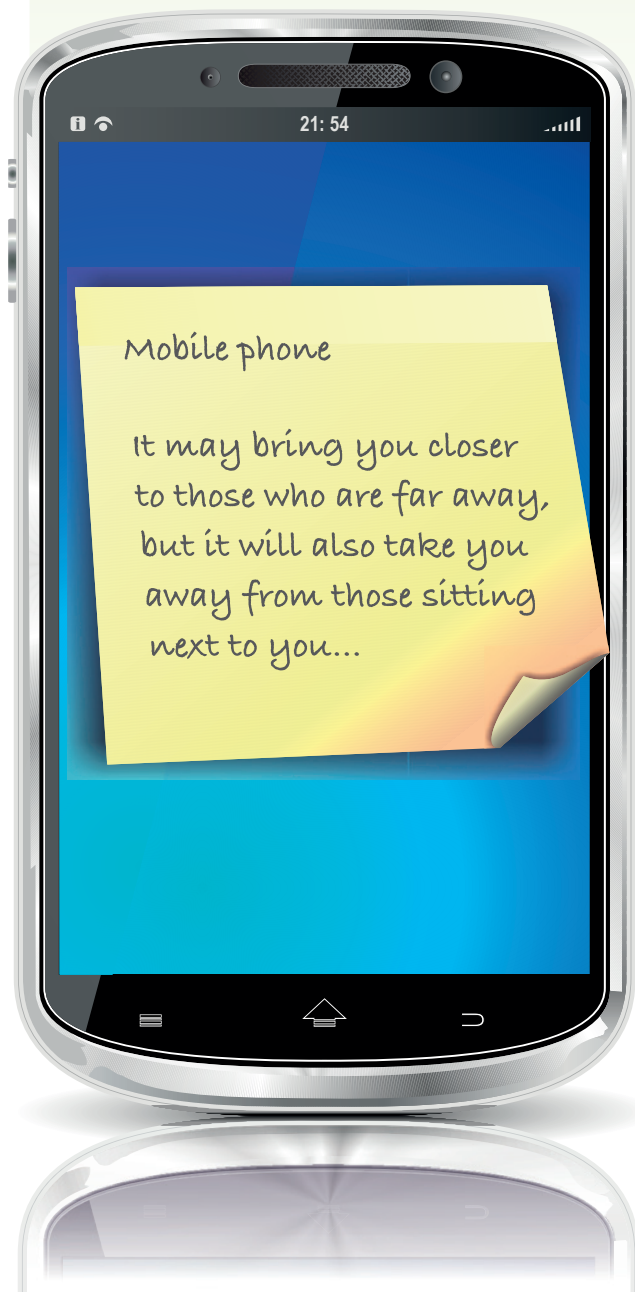
The new website at www.bts.org.au is receiving good reviews. Please let us know if you have any articles that you feel may be suitable or any comments for improvement. You will find on the events page dates for support meetings and coffee mornings.

This edition of the newsletter has a focus on mental health. You will find articles and stories relating to the need for us to find ways to better mental health. For many of us our mental health can be a real struggle, affecting our daily lives. There seems to be more information available but how do we make best use of the information. Technology seems to be increasing anxiety and stress and we forever seem to be busier. How do we slow our busy lives to practise "mindfulness". Hopefully the articles may give you some ideas.

May we all travel safely and take care of ourselves and those around us.

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)



FOR THOSE IN GRIEF...

... Talking to a Dead Loved One Is Good for Mental Health. And it's totally normal.

Grief is hard work. Whether you've lost a parent, sibling, a friend, or someone else, a loved one's death can lead to a feeling of tremendous loss.

Everyone grieves differently. For some, talking to a deceased loved one at their grave is comforting, while others like to post messages on someone's Facebook after they have died. If you've ever found yourself having a conversation with someone you love who has passed away, don't worry. If you've ever wondered whether this is an unhealthy coping mechanism, experts argue it is a completely valid and healthy way to cope with loss.

"Speaking out loud to a loved one who has passed — whether at a grave site or out loud at home — is helpful for many people processing grief," Dr. Alison Forti, an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling at Wake Forest University. "I will sometimes encourage my clients to speak to an empty chair in an effort to help them cope with grief. Many people will experience a sense of disbelief after they lose a loved one. By encouraging people to speak out loud to their loved one it helps them resolve that disbelief."

It's also normal to see, hear, and/or sense the presence of a deceased loved one as well. According to the Conversation, sensing someone's presence even though they have died is totally normal. Often at times, this presence can be comforting. If that's something you've experienced, it's OK, and it's even a good thing.

For instance, as an exercise, licensed counselor Dr. Sherrie Campbell sometimes ask her clients to write letters to their deceased loved ones to air out any grievances or final thoughts, such as what the client wish they could have said before their loved one died.

"When a relationship is ripped away from us through death, it takes the heart time to let go," Dr. Campbell said. "We still have things left unsaid, emotions and experiences we want to share, things to get closure on and a place to receive or feel a sense of connection and comfort. I tell my patients, young and old, that although our loved one's may not be here in physical form, that they are right next door watching over us. We can find a sense of comfort in feeling that they are still close to us, conversations can still be had."

In any case, remember that everyone goes through the process of grief at a different pace. For instance, if a close friend you attended school with passes away, and your other friends seem to be moving on, it's okay to still feel down and feel like you can't quite move on just yet.

"Many people have heard of the stages of grief and make a false assumption that grief is linear," added Dr. Forti. "However, grief comes in waves and can hit people when they least expect it. People can actively grieve, move forward in life with their grief, years go by, and the simple smell of a perfume brings them back to an angry or sad moment of grieving."

By Adryan Corcione

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/grief-talking-to-a-dead-loved-one-is-good-for-mental-health>



STAYING IN TOUCH WITH THOSE YOU HAVE LOST

For those who are grieving the death of a loved one by suicide, feelings of isolation, alienation, and guilt can be crippling. And just when they're needed most, friends can disappear because they're unsure what to say to someone who is grieving suicide loss. Here's some things that help, and some things that don't ...

Dr. Christine Moutier, chief medical officer for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, says that it's important not to avoid the loss survivor because you feel awkward.

"A person who's lost someone to suicide is often left in this vacuum. After the death and after the services, there's this sort of radio silence from their friends and family and community," she says. "It's sort of a really bizarre experience when you're going through this grief to not have your usual people coming around and supporting you."

When people do try to be helpful, it can often be overwhelming for the person who is grieving. If someone really wants to help, instead of saying something like, "let me know what I can do, or tell me if you need anything," Dr. Moutier advises that it's better to ask yes or no questions to take the responsibility off the person who is grieving and may have difficulty asking for help or expressing their needs. For example, you could say: "I want to bring you dinner on Tuesday, is that OK?"

She also suggests that those close to people who are grieving a death by suicide can educate themselves about suicide. "Taking a few minutes is going to help you understand that suicide is a complex health outcome, like many other causes of death."

People who don't take the time to learn about suicide might (incorrectly) assume that the person who died was "selfish" or "weak," which can lead to a lack of compassion for their death. "None of those things make sense when you really understand what drives suicide risk in general, according to the science," Dr. Moutier says.

Another thing that's important to know is that because people often feel awkward discussing suicide, loss survivors may not feel they have space to talk openly about their loved ones. A supporter of a loss survivor should understand that the loss survivor does not need to 'be fixed' and that they are not broken. It is okay to talk about the person that the survivor lost, and in most situations, the loss survivor wants to talk about the person that they lost. A loss survivor needs someone with an open ear to listen to them. Experts say that survivors need to talk about how they're feeling in a safe, judgement-free space, which family and friends can provide.

"We hear from a lot of loss survivors that they never get to talk about who the person was in life because there's so much focus on the way the person died," Dr. Moutier says. "Allow the grieving person to talk about their loved one and who they were in life instead of just focusing on their method of death."

On the other hand, well-meaning people who don't take the time to educate themselves about suicide can actually do more harm than good. Even someone else who has experienced a suicide loss cannot fully understand another person's suicide loss. Examples of things that people have said that have not been helpful, and that have actually been hurtful include: 'It's going to be OK,' 'Everything happens for a reason,' and 'He's in a better place now.' Please avoid these statements.

Dr. Moutier notes that some loss survivors are even framing the way they talk about suicide in a way that helps destigmatise mental illness, which in turn plays a role in suicide prevention. For example, an obituary might read that a person's depression led to their death. "That is a helpful way to frame it," Dr. Moutier says. "Just like we would say they died of cancer or heart disease, [it's important to] keep a health frame on suicide. It's a complex, but ultimately a health, outcome."

Source unknown

9 Warning Signs

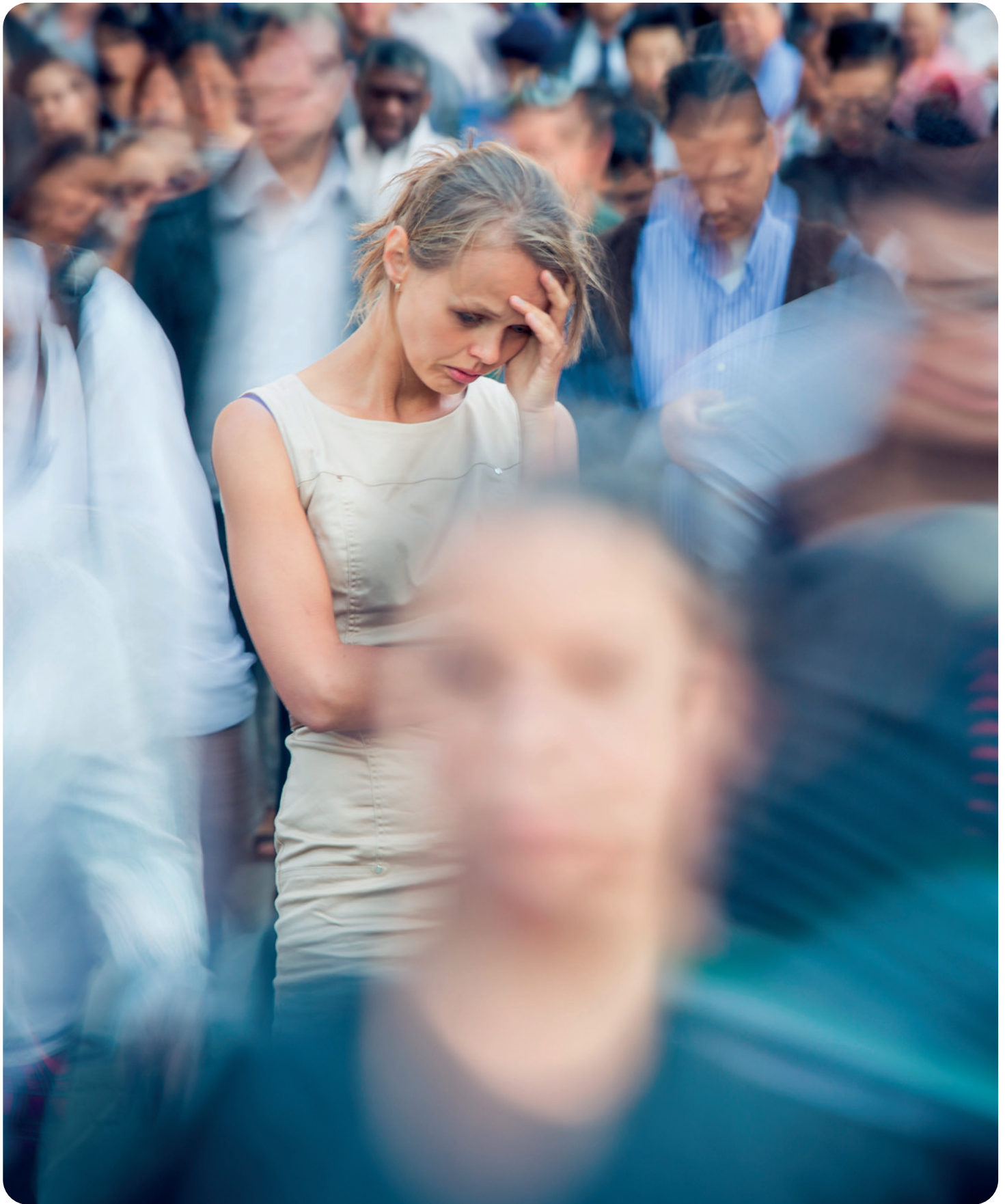
You're Mentally and Emotionally Exhausted

1. **You're easily irritated.**
2. **You feel completely unmotivated-**
even to do things you normally enjoy.
3. **You're experiencing anxiety or panic attacks.**
4. **You're having trouble sleeping.**
Either it takes you hours to fall asleep
or your sleep is broken all through the night.
5. **You have almost no patience**
and you find yourself being short with
colleagues and family.
6. **You're experiencing indigestion.**
You have a low-grade stomach ache all the time
or feel like there's butterflies in your stomach.
7. **You start crying unexpectedly.**
8. **You feel detached from reality-**
you go through your days without really
emotionally responding or connecting to anything.
9. **You feel empty.**

| TheMindsJournal

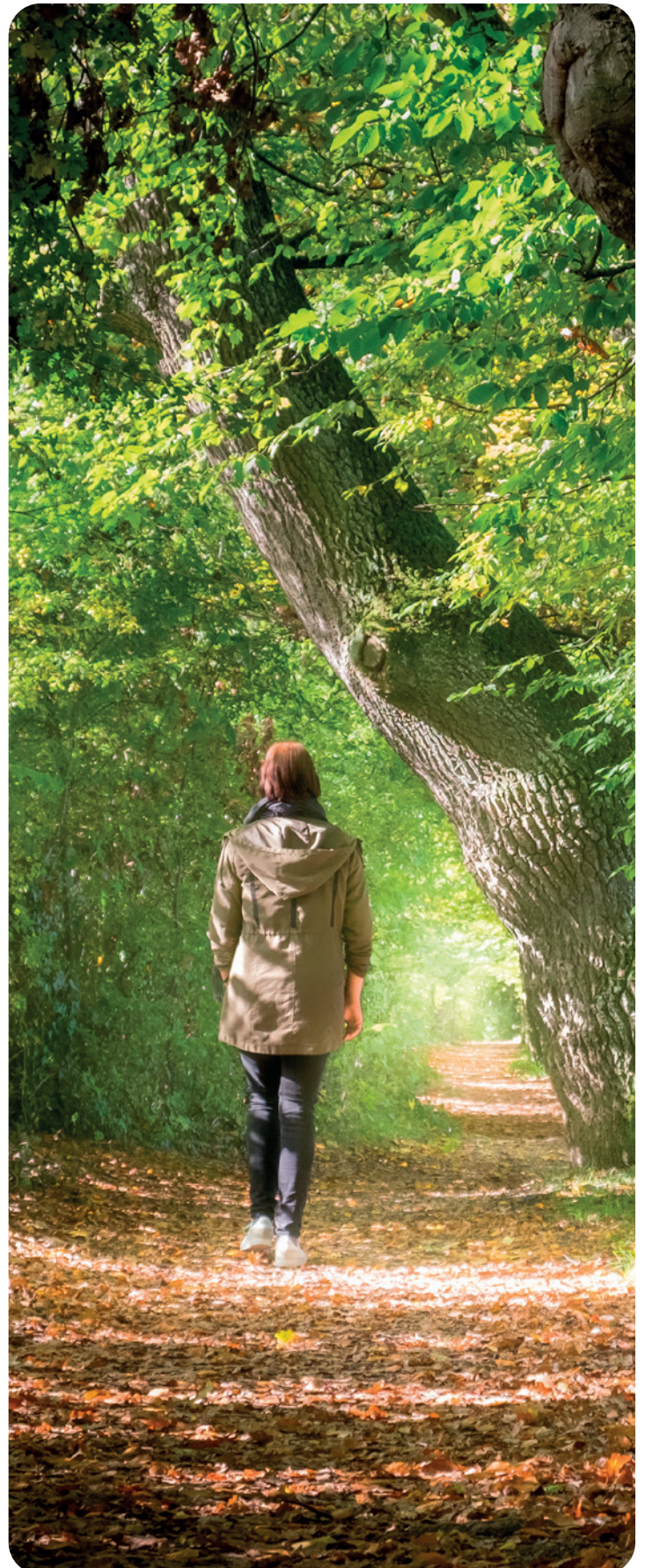


THEMINDSJOURNAL



31 TIPS TO BOOST YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

1. Track gratitude and achievement with a journal. Include 3 things you were grateful for and 3 things you were able to accomplish each day.
2. Start your day with a cup of coffee. Coffee consumption is linked to lower rates of depression. If you can't drink coffee because of the caffeine, try another good-for-you drink like green tea.
3. Set up a getaway. It could be camping with friends or a trip to the tropics. The act of planning a vacation and having something to look forward to can boost your overall happiness for up to 8 weeks!
4. Work your strengths. Do something you're good at to build self-confidence, then tackle a tougher task.
5. Keep it cool for a good night's sleep. The optimal temperature for sleep is between 15.5 and 19.5 degrees Celsius.
6. "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." - Martin Luther King, Jr. Think of something in your life you want to improve, and figure out what you can do to take a step in the right direction.
7. Experiment with a new recipe, write a poem, paint or try a Pinterest project. Creative expression and overall well-being are linked.
8. Show some love to someone in your life. Close, quality, relationships are key for a happy, healthy life.
9. Boost brainpower by treating yourself to a couple pieces of dark chocolate every few days. The flavanoids, caffeine, and theobromine in chocolate are thought to work together to improve alertness and mental skills.
10. "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you." -Maya Angelou. If you have personal experience with mental illness or recovery, share on Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr with [#mentalillnessfeelslike](#). Check out what other people are saying here.
11. Sometimes, we don't need to add new activities to get more pleasure. We just need to soak up the joy in the ones we've already got. Trying to be optimistic doesn't mean ignoring the uglier sides of life. It just means focusing on the positive as much as possible.
12. Feeling anxious? Take a trip down memory lane and do some coloring for about 20 minutes to help you clear your mind. Pick a design that's geometric and a little complicated for the best effect. Check out hundreds of free printable coloring pages [here](#).
13. Take time to laugh. Hang out with a funny friend, watch a comedy or check out cute videos online. Laughter helps reduce anxiety.





14. Go off the grid. Leave your smart phone at home for a day and disconnect from constant emails, alerts, and other interruptions. Spend time doing something fun with someone face-to-face.
15. Dance around while you do your housework. Not only will you get chores done, but dancing reduces levels of cortisol (the stress hormone), and increases endorphins (the body's "feel-good" chemicals).
16. Go ahead and yawn. Studies suggest that yawning helps cool the brain and improves alertness and mental efficiency.
17. Relax in a warm bath once a week. Try adding Epsom salts to soothe aches and pains and help boost magnesium levels, which can be depleted by stress.
18. Has something been bothering you? Let it all out... on paper. Writing about upsetting experiences can reduce symptoms of depression.
19. Spend some time with a furry friend. Time with animals lowers the stress hormone - cortisol, and boosts oxytocin - which stimulates feelings of happiness. If you don't have a pet, hang out with a friend who does or volunteer at a shelter.
20. "What lies before us and what lies behind us are small matters compared to what lies within us. And when you bring what is within out into the world, miracles happen." - Henry David Thoreau. Practice mindfulness by staying "in the present." Try these tips.
21. Be a tourist in your own town. Often times people only explore attractions on trips, but you may be surprised what cool things are in your own backyard.
22. Try prepping your lunches or picking out your clothes for the work week. You'll save some time in the mornings and have a sense of control about the week ahead.
23. Work some omega-3 fatty acids into your diet—they are linked to decreased rates of depression and schizophrenia among their many benefits. Fish oil supplements work, but eating your omega-3s in foods like wild salmon, flaxseeds or walnuts also helps build healthy gut bacteria.
24. Practice forgiveness - even if it's just forgiving that person who cut you off during your commute. People who forgive have better mental health and report being more satisfied with their lives.
25. "What appear to be calamities are often the sources of fortune." - Disraeli. Try to find the silver lining in something kind of cruddy that happened recently.
26. Feeling stressed? Smile. It may not be the easiest thing to do, but smiling can help to lower your heart rate and calm you down.
27. Send a thank you note - not for a material item, but to let someone know why you appreciate them. Written expressions of gratitude are linked to increased happiness.
28. Do something with friends and family - have a cookout, go to a park, or play a game. People are 12 times more likely to feel happy on days that they spend 6-7 hours with friends and family.
29. Take 30 minutes to go for a walk in nature - it could be a stroll through a park, or a hike in the woods. Research shows that being in nature can increase energy levels, reduce depression and boost well-being.
30. Do your best to enjoy 15 minutes of sunshine, and apply sunscreen. Sunlight synthesizes Vitamin D, which experts believe is a mood elevator.
31. "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." -Albert Einstein. Try something outside of your comfort zone to make room for adventure and excitement in your life

<https://www.mhanational.org/31-tips-boost-your-mental-health>



The Bereaved through Suicide Support Group

Run by people who themselves have been bereaved through suicide, BTS supports those in the community who have been close to someone who has taken their own life – partner, child, relative, friend or close acquaintance.

Telephone support service: 0468 440 287
from 8am - 8pm

Email support service: support@bts.org.au
Suicide bereavement resources: www.bts.org.au

BTS holds a support meeting facilitated by trained Support Workers, themselves having lost someone to suicide, it is a place for people to find compassion, support and understanding. Thoughts of attending a meeting can be incredibly daunting. Many of us want to be alone. But knowing and talking to others that know, and have an understanding of, how you feel can provide some help and solace in this incredibly difficult journey.

Donations

Without donations, BTS would not be able to continue supporting the Bereaved Through Suicide community.

100% of all donations received are used to continue supporting people bereaved through suicide. BTS receives no government funding and all work is undertaken by volunteers, however we incur costs by providing the support services above.

Should you wish to make a tax deductible donation to BTS you can directly EFT to: **BTS Support Group BSB: 633-000 A/C: 148312366** Tax deductible receipts will be issued.

Thank you in advance for supporting our very worthy organisation.



Additional Support Services

NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Lifeline	13 11 14
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
Beyondblue	1300 22 4636
Mensline	1300 789 978
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467

OTHER SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT SERVICES

Living Beyond Suicide (LBS)	between 10am–10pm any day.	1300 76 11 93
Minimisation Of Suicide Harm (MOSH)		8443 8369
Country SA – Standby Response	North	0438 728 644
Country SA – Standby Response	South	0437 752 458
Silent Ripples	Murray Bridge	0417 741 888

Thank you

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