

HALO & WINGS

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A production of Archangel Gabriel Consultancy® Pty Ltd (Archangel)

Welcome to the eighth edition of *Halo & Wings*. Over the Christmas and New Year holiday season, when most people are away and resources are scarce, there may be a time when someone requires support with a health care issue, including a person requiring an advocate to deal with medical staff on their behalf. Archangel is available throughout the holiday season. If you require any assistance at this time, see our 'Christmas Special Offer' on page 2.



As *Halo & Wings* can cover many topics, if you would like information on any health issues in particular or if you would like to contribute to future editions, please contact Gabrielle Charlesworth; contact details are on page 2.



Contemplating contemplation

Christmas and the start of the New Year can be a time of reflection and contemplation. It's a time where people in Religious Life are very busy then slow down, hopefully to rest a little. This article is not preaching to the converted. People in Religious Life know how to stop, reflect and just be. This is an important lesson others can learn.

As a whole, society encourages 'doing'. We all must have something to do. We ask each other the question, "What do you do?" It seems our value is tied up in what we do, when our real value is in who we are and how we be that person.

'Just being' is about who we are and about stopping, reevaluating and checking in with ourselves. Someone recently said that they make an appointment with themselves. This means putting the time aside to give value to oneself and giving importance to the contemplation of oneself.

Contemplation of oneself can be challenging and takes practice. Making the time to just be and reflect takes planning and discipline; the discipline to prioritise oneself. This may become less challenging when the value of 'just being' is recognised and accepted.

As with all things, there needs to be balance. We can be so busy doing that we forget to just be. However if we spend too much time just being, negative thoughts and feelings can surface. The next article looks at ways of increasing awareness of thoughts and feelings that may be experienced at this time of year.

Being aware of thoughts and feelings

Christmas and the New Year can be a time of contemplation and lonely for some. This article helps to increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety, and to know that there is always someone to talk to.

A few statistics from Beyond Blue, www.beyondblue.org.au:

- there are three million Australians living with depression or anxiety
- one in eight men experience depression and one in five men will experience anxiety during their lifetime
- one in five women in Australia will experience depression and one in three women will experience anxiety during their lifetime
- it is thought that 10-15% of older people experience depression and 10% experience anxiety.

Depression and anxiety are not a normal part of ageing. They are conditions for which effective treatments are available. However older people are more hesitant to share their experiences of depression with others, often ignoring symptoms over long periods of time and only seeking professional help when things reach crisis point.

1. Depression

Depression is a prolonged state of sadness or losing interest or pleasure in usual activities, while also experiencing several of the signs and symptoms from at least three of the following categories.

Please note that everyone experiences some of these symptoms from time to time and it may not necessarily mean a person is depressed. Equally not every person who is experiencing depression will have all of these symptoms.

Behaviour

- ❖ not going out anymore
- ❖ not getting things done at work
- ❖ withdrawing from close family and friends
- ❖ relying on alcohol and sedatives
- ❖ not doing usual enjoyable activities
- ❖ unable to concentrate.

Feelings

- ❖ overwhelmed
- ❖ guilty
- ❖ irritable
- ❖ frustrated
- ❖ lacking in confidence
- ❖ unhappy
- ❖ indecisive
- ❖ disappointed
- ❖ miserable
- ❖ sad.

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Being aware of thoughts and feelings

(Continued)

Thoughts

- ❖ "I'm a failure."
- ❖ "It's my fault."
- ❖ "Nothing good ever happens to me."
- ❖ "I'm worthless."
- ❖ "Life's not worth living."
- ❖ "People would be better off without me."

Physical

- ❖ tired all the time
- ❖ sick and run down
- ❖ headaches and muscle pains
- ❖ churning gut
- ❖ sleep problems
- ❖ loss or change of appetite
- ❖ significant weight loss or gain.

2. Anxiety

The symptoms of anxiety are not all that obvious as they often develop gradually and, given that we all experience some anxiety at some points in time, it can be hard to know how much is too much.

Some common symptoms include:

- ❖ hot and cold flushes
- ❖ racing heart
- ❖ tightening of the chest
- ❖ snowballing worries
- ❖ obsessive thinking and compulsive behaviour.

These are general symptoms that may be experienced. Also there is an extensive list of symptoms common to specific anxiety disorders, as a guide only, at <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety/signs-and-symptoms>

Overall symptoms of anxiety disorders experienced for six months or more, on more days than not, include having:

- ❖ felt worried
- ❖ found it hard to stop worrying
- ❖ found that anxiety has made it difficult to do everyday activities.

If any of the symptoms above are experienced, plus three or more of the following, seek help or advice:

- ❖ felt restless or on edge
- ❖ felt easily tired
- ❖ had difficulty concentrating
- ❖ felt irritable
- ❖ had muscle pain (e.g. sore jaw or back)
- ❖ had trouble sleeping (e.g. difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep or restless sleep).

If there are any concerns for yourself or someone else, contact Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.

Lifeline Australia is an organisation that can assist in times of crisis. Contact them on 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au

Christmas Special Offer

Archangel Gabriel Consultancy offers you a free service equal to three hours.

A Healthcare Consultant will attend to your requests such as:

- advice over the phone
- accompanying a person to a doctor's appointment
- assistance with patient advocacy if a person is in hospital
- ensuring all is in place for a person on discharge from the hospital
- assessing the need for rails or equipment to assist a person in their home
- assisting with a person's continence concerns
- advice on when it is the right time to consider permanent residential aged care.

There is no obligation after the three hour free service. This offer ends on 31 January 2014.

To accept this offer, call Gabrielle Charlesworth on 0413 409 585 or email gcharlesworth@archangelgabriel.net.au

Archangel Gabriel Consultancy can provide peace of mind at Christmas time and throughout the coming year.

Archangel wishes you, your families and loved ones



a happy and holy Christmas and a safe New Year.

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