



# Depression

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# Real people

- Meet Tim - depressed and unemployed
- Meet Hannah - depressed after a childhood of abuse
- Meet Liz - depressed after giving birth 6 months ago
- Meet Chris - depressed and contemplating suicide after online bullying

Depression: predominant mental health disorder worldwide. 1 in 5 of us may struggle.



# Real pain

*"a black blanket is dampening every aspect of life and sapping every ounce of energy I once had"*

- Emotional symptoms
- Relational symptoms
- Physical symptoms
- Spiritual symptoms





# Diagnostic criteria

In a two-week period, 5 of more must be present:

- Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day.
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day.
- Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain, or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day.
- A slowing down of thought and a reduction of physical movement
- Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day.
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness, nearly every day.
- Recurrent thoughts of death, recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide.



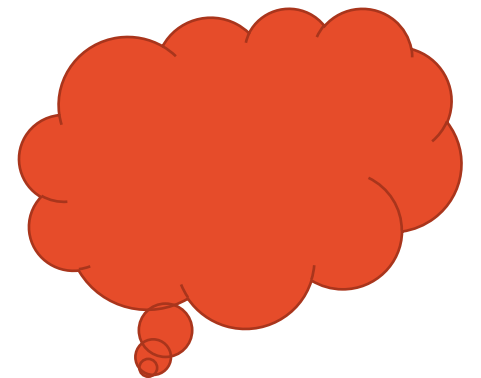
# Roots

*“life hurts - sometimes people hurt me, sometimes I hurt myself”*

- Broken experiences (and interpretation of those experiences)
  - Past
  - Present
  - Future
- Broken bodies - an important facet but be wary of the myths
- Broken desires

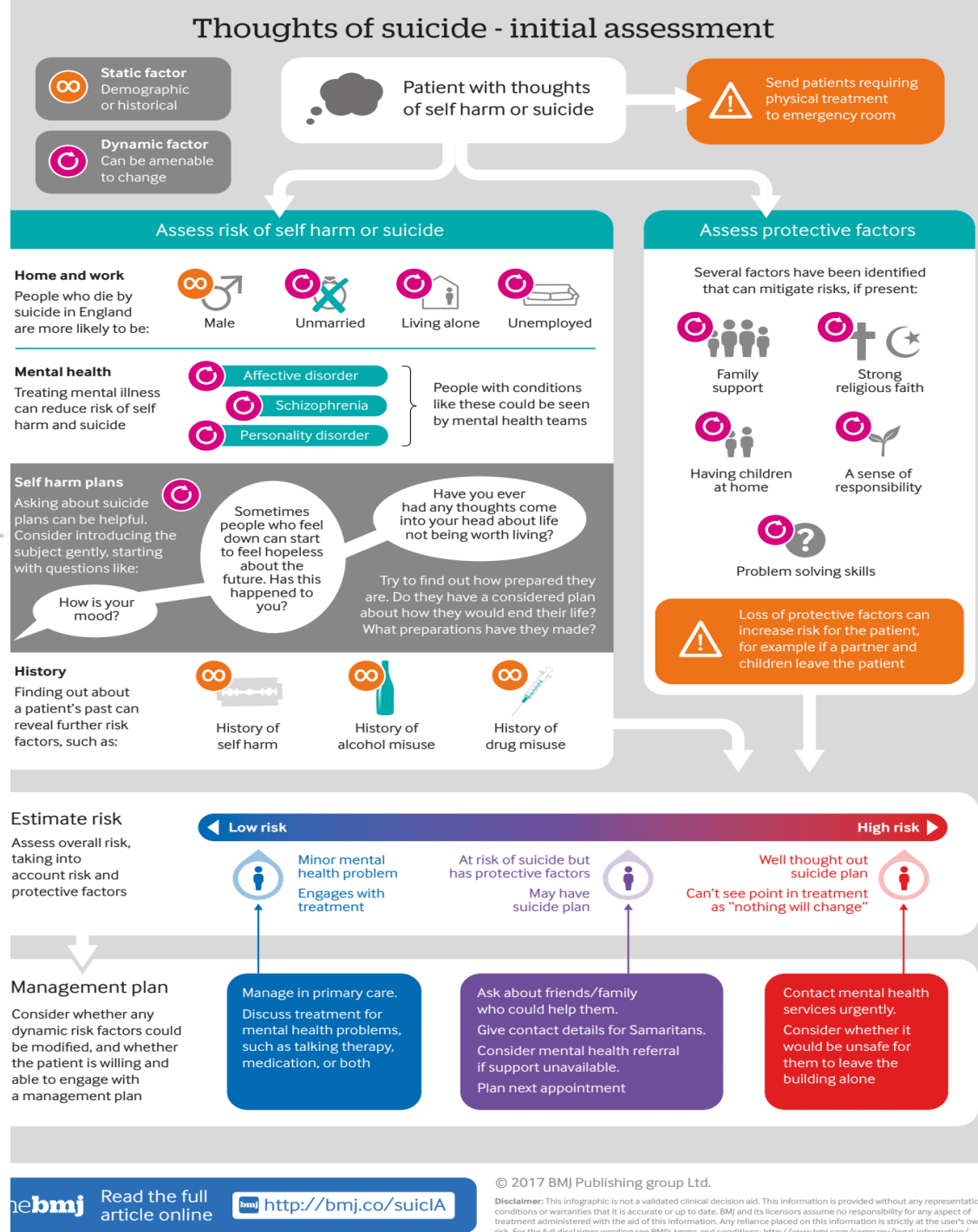
# Real dangers

- Over-simplifying causes or experience or potential pitfalls
- Over-spiritualising
- Over-medicalising
- Over-disciplining
- Becoming overwhelmed



# Real risk

- GP (direct or expressions of concern)
- Use helplines (NHS and Samaritans)
- A&E if necessary
- Safeguarding policy





# Real hope

*“there’s no situation beyond the love of God – no situation outside the power of the cross”*

- Forgiven past
- Transformed present
- Glorious future

But no over-realised eschatologies ...

some people will struggle until Jesus calls them home





# Real community

- Circles of concern - differing gifts, differing capacities
  - Prayer
  - Counselling
  - Practical help eg shopping / children / paperwork
  - Exercise
  - Safeguarding
  - Conscious of the input of secular providers too
- Bibles and boundaries



# Real pastoral care: laying the foundations

- Book reviews
- Blogs
- Testimonies
- Trained team (thought through wisdom on gender / boundaries)
- Sermon illustrations
- Vocabulary of weakness



# Case study

Meet Tom. Tom is 25, struggling at work, single and hating it. He grew up with his mum and step-dad and had his confidence eroded by both bullying at school and conflict in the home. He is a Christian - has been for 8 years, having come to Christ on a camp - but doesn't feel God can love him. He is drifting from church, staying in bed gaming and over-eating, and wondering if life is even worth living.

What are your initial thoughts?





# Real pastoral care: love

Love through:

- Acceptance
- Humility
- Commitment to long-term relational support
- Practical care



# Real pastoral care: lament

## Learning to lament

- Address God
- Describe pain
- Confess belief
- Petition God to act
- Articulate hope

It's OK to have Psalm 88 weeks!



# Real pastoral care: listening

- Don't be a Job's comforter

(C. Ash - they lacked understanding of Satan / waiting / innocent suffering)

- Do ask about
  - Experiences
  - Emotions
  - Expectations - everyone is different
- Listen to behaviour too



# Case study

- What would you want to ask Tom?
- Where would you take him in Scripture to help him lament?
- What time can you realistically give him on an ongoing basis?





# Real pastoral care: lie-spotting!

What false beliefs do they hold about:

- God
- God's world / people
- Themselves?





# Real pastoral care: speaking

- In prayer
- In the Bible (combatting false beliefs) = snacks not meals!
- In ways that facilitate them to speak ... (not primarily about you teaching)
- In ways that help them to change
  - Put off
  - Transform
  - Put on (Eph 4: 22-24)



# Case study

- What lies are Tom believing right now?
- What truths about God would you want him to know? Where would you start?
- What would you be encouraging him to pray for himself?





# Real pastoral care: serving

- What do they need us to do?
- What do they need us to help them to do?
- What do they need to be doing for the church?

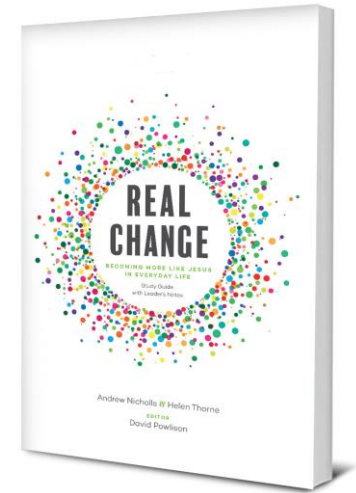
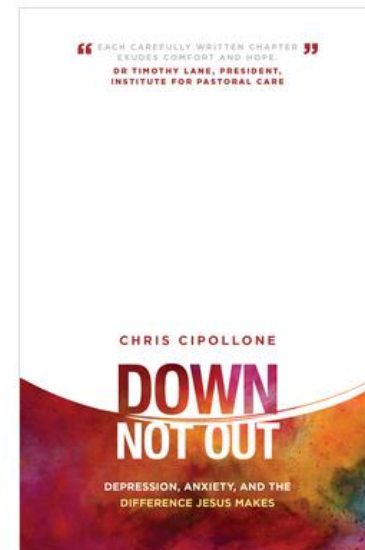
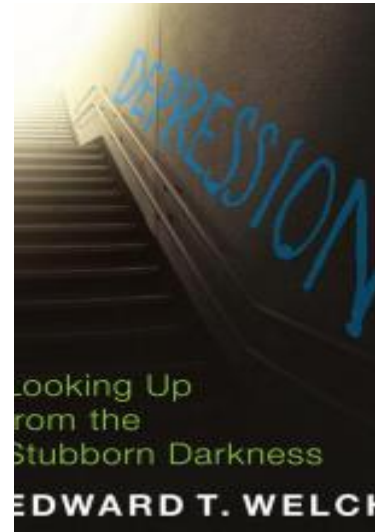


# Case study

- How might you help Tom practically?
- How might you encourage him to stay involved? (but without burdening him)



# Useful resources



**Biblical Counselling UK**

[www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk](http://www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk)