

Knowing When to Ask for Help

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If you've never felt depressed or anxious, you might not understand someone who does. When people tell anxious or depressed loved ones to, "Get over it. Rejoice in the Lord," it's as unkind as telling someone with a broken leg, "If you had a positive attitude, you'd be able to run the 5K this weekend." We know we need medical help for a broken leg, and we need to recognize when it's time to get professional help for emotional concerns. Instead of feeling ashamed, defective, or helpless, we can learn to recognize when emotional stressors (like a global pandemic!) exacerbate neurochemical imbalances already present in many brains and bodies.

Below are a few of many warning signs of significant mental and emotional concerns:

- Increasing anxiety, with chest pains (get those evaluated by a doctor), racing thoughts, panic attacks, inability to sleep or rest, feeling like you can't stop shaking inside, difficulty concentrating, muscle tension, irritability, decreasing competence at school or work
- Depression so pervasive you feel crippled by shame and guilt, sleep disturbances (either you can't fall asleep or can't stay asleep; intrusive dreams/nightmares), reduced interest in things you used to like to do, loss of energy, concentration difficulties, appetite changes, thoughts of suicide
- Inability to maintain healthy relationships
- Abusing others emotionally, mentally, physically, or sexually
- A fear-driven lifestyle
- Eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia
- Using drugs, alcohol or other destructive activities to numb emotions; "frozen" emotions

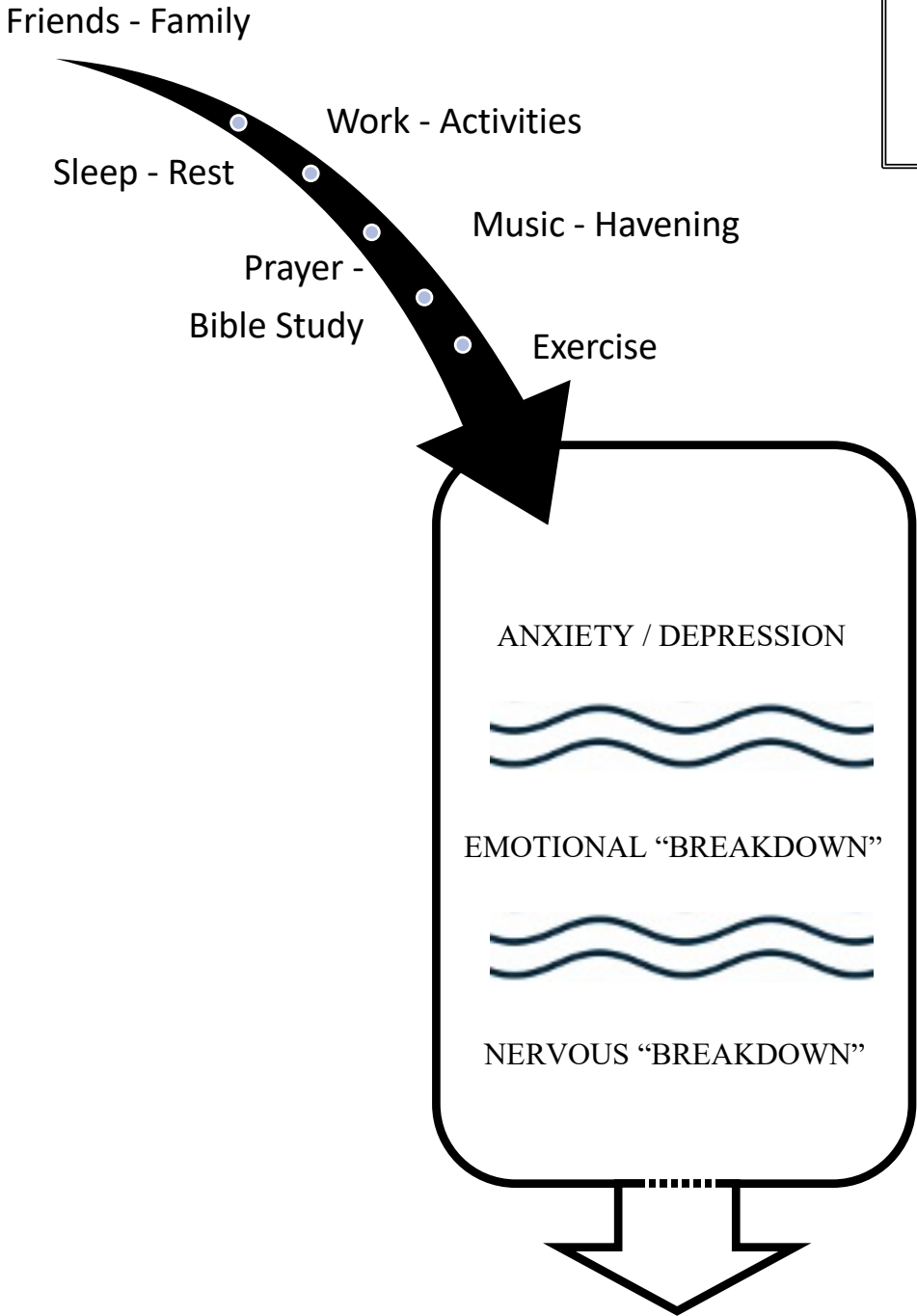
If you see yourself or family members in the warning signs above or if you have other significant concerns, perhaps it's time to consider meeting with a Christian counselor. Many are listed at <https://sfacc.net/>.

In his book *Blue Genes*, Paul Meier, M.D., of Meier Clinics (meierclinics.com), uses the illustration of a car breaking down after losing its power steering fluids. Rather than expecting the car to heal itself, the simple solution would be to replace the power steering fluid. Mental health issues can cause "power steering fluids" of the brain to leak too fast. These "give you mental and physical power and steer you to use that power of thought and action to accomplish good in the world," says Meier. When reuptake sites of the brain "leak," a neurochemical imbalance results, which can often be helped by professional counseling and, if indicated, medication designed to help heal brain chemistry disorders. The God who created your inmost being says **you** are *fearfully and wonderfully made* (Psalm 139:14). You're worth getting the help you need!

For practical help, you can work through *Core Healing from Trauma*, a biblical workbook for individuals or groups, available on Amazon. For more ideas for emotional health maintenance, check out the Resources link of the Palm Beach Counseling website: <https://www.pbcounseling.com/Resources.htm>, or watch "Strengthening Your Core," my 12 - video series on YouTube at <https://cutt.ly/Or6EiiW> or subscribe to my blog at <https://corehealingfromtrauma.com/>.

We all have invisible "emotional reservoirs," as illustrated on the following page. Listed at the top left of the page are some of many ways we fill our emotional "tanks." Listed beneath the reservoir are activities, habits, and challenges that can drain these emotional reservoirs.

Emotional Reservoir



Relationship Challenges – Work Issues – Health Concerns
Neurochemical Imbalance – Loss of Loved Ones – Political Instability
Global Pandemic – Weekends/Vacation – Financial Problems – Etc.