How the basic and more simplistic aspects of everyday life frequently carry the
greatest impact to those suffering with mental health difficulties.

By Lia Batson

Why is it that the simple, uncomplicated aspects of our lives are frequently the
aspects with which we hold the most fondness? Why is it that it is habitually the most
basic aspects of life that carry with them the most benefits for someone who is
afflicted by one or more mental health conditions? Manners and polite conversation?
It could be a warm smile, a hug or even a courteous nod of acknowledgement from
someone you walk past on the street. It may not even be a social aspect of life that
ignites that feeling of warmth. It could be the hazy streaks of sunshine bouncing
between the trees creating an inspirational glow of calm repose, and colours that fill
us up with internal hope. It could be blazing hot weather that lovingly prickles at your
skin in a comforting gesture, or regular and consistent hobbies, activities, routines
and everyday habits that we enjoy and have inadvertently adopted into our lives as
tradition. It could even be a short and sharp sensation, such as a cool, pinching night
time breeze that whips through our facial features as we stand outside, reminding us
that we are very much alive.

It would be incredible if we were fortunate enough to take pleasure in events and
activities that so many others take for granted and many can only but dream of; lavish
holidays, a comfortable home, not having the perpetual burden of fretting over bills
versus this week’s grocery shopping or having the added challenge of running and
maintaining a car. Then there’s the fact that one neglects to mention the repeated
cancellations on dental appointments, medical prescriptions and the odd evening out
because we are simply not in a position to fund it, which leads only to further stress
and emotional toil. We would all like to further enjoy some extra disposable income
in addition to this, so we can better educate ourselves, pamper or treat ourselves or
even be able to make those essential purchases we have been delaying despite it
being something we have been in need of for a while. However, for those suffering
under the harrowing trial of merely living through every twenty-four hour period, it is
not these aspects of life that generate the most pleasure. Instead, it is the simple
things in life that leave the longest lasting marks of appreciation and the deepest
traces of love. Those traces of love build bridges of trust, value and self-worth that
can gradually aid sufferers to more consistently and effectively engage in self-care and
appreciate their own self-worth.

This article will use both online research and personal experience to examine some
examples of those areas of life that are so frequently overlooked and
underappreciated and will consider what beneficial implications can arise for sufferers
of mental health conditions when those tools are utilised.
Firstly, one of the most simple things in life that often acts as a mechanism under which those suffering with one or more mental health conditions can lay a foundation to forge themselves a path to better facilitate their self-appreciation and general mood is a smile. It seems to stand as just an everyday gesture that is forever overlooked; especially in our modern, chaotic society where nobody can permit themselves time to even scratch their heads let alone reconfigure their features to display some form of affection and inner peace. Nonetheless, it is a smile that can hold the most inconceivable levels of powerful, positive energy that can so effectively rub off on, and benefit someone entrenched in the battles regarding their ongoing mental health afflictions.

Smiling “often goes undetected. Those suffering often discount their own feelings and brush them aside. They might not even want to acknowledge their symptoms due to a fear of being considered weak.” Despite this, behavioural psychologist Sarah Stevenson, alongside many other researchers have discovered that “each time you smile you throw a little feel-good party in your brain...The notorious party animals dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin start whooping it up when you smile. And a bonus: those endorphins serve as natural pain relievers and act as the body’s own opiates” (to help aid well-being and relieve pain.) Therefore, not only does that simple little smile you receive fill you up with whole-hearted contentment and affection that is additionally “contagious,” but those benefits are scientifically proven. Others will benefit from you adorning that smile, and you will benefit when you receive that smile from another person.

So what exactly does that smile do? From personal experience, what exactly is it about that simple gesture that ignites such powerful results and how does it feel to be on the receiving end of that when you’re hanging listlessly in the tree of mental dejection and hopelessness?

When someone smiles at you, it does not matter whether it is someone with whom you have an already established friendship or whether it is merely a stranger passing you on the street. “Smiling activates the release of neuropeptides that work toward fighting off stress,” regardless of who initiated it. Even a forced smile can increase a person’s mood and affect the balance of their positive versus their negative outlook. Author Thich Nhat Hanh said, ”sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.” Even participants in

1 https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/the-guest-room/201411/smiling-depression
3 Ibid
4 Ibid
5 https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/changepower/201605/the-9-superpowers-your-smile
scientific research experiments who were “directed to place a pencil between their teeth, forcing their lips into a smile (did) actually feel better.”

Therefore, it doesn’t matter who it comes from or why, what matters is the result. When you are so desperate for a sense of normality and are so deeply cemented into the grave of depression, anxiety or similar mental illness, that smile is something different. It makes you stop. It makes you look twice. It makes you think. It makes you think something different to the usual thoughts of despair and isolation that plague your already exhausted mind. Thus, you pay attention to it and recognise it. It stays with you.

Is that person actually pleased to see me? Are they making an effort for me and offering to share a part of their day that is brighter than I can ever hope to make mine by myself? Are they acknowledging me, and not merely doing what everyone else normally does; which is to either offer some form of ridicule or a facial expression that conveys their repugnance at my mere presence? Or to bypass me altogether? I exist? You mean to tell me, albeit without words that I’m worthy of that expression?

Quite simply that experience is one of the most invigorating you can experience; especially when the sheer despondency and emotional turmoil you live with every hour of everyday is the norm, and nothing within any range of positivity seems to exist. Receiving that smile generates a feeling that is in all honesty, inexplicable. This tingling sensation and accompanying sense of gratification and assuagement gradually whirls with increasing vigour within you until it reaches your lips and you automatically deliver a smile in return, even if it is not from your genuine arsenal of emotions as you currently feel them. You feel valued and you feel worthwhile. You feel like perhaps there is at least one other person in the world that is compassionate enough to reach out and offer a sense of normality, reason and encouragement without the usual accompanying trauma of passing judgement. Receiving that smile encourages you to search within yourself for your most valuable traits and encourages you to endeavour to build upon the results of that search to start believing in yourself a little more. If someone else values you, then perhaps there is at least one tiny fragment of hope that you are worth believing in yourself. Without that smile, that microscopic fragment of hope would never have been sparked and would never be built upon or realised.

Therefore, it is moments like those that are treasured the most. If you ask someone who struggles with their mental health what it is that they most fondly recall from the past month, it won’t be a cinema trip, or the purchase of a new top, which they would have been reluctant and potentially unable to face up to due to their emotions anyway. It will be that smile. It will be that smile from that random

\[6\] Ibid
person that they may not even know that brings about the greatest joy and becomes etched into their minds with more substance and unshakable power than anything that could ever be matched in a material sense. It will be that smile from their friend, the strange lady in Asda who could not decide which ketchup to buy, or the smile from their dentist, doctor, postman or fishmonger that becomes positively engrained into their memory. It becomes engrained and sticks there with more cohesion than that thrice chewed gum you just put your hand in on the underside of your desk... It makes them reconsider themselves in ways they never did before. It sparks a faith within themselves that enables them to make their own changes and life choices; purely because that other person chose to impart their compassion upon them in the first instance.

Likewise, when a conversation is being held between friends, it will certainly not be the conversation held with an indignant, overbearing or autocratic attitude that will hold water. It will be the conversation that involves encouragement and a warm smile. It does not have to be a smile of amusement. It can be a smile of reassurance, that offers the person overwrought by their suffering that element of credence and self-empowerment to endeavour to seek even the most minute flecks of light floating in that unending blanket of darkness. It really is that significant. It really is that powerful. It really does make a difference which sometimes can stand as the difference between someone choosing to live through the rest of the day, and someone choosing to give up altogether.

On the contrary, it is imperative to ensure that those afflicted by mental ailments are not permitting themselves to become imprisoned by what is referred to as ‘depression smiling,’ which is defined by Dr Judith Orloff as being “a con job that implies happiness though it is absent from the person’s mindset... It isolates and endangers practitioners at a loss to deal with their sadness.” It is a “false front of optimism and well-being,” and is described by the National Alliance on Mental Illness as a “coping mechanism that backfires” and “involves appearing happy to others and smiling through the pain, keeping the inner turmoil hidden.” In other words, a person is not reacting to a smile or giving someone else a genuine smile whereby they find themselves experiencing positive emotions as a result, instead, that person is using the smile as a mask to conceal their emotions or to simply ‘get by’ in the least intrusive manner possible before seeking an escape from the current situation.

This is not one of those ‘simple’ aspects of life that can make a beneficial mark on a sufferer’s life. The true smile is that which is spontaneous and requires the least effort

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7 https://www.e-counseling.com/depression/need-know-smiling-depression/
8 Ibid
9 Ibid
to establish. It should not even have to be established, if it is a smile that is genuine, it should simply just happen. Thus, reach out to people. Reach out as strangers, as family and as friends. Talk to people around you and do your utmost to ensure that everyone around you feels valued. Encourage and appreciate those around you, lend a hand where you can and take the time to get to know people. It is then that those smiles will be born with authenticity, will spread, and that those feelings of invigoration will intensify and those walls of mistrust can gradually be torn down as a consequence.

Who needs a material gift? Of course, everyone loves a trip out somewhere, a hearty meal or a date night, but in reality those chocolates will disappear, the flowers will wilt and that new dress will start gathering dust in the wardrobe. However, that smile you made the effort to deliver will be forever engrained and forever appreciated.

Next, another seemingly unimportant aspect of life that again yields the most beneficial results in brightening the day of a person suffering with mental health difficulties is the art of a simple, uncomplicated conversation. Merely spending time and making the effort to be around and stay around that person holds more value that one can ever envisage.

“When we’re struggling with depression, it’s hard to understand why anyone would want to be with us. We feel utterly unlovable, and may lash out or withdraw. Our depression can be so all-consuming it feels easier just to push our loved ones away.” However, when we do spend time with friends, people who can offer support or even an acquaintance, just having that simple conversation with them; even one that is a mere five minutes in length or not related to the mental health sized elephant in the room can truly make a day or even a week so much brighter. It can aid us in putting things back into perspective; even if that is merely temporary. It can teach us to trust, help us to boost our confidence and even trust ourselves a little more readily. It can re-establish our priorities, teach us to make less damaging choices and even encourage us to more effectively engage in promoting and believing in our own already non-existent self-worth.

I can personally vouch for this and can safely state that the simple art of conversation with someone I trust, no matter how long or seemingly insignificant can literally prevent me from making choices that may negatively impact myself and my health later on down the line. Talking treatments such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and counselling never worked for me. Having to start over with people you do not trust is a certain non-starter in my world. However, there are people who can change the way I feel simply by talking to me, offering me their time and offering

11 https://www.blurtitout.org/2016/02/10/relationships-and-depression/
some confidence boosting reassurance and encouragement. They probably believe they are achieving nothing, but in my eyes, it provides both my body and mind with life, fire and spirit that I cannot construct on my own merits.

My GP is rather forthright, which is not always a benefit due to my sensitive nature, however, she talks with me and not at me. She does not always understand that I function in what is most certainly a less conventional way than most patients would. However, she doesn’t judge me for it. She speaks to me like a human being. She speaks calmly and will allow me to have that conversation I need to acquire the help I require; even when ten minutes is an impossible time-frame with which to adequately achieve that. She lets me seek my elusive words and try to frantically decipher my chaotic hash of warped emotions, speaks gently, sits with me and supports me when I have nothing but tears and even offers me comfort when I believe myself to be nothing more than a burden who is wasting her time better spent on other, more deserving patients. Simply due to the sympathetic and understanding tone in which she speaks to me, I am able to believe that I’m as deserving of a place in this world as anyone else. I am worthy of fighting to recover and will not shy away like I would if she, or anybody else was to speak to me in a brash, disparaging or besmirching tone.

The other GP I have seen on occasion when my regular GP is unavailable and the situation is a dire emergency also offers me the time to talk without bypassing me or telling me what I need, instead of allowing me to tell her what I need. She speaks to me with a reassuring and comforting tone, and when you feel you are being listened to, it really does move mountains. The last time I spoke to her, she praised me for my bravery and stated that even though both my physical and mental health have failed me, I still muddle through and should garner some self-esteem from that. Simply by the way she used that tool of conversation, and the words she used, I believed I had strength and that I am a person worth fighting for. I believed that I could trust myself, keep battling and lock horns with my afflictions to keep my head above water until the next time I was to succumb to it. That was special. Those conversations are special. They are the secret weapon in the toolbox of mental health warfare!

Additionally, without the care and support of the healthcare team, and one healthcare assistant in particular, I most certainly would not be alive today. I have put her through hell and high water with my depression, anxiety and anorexia, yet she never becomes irritable. On occasion I have convinced myself that I have irritated her or that she has had a tough day and that such a day is being worsened by my presence, but she never stops listening and will always allow me that conversation that even in ten or twenty minutes, makes more difference than she would ever imagine. She even remembers the things I tell her and reminds me of such when I am truly feeling downcast. By simply sitting there and engaging in conversation, sharing
words of encouragement or talking me down from whatever strange, vulnerable or even volatile emotion I may be feeling, she can deposit me back down to planet Earth. Even by reminding me that something I stated in passing conversation months ago has been listened to, she can literally twist my warped outlook back to something within the realms of normality for another week.

She repeatedly states “I’m not doing very much to help.” Well... Next time, I will bring along one of those X-Factor buzzers and press it until she becomes deaf. Why? Because that is one thing she is most definitely incorrect about. She is doing so much. She may feel regret that besides needles, blood pressure monitors, echocardiograms, weight scales and goodness knows what else, she only has words to help me, but those words are life-changing.

With her efforts to make me laugh or pick me up when I’m overwrought with tears, I have been able to carry on, and although it does not remove my pain; physical or mental, it temporarily reduces it to a much more manageable degree, to which I will be perpetually grateful. Even when she talks to me about something unrelated to my lunacy, like the time she drove off with a flask on her car roof, or when she put mouthwash in her eye, or left chocolate in her pocket for so long that it melted, it made me laugh. When I was vomiting in the side room or waiting for an emergency doctor’s appointment, fighting with every ounce of strength I possessed to withhold the tears, she has taken extra time that she doesn’t have to sit with me for a while and talk to me. Those are words. Those words are the best medicine of all. It is conversation that creates amusement which temporarily appeases some of the suffering. Those appointments that involve those conversations have literally placed barriers between myself and negative choices that could have ultimately ruined or even taken my life.

When I have got nothing besides abject misery and I have attended appointments still hiding the fact that I’m suffering more than I am conveying, or that I am literally minutes away from engaging in something daft because my physical afflictions are ripping my mental health to shreds, those simple conversations have forced me to change my mind. They have literally concreted and sealed the tunnel to self-destruction; something which even CBT and counselling has not been able to achieve over the last ten years...

Both the doctor and the healthcare assistant probably have no idea of the impact they have made and make every time I see them, however, without doubt, those tools of conversation and words of support, reassurance and encouragement are the most effective by far. They enable me to learn, to trust, to challenge my negative thoughts and emotions and to try to value myself a little more. Even if they have to
use that art of conversation to repeat themselves until they are as blue in the face as Papa Smurf, it never goes unnoticed or unappreciated.

Furthermore, because conversation is such an effectively valuable tool, that is why people suffering under the clutches of their mental health try to push people away. Why do I push people away? Why do I sometimes feel reluctant to return that conversation with my boyfriend, the doctor or the healthcare assistant? Because people such as myself are scared. We are scared of losing the most valuable tool; having it ripped away from us when it is the most efficacious treasure we cherish every single day. “A kind word during a tough time can make all the difference,” and empowers us to think with our own minds, not the imperious mind of mental torment.

Something that makes us laugh can flip over our negative outlook, and we pray every day that it never gets taken away from us, so we protect ourselves. We don’t take the bait; we don’t always open up. Conversation works so well that if we settle too quickly and reap the benefits, we will wish they never existed when they get snatched away. The old saying is, “don’t bite the hand that feeds you,” but we won’t always go near it to even try to bite at it. Why? Because that hand is the nerve steadying, confidence boosting and heart warming conversation that can save our lives, and we don’t want to accept it and get bitten back by it. That is demonstrative of how purely magical a simple conversation can be for someone suffering. It is so magical that frequently people are afraid to engage with it because the results habitually seem too good to be true!

It is not just feelings of a personal nature that are indicative of how a simple conversation can counteract the overwhelming encumbrance of the isolation that mental afflictions bring about. Scientific studies, as well as charities such as Mind have also discovered and expressed how effective simply spending time with someone or offering them a simple conversation can be in breaking that cycle of mental health; the cycle where the afflictions impact upon peoples’ social lives, and those social lives are subsequently impacted by a lack of social stimulation.

Spending time with a friend, family member or “someone you trust” can offer a temporary yet effective “release” and render things a great deal “less scary,” than they would continue to be should you persist with attempting, or even neglecting to attempt to tackle the situation solely of your own accord. This is furthered by Heads Together, where Fiona Thomas states “when I feel helpless and upset it’s important

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12 https://www.blurtitout.org/2016/02/10/relationships-and-depression/
13 https://www.mind.org.uk/
14 https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/#.XEsdJFz7TIV
16 Ibid
17 Ibid
that I feel comforted, even when I can’t explain exactly what the problem is... If you know someone (will) take the time to ask if (you are) OK and they “tell you they are there” for you... “it can really help else the symptoms a little.” She also affirms that “even a few simple words can make (someone) feel less alone.”

Therefore, always offer that person some time. Talk with them, not at them. Talk about anything; it need not be relevant to mental health, and frequently those afflicted with such conditions will crave a variation in topic. Assure them that you are not going anywhere and that they can trust you; as long as you do not go back on your word thereafter. Sometimes, simply making a joke about something completely insignificant or seemingly irrelevant to anything at all can act as both a mechanism that can strengthen trust and friendship, and redirect a distressed, shaken and discombobulated mind to a haven that is for even a short time, a precious “release.”

In addition to the above, another ‘small aspect’ of life that is equally imperative to making the most marginal of differences that still relates to the art of conversation is to simply be there, yet not say anything at all. A person does not even have to verbally project any words to successfully ameliorate the day of someone who is so intensely entrenched into the sheer depths of mental ill-health that they can no longer retain even a facet of sane, controlled thought. By sitting beside someone without an air of judgement or ostentatiousness, giving them a shoulder to cry on, a reassuring nudge or a warm hug can frequently mean even more than words can.

Coming from a childhood and home environment which was fuelled with spite, violence, beatings, verbal turmoil and sheer viciousness has educated me and moulded me to endeavour to build relationships and offer support to others in a completely opposing manner. I could not live with myself if I saw someone struggling either mentally or physically because I appreciate the true depths of depravity. By offering a supportive clutch of the hand, a rub of the shoulder, a hug, or simply sitting beside them should they look in so much distress that touch would be a potentially ineffective means of support, I feel secure in the knowledge that even if I don’t know that person, by not leaving them there alone, I could hopefully leave a positive mark upon them and their outlook on life. By not leaving them alone to their tears, making snide remarks, dismissing them for harbouring those emotions, and instead, offering them that necessary, human comfort, I can assure them that there is someone who cares. It is “okay to not be okay,” and that they have nothing to be ashamed off by admitting to it. If that can improve the life and mental perspective of even one other

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18 https://www.headstogether.org.uk/10-things-to-say-to-someone-with-depression/
19 Ibid
20 Ibid
21 Ibid
person, then it is more than worthwhile. Using our human nature to ease the torment of others, even through gesture alone, is worthwhile.

By providing those minor sugar cubes of support and affection, a pang of indecisiveness, anguish or disquiet can be spun and shaped into a surge of hope, warmth, stable thinking and the ability to begin to more readily compartmentalise those feelings to more efficaciously deal with them longer term. These acts of kindness may appear to be the most simplistic, yet they are guaranteed to ensure the person bludgeoned by the battering ram of mental suffering does not feel “pushed further away” or isolated. As a consequence, they will find themselves in a position where they are better equipped to more effectively trust themselves and build themselves back up to being that person they once were – that person they so deeply crave to return to once again.

Next. Another simple aspect of everyday life that can truly work miracles for sufferers of mental health afflictions is sometimes in good, old fashioned and traditional forms of companionship. What is meant by this is that you do not need gismos, gadgets and fancy possessions to brighten someone’s day. You do not have to be anyone exceptional or be in a position where you can only help someone if you’re trained, experienced or possess the most effective tools. The old fashioned ways are frequently the most effective, even if they are the least opulent or meretricious in comparison.

What about sitting down with someone without a computer, tablet or mobile and sharing a conversation over a cup of tea or cold drink? What about a spot of lunch where each others’ company is the only instrument you have at your disposal? What about lending someone a hand with something they require assistance with? These acts of kindness are also vastly advantageous when it comes to endeavouring to ease the pain of someone who is lost in the limitless void of despair.

As daft as it sounds, an appropriate example can be conveyed through a referral to a recent episode of childrens’ television. In a recent episode of Postman Pat, the characters were engaged in a race, utilising various forms of transportation to see which form would lead them to the finishing line at the quickest speed. There was the policeman on his bicycle, Pat in his van, an Indian man on a motorbike and a farmer on a steely tractor. They were all determined to stand victorious. However, when hurdles arose throughout the race that either hindered their progress or would have swiped that victory from their hands, instead of pompously promoting only their own success, they assisted the other members of the race at great sacrifice to themselves. When the upscale, swanky motorbike ran out of fuel, Pat stopped his van to assist. When the bicycle had a puncture, the farmer offered the tools and the manpower to

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23 https://www.headstogether.org.uk/10-things-to-say-to-someone-with-depression/
help to fix it to permit the policeman to continue on to win the race at his own personal sacrifice. When another member of the race found themselves lost, another stepped in to lead them back to the main route, effectively delaying their own progress and inhibiting their chance of success. At the end of the race, they all then shared an old fashioned cup of tea and a piece of cake, and celebrated assisting each other in their true community spirit. It demonstrated love. It demonstrated companionship and it demonstrated whole-hearted collaboration and the act of pulling together, that as a consequence, literally saved the day.

It may be perceived by those on the outside as either ridiculous or outright ‘cheesy,’ however it truly is the one of the most valuable ways someone can reach out to appease the suffering of another; despite how seemingly small that act of kindness may be. When translating that into assisting someone with a mental health affliction, simply by offering some companionship, by lending a helping hand, even if it is something unrelated to the conditions they face, or by merely being a friend; a neighbour and a supportive fellow human being, that too will yield those same results.

By offering that shoulder, that hug or that cup of tea, you are being the Postman Pat who stops his van and offers fuel. You are being that farmer that leads a friend back to the path of clear thinking. You are being that farmer that leads a friend back to the path of clear thinking. You are helping someone carry on when they are stranded by a puncture. Those tools remove the sufferer from that environment under which they feel and are so aggrieved. It temporarily removes them from that situation that continues to overwhelm them and uses tools that are not modern, complicated or difficult to obtain to help them help themselves. It aids them in contemplating their own self-worth in a supportive environment without those negative implications and aggravating factors that prevent them from opening that tightly sealed lid to a more contented life. It makes them feel appreciated, loved and valued. It teaches them to value others as well as themselves. Utilising those simple techniques makes them feel like they too can construct their own foundations of simple tools to help make better decisions and gain the confidence to live with increased freedom. It may only be short-lived until the next time those simple tools have to be re-used, but nonetheless, ensuring they are used is the backbone for literally changing someone’s life, slowly and surely for the better.

Finally, one other simplistic element of life that inevitably brings joy and release to anyone; regardless of the state of their health is laughter. According to both scientific studies, and even as far back as Biblical references, “a merry heart doeth good like a medicine²⁴, and is the “perfect antidote²⁵” that is an “effective self-care tool to cope

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with stress. Furthermore, these benefits to mental well-being have actually been proven. Berk et al conducted a controlled study in 1989 of “10 adult men randomly assigned to either 1 hour of laughter or quiet time. In a pre-test (and) post-test design, blood samples were collected prior to, during, and after the intervention... The control group showed no change, while the laughter group demonstrated a decrease in serum cortisol, dopac, epinephrine, and growth hormone levels, which lower the physiological stress response. Subsequent increases in immune response were (also) found.”

Therefore, both smiling and laughter are the simplistic source of magic that is so powerful, even Albus Dumbledore himself would struggle to provide it. The magic is so dynamic that it has in fact spread in rapid succession across the globe. Even medical and psychological studies as far away as Asia are reaching the same results. Even studies from Japan have discovered that “endorphins secreted by laughter can help when people are uncomfortable or in a depressed mood.” They have proven that laughter “is a non-invasive and non-pharmacological alternative treatment for stress and depression” and concluded that its power “is effective and (as) scientifically supported as a single or adjuvant therapy such as CBT.

Additionally, laughter “does not require specialized preparations, such as suitable facilities and equipment, and it is easily accessible.” It is thus preferred on many occasions to traditional methods of therapy or medication. It is easier to engage with than having to partake in therapies or undergoing treatment that many people are embarrassed by or ashamed to admit to. It is a one size fits all approach that can encourage sufferers of mental ill-health to emerge from within themselves a little more. It can build friendships that otherwise tend to fade due to the stigma and lack of education that exists around these conditions, and it can simultaneously provide sufferers with opportunities to re-adapt and develop their social skills. These benefits can in turn ensure that those afflicted are less isolated and can trust that there is hope on the other side of their ceaseless veil of dispirited desolation.

Therefore, present someone with those ‘small tools.’ If you are suffering, tell someone which of those ‘small tools’ would be most beneficial to you to allow them to more advantageously support you. If you are that person looking in from the outside, sit with that person who is suffering and offer them your hand, a smile or a

25 https://www.healio.com/psychiatry/journals/jpn/2004-3-42-3/%7B953a485d-52b8-4b92-b2b7-642268f5451d%7D/a-chuckle-a-day-keeps-the-doctor-away-therapeutic-humor-laughter
26 Ibid
27 https://www.healio.com/psychiatry/journals/jpn/2004-3-42-3/%7B953a485d-52b8-4b92-b2b7-642268f5451d%7D/a-chuckle-a-day-keeps-the-doctor-away-therapeutic-humor-laughter
28 https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/tjem/239/3/239_243/_article/-char/ja/
29 Ibid
30 Ibid
31 https://www.healio.com/psychiatry/journals/jpn/2004-3-42-3/%7B953a485d-52b8-4b92-b2b7-642268f5451d%7D/a-chuckle-a-day-keeps-the-doctor-away-therapeutic-humor-laughter
joke; as long as it’s a decent one. Permit them to drench your shirt in tears or cradle them in your arms as they stumble along the path of hopelessness. Spend some time with them, share a coffee and hold that all-important conversation. Refrain from simply bypassing that lonesome person who is grappling with their emotions out in public and take your time to see if there is anything you can do to ease it. It may seemingly be a nonsensical use of your time, but to the person you are with, it can, and probably will benefit their day, week and even their life beyond the realms of anyone’s imagination.

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