



The first week of May in Canada is Mental Health Week when Canadians are reminded that mental health issues affect many of us.

Here is my story:

I just felt tired and had no energy. It seemed like everything I did took a tremendous effort. At work, I was getting further and further behind in my projects. I actually felt like I had the flu, that after the first week just seemed to linger and linger.

My head just ached with the very act of thinking!

What could it be? My mind started to ponder all the possible scenarios, and they didn't add up to anything too pleasant. Maybe, I had some sort of disease that I had picked up during my time in Asia. Or, heaven forbid, I was suffering from some sort of cancer.

Feeling at the end of my rope, I made an appointment with my GP. After explaining my symptoms, she sent me to an internal medicine specialist, for a further consultation. He in turn put me through a battery of blood tests and scans, poked and prodded me, and asked me a lot of questions about my job and lifestyle.

A few weeks later he called me back to his office to give me the results. "Well Mr. Hall, I can assure you that you do not have cancer." I sighed a sigh of relief at those words. He continued, "I really think the symptoms you are experiencing are from what we term, 'clinical depression.'"

Depression? I still recall the confusion I felt at that word. "You mean what I am feeling is just in my head? Christians aren't supposed to suffer from these types of things...are they?"

Well, did I ever have so much to learn!

Over the course of the next year, I was under the care of my GP. Because of drug therapy and counselling—I came out the other side of the darkness I experienced during my illness. It has made me appreciate the little things in life, like enjoying a sunny day, the song of a bird, and the encouragement and support of my spouse and children.

In addition, I have appreciated the backing of my Christian brothers and sisters, who although I may appear whole on the "outside", are cognizant there might be something more going on the "inside" of me. I still remember the time attending my small group when I explained I was having a particularly bad week and a group member asked if she could pray for me. When I said, "I'd love that," it was followed by one of the most heartfelt prayers I had ever heard. I remember thinking, "Here is someone who has been here, too."

Finally, I continue to gain inspiration from the words of the Apostle Paul:

"Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!"

"Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life" (Philippians 4:6-7 The Message).

Bill Hall

**Bill Hall is Western Superintendent of Grace Communion International-Canada
He can be reached at: bhall@gcicanada.ca**
