

thrive

living resilient and renewed.



GRACE ALLIANCE
HEALTHY SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR MIND

Thrive: Living Resilient and Renewed

Mental health often affects the whole person; thus, mental wellness is a whole health approach (physical, mental/emotional, spiritual, and relational wellness). Thrive: Living Resilient and Renewed is a resource designed to aid you through a whole health journey in discovering healthy solutions for your heart and mind.

Each chapter will guide you through a new lens of scripture, proven science, practical tools, and a simple metric to measure and improve your progress. This will help you become more resilient through mental health stressors and various life challenges and will help you live renewed in your "in Christ" faith, life, purpose, relationships, and more.

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Thrive: Living Resilient and Renewed

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Mental Health Grace Alliance is a non-profit organization that cultivates healthy solutions for hearts and minds through a simple and innovative approach with biblical truths, scientific research, and practical tools.

This curriculum resource is not a professional therapy resource and is not intended to treat, diagnose, cure, or replace mental health professional care and/or medical treatments.

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For more information and additional resources, visit us at www.mentalhealthgracealliance.org.

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HOW TO USE THRIVE.

Thrive is a course experience that provides more in-depth information and tools for the topics introduced in the other Mental Health Grace Alliance group curriculums. Whether for personal or group use, this course requires a willingness to reflect on each topic and apply the tools presented.

The format of each chapter is as follows:

EXPLORE:

- + **GOD'S HEART.** Beginning with a simple prayer, this section explores Biblical Scriptures (the heart of God) that relate to the topic. Three simple points provide helpful Scriptural context, translation, and understanding, allowing you to reflect and personalize its meaning. A simple question then allows for further reflection or discussion.
- + **GOD'S DESIGN.** This section introduces five specific insights that draw together more meaning from the scripture and proven science on why and how the topic will improve your mental well-being, your whole health, and your life. Then, a simple question helps you reflect on any new insights.
- + **YOUR STARTING POINT.** This section helps you capture a general view of how you feel you are doing in this specific area before implementing any new insights or tools and what helpful outcomes you wish to see after applying the tools.

EXPERIENCE:

This section provides a way to help you apply the topic through creative tools. These are uniquely designed to be easy to implement within a few days or more.

EVALUATE:

This section helps you see the progress you are making regarding the topic. It allows you to compare your results with your previous scores. In addition, this helps you evaluate how to adapt or progress with the tool for future use.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS:



TIPS: In most chapters, you'll find helpful tips scattered throughout to give additional direction to improve your experience with the new insights or tools.



EXTRAS: Not every chapter will have this, but this additional section provides more helpful information on scripture, science, and tips to understand each topic better. This section is to help take the pressure off and help you see grace throughout your whole journey.

HOW TO USE THRIVE (CONT.).

PERSONAL USE: Thrive for your personal journey.

Explore the topic and follow the guided process. Browse the chapter to review the content. Then, begin by letting the workbook guide you through the information, questions, and tools. Use the space in the workbook or an additional notebook to write your answers and any notes.

Go at your own pace. Give yourself time to process the information in each section. You can take a break or complete it in segments (e.g., first section in the morning, another section in the evening, or over multiple days). Allow time to understand and process the information and try out the tools. You will see the material is not intense but simple, encouraging, and full of grace, so have fun and enjoy the process.

GROUP USE: Thrive as a community growth experience.

Commitment to the community growth experience (one-on-one or small group). Whether your group is completing a portion of the curriculum or the whole workbook, do your best to commit to the growth experience. Use the space in the workbook or an additional notebook to write your answers.

1.5-hour weekly group time. To adequately discuss and learn the tool in each chapter, allow at least 1.5 hours. For discussion and tool practice, larger groups may need to divide into twos or threes and then return to the full group for overall discussion. Some groups may decide to have a shorter session or to cover each topic over a two-week period. Each group can design it in a way that fits best. Here is a sample meeting schedule:

- 20 min: Group start, guidelines, & review "Evaluate" section (from the previous chapter)
- 40 min: Explore: God's Heart, God's Design, & Your Starting Point & discussion
- 20 min: Experience (tool – review and practice)
- 10 min: Closing prayer (or extra time needed)

People who want to join along the way. Although every chapter builds toward a common goal, each topic is created to stand alone. This allows anyone in need to join in at any point and be encouraged by the momentum, sense of community, and encouragement of the group.

Honor the guidelines. Every chapter begins with a review of the guidelines for the group. This helps to respect and honor the group experience. As best as you can, try to review these as a group before every meeting, especially when a new member joins the group along the way.

Be prepared. Take some time before each group to read through the chapter. If you have time, write down some of your personal reactions and responses to the questions.

Apply the topic and tools. Each group meeting and chapter topic has creative tools to try out and evaluate your progress. You will learn from one another's progress and challenges in the group.

Enjoy and have fun with the growth experience. Most of all, you will see the material is not intense but simple, encouraging, and full of grace, so enjoy the process and have fun.

For extra group use insights and ideas, visit our Thrive page at www.mentalhealthgracealliance.org.

WELCOME,

You are a masterpiece of grace.

THRIVE:
PHYSICAL

CHAPTER ONE

SLEEP

KEY POINT

The quality of our sleep directly affects the quality of our waking lives and faith to be resilient through any challenge.

HEALTHY GUIDELINES (for group use)

HEALTHY COMFORT:

Offer respect, encouragement, and compassionate support.

HEALTHY CONFIDENTIALITY:

Create a safe place to share by listening confidentially.

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION:

Avoid fixing anyone's challenge, correcting, debating, or using offensive language.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY:

Discover hope and useful tools while learning from one another's journeys.

EXPLORE: GOD'S HEART

PRAYER

Father, as we explore your whole health design for our lives, unfold the wisdom that your Spirit gives and strengthen us for endurance and patience by your power. As we trust in you, thank you for filling us with all joy and peace so that hope overflows from us. In Christ's name, Amen (Col. 1:9-12; Rom. 15:13).

SCRIPTURE

READ PSALM 3:3-6

After reading the Scripture, use the following comments for helpful reflection or discussion.

- 1 This scripture passage was written during a time of crisis. David has been betrayed and is running for his life.
- 2 The wording in verse four is an expression of anxious fear and stress. Then, verse five is how God answered David by providing a full night of refreshing sleep; God keeps him safe and secure and protects his rest.
- 3 Verse six highlights how a refreshing night of sleep gave David mental, emotional, and spiritual (faith) energy to face his stress and crisis.

What other encouraging thoughts, ideas, or questions do you have about this Scripture and topic?

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EXPLORE : GOD'S DESIGN

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Healthy sleep heals and strengthens our brain and body. While we sleep, our brain organizes new information and memories and adapts based on the experiences we've had that day.¹ Our body also uses sleep time to grow and heal by repairing muscles, regulating our immune system, and more.²

②

Healthy sleep makes us more resilient. A good night's sleep (7.5 – 9 hours) helps build stronger connections between our brain's threat center (i.e., amygdala) and decision and mood regulation center (i.e., prefrontal cortex). As a result, we have better mental and emotional clarity to make healthier decisions and responses in difficult situations.³

③

Healthy sleep routines and environments are linked to positive well-being. On average, people who practice good "sleep hygiene" report improved sleep quality and a more positive emotional well-being. We can build sleep hygiene by implementing soothing pre-sleep activities and preparing our sleep environment as we remove potential disturbances.⁴

④

Healthy sleep happens in 90-minute cycles. During sleep, our body goes through cycles of light sleep, deep sleep, and dreaming sleep. It's easy to feel disoriented and groggy if we wake in the middle of a cycle, so it helps to plan our wake-up time at the end of a cycle instead.⁵

⑤

Healthy sleep habits stabilize our body clock (i.e., our circadian system). We can train our brains and bodies to become sleepy at a desired bedtime by creating a consistent sleep routine that begins around the same time each night.⁶

What are 1-2 things you found interesting from these facts? Why does it encourage you?

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¹ "The Science of Sleep: Understanding What Happens When You Sleep."

² DiGiulio, "What Happens in Your Body and Brain While You Sleep."

³ Havis, "The Surprising New Connection between Sleep and Mental Health."

⁴ Kang and Chen, "Effects of an Irregular Bedtime Schedule...", 248.

⁵ Gordon, "Your Sleep Cycle Revealed."

⁶ Levi, "How to Design a Better Bedtime Routine."

EXPLORE: YOUR STARTING POINT

① | **GAUGE:** On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you doing in relation to sleep?

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10

Not satisfied, want
big changes!

It's so-so.

Completely
satisfied with it!

② | **AWARENESS:** Describe any specific positive or negative factors contributing to your score above.

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③ | **GOAL:** As you develop tools and implement small changes to improve your sleeping habits and patterns, discuss the benefits you desire to see within the first week or longer.

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EXPERIENCE

1 PRE-SLEEP ROUTINE

PART 1: Mark which statements describe your current pre-sleep activities and environment.

DISRUPTIVE PRE-SLEEP ACTIVITIES

- Texting or talking on the phone
- Deep, intense conversations, shows, or news
- Stressful work
- Gaming activities
- Watching TV, binge streaming
- Scrolling through social media
- Eating 1-2 hours before bed (digestion can interfere with falling asleep & disrupt sleep)
- Drinking too much caffeine
- Smoking heavily (nicotine reduces REM sleep & withdrawal causes frequent waking)
- Drinking too much alcohol (impacts 2nd half of sleep, causes frequent waking, decreases sleep quality)

OTHER

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DISRUPTIVE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

- Clutter or items that trigger stress (e.g., bills, work, etc.)
- Temperature too warm or too cold
- Bright or distracting lights (e.g., overhead lights, TV on, etc.)
- Distracting noises

OTHER

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SOOTHING ACTIVITIES

- Reading a relaxing book
- Taking a warm bath
- Listening to relaxing music
- Reading a peaceful devotional
- Saying a simple, hope-filled prayer
- Practicing gentle stretching postures
- Using relaxation techniques
- Sipping on non-caffeinated teas
- Grace-filled meditation/mindfulness
- Writing down concerning thoughts or to-do items to calm over-active thinking
- Gratitude journaling or thinking
- Doing a simple, relaxing craft (e.g., coloring, drawing, knitting)

OTHER

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SOOTHING ENVIRONMENT

- Reduced light and noises
- Clean space
- Relaxing scents from essential oil diffuser
- White noise from a fan or sound machine
- Soothing music set to stop after 30-60 min.
- Comfortable, cool temperature

OTHER

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PRE-SLEEP ROUTINE (CONT.)

PART 2: Now, list three disruptive activities and environmental factors you want to remove from your experience prior to sleep. Then, list three things to add or change to help create a soothing pre-sleep routine and environment.

DISRUPTIVE PRE-SLEEP ACTIVITIES

1.
2.
3.



SOOTHING ACTIVITIES

1.
2.
3.

DISRUPTIVE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

1.
2.
3.



SOOTHING ENVIRONMENT

1.
2.
3.

2 SLEEP PLAN

Using the tips below, start by setting achievable goals for:

MY PRE-SLEEP ROUTINE START TIME:

MY BEDTIME:

MY MORNING WAKE TIME:



MAKE SMALL CHANGES OVER TIME. Try moving your bedtime 15 minutes earlier each night until you reach your desired time.



AVOID DROWSINESS. Aiming for 7.5-9 hours of sleep, set a wake time that's a multiple of 90 minutes from your bedtime. This allows you to wake at the end of a sleep cycle when your brain and body are closer to wakefulness (e.g., 10 p.m. - 7 a.m.).

EXPERIENCE

3 SLEEP TRACKER

Track your sleep over several days.

In the morning, **circle** the time you went to bed, **shade** in the boxes of the hours you slept, and **star** any times you were awake during the night. Check the boxes if you were able to follow through on your sleep routine and environment. Mark how rested you feel and your mood for the morning. Later in the afternoon, mark your energy level and mood with any helpful notes to the side. Lastly, evaluate any helpful sleep adjustments.

Sample Sleep Experience:

I went through my pre-sleep routine and made sure my sleep environment was soothing. I went to bed at 10 p.m. I was awake around 1:15 a.m.-1:45 a.m. worrying, but I was able to fall back to sleep. I woke up at 7 a.m. feeling somewhat rested, and my mood was okay. I took a 40-minute nap at 1 pm. My afternoon energy level and mood were okay, but I think it was because of work stress.

① **DATE:** Monday, 10/12

Awake (worrying) 1:15-1:45 a.m. 40 min nap

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Morning:

Pre-sleep routine
 Soothing environment

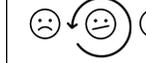

 rested


 mood

Afternoon:

Pre-sleep routine
 Soothing environment


 energy


 mood

I'm behind on my work deadlines.

Adjustments: Stop social media before bed. I get pulled up & down by positive & negative posts.

TRACK OVER TIME. Make a copy of the blank Sleep Tracker on the following pages to use continually and see long-term changes.

13

SLEEP TRACKER

① DATE:

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---

	Morning:		Afternoon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-sleep routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing environment	rested	mood	energy	mood

Adjustments:

② DATE:

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---

	Morning:		Afternoon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-sleep routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing environment	rested	mood	energy	mood

Adjustments:

③ DATE:

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---

	Morning:		Afternoon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-sleep routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing environment	rested	mood	energy	mood

Adjustments:

④ DATE:

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---

	Morning:		Afternoon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-sleep routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing environment	rested	mood	energy	mood

Adjustments:

SLEEP TRACKER

⑤ DATE:

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---

	Morning:		Afternoon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-sleep routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing environment	rested	mood	energy	mood

Adjustments:

⑥ DATE:

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---

	Morning:		Afternoon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-sleep routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing environment	rested	mood	energy	mood

Adjustments:

⑦ DATE:

7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12pm	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---

	Morning:		Afternoon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-sleep routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing environment	rested	mood	energy	mood

Adjustments:

What are any helpful thoughts or observations you noticed from the experience?

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EVALUATE

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COMPARE RESULTS: After applying the tools over the last 5-7 days, how are you doing in relation to sleep? Compare this with your score in the **"Explore: Your Starting Point"** section.

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10

Not satisfied, want big changes!

It's so-so.

Completely satisfied with it!

②

GOAL OUTCOMES & ADJUSTMENTS: List any positive changes you have observed over the last 5-7 days (or longer) and how they compared to the goals you listed in the **"Explore: Your Starting Point"** section. What adjustments can you make to continue improving your sleep?

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MEDICATIONS, SUPPLEMENTS, APNEA. Some medications and supplements can interfere with sleep quality. Some may also struggle with other sleep disturbances (e.g., sleep apnea) or may need a sleep aid medication for a while. Consult your doctor if you feel your medication, the mixture with supplements, or other sleep disturbances are affecting your sleep quality.