A PATIENT WORKSHOP

Mental Wellbeing in Rheumatic Diseases

Tools, Techniques and Everyday Coping — Together

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WHY WE'RE HERE TODAY

Why Your Mental Wellbeing Matters

Living with a rheumatic disease affects far more than your joints — the pain, fatigue and uncertainty carry a real emotional weight that is common and often unspoken.

2×	Anxiety and depression are about twice as common in people with arthritis as in the general population.
~37%	Reported prevalence of anxiety and depression in some rheumatoid arthritis study populations.
~25%	Estimated prevalence of depression in systemic lupus, from pooled analyses.
2.5×	Higher risk of death by suicide reported in rheumatoid arthritis — a critical unmet need.

If any of these feel familiar, you are not alone — and that is exactly why we're here.

Source: Peer-reviewed rheumatology literature (Journal of Rheumatology; PMC/NCBI; Oxford Rheumatology), 2023–2025.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

The Pain, Mood and Fatigue Cycle

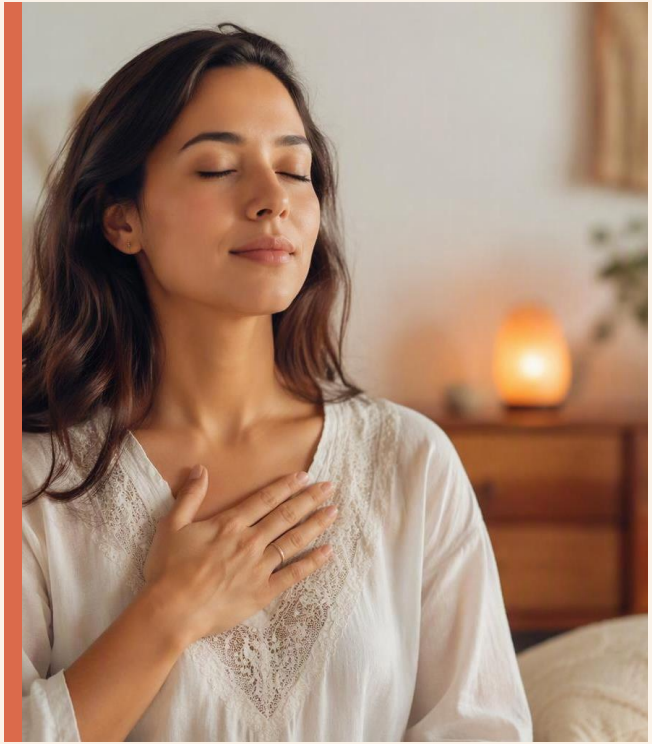
Body and mind feed each other — easing any single point in this loop can calm the whole cycle.

1. **Pain & inflammation**
   Flares and persistent pain drain energy and lower mood.
2. **Poor sleep & fatigue**
   Disturbed sleep deepens exhaustion and reduces resilience.
3. **Low mood & anxiety**
   Stress and worry heighten the perception of pain.
4. **Higher disease activity**
   Distress is associated with worse measured disease activity.

The good news: this cycle works both ways — improving your mood, sleep or activity can quiet the rest.

TOOLS WE CAN PRACTISE

Ways to Feel Steadier



- **Cognitive behavioural therapy**
  Reframes unhelpful thoughts about pain and rebuilds confidence.
- **Mindfulness & relaxation**
  A few minutes of mindful breathing can steady emotions and calm pain.
- **Better sleep (CBT-I)**
  Sleep-focused techniques improve rest, fatigue, mood and pain.
- **Learning & sharing together**
  Education and shared experience, like today, add to your care.

EVERYDAY COPING

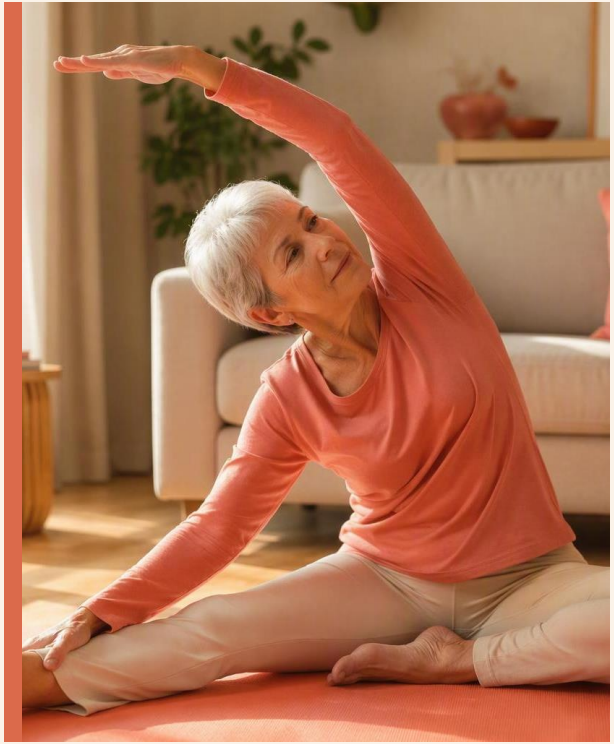
Small Habits That Protect You

Move gently, often
Joint-friendly activity eases pain and mood.

Pace your energy
Break tasks into steps; rest before you tire.

Protect your sleep
A steady wind-down routine improves rest.

Protect your joints
Kind movement reduces daily strain.



Consistency matters more than intensity.

YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

You Don't Have to Cope Alone



- **Speak up in your care team**
  Ask about mood at appointments; simple questionnaires help.
- **Connect with peers**
  Groups like this one turn isolation into shared understanding.
- **Use remote support**
  Telehealth and self-management bring help closer to home.
- **Lean on people you trust**
  Family and friends can share the load — let them in.

OVER TO YOU

Let's Talk Together

Take a moment, then share as much or as little as you like — every experience in this room is welcome.

? **What helps you most on a hard day?**

? **Which small habit from today will you try this week?**

? **Who is part of your support circle?**

? **What would you like to ask or share with the group?**

There are no right answers — just your experience, in your words.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Carry These With You

- Your mental health is central, not optional.
- Anxiety and depression are common, treatable and worth naming.
- Proven tools help: therapy, mindfulness, sleep and gentle movement.
- Small daily habits build lasting resilience.
- Support — from your team and your people — changes everything.

One small step from today is enough to begin.



MENTAL WELLBEING IN RHEUMATIC DISEASES

Thank You

For sharing your time, your questions and your courage today.
Be kind to your mind — one small step at a time.

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Group A Discussion

Challenges & Emotional Impact

Biggest impact on your mental wellbeing?

Pain, fatigue and sleep effects?

Barriers to seeking support?

What should professionals better understand?

Group B Discussion

Coping, Resilience & Support

Best coping strategies?

Protect wellbeing during flares?

Who is in your support network?

Advice for newly diagnosed people?