**Self Help Techniques for Mental Health Care:**

\*\*Adapted from NAMI, The National Alliance on Mental Illness’ website, Emmie Pombo, a mental health advocate and student identifies 6 Self Help Techniques for Coping with mental Illness, February 1, 2019 <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/january-2019/self-help-techniques-for-coping-with-mental-illness>

Many people have heard that a good healthy diet and exercise will provide mental health wellness. “If that person with depression would just eat a heathier diet and exercised, their symptoms would decrease.” For so many people, doing just that, works. But what about when depression and anxiety *prevent* a person from getting out of bed to eat, could they also leave the house to exercise? For many, there needs to be another way to face the mental distractions head on. This is especially true if isolation has become a frequent behavior. Below are 6 coping techniques identified by Emmie Pombo. \*\*

**Acceptance:** The first step is understanding and accepting that you have a mental condition. A person can become energetically drained trying to fight off the sub-conscious mind and accepting that they alone cannot change their condition by trying to escape it (substance abuse) or ignoring it exists.

**Practice Deep Breathing:** Many people use various breathing techniques to calm anxiety;

Pombo uses the 5-3-7 technique. Inhale for count of 5, hold for count of 3 and exhale for count of 7. According to Pombo, this style of breathing communicates with the brain that everything is (or will be) okay. Resulting in a calmer relaxed state.

**Opposite-to-Emotion Thinking:** A person acts in reverse (or opposite) of what their emotions are telling them to do. If one is feeling anxious and their energy levels are high, try meditation, or silently count backwards from 100. If the brain loses count, start again from

**The Five Senses:** Run though each of your 5 senses. Follow sequence below

* + - Stop and look around you
    - Feel where you are (sitting or standing, chair or ground, etc.)
    - Listen to the sounds around you, what do you hear?
    - Use your nose. What do you Smell?
    - Taste: find a lollipop or chewing gum

**Mental Reframing:** This is taking a current emotion or stressor and thinking about it in a different way. A good example of this would be commute traffic. It is truly your choice how this experience plays out. Do you want to spend the time angry and full of useless energy? Or can you switch that to listening to your favorite podcast, audible book, or musical artist? Do you stop and look out your window and notice how green the trees have gotten? Do you notice the way the ice accumulates on the rocks that were cut into to create the road? Is that commuter next to you a person you went to school with years ago? Without the ability to use our imagination and reframe our thoughts, we may never be able to experience the little things we often take for granted.

**Become aware of your emotions:** If you have read my previous blog post, you know that I am strong believer in facing emotions as they come up. It is well known to many that have studied and worked with people who carry mental conditions like depression and anxiety. The longer one avoids facing their emotions, the longer it will take to resolve the issues that cause/d them. Of course, one cannot control that they have a mental condition, however they can control how they respond to the emotions that come up as a result.