

Basic Ideas/Principles of Mental Health

- Scientifically, there is not good support for any one theory for what mental health is, nor for what mental problems are.
- It is helpful to remember that we are progressing, but deeply flawed beings – so problems and mistakes are normal.
- Mental health is not the natural state. In fact, mental health is abnormal and transient. It requires effort, diligence, and growth.
- It is a lifelong struggle for all, but some struggle a lot more. This “unfair distribution” makes us need each other and encourages compassion.
- Relationships and connection are key to mental health. Our struggles almost always have to do with relationships that are not meeting our expectations. Improving our ability to communicate and relate well with others improves our mental health.
- The realm of mental health is not mystical and unknowable by normal individuals. We should not fear problems in ourselves, nor fear trying to help others—just recognize that not all of our ideas are right. Don’t be afraid to talk about hard and confusing mental health issues.
- Lower mood brings distorted thinking, including distortions in memory, time, and expectations. Don’t trust all of your thoughts when you’re down.

10 Actions to Improve Your Mental Health

1. Choose action rather than being acted upon (2 Nephi 2:14)
2. Use routines and create habits (organize yourselves D&C 88:118).
3. Repent and change.
4. Keep change plans simple—one focus of change at a time. You have time, so slowly make a real change.
5. Choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong. Face the challenge in front of you.
6. Seek meaning. Believing that who you are and what you do *matters*.
7. Build relationships with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Learn their view of you and to find your worth from them.
8. Build stable relationships.
9. Go outside; be active.
10. Therapy actually helps.

Depression—a loss of Hope

- Take action-go against your desires/feelings.
- Seek friendship/connection.
- Become more aware of self-talk and challenge thoughts, beliefs, and interpretations.
- What important relationship is not currently meeting your expectations and what can you do about it?

Anxiety—taking on future pain today/now on the false premise that it decreases pain in the future.

- Some form of exposure to fear/anxiety is the best treatment.
- Challenge thoughts and experiment with beliefs. Create power statements and thought plans.
- What important relationship is not currently meeting your expectations and what can you do about it?

Addiction – behaviors we engage in when feeling a loss of control or fear of accountability that give a brief sense of control or peace, but in fact decrease control over time

- Increase the sense of control in your life through active choice
- Identify major triggers to feeling out of control and seek healing
- Accept your own inability/weakness, and turn to Christ to make up the difference between the desired you and the real you.
- Seek accountability through an accountability partner
- What important relationship is not currently meeting your expectations and what can you do about it?