

PATTERNS of Self-Care

What are PATTERNS?

Personal reflection (Prayer/Meditation)

Attention to mental health & effective skills

Tend to physical needs

Time management

Exercise

Re-charge yourself

Nutrition

Sleep



be good to yourself

Taking good care of ourselves is the first step in moving toward a goal. Each time a person's behavior takes them away from their goal, one or more elements of PATTERNS have usually not been tended to.

It is helpful to develop a plan for self-care after reviewing each element. Most of us find that we're lacking somewhere.

Simply being tired can negatively impact your progress. New behaviors are hard to adopt in the best of situations. We need all of the strength we can muster. Good self-care will help increase your chances of accomplishing your Big Hairy Goal!

What areas are you doing well in?

What areas could use more attention?

Inside this issue:

Personal reflection	2
Attention to MH skills	2
Tend to physical needs	3
Time management	3
Exercise	4
Re-charge yourself	5
Nutrition	5
Nutrition—Little changes make a big difference	6
Sleep	7
Pre / Post Assessments	8
I will statements	8
What I Got Out of This Section	8



Personal Reflection

Personal reflection can be accomplished in multiple ways. Some examples are prayer, meditation or journaling. Take some time to look back over your day and consider things like:

- ◇ Did I move toward my goals?
- ◇ Were my emotions in a stable/safe zone?
- ◇ Did I show that healthy relationships are important to me?
- ◇ Is there anything I would like to have done differently?

Personal reflection offers the ability to make needed adjustments rather quickly. This practice is proven to reduce stress, increase self-esteem and the ability to bounce back from problems.



Attention to Mental Health - Using Effective Skills

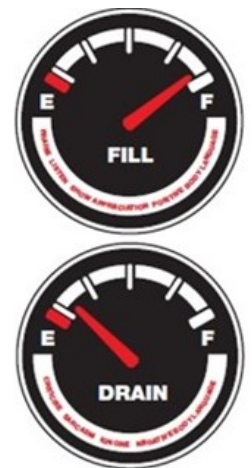


Our mental health generally remains stable when we have effective skills to manage the things we face. This means that there are many things you can do to keep symptoms at bay. The word picture "60/40" is meant to represent that doctors say no medication or program can completely fix any mental health condition. Medication can help by taking the edge off which then allows us to take responsibility by using skills. It is reported that 40% of symptoms can be treated by medication while the other 60% represents the work you will need to do.

The exception to this rule is medication that treats schizophrenia and bi-polar symptoms. Medications in these cases may provide 60% relief but we still have a 40% responsibility to engage skills to maintain stability. We will introduce tools to help build your skill level so you can manage your symptoms. It takes a lot of work but is worth the effort in the long-run. But do take all medications as prescribed. Do not stop any medication without first consulting your doctor.

Think of your mental health like a gas tank. You only have so much you can do each day. You need to find things to fill your tank with that are healthy and that you enjoy. Many people fill their tanks with unhealthy substitutes such as caffeine, sugar, carbs, etc. These things are temporary solutions and don't maintain energy.

When your mental health tank is nearing empty, you might feel stressed and become irritated easily or want to sleep. The result is not moving toward your goals and therefore making unwise choices is more likely. People often regret those choices later. Making up for lost progress can sometimes be more difficult – requiring even more energy. It is wise to maintain your mental health and often take a look at which skills you are using to get through situations. It is equally important that you pay attention to things that fill your tank and what drains your tank.



WISE MIND - WE HAVE AN 'EMOTIONAL BRAIN' AND A 'LOGIC BRAIN'. USING EITHER ON THEIR OWN ARE NOT HELPFUL. ENGAGING BOTH IS CALLED THE WISE MIND.

RESPONDING VS REACTING — REACTING IS A KNEE — JERK REACTION TO SOMETHING WHICH OFTEN IS INEFFECTIVE IN THE LONG-RUN. RESPONDING IS THINKING THROUGH HOW YOU'LL HANDLE A SITUATION. IT REQUIRES A PLAN AND IS EFFECTIVE IN THE LONG-RUN.

Tend to Physical Needs

"TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. IT'S THE ONLY PLACE YOU HAVE TO LIVE."

- JIM ROHN



Daily Care: Did you know that taking good care of your body shows that you like yourself? Those with low self-esteem or depression often ignore basic care such as brushing teeth, showering, styling hair or dressing well. Instead you will be noticed for the odor that most people do not want to be around. Spend some time every day getting your body ready for the day even if you are not going anywhere.

Preventative Care: Preventive care lets you find potential health problems BEFORE you feel sick. Preventive care can include immunizations, lab tests, physical exams and prescriptions. Men and women face many of the same issues. However, there are things to consider that are specific to each gender. Our age makes a difference as well. What a 19 year-old should watch for can be quite different than what a 50 year-old person needs to pay attention to. Knowing how well your body functions is important in all levels of care. You can avoid much of the need for treatment care if you get an annual physical or get your teeth cleaned every 6 months. Start with a daily vitamin.

Emergency Care: Another important aspect to taking care of your body is to tend to illnesses or injuries. This includes cuts/bruises, aches and pains, bites/stings, fevers and general "under the weather" feelings. If you have been active in preventative care tasks, it is likely you have established a regular doctor. This helps you as a regular primary care physician knows you and your history. He/she can therefore often intervene in serious illnesses sooner, and with better outcomes than if your regular access to medical care is the emergency room or walk-in clinic.



Time Management

We all have 24-hours in the day but we do not all manage it the same way. The best way to look at time management is balance.

- ◇ **Boredom:** Too much time on your hands can create boredom. This often leads to negative outcomes as your mind wanders – and usually toward things you had rather it not. Boredom thinking can lead to depression, sadness, or loneliness. It can lead to poor choices as you try to find anything to do to get rid of boredom.
- ◇ **Stress:** Too little time to get things done can lead to an increase in stress. Running from one activity to another causes the mind to always be "on" and have difficulty keeping up or resting.
- ◇ **Addictions:** People who struggle with addictions often are out of balance with their time. Addictions aren't just drugs and alcohol. It includes many things like work, food, shopping, cutting, drama, etc. Did you know that you can even be addicted to your problems? If your problems are something that you have always had to struggle with, they have become normal. Addressing them so that you do not have to face them anymore might leave you without something to do. Many people go right back to their problems because it is comfortable – what they have always

known. An addictive personality tends to use "substitutes" as a way to avoid life. For example, if I am uncomfortable meeting new people, I might drink to take the edge off or eat to soothe myself rather than learn new skills to get to know others.



Strategies

- ◇ Keep an activity log. Then practice personal reflection to see if you spent your time wisely.
- ◇ Make a to-do list and organize tasks. For example, group errands together based on where you need to go.
- ◇ Establish a daily/weekly schedule.
- ◇ Establish a regular routine.
- ◇ Say "No" to additional activities when overbooked.
- ◇ Find hobbies or volunteer to avoid boredom.
- ◇ Minimize distractions and interruptions.
- ◇ Match your daily activities to your goals. You'd be surprised at how much time is wasted that could move you forward.

Exercise

EXERCISE- one of the most overlooked forms of self-care. Exercise is far more than working out at the gym. Exercise can be walking with friends, playing basketball, hiking, walking a dog or anything that keeps you moving.

Like exercise, getting outside is an immediate way to improve your mood. Research has shown that children who struggle with ADHD and played outside had fewer negative symptoms than did those who played indoors after-school and on weekends. Sunshine ups your vitamin D intake. It is hard to get enough vitamin D but most people can get between 80-90% of this vitamin from being outside in the sun for roughly 15-20 minutes. (Don't forget your sunscreen.)



Research Shows....

- ⇒ In a San Francisco Bay area study of 8,023 people who were tracked for 26 years, researchers found that those who did not exercise were 1.5 times more likely to be depressed.
- ⇒ A Finnish study of 3,403 people found that those that exercised two to three times per week were less depressed, angry, stressed, and cynical.
- ⇒ A Dutch study of 19,288 twins and their families found that those who exercised were less anxious, depressed, and neurotic and were more socially outgoing.
- ⇒ A Columbia University study of 8,098 people also found a positive relationship between exercise and depression.
- ⇒ An Ohio State study found that 45 minutes of walking per day at least 5 days per week with a heart rate of 60% to 70% maximum lowered Beck Depression Inventory mean scores from 14.81 to 3.27 compared to no change for controls who were depressed non-walkers.
- ⇒ A University of Wisconsin study found that jogging was as effective as psychotherapy for moderate depression. While after one year 90% of the exercise group were no longer depressed, only 50% of the psychotherapy group were not depressed.
- ⇒ A Duke University study found that exercise was as effective as Zoloft. At their 6-month follow-up, exercise was 50% more effective in preventing relapse.

What You Can Expect

- ⇒ Controls weight
- ⇒ Promotes better sleep
- ⇒ Combats diseases
- ⇒ Boosts energy
- ⇒ Improves mood
- ⇒ Can be very fun

My Commitment

What are you willing to do this week to increase your physical activity?



Re-Charge Yourself

All of us at times feel the strain of all we have to handle in a day. Our brains and bodies benefit greatly by engaging in activities we enjoy. The result of this activity each day can boost your immune system, relieve pain, decrease depression, improves relationships, improves breathing and even helps to lose weight.

Take time each day to do things that you enjoy. Make a list of things you can do when you are feeling down or bored. The time to plan for positive things is when you're already feeling good.

If you wait until you're sluggish, odds are you won't have the energy you need to pull yourself back up. But making a plan ahead of time allows you to be ready for these unavoidable moments.



Here are suggestions for increasing leisure activities that can put a smile on your face:

- ◆ Make a list of things you like to do. Refer to it daily to make sure you are doing something positive for yourself.
- ◆ Connect with your support system. Grow your circle of friends as well.
- ◆ Make a stress-free day. Commit to NOT do things that stress you out!
- ◆ Find something you are passionate about! Try new things whether you feel like it or not. You might be surprised. Many people found their passions in places they never thought they would even enjoy.
- ◆ Learn new things. Get out of your comfort zone.
- ◆ Know your personality. Some temperaments prefer to be around people and that is how they get re-charged. (Sanguine...yellow/Choleric...red) Others prefer to have time alone in order to re-charge. (Melancholy...green/Phlegmatic...blue)
- ◆ Laugh, laugh, and laugh! Laughter is the best medicine.



LOL
is healthy!

Nutrition

If it is good for us, why does it not taste better? When making the choice between crunchy Cheetos or carrots, the pleasure center of the brain is triggered based on how you have trained it. Eating healthy is actually a habit that can be developed if you are willing to overcome the strong desire for things like sugar, carbohydrates, grease or salts.

Choosing the food we eat is a very important choice. But many people pay attention to their food choices. Like smoking, food can cause a lot of damage to our bodies, even to the point of early death. Yet poor eating habits remains the cause behind the 2nd leading cause of death in the US right behind smoking.

There are many reasons we choose foods that offer little nutritional value. Below are just a few of those.



You Are What You Eat
Make Healthy Choices

CONVENIENCE offers a quick solution when our schedules are busy or we lack the energy needed to plan, shop, prepare and clean up from a more nutritional option. But over time, choices based on convenience has consequences that add up fast.

ANXIETY causes us to seek out "comfort" foods that are high in carbs and sugar.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION motivates us to choose junk food because our willpower is at a weak point as our logic brain operates less effectively.

FOOD ADDICTIONS can develop early in life as children learn to crave more junk food that triggers the reward centers of the brain.

Little changes that make a big difference.



What are the foods that you eat and know are not healthy?

What makes it hard to think about giving up those foods?



Step 1—Meal plan

Step 2—Create shopping list

Step 3—Shop only for what is on the list

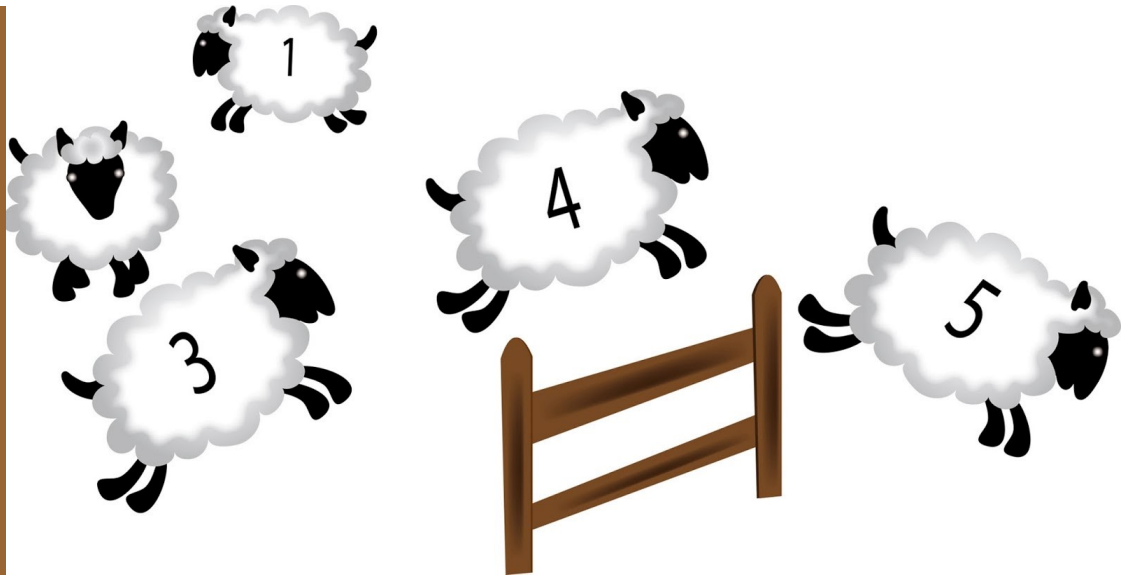
Step 4—Stick to the meal plan



Good Foods Will	Bad Foods Will
Boost your thinking power.	Accelerate the aging process.
Prevent weight gain.	Cause weight gain.
Reduce stress.	Cause digestive problems.
Give you a healthier heart.	Increase heart disease.
Decrease toxicity (fights cancer cells).	Increase toxicity (allows cancer cells).
Give you healthier bones.	Weaken joints.
Improve skin.	Increase sleep disorders.
Give energy.	Increase depression.
Increase confidence.	Increase doctor visits.
Lower cholesterol.	Shortens life expectancy.
Decrease diabetes.	Increase diabetes.

What is just one or two changes in your diet would you be willing to start with?





Sleep

Sleep is a very important part of self-care. You can actually go without food longer than you can go without sleep. Sleep resets the brain, provides closure on events in the day and prepares you to effectively handle what comes your way. Try some of these ideas to improve your sleep.

- Cut caffeine intake, and avoid drinking caffeine during the afternoon and/or on an empty stomach.
- Be sure to eat three balanced meals a day.
- Avoid sugar and other simple carbohydrates.
- Do not try too hard to go to sleep. You will only be frustrated and work yourself into an anxious state of mind. Rather tell yourself, “It is okay if I get just a few hours of sleep tonight. I will sleep better the next night.” This change in expectation will free you up enough to relax and get to sleep. The harder you try to go to sleep, the harder it will be to induce sleep.
- Do not use your bed for anything but sleep. If you can not sleep, get up and go to another room.
- Avoid drinking large quantities of liquid at night. Drinking a lot lowers the sleep threshold because you will be prone to wake up to urinate.
- Avoid bright light for at least a few hours before going to sleep. Do not work on the computer into the late evening.
- Do all your planning for the next day before you get into bed. If you think of something you need to remember, get up and write it down.
- Postpone thinking or worrying about anything until the next day.
- Avoid daytime napping. Naps steal sleep from the nighttime.
- Eat a light snack with complex carbohydrates before bed (such as foods rich in L-tryptophan).
- Avoid eating anything with sugar or salt before bed.
- Avoid protein snacks at night; protein blocks the synthesis of serotonin and promotes alertness.
- Exercise 3 to 6 hours before going to bed. A brisk walk before or after dinner is perfect.
- If noise bothers you, use earplugs or a white-noise machine.
- Avoid alcohol.
- If you are troubled by chronic insomnia, try the sleep-scheduling technique.
- Try relaxation exercises to help go to sleep or get back to sleep if you wake up during the night.

Keep your eyes set on what is ahead.

Directions:

- All questions are “behavior” based, meaning that you are rating yourself on what you “do” rather than what you “know”.
- Answer the questions below by rating yourself as follows:

0 - Does not apply to me at all.

1 - Applies sometimes, but not often.

2 - Applies to me often.

3 - I have this one down on a regular basis.

Check the boxes of the behavior you’d like to work on during this section.

Pre		Post
	I have made a personal care plan and follow it.	
	I slow down to reflect on my day. I am not worried about the thoughts that come forward.	
	I pay attention to how I respond to situations to make sure I am not being triggered.	
	I take good care of my body and make sure I have regular care support.	
	I make sure I am not too busy (anxiety) or too bored (depression).	
	I exercise regularly and am in good shape.	
	I do things to make myself laugh and enjoy most days.	
	I eat balanced meals with good nutritional habits.	
	I get at least 8 hours of sleep and sleep well through the night.	

‘I Will’ Statements

To get closer to my Big Hairy Goal, “I Will” do the following:

◇

◇

◇

◇

What I Got Out of This Section
