

Coping Strategies Treatment Plan for Mood Related Problems

Name _____ Date _____

In each box below, please place an **S** for *Success* or an **I** for *In progress* to document status of your treatment plan. Continue to track your progress daily.

- 1. Make a list** of the actions or resources that help you cope with moodiness, anxiety, depression, anger, restlessness, boredom or stagnation.

- 2. Anticipate** which times of the day, month or year cause you the greatest risk of emotional instability. Notice when nutrition, hormones and seasonal changes impair your mood.

- 3. Be proactive** in planning how you will either *prevent* or *cope* with mood swings. *Recognize your early warning signs of mood instability. Make a preventative action plan with your doctor, therapist, support group or trusted friend.*

- 4. Eliminate alcohol and marijuana.** Inform your health care professional of an inability to reduce, control or eliminate your substance abuse. Seek substance abuse treatment now. Resume this workbook once you are alcohol/drug free.

- 5. Express your feelings openly.** Express emotions through music, dance, art, spoken or written word. Practice mindfulness by listening to your thoughts.

- 6. Make plans to do something fun, relaxing, exciting or special.** Follow through with your plans even when you do not feel like it. (Caution: work within your budget!)

- 7. Practice positive thinking.** Speak lovingly to yourself. (See Chapter Five).

- 8. Reassure yourself:** *“I am not a failure, I am just depressed.” “I am not falling apart, I am just anxious.” “I can feel upset without becoming self-destructive.” “This feeling will pass. I will be okay.”*

- 9. Allow a good cry.** Accept your emotions. Tears carry no shame. Tears are your body’s natural way of releasing toxins created by stress hormones

- 10. Make a list of reasons why your mood is disturbed, then problem solve.**
 - *Cross off all reasons that are not within your control.
 - *Create a plan to address the remaining reasons.
 - *Do a reality check. Talk with yourself exactly as you would speak to a friend in the same situation. Do you exaggerate the negative? Does your affect match the situation? What are your options for problem solving?

- 11. Create a positive environment.** Brighten up your living and workspace by de-cluttering, organizing and cleaning. Caution: work within your budget! If you are not able to improve your space, consider spending time in a comfortable, soothing and familiar place such as a public library, museum or state park.
- 12. Spend time with positive people.** Seek role models. Contact trusted people for intimate conversations. Read biographies about your heroes.
- 13. Avoid negative people.** Detach from people who bring you down. Explain why you are detaching. Sometimes providing feedback to negative people sparks them into positive action. Perhaps they had no idea they were so negative and would love to be more positive with you. If your feedback offends them, they will avoid you. (Win/Win result!).
- 14. Move.** Physical activity stimulates production of the brain's "feel good" chemicals. Depressed and stressed people often complain that they cannot *EXERCISE* because they have no time, energy or willpower. Avoid that *E* word. Just move. Take the stairs. Park your car farther away from the building. Any movement trumps inertia.
- ✓ Got 15 minutes? Stretch. Reach. Bend.
 - ✓ Wash your car, sweep the steps, walk the dog.
- 15. Consider joining something:** Sadness loves loneliness. Challenge emotional upset by connecting with others through volunteering, taking a class, joining a club or attending a church or support group. Any social activity directed toward overcoming loneliness is a step in the right direction. (Well, maybe not just anything. When your mood is disturbed, avoid shopping malls, casinos, bars and "all you can eat" buffets).
- 16. Eat healthy food. Eat in moderation and feel proud you did.** Reduce sugar, fat, salt and caffeine. Discuss nutrition with your health care provider. Make a rule not to engage in binge eating or emotional eating. Excessive eating leads to self-loathing and more binging.
- 17. Practice good hygiene.** Careful grooming provides an emotional lift. Take care of your body with the same attention and affection you give to loved ones.
- ✓ Take a shower or bath daily.
 - ✓ Use deodorant or powder.
 - ✓ Brush and floss your teeth daily.
 - ✓ Apply lotion or sunscreen.
 - ✓ Wear fresh underclothes and socks each day.
 - ✓ Comb or style your hair daily. Keep it clean.
 - ✓ Tidy up the nails on your hands and feet.
 - ✓ Take medication as recommended by your physician.
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- 18. PLAY.** Use art, music, hobbies, crafts, sports, games, theater or recreation. Take time to discover your interests. What activities did you love as a child? What interests could you rekindle now? Do not let your age restrict your playfulness.

- 19. Expose yourself to natural sunlight.** Sunlight helps reduce depression. A brisk walk the first thing in the morning is a wonderful mood booster. (Use sunscreen!).

- 20. Use relaxation DVDs, CDs, M3Ps to practice meditation, deep breathing exercises or guided imagery.** Browse the internet or your local library for free and low cost community resources.

- 21. Consult your health care professional** if your mood problems last for more than two weeks and do not respond to the 20 previous coping tools.

Call for help immediately when you have thoughts of hurting yourself or others.
Keep a list of emergency numbers in or near your phone.