

You can do this. It just takes time.

Important Note

Remember that this is a long term self help guide. If any situation involves risk of harm at all then call the emergency services. You will have taken the responsible choice, can relax, think positively and talk openly. Remember that you don't have to have all of the answers and probably won't. If you say "I can't explain" or "I don't know what to do" then they are valid answers. People will listen.

Introduction

The aim of this guide is to provide a way for you to understand, analyse and overcome adverse mental health situations. In my opinion, the self awareness that you can gain from this and other techniques will empower you to not just maintain control but heal and become a stronger person. Your goal should be to deal with your problems and leave them behind you. Believe me; you don't need the baggage and you'll feel lighter, brighter and even more able to help others.

Remember that you may not need all of the help provided and it's better if you don't. In all honesty, the sooner and more simply you address any problems the better. Managing anxiety is a good place to start. Talking to someone can be as useful as reading about stress and related disorders and is more enjoyable.

The person you choose to talk to is important. This could be family, a friend or even a therapist or doctor. Be certain to choose someone who you trust, is a good and patient listener and likely to respond positively to your needs. It needn't be formal or too focused; a simple question or two in a normal social conversation can be ideal. A good opinion and reassurance can do the world of good.

Remember to remain calm always. There are two other really important helpers that can be invaluable to you. Firstly, focus on why you want to cope and set a rock, an immovable object such as the love you hold for family, friends, people as a whole or even yourself. In itself, thinking about this is good for you so be positive. You are worthwhile. Secondly, don't panic and remember that time is your friend. Any important decision is worth making well and the calmer you are and the more time you take, the more likely you are to come up with the right answer. This approach works well across a range of MH concerns so keep it in mind. Remember that if you're upset or stressed then it shows that you care; not a bad trait to have by the way but try to stay calm and work through your problems. You may well be fortunate enough to have more than one rock and let's be honest, the more the merrier. Positivity will help here.

The ideal for this guide is that it is proactive and can prevent serious issues but intervention at any point is welcome. Remember that stress is a part of life, ubiquitous, yet can be managed before, during and after situations. Preparation is key here.

You will hear and read a range of opinions as you experience stress on how to cope and overcome. Some will be useful and some nonsense. Remember that it's your health and your opinions that matter. Anything in this work that you don't agree with just ignore. Choose what makes sense to you. Peace of mind is vital for good and lasting wellbeing. Indeed, choose what works best for you and write your own guide. It is cathartic and will help you to avoid relapses or minimise their impact and duration. Happiness is your goal.

As you go through the process you will likely feel better and want to open up and talk to people more. This is healthy and will give you a lift but remember if you don't feel like talking then don't. Take life at your own pace and put yourself in control.

If you find this leaflet / book helpful then tell your friends. Reading it may help them to support you through any problems. Effectively, you'll be speaking the same language and it will help them to understand you more clearly.

A Personal Note That You Might Consider Important

Regarding belief structures, in my opinion as long they're positive then they are beneficial. If you don't follow faith then that's fine. You will have other important things in your life and these are a reason to get well or stay well. These are your rocks.

Personally, I am a Theist and have a very simple belief structure that God is perfect good and that you should do good. The latter is healthy for you anyway. I find this to be very comforting during dark times and a positive influence when times are good as well. This is not necessary though. Your way of life, your *raison d'etre* can as mentioned include yourself, your family, friends and even your personal goals.

If you have faith then great but if not, then don't worry. As long as you have that rock that guides you through then it's not important. I just find that it helps me.

Stress and Trauma; Cause and Effect. We are human after all.

Having seen positive results, I would wholeheartedly recommend trauma therapy to anyone as a key to healing. In fact, I would go one further and teach people how to manage trauma before they experience it. A simple lesson or two could avert serious personal distress and even broader medical, societal and financial consequences. I'm sure we all remember a few useless facts from school but were never prepared for some of the most important and traumatic times in our lives. It doesn't have to be like that.

However, assume that you're going through or have been through trauma without this help. What do you do? Thankfully, there are many resources out there that can help: books, webpages even trauma groups and direct therapy. The first step though is to analyse the process. I will give a simple guide and my own opinions on this. In addition, further on there will be specific guidance for a range of aspects of MH conditions that may help you understand and/or cope with these. The ideal is not to cope but to learn, adapt and leave these conditions as a thing of your past. Remember that practice makes perfect here and that it's never too late to heal. Once these methods become natural, you recover your old self and hopefully improve on that. It is possible.

Always remember to take the time to think, keep it simple and cling to something positive. Obviously, the more complex a situation becomes then the harder it is to deal with. If you're struggling then saying no to someone could be the right thing to do. Stay strong and calm and be yourself. Early action will help and don't bottle it up. Talking to someone wise and trusted will help.

The overall process in short.

The goal is to understand trauma, heal, safeguard against future issues and be a source of wisdom to someone else. Truly rewarding.

When you've mastered this, not coping and just coping become being able to cope and importantly a return to happiness. Mastering this is a personal process so you have to go through the steps, either alone or with appropriate guidance. Personally, I found it easier to do self help as I could explore from my own perspective which is very important and there was no timescale and therefore no time pressure. Whatever works for you. Remember that you may have suffered trauma for years so taking a day or week off from active therapy really isn't a problem. As long as the overall progress is good and that you remain positive then stick with it. Revisiting trauma can be disturbing but the rewards are enlightening. The process is fluid in that you may make progress and then have a setback but remember that you're learning to improve and looking to become your true self. A pen and paper aren't even optional. Capture your thoughts and work through them methodically and logically in your own time.

Remember that you're taking control so that you can enable the best possible outcome for you. The process is mainly about you. Time to put yourself first. Trauma is real yet so are the benefits of therapy. You will realise that you're not to blame, your self confidence will improve, your ability to cope will as well and you'll start to feel better. In fact, you'll look back and think that I have come through it and that's heroic. Remember to praise yourself every now and again. It might just bring a smile to your face.

The goal of the process is for normality and coping to become natural. What you let go of, you neither need nor want. What you will be left with is so worthwhile. You may have amends to

make, relationships to rebuild, perhaps find a new job. You're putting yourself in the best position to do all of this and more. It just takes time and remember that time is your friend.

Stage 1: Pre trauma characteristics.

The real you.

Stage 2: Rumination.

The hard part. Reliving the past. Believe me, it's worth it.

Stage 3: Event centrality.

How you want to improve your life and ability to cope.

Stage 4: Control.

Putting into action the ways to improve.

Stage 5: Mastery.

Post trauma return to self. Older, wiser and able to cope.

Reference: <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/trauma-recovery#takeaway>

Step 1: who you really are. Pre-trauma normality.

This one is simple and one of the most positive steps in the process. You analyse how you were before things started to go wrong. Be positive and kind to yourself. List your attributes here. It will give you a lift. You may feel bad now but this is the real you. You can regain this and even more, leave room for improvement. For example, were you kind, considerate, respectful, perhaps a good sense of humour and comfortable with people. The list is up to you, only you know

yourself that well. I would expect that you'll read through it and realise that you're a good person who's been through a difficult time. Conquering the difficulties leads us to the next steps.

Step 2: Rumination. Oh my life, do I have to go through it again?

The answer is yes and it might not be easy but you're investing in your future here. Basically you are asking what's wrong so that I can look into it and decide what I want to fix. Prioritization may be important here: high risk problems with high impact first then allow the rest to follow. If all goes well, you may be left with low risk, low impact problems but remember that nobody's life is perfect so be realistic. Expect flashbacks, remembered stress and anxiety but take it at your own pace and stay in control of the process. You may experience this in your life anyway so what have you got to lose?

Step 3: Event Centrality. What you want happen.

Another list but again positive. You're asking what you want to improve in your life and if you commit to this then you should believe that you can make it right. Again, it's a personal process and only you know what's really wrong and this differs from person to person. It may be simple niggling anxiety that you don't want anymore, depression that you want to heal from or perhaps a more serious MH condition. While it varies, the process can help all of these and by the way so can you. You may well be feeling more positive by now. Willpower will be a well remembered friend, perhaps long lost but if so then it's time to welcome it back. You CAN do this. Be prepared for setbacks and learn but as things start to turn in your favour, you will gain positivity and this will help with the next victory. It's self sustaining and accelerates. Stay in control and you will a higher level of being where stability and happiness are realised. Take a quick moment to think back to Stage 1 and the first list and you will realise that you're really starting to make progress. Carry this positivity forward with you.

Stage 4: Control. When it starts kicking in.

So, now you know what the problems are so start implementing ways to solve them or learn to accept them. Not every problem can be solved but most can and every burden that you lift makes you more able to tackle the next. It all got too much so take a calm step back, take time and take on one problem at a time. Time is on your side. Remember, there is also nothing wrong with asking for help at all. Most people will jump at the chance to help.

Be realistic of course but more than anything be positive. Relax, take time to adjust, keep it real and stay strong. Praise yourself and let people know that you're doing well. They will be happy and that will give a lift.

Stage 5: Mastery. When practice becomes perfect or at least close enough.

At this point, you will be more your old self and able to cope with problems more easily. In fact, your ability to overcome stress and health issues should leave you more confident. Take time to feel proud of yourself. Be vigilant but overall be relaxed and positive. You know that you can solve life's problems. It will help You become the very best version of yourself. You may also be able to help others.

Specific Health Problems and Methods of Coping and Healing.

Unfortunately there are more serious mental illnesses but remember the fundamentals. Your rock is your rock or preferably your rocks are your rocks (this will improve in time and with realisation), time is still your friend and no is still a valid answer. Follow these rules and you'll be able to say crisis, what crisis? You can cope with or indeed heal from these conditions and you need to know that. Maybe, we can cope? Help is out there. You will need self confidence, willpower, dreams and ambitions but you have those. If you don't think so ask why, think about and think why not adjust what you would like or even yes of course I do. Be positive, realistic, calm and patient.

More serious illnesses obviously cannot be treated lightly but you may be aware of that already. That being said, they are not insurmountable if you are clear in your objectives, patient and set your goals sensibly both in terms of what you would like to achieve and how long it may take. Go easy on yourself and say it could take a long time but anything shorter than that is a bonus. In fact, any improvement is more than welcome.

It's worth noting that much of this short book (it's value is in being concise) has focused on trauma and therapy but most of these following strategies, which are most likely to be already known in the literature, are valid coping strategies whether or not one finds help from trauma

therapy or not and they do work to some extent regardless. For me, the trick is turning them into second nature and becoming a stronger, fitter and even better person.

It's worth noting that whatever your health issue, there are similarities between how you manage mental health problems. Fundamentally, it's about what and how you think and you have the ability to control this. The greater control that you have over your thoughts then the more able you will be to tackle the actual problems and improve your life.

Depression

Life events happen and take a variety of forms. Depression should be seen as a sign that you care but don't let it control you. It needn't last and time heals. There are positive steps that you can take to coping. Focus on positives and time will help you to heal.

Focus on what you do have. Count your blessings, again make a list and perhaps look through some photos. Choose things that make you feel happy. Focus on good memories. Perhaps think "I remember the time when I or we.... ". Talk to family and friends about these good memories as it can be a way to start a good conversation and lift your mood. It's refreshing and a good way to break isolation if you are struggling to talk.

Treat yourself every now and again. Don't go to excess but give yourself something to look forward to and occasionally be spontaneous.

Be positive. You may feel lonely but people want to know you. Get in touch and maybe invite them round for coffee or even go out socially when you feel up to it.

Do your best to keep to a good routine and look after yourself. Try to eat regularly and focus on establishing or keeping a good sleep pattern. There is help available if this is difficult.

You know the cause of depression. Perhaps it's something that you can't change such as bereavement so here you will focus on getting through and healing as best as you can. Perhaps it's a situation that you can change. Just remember to remain calm, take time to think and make decisions that put yourself first. It may be a conflict resolution where both parties can agree and move forward positively.

Again, If you have more than one problem then prioritise. Try to tackle other mental health problems separately if possible and seek assistance if necessary.

Anxiety.

Human beings are caring and so naturally anxiety is normal but don't let it rule you. Treat it as a sign that something in your life needs to change.

Change what you can and accept what you can't change until you're able to. Not all problems can be solved straightaway but be positive and make a plan of what you want to change and think. Most problems don't just go away or disappear with a click of your fingers. Remain calm and stay in control. Keep a special place in your mind where nothing can bother you. Meditation or other relaxation techniques may help.

Balance has a place here. Focus on doing positive things as well and keep a sense of perspective. This will help you to feel happier and will give you a respite from life's problems. Support groups are available but if possible family and friends will be the best support that you can get.

Talking to people when you feel comfortable will be a great help. It can offer solidarity and they may even help you solve the problem. You are not alone so reach out.

Anxiety can be a pathway to more serious problems so remember to take control of it as soon as possible.

Paranoid thoughts.

This can be very damaging and should be dealt with as soon as possible as it can be insidious and very destructive to your mindset, relationships and so forth. However, it can be managed and overcome. If there is any risk or you're at all concerned of being unable to cope then that is the time to seek help. If safe to do so and you feel comfortable then talk to a friend or family member. A sensible and pleasant conversation could set your mind at rest and enable you to clear your mind. If this doesn't help or if you're uncomfortable then please seek professional help. Whoever you talk to make sure that you take time to think clearly, discuss sensibly and work through it with a view to returning to rational thought. Recovery is very important so make sure that you take as much time as you need and make sure that you feel at ease with any advice or treatment.

The causes may vary and can include a basis in reality but you need to remain grounded. Focus on your rocks and take time. Slow down your thinking and make sure that you take safe, sensible and positive decisions. Your recovery is paramount due to the damaging nature of these thoughts. Rethinking can be very useful here and a clear head is imperative. Retain insight, be calm and question any thoughts that make you uncomfortable. Determine external stressors and identify

and manage the internal stressors. ie your emotional and mental responses to these. These external stressors may or may not be real but your primary responsibility is to keep a clear head. Your entire existence is based on your perceptions and beliefs so you really need to take care to remain healthy and well balanced.

It's time to take a step back mentally and remember that time really is your friend here. Be patient and try to put things into context. You may be hypersensitive and reactive to a single word or look. If you're struggling with this, be calm and listen patiently. If you misread something or are uncomfortable then you can ask someone to repeat what they were saying or perhaps say can we talk about something else. Remember to keep that calm and safe place in your mind. If it's too much, take a timeout and try to relax in a comfortable space.

There are ways to manage this, including rationalizing your thoughts and returning to a healthy mindset. Perhaps you will need time for this but there are very few decisions that absolutely have to be made straight away. Time again. Distraction techniques including CBT, your comfort zone and thinking about your rocks will help. Ask yourself if what you're thinking about is that important, calm yourself and if it is then work through it at your own pace in a way that makes you feel comfortable. Remember that simply ignoring a situation or your own thoughts about it is an option. There is no onus on you to solve every problem and most often you don't have to have the answer immediately. If it's that important then the more clearly you think about it the better. Take time and stay calm. If necessary, seek advice. You're not on your own.

If you believe that there is a basis for your thoughts then discuss this as openly as you feel comfortable. Remember that it may be based on anxiety that has gotten out of hand and takes you on the anxiety, fear, paranoia pathway. Tackle the problem at its root cause or causes and manage your way back to rational thoughts. Rethink, stay grounded and focus on the desired outcome; that you become and remain well. Don't feel guilty about your thoughts as it won't help. If things went too far then you may have upset someone but most people will respond well to an explanation and apology.

Overall though the key is that you conquer these thoughts and stop anything similar in future. Learn any lessons, give yourself time, be positive and be wary of how you think but don't worry too much. Remember that this way of thinking can be made a thing of the past and you won't miss it in the slightest. Keep in mind how you think when well or under less stress and similarly to trauma therapy make that mindset your goal. It may be useful to capture your thoughts and

work methodically on ways to recover. Logical work such as this can give you a framework to gain control.

Stay safe, calm, patient, keep it real and focus on how best to achieve and maintain a healthy and positive mindset.

Psychosis.

In a very similar way, perception is key here and the coping strategies and paths to recovery and wellness are very similar to those that apply to paranoid thoughts or any form of unacceptable belief. Re-read the previous chapter for help. Keep in mind that time will help, keep your safe spaces, both physical and mental, remember your rocks and remind yourself of your healing goals. Write your own guide and follow it. Simply writing your problems down will help you to think them through and evaluate how to overcome them. It has the added benefit of slowing down and focusing your thought processes. Once you have a coping strategy then expand it to include how you would like to be and feel. This can give you control and a way to achieve sustained happiness and a life of contentment. Logical analysis of your thought structure at your own pace and in your own time will help you to develop strategies to get well and stay well. Stay calm and strong.

Mania.

In my experience, mania is the consequence of other unprocessed, underlying problems so the answer is to tackle them at source and relax. This can be a form of escapism gone wrong. If you begin to lose perspective, balance and focus then slow down, remain calm and revisit coping techniques. Plan your way back to a normal and comfortable mental state.

Intrusive, associative thoughts, flashbacks and racing thoughts.

Keep your mental health as your first priority and put these into perspective. There is an old saying that is appropriate here. Is it good, is it necessary and is it kind? If not then it's not worth bothering with.

An intrusive thought or flashback may be a single mental image. Most likely it will lack any context and is therefore useless in terms of logical thought. So, it's ambiguous, unwanted, not good for your health and ultimately damaging or simply a waste of your good time. You don't need it so focus and move on.

Associative thoughts are likely memory based associations to life experiences. An example would be that a situation existed that caused you concern and you associate it with a negative experience or thought pattern. A similar situation or aspects of a situation may lead to anxiety. Unchecked, this can lead to negativity and reliving trauma. Find ways to break the cycle; focus on what's important, move on and think it doesn't have to be like that and be positive.

Racing thoughts can be a microcosm of mania. Rather than events, your thoughts are moving at an uncomfortable or unmanageable rate. Remember time; yes your old friend time. Slow down, there's no pressure and you're better off finding your comfort zone and rethinking rationally. Prioritise your thoughts, work through them methodically and relax. Good decisions take time and rational thought. If the influences or data are wrong then you'll come to the wrong conclusion. Take a step back; if it isn't important then forget it, if it is then you can always come back to it. Very few decisions require an instant response. The same applies to your thoughts as does to a conversation. In a discussion, one of the most intelligent answers is let me think about it. The same applies with internal discussions and this is what most thought processes are. What should I do, what aspects are important, when should I do such etc? If it's all going too quick then slow it down. Some situations don't have right or wrong answers so talk about them if it helps.

How you cope with these phenomena depends on you and you'll learn how to cope in a range of situations. Ignoring them, distraction techniques, grounding techniques and returning to your comfort zone may apply. You decide but stay positive and confident. Problems are there to be solved if possible to do so. If not, learn to cope until you're able to.

Other problems.

This treatment isn't exhaustive but there are other problems people experience. However, many of the simple principles here will apply. At it's most basic, mentality is simply a range of thoughts and emotions assembled together into an experience that can be expressed. Diligence

and discipline of thought will make that experience positive and welcome. Opinions matter but good opinions matter most whether they're related to mental health or everyday normal life.

Perhaps the best way to deal with these problems is to have the tools that you need should the need arise but more importantly focus on life's positives. Put in their place, which is nowhere at all if you can manage it, mental health problems don't have the right to rule or ruin your life. However you heal or even improve, better mental health is a choice and ultimately is up to you. Help is there for you.

That balanced state of mind

Hopefully, you will be well or on your way to becoming well. Personally, at the time of writing I am recovering and feel good for it. The ideal is for your own guide to become second nature, your coping strategies there if you need them and for a more positive and relaxed way of life to be ahead of you. Something to be grateful for and pleased about.

A good thing to do at this point is to leave the process in the background and focus on real life goals and methods, what you want to achieve and how. Be realistic but positive. A list including both of these can be your to do list but remember that there's more to life than just this list. It's an aid to a better life and not a set of hard and fast rules. You set a list of objectives to overcome difficulties in the trauma therapy section. There will be similarities but this list should focus

solely on positive goals and methods rather than corrective actions. It's a fresh page in a new chapter.

Perspective

Don't worry about mental health. Tackle it, talk about it. Remember, the best way to achieve good wellbeing is to maintain a healthy routine, socialise, be positive and make good health a reality. Don't expect life to be easy but take time to do the things that make you happy. Make time for yourself. Sometimes this might take effort and it might not always work but it's worth persevering.

Remember this just my guide and I really hope it helps. Please write your own. It's cathartic, helps you to understand and overcome any problems or guard against them. It's the best form of personalised medicine. Good health and good luck.