

# What Helps the Person with Mental Health Problems

Here are some suggestions for coping with their mental health problems collected from people who are living with them. As with any list, not every suggestion will work with every person.

## **Professional / Peer Help**

- Psychotherapy with a therapist trained to know how to discover and deal with psychological problem areas.
- Effective medication in an effective dosage prescribed by a psychiatrist. If a medication isn't working for you, work with your doctor to find another medication or therapy that works.
- Join a peer support group.
- Consider adding alternative therapies to your treatment plan. Ex: Acupuncture, Acupressure, Dance therapy, Art therapy, Music therapy, Tai Chi, Yoga...
- Help someone else, especially someone with problems similar to yours.
- Work with a counselor to identify and make progress toward career goals
- Attend a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) group if there is one in your area.

## **Personal Care**

- Eat a good solid balanced diet.
- Little or no caffeine
- No alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant and often interferes with medication.
- Get plenty of rest. If you can't sleep, ask your doctor for something to help you sleep.

## **Stress Management**

- Exercise. Elevate the heart rate for 15-30 minutes a day, with your doctor's permission. Examples: walking, jogging, aerobics, swimming ...
- Avoid getting over-committed in time to any activities, so that you feel overwhelmed.

## **Emotional Self Awareness**

- Learn how to recognize warning signs of a coming episode of mental health trouble and take immediate action to head it off or minimize it. Involve your family so they can help you.
- Do something to make you laugh, cry, or get angry in a safe place. Ex: watch a sad movie and cry.

## **Life Enrichment**

- Indulge in some creative activity. Ex: music, drawing, painting, crafts, creative writing, weaving
- Take an adult school class: swimming, art, history ...
- Engage in volunteer work
- Continue to be active with friends and make efforts to develop friendships
- Seek out helpful relatives

## **Spirituality**

- Learn how to love yourself as an individual, spiritually and creatively. There is no one else on Earth quite like you.
- Meditation. 15-60 minutes of quiet listening to your heartbeat and breathing. Caveat: This can be disturbing for people who are psychotic. If so, don't use meditation, guided or silent.

\* **Disclaimer:** These suggestions are not professional medical advice, just things that have worked for real people living with mental health difficulties and their families.