

6 Steps to Emotional Health

1. **Sleep** - 7 to 9 hours nightly
 - Stop using all electronics (TV, computer, phone, etc.) at least 30 minutes before you try to go to sleep;
 - Read a book or magazine just before going to sleep (to get your mind off the concerns of the day).
2. **Eat** – at least 3 times a day (something with nutritional value); don't go long periods of time without eating.
3. **Exercise** – move around a little more than you do now, aiming for 20-30 minutes or more, most days
 - Exercise is mood-regulating and anxiety-reducing, (& can be done in 10 minute chunks).
4. **Daily Pleasant Activities** – do something pleasant everyday, & pay attention to it while you're doing it
 - Put your mind on the pleasant activity (instead of the *worry* or *sad thoughts*), & redirect your attention back to the pleasant activity as many times as you need to.
5. **Slow, deep, rhythmic Breathing** – @ 5 minutes or more each day, breathing in *calm*/breathing out *tension*
 - Maybe breathe to music, or use a phone app or website like *calm.com* or **Stop, Breathe & Think** for 2 or more minutes daily.

6. **Mindful Thinking** – It's healthy to bring our attention to the present moment as often as we can. The 4 steps to Mindful Thinking:

Step 1: Notice your thoughts. Thoughts come and go like clouds in the sky (that's the nature of thoughts). When you find yourself thinking a *worry thought* or a *sad thought*, **you don't have to keep thinking about it.** It's not always the right time to think about issues or problems.

Step 2: Allow yourself to gently **Let Go** of your *wandering, worry, or sad thoughts*, without judging the thoughts or yourself, or struggling with the thoughts.

Step 3: Then **Find a Different Focus**, gently redirecting your attention to something else, like:

- an image (maybe your pet, or a relaxing or beautiful place), or
- a word (maybe *relax*, or *calm*), or
- your breath, a puzzle, 1 of your 5 senses (like the taste of a mint). *You'll get better the more you practice!*

Step 4: Maybe, **set aside a time** to think about the issue or problem that was bothering you:

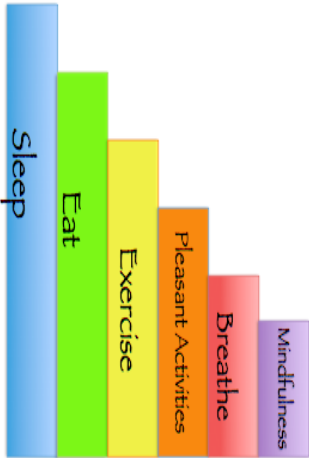
- for 30 minutes or less, during daytime hours, maybe 1-2 times during the week, followed by an activity to bring your thoughts back to now (instead of the problem).
- When your mind wanders to the problem or issue later in the day, notice it, gently let it go, Find another Focus.

6 Steps Daily Self-Care Checklist

	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1. Sleep:							
2. Eating							
3. Exercise:							
4. Daily Pleasant Activity							
5. Calm Breathing							

6. Mindful Thinking							

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