

THE ART OF MENTAL HEALTH

A Mental Health Newsletter

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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NEW YEAR, NEW YOU?

The beginning of the year is always a reflective time for us all. If you are making resolutions, I want to challenge you to use the start of the year to make reflections instead. Reflect on 2023 (what you learned, what it taught you about yourself etc). As humans we should operate on the schedule of nature, which says right now is for hibernation and preparation and goals and new beginnings should start in the Spring when things are blooming again. Make plans so you can attack your goals when Spring gets here.

IN THIS ISSUE

GOAL PLANNING

We will explore preparing and planning our goals in a way that it's attainable and not overwhelming.

COPING SKILLS

We will continue to explore different coping skills and how to manage our emotions.

MENTAL HEALTH FACTS VS MYTHS

We will explore mental health facts vs myths.



Goal Planning

FOCUS ON THE SMALL STEPS FIRST

Sometimes when creating goals, we can get caught up in focusing on the end. Goal planning is all about the small details and steps to get to the overall goal at the end of the tunnel. On this page you will find 3 things you can do to help break down your goals so it doesn't feel overwhelming.

1. Create SMART Goals

You want to make sure all goals you create are SMART goals.

Specific: Your goals should be specific and narrow to eliminate them being vague and for easier planning.

Measurable: Make sure you can measure the progression of your goal.

Achievable: You should be able to realistically accomplish the goal in the time frame you are desiring.

Relevant: Make sure your goal aligns with your long term values and plans.

Time-based: You should set a realistic time frame to accomplish your goal.



2. Create Quarterly Goals

Create goals at the beginning of each quarter of the year. This helps break down your goals throughout the year so you're not focused on a million goals at once. This can relieve some of the pressure that stops people from starting their goals because they are overwhelmed and unsure how to start. Don't focus so much on achieving the goal that you lose sight of the journey it will take to get there. Create 2 small goals throughout the year at the beginning of every quarter.



3. Create 3 mini goals for each quarterly goal

One of the reasons we never start on our goals is because it can feel like a daunting task. To help relieve this pressure, after creating your quarterly goals it's best to then create 3 mini goals (goals that will help you achieve your overall quarterly goal). After creating your mini goals, you then want to create an action plan for each mini goal. Below is how you would break it down.

Quarterly Goal

Mini Goal

Action Items for Mini Goal





Mental Health Facts vs Myths

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1. Mental health only refers to mental illness.

a. This is a myth. *Mental health is the overall term for your mental well-being. Everyone has to nurture their mental health, but not everyone will be diagnosed with a mental illness. When the term mental health is used, it is talking about your overall mental well-being.*

2. Mental Health problems are a sign of weakness.

a. This is a myth. *There are many reasons people struggle with their mental health. Some include life experiences and trauma.*

3. Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental illnesses in America.

a. This is a fact. *If you are diagnosed with anxiety, know that you aren't alone.*

4. Over half of adults (56%) who are diagnosed with a mental illness do not attempt to receive treatment.

a. This is a fact. *There is a stigma with receiving treatment, so a lot of people don't try to get help. Know that there is no shame in getting the help that you need.*

Coping Skills

Coping Skills are defined as behaviors people partake in to help manage internal and external stressful situations. Coping skills are used to deal with and process emotions. Each individual will have different coping skills that will help them regulate their mood. The key in finding a coping skill that works for you is to be proactive (so practice your coping skills when you are not at a heightened emotion state), and to try different things. Not everyone will find coping skills that work for them on the first try, so it's imperative to keep trying until you find something that works for you.



TYPES OF COPING SKILLS

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

Tools for identifying and expressing your feelings.

Ex: Journaling

DISTRACTION

Tools for taking your mind off the problem.

Ex: Reading, puzzles, exercising, crafts

GROUNDING

Tools for centering yourself and staying present.

Ex: Meditation, yoga, 5 senses check-in

SELF-SOOTHING

Tools for comforting yourself through your 5 senses.

Ex: Music, bubble bath, stress ball, candles

COGNITIVE CHALLENGE

Tools for pushing back against negative thoughts.

Ex: "What are the facts?"

CRISIS PLANNING

Tools for staying safe when coping skills aren't enough.

Ex: Crisis line, safety plan, therapist, 911

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Read the graphic for more information about different types of coping skills. What type of coping skills work best for you?