

BACES

STEPS TO POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH: Cover all bases!

- **B**ODY
- **A**CHIEVE
- **C**ONNECT
- **E**NJOY
- **S**TEP BACK

BODY: Self Care

Taking good care of our physical body means we will be better able to cope with emotional problems



- Take steps to ensure you get enough sleep
- Eat healthily and regularly
- Exercise regularly, preferably in an outside/natural space
- Plan rest times too
- Beware of how things like drink, drugs, smoking and caffeine affect you

ACHIEVE

Our brain gets a boost when we achieve things during the day. Achievement increases the neurotransmitter dopamine and purposeful activity increases serotonin.

It is therefore very helpful to plan realistic and achievable goals every day, such as those concerning work, chores and study, but we can also set goals and achieve activities relating to Connecting to others and Enjoyment and Exercise.

CONNECT

Very often when we're struggling with our mental health, we can withdraw and isolate ourselves and neglect our relationships.



However, connecting with and/or helping others boosts the neurotransmitter oxytocin which will boost our wellbeing. So plan to connect with other people every day, particularly with close friends and/or family, but also with the local community.

It may just be smiling and saying hello to strangers in the street or at the corner shop.

You might consider helping out with a voluntary organisation, or find a local support group. You can find out what is available locally from the internet, or at your local library or citizen's advice bureau.

It's important to connect face to face, but as a first step, or additionally, we can connect to others via the internet.

ENJOY

When our mood dips and we feel tired, or we withdraw and isolate ourselves, the first things we stop doing are the fun and enjoyable activities. We tend to keep doing those things that drain and deplete us, but neglect those that we enjoy and which energise and nourish us.

Read more about [nourishing vs depleting](http://www.m.get.gg/energisingdraining.htm) activities here (www.m.get.gg/energisingdraining.htm)

Aim to do more enjoyable activities. Maybe something you used to enjoy doing (e.g. hobby or sport), or something you've thought you would like to do. It might be something outdoors, or with other people, or maybe just on your own at home.

Add more colour into your life!

If you need more ideas, see the [distract](http://www.m.get.gg/distract.htm) page (www.m.get.gg/distract.htm)

STEP BACK

When we feel emotional, we get caught up in that emotion - it is difficult to think clearly and see the bigger picture at those times - and we react by doing things that are unhelpful.

It seems like doing those things help at the time, but by reacting the same way all the time, we just keep the problem going. (About [CBT](http://www.m.get.gg/cbt.htm) - www.m.get.gg/cbt.htm). We can learn to react and think differently! Follow these links and practise the skills:

- **STOPP** www.m.get.gg/stopp.htm
- Is this **Fact or Opinion?** www.m.get.gg/factopinion.htm
- **Different Perspectives** www.m.get.gg/perspectives.htm
- **The Helicopter View** www.m.get.gg/perspectives.htm
- **Positive Coping Statements** www.m.get.gg/positive.htm
- **Mindfulness** www.m.get.gg/mindfulness.htm
- **Breathe** www.m.get.gg/breathe.htm
- **NOW** www.m.get.gg/now.htm
- **Flexible Thinking** www.m.get.gg/flex.htm
- Take care of yourself and treat yourself as you would treat a friend. Be kind to yourself and use compassionate and understanding self-talk.



Use the [Weekly Planner](http://www.get.gg/docs/WeeklyPlanner.pdf) sheet to plan your days (www.get.gg/docs/WeeklyPlanner.pdf). Set time aside every evening or early morning to set your daily goals, then you can tick them off at the end of the day.

More about [ACE Activity](http://www.m.get.gg/ace.htm) www.m.get.gg/ace.htm

Include practising the new skills as part of your daily goals! It's important that you read, re-read, and practise using the skills, so that when you really NEED them, you'll be able to use them effectively.