



One of the most frustrating stages of recovering your health is when you realize that you can do many things to help yourself stay well but you can't figure out a way to do them regularly. It is easy to forget simple things, especially when you are under stress or when your symptoms are beginning to flare up. The Action Plan for Prevention and Recovery was devised by people who experience emotional or psychiatric symptoms. It was developed to help provide structure in lives that actively supports health. APPR is simple, low-cost, and can be changed and added to over time as you learn more and more. Anyone can develop and use these plans for any kind of health concern.

People using this system report that by being prepared and taking action as necessary, people feel better more often and gave improved the overall quality of their lives dramatically.

One person said, "Finally, there's something I can do to help myself."

Action Planning for Prevention and Recovery works because:



- it is easy to develop and easy to use
- is individualized; you develop your plan for yourself- no one else can do it for you; however, you can reach out to others for assistance and support
- it can improve your ability to communicate effectively with your family members and health care providers
- it directly addresses the feelings, symptoms, circumstances, and events that are most challenging to you with plans to respond when they occur
- it renews your sense of hope that things can AND will get better, let you have control over your life and the way that you feel

WELLNESS TOOLBOX



In the space below, develop your Wellness Toolbox. Identify and list the things you use to help yourself feel better when you are having a hard time. Some of them are things you know you must do, like eating healthy meals and drinking plenty of water. Other ideas could be things you choose to do to help yourself feel better. You can get more ideas for your Wellness Toolbox by noticing the good things you do as you go through your day, by asking your friends and family members for suggestions, and by looking into self-help resource books. Write down everything, from really easily accessible things, like taking deep breaths, to things you only do once in a while, like getting a massage.

In the left column, some ideas are listed for you to consider adding to your Wellness Toolbox. In the right column, continue brainstorming ideas for your Wellness Toolbox.



IDEAS

- Make a list of your accomplishments
- Repeat positive affirmations
- Spend 10 minutes writing down everything positive about you
- Take a warm bath
- Attend a support group
- Check-in with your healthcare provider
- Listen to music, make music, sing
- Do something special for someone else
- Do something you enjoy (like watching a favorite TV show, knitting, or reading)
- Talk to a friend
- Meditate or journal



MY WELLNESS TOOLBOX

DAILY MAINTENANCE PLAN: DAILY LIST

In the space below, describe those things you need to do every day to maintain your wellness. Use your Wellness Toolbox for ideas. Writing these things down and reminding yourself daily to do them is an important step toward wellness. When you start to feel "out of sorts," you can often trace it back to "not doing" something on this list. Make sure you don't put so many things on this list that you couldn't possibly do them all.



Remember, this is a list of things you must do, not things you would choose to do. Some ideas are listed in the left column. Feel free to use some of these ideas and change the amounts (time, quantity, frequency) to meet your own needs.



IDEAS FOR DAILY LIST

- eat meals and snacks that include a variety of food
- drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of water
- get exposure to outdoor light for at least 30 minutes
- take medications and vitamin supplements
- have 20 minutes of relaxation or meditation time or write in journal for at least 15 minutes
- spend at least half an hour enjoying a fun, affirming, and/or creative activity
- check in with my partner for at least 10 minutes
- check in with myself: "how am I doing physically, emotionally, spiritually?"
- go to work if it's a workday



MY DAILY LIST

DAILY MAINTENANCE PLAN: DREAMS & GOALS



Some people use their plans to make a list of their dreams and goals, too. If you think you would find it helpful, make a list of goals you could work toward. You can write down far-fetched goals or more easily achievable ones. It is really helpful to remember your goals and dreams so you always have something to look forward to. Then, you can identify steps to take to achieve them and incorporate these small steps into your daily maintenance plan.

DAILY MAINTENANCE PLAN: DO I NEED TO...?

In the space below, make a reminder list for yourself of things you might need to do. Check the list each day to ensure that you do those things that you need to do sometimes to keep yourself well. This list can help you avoid a lot of the stress that comes from forgetting occasional but important tasks.



IDEAS FOR FOR POSSIBLE REMINDERS

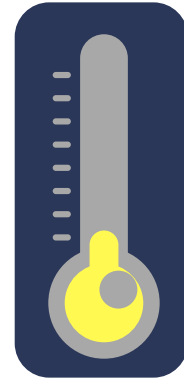
- set up an appointment with one of my health care professionals
- spend time with a good friend or be in touch with my family
- do peer counseling
- do some housework
- buy groceries
- do the laundry
- have some personal time
- plan something fun for the evening or weekend
- write some letters
- go to support group
- remember someone's birthday or anniversary



MY REMINDER LIST

TRIGGERS

In the space below, write down those things that, if they occur, might cause an increase in your symptoms. They may have triggered or increased symptoms in the past. It may be hard to think of all of your emotional and psychological triggers right away. Add triggers to your list whenever you become aware of them. It is not necessary to project catastrophic things that might happen, such as war, natural disaster, or a huge personal loss. If those things were to occur, you would use the actions you describe in the triggers action plan more often and increase the length of time you use them. When listing your triggers, write those that are more possible or sure to occur, or which may already be occurring in your life.



COMMON TRIGGERS

- the anniversary dates of losses or trauma
- frightening news events
- too much to do, feeling overwhelmed
- family friction
- the end of a relationship
- spending too much time alone
- being judged, criticized, teased, or put down
- financial problems, getting a big bill
- physical illness
- sexual harassment
- being yelled at
- aggressive-sounding noises or exposure to anything that makes you feel uncomfortable
- being around someone who has treated you badly
- certain smells, tastes, or noises

YOUR LIST OF TRIGGERS

TRIGGER ACTION PLAN

In the space provided below, develop a plan of what you can do, if a trigger come up, to comfort yourself and keep your reactions from becoming more serious symptoms. Include tools that have worked for you in the past, plus ideas you have learned from others, and refer back to your Wellness Toolbox. You may want to include things you must do at these times, and things you could do if you have time or if you think they might be helpful in this situation.



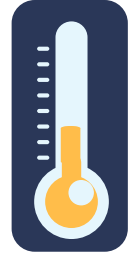
IDEAS TO CONSIDER

- make sure I do everything on my daily maintenance list
- call a support person and ask them to listen while I talk through the situation
- write in my journal for at least half an hour
- ride my stationary bicycle for 45 minutes
- pray
- play the piano or work on a fun activity for 1 hour
- do some deep breathing
- get some validation from someone I trust
- take some time away in a comfortable place
- go to a community activity
- remind myself that it is okay to take care of myself

MY TRIGGER ACTION PLAN

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Early warning signs are internal and may or may not be connected to stressful situations. In spite of your best efforts to take care of yourself, you may begin to experience early warning signs, subtle signs of change that indicate you may need to take further action. If you can recognize and address early warning signs right away, you often can prevent more severe symptoms. Reviewing these early warning signs regularly helps you to become more aware of them. In the space below, make a list of early warning signs you have noticed in yourself in the past. How do you feel when you know you are not feeling quite right? How did you feel just before you had a hard time in the past or when you noticed that your habits or routines changed? If you need help identifying warning signs, consider asking some of your supporters for signs that they have noticed.



COMMON EARLY WARNING SIGNS

- anxiety
- nervousness
- forgetfulness
- inability to experience pleasure
- lack of motivation
- feeling slowed down or speeded up
- being uncaring
- avoiding others or isolating
- being obsessed with something that doesn't really matter
- displaying of irrational thought patterns
- feeling unconnected to my body
- increased irritability
- increased negativity
- not keeping appointments
- changes in appetite
- restlessness

MY EARLY WARNING SIGNS

EARLY WARNING SIGNS PLAN

In the space provided below, develop a plan of what you must do, if you notice early warning signs to keep your reactions from becoming more serious symptoms. Include tools that have worked for you in the past, plus ideas you have learned from others, and refer back to your Wellness Toolbox. This plan may be similar to your Trigger Action Plan. You may want to include things you must do at these times, and things you could do if you have time or if you think they might be helpful in this situation.



SAMPLE PLAN FOR WARNING SIGNS

- do the things on my daily maintenance plan, whether I feel like it or not
- tell a supporter/counselor how I am feeling and ask for advice. Ask them to help me figure out how to take action
- peer counsel at least once each day
- do at least three, 10-minute relaxation exercises each day (simple exercises described in many self-help books that help you relax through deep breathing and focusing your attention on certain things)
- write in my journal for at least 15 minutes each day
- spend at least 1 hour involved in an activity I enjoy each day
- ask others to take over my household responsibilities for the day
- check in with my physician or other health care professional
- read a good book, dance, sing, listen to good music, play a musical instrument, exercise, go fishing, or fly a kite

MY EARLY WARNING SIGNS PLAN

WHEN THINGS ARE BREAKING DOWN

In spite of your best efforts, your symptoms may progress to the point where they are very uncomfortable, serious, and even dangerous. This is a very important time. It is necessary to take immediate action to prevent a crisis or loss of control. You may be feeling terrible and others may be concerned for your wellness or safety, but you can still do the things that you need to do to help yourself feel better and keep yourself safe. On the page below, make a list of symptoms that indicate to you that things are breaking down or getting much worse. Remember that symptoms and signs vary from person to person. What may mean "things are getting much worse" to one person may mean a "crisis" to another.



COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- feeling very oversensitive and fragile
- responding irrationally to events and the actions of others
- feeling very needy
- being unable to sleep
- sleeping all the time
- avoiding eating
- wanting to be totally alone
- using substances
- taking out anger on others
- chain smoking

MY BREAKING DOWN SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

WHEN THINGS ARE BREAKING DOWN PLAN

On the page below, write an action plan that you think will help reduce your symptoms when they have progressed to this point. The plan now needs to be very direct, with fewer choices and very clear instructions.



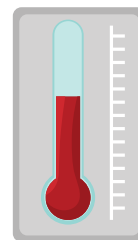
IDEAS FOR AN ACTION PLAN

- call my doctor or other health care professional, ask for and follow their instructions
- call and talk for as long as necessary to my supporters
- arrange for someone to stay with me around the clock until my symptoms subside
- make arrangements to get help right away if my symptoms worsen
- make sure I am doing everything on my daily check list
- arrange and take at least three days off from any responsibilities
- have at least two peer counseling sessions
- do three deep-breathing relaxation exercises
- write in my journal for at least half an hour
- schedule a physical examination or doctor appointment or a consultation with another health care provider
- ask to have medications checked

MY PLAN

CRISIS PLAN

Writing a clear crisis plan when you are well, to instruct others about how to care for you when you are not well, helps you maintain responsibility for your own care. It will keep your family members and friends from wasting time trying to figure out what to do for you. It relieves the guilt that may be felt by family members and other caregivers who may have wondered whether they were taking the right action. It also insures that your needs will be met and that you will get better as quickly as possible.



The CRISIS PLAN differs from the other action plans you've created because it will be used by OTHERS.

What I'm like when I am well.
Copy from Daily Maintenance Plan

Signs that supporters need to take over.
Be very clear and specific in describing each symptom.

List these people who you want to take over for you when the symptoms you listed in the previous section arise.

NAME

RELATIONSHIP

PHONE NUMBER

CRISIS PLAN

MY DOCTORS' NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:



PHARMACY



MEDICATIONS CURRENTLY TAKING

MEDICATIONS OK TO TRY IF NECESSARY:

MEDICATIONS TO AVOID:



TREATMENTS THAT MAKE ME FEEL BETTER:

TREATMENTS TO AVOID



TREATMENT FACILITIES I PREFER, IF NECESSARY



PEOPLE TO AVOID INVOLVING AND WHY:

CRISIS PLAN

HOME/COMMUNITY/RESPITE CARE PLAN

Describe a plan for your care in a crisis that would allow you to stay where you like. Think about your family and friends. Would they be able to take turns providing you with care? Could transportation be arranged to health care appointments?

Is there a program in your community that could provide you with care part of the time, with family members and friends taking care of you the rest of the time?

CRISIS PLAN

THINGS THAT HELP

Examples: let me pace, provide me with materials so I can draw or paint, play me comic videos, play me good music (list the kind), just let me rest

THINGS OTHERS NEED TO DO

Examples: listen to me without giving me advice, help me to move, peer counsel with me, encourage me and reassure me,

THINGS THAT DON'T HELP

RECOGNIZING RECOVERY

Give your supporters information on how to recognize when you have recovered enough to take care of yourself and they no longer need to use this plan.

I, _____
developed this crisis plan.

Signed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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All material contained in that publication is in the public domain.