

The Art of Wellness

by
Kevin Hines

Step 1: THERAPY

- Psychotherapy – otherwise known as Talk Therapy
- Music Therapy
- Art Therapy
- Blue Wave Light Box Therapy
- Breathing Therapy

Step 2: PROPER NUTRITION

The brain is the seat of our consciousness.

It governs our capacity to think, learn, reason, and remember;

It is also the control center for virtually every other bodily process that we have.

And, not surprisingly, it's an organ that requires excellent nutrition to function at top capacity.

- **Eat a Diet that is high in Nutrients & Balanced**
- **Essential Antioxidants**
- **Smart Carbs for a Calming Effect**
- **Protein Rich Foods Boost Alertness**
- **Vitamin B, C, D & E**
- **Minerals**
- **Omega 3 & 6 Fatty Acids**
- **Phytochemicals & Flavanoids**
- **Stay at a healthy weight**
- **No illegal drugs, No alcohol**

Step 3: EXERCISE

- Strong correlation between improved mood and aerobic capacity
- Regular exercise decreases the release of cortisol. This causes the body to have a better response to stress.
- Improves Sleep
- Exercising for 20 minutes facilitates information processing and improves mood ([*University of Georgia*](#))
- Exercise increases heart rate, which pumps more oxygen to the brain.
- From a behavioral perspective, the same antidepressant-like effects associated with "runner's high" found in humans is associated with a drop in stress hormones.
- Aerobic exercise is great for body and brain: not only does it improve brain function, but it also acts as a "first aid kit" on damaged brain cells.

Step 4: SLEEP

- Helps restore the brain by flushing out toxins that build up during waking hours
- Lack of sleep leads to:
 - [cognitive decline, memory loss](#), anxiety, depression & paranoia
- THINGS I DO TO GET 7-8 HOURS OF SLEEP EVERY NIGHT:
 - Maintain a consistent Circadian rhythm (bedtime and rise time)
 - Stop caffeine at 12pm
 - Listen to calm / soothing music / winding down ritual
 - Melatonin
 - Stop eating 3 hours before sleep
 - Eliminate daytime naps

Step 5: EDUCATION

- Continually educating myself on my mental health
EMPOWERS ME
- **Helps me make the right decisions for myself**
- Researching new treatment options **enables me to manage my mental/brain health**
- Educating my friends and family about mental/brain health promotes healthy minds and reduces the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness
- People with mental illness require information and support to enable them to accept and understand their health condition.

Step 6: MEDICATION

- 100% accuracy & Same time(s) every day
- If I feel negatively affected by my medications, I immediately contact my doctor
 - Pay close attention to side effects / bodily reaction
 - Know what the side effects are
 - Know what the drug interactions are
 - Never stop taking medication abruptly
- Understand that:
 - Medications are not cures
 - Medications are most effective when they are part of an overall treatment program

Step 7: MEDITATION

- Meditation is an active training of the mind to increase awareness, and different meditation programs approach this in different ways.
- Not a magic bullet for depression, as no treatment is, **but it is one of the tools that help manage symptoms.**
- Reduces activity in the brain's *Me Center* (mind-wandering and self-referential thoughts)
- Increases focus
- Reduces symptoms for depression and anxiety
- Leads to to better mood and improvements in psychological well-being
- Can help with addiction

Step 8: ADVOCACY

2 Types of Advocacy

- Self-Advocacy is the process that involves identifying the obstacles you face as a patient, developing the strategies to overcome them, and then putting your plan into action.
- Public Policy or Legislative Advocacy is the act of trying to influence public policy at the state and federal levels through a wide range of activities.
- They are both empowering

Step 9: COPING MECHANISMS

- Grounding
- Socialize with friends and family
- Spend time with a pet
- Time with myself
- Humor
- Spirituality / Faith
- Create (draw, build furniture, paint, write/journaling)
- Physical recreation (exercise, team sports)
- Adjusting expectations
- Seek emotional support from a loved one
- Focus on the positive
- Practice gratitude

Step 10: THE PLAN

Years ago I created an **emergency mental health binder**.

- Back then it was a physical binder that I handed the people closest to me, today it is an e-file that I can share with anyone.
- Everyone has mental health, & everyone with a mental health condition should have the plan.

“The Plan” will help in the following ways:

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Gain a positive perspective
- Help stay mentally, emotionally, & physically well

Reasons “The Plan” has benefited me by:

- Keeping me safe
- Keeping my personal protectors informed
- Keeping me self aware
- Keeping me hopeful in the darkest of times