

Questions and Answers

VISIT OUR WEB SITE

www.sbhihelp.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Our web site, www.sbhihelp.org, has a wide range of carefully selected information on mental health and substance abuse issues. In addition to articles on many subjects, you will find links to related web sites, plus information specifically for health care and social service providers.

Information about our emergency and outpatient services, and the latest information in mental health and substance abuse are also available.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the **Samaritan Health Foundation**. Without the Foundation's generous support, our newsletter would not be possible. ■

Sincerely,

Susan Elias
Director of Development
Samaritan Behavioral Health

Elizabeth Place • East Building, 4th Floor
601 Edwin C. Moses Boulevard
Dayton, OH 45408 • 937-276-8333
Preble County Office • 937-456-1915
Emergency Numbers:
Montgomery County • 937-224-4646
Preble County • 1-800-453-3386
(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

What can I do to avoid problems?

No one can avoid problems but we can learn to deal with them in a healthy way. Notice your emotions and reactions and try to understand them. Learning to sort out the causes can help you better manage your emotional health.

What are the rewards of having a wellness plan?

- * Reduction of stress
- * Enhanced spiritual fulfillment
- * Improved job satisfaction
- * Improved social and family life

What happens if I have setbacks in my recovery?

It is hard to avoid setbacks when life throws you curve balls. Do not be hard on yourself and return to your Recovery binder for answers. You may need to consult with a therapist or discuss a medication change with your psychiatrist.

What does my attitude have to do with my health?

Keeping a positive attitude can make a difference. People see life differently and view experiences differently as well. Some people see life as negative while others look on the bright side of things. Being positive doesn't mean a person sees or experiences life unrealistically. When challenged with life, being positive can have a great health benefit. People who look on the positive usually experience less stress and less stress reduces health risks. To remain positive use positive self-talk, be flexible, be assertive and live for today.

What does being with other people do for my health?

Life with others carries much meaning to how we feel. To remain stress free it is important to connect with others. Seek out others who care about you and you about them, whether that be with friends or family. Make a schedule of getting together with others at least once per week; plan activities that you can share and build memories together. Even having a pet can be comforting and help reduce stress.

What about hobbies, can this make a difference in my health?

There are lots of ways to broaden your horizons. Creating a change of pace or increasing your interests definitely helps your wellness. Whether it's exploring a new hobby, planting a garden, planning a road trip, trying a new restaurant, learning to play an instrument or learning a new language; change is important to building a balance in life that leads to overall wellness. ■



Spring 2009

Issue: #4

Welcome!

Welcome to the next issue of Samaritan Behavioral Health's Community Newsletter. This newsletter, which focuses on Recovery and Emotional Well-Being, will offer you some wonderful tips and tools for taking care of yourself and for taking charge of your improved health and well-being. Tips and tools are great - I love them. But underlying our ability to use tips and tools is something that gets more to our core as human beings, and that is a basic belief that each and every one of us is worthwhile and deserves to be the healthiest that we can be - emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and physically. You deserve the best - believe in yourself and the tips and tools will be that much more powerful. Here's to you and your well-being! ■

Sue McGatha
President and CEO

Sam's Story

I was lost in my illness, feeling it had beaten me. It kept me isolated and removed from my support system when I needed them most.

After feeling alone for so long, I decided to attend therapy sessions at Samaritan Behavioral Health. It took some time to put out fires and learn to handle life's curveballs but my therapist was patient and helped me establish basic "rules" for living.

I developed a plan to help me realize when I needed help and how to access it. I learned that everything is interconnected. To be healthy, each aspect of my life needed attention. I made a list that I adhered to daily and took note about what was missing when I felt out of sorts.

My triggers and warning signs were discussed to help me realize when I was having a setback and needed extra help. I nurtured my support system and began to break free from the rigidity of feeling hopeless. I began helping myself and it felt great.



SBHI is partially funded by the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board for Montgomery County and the Preble County Mental Health and Recovery Board.

In This Issue...

Sam's Story

Action Planning for Recovery

Emotional Well-Being

FAQ's

Quick Links...

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nlm.nih.gov

National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org

SAMHSA
www.samhsa.gov

There are many things you can do to help yourself through the recovery process. One idea would be to create a binder to help you focus on your goals and to learn how to take care of yourself.

On the first page, describe yourself when you are feeling okay. Use descriptive words like energetic, funny, or bright. When you are not feeling well, you can refer back to this to see how you can feel or want to feel.

Secondly, list your goals. Write down all goals, especially achievable ones. This will give you something to look forward to. You can also identify steps to reaching these goals.

Keep a list for your daily use on how to maintain your well-being. Remember that all parts are interconnected. Don't make your list too long and remember that these are things you must do everyday. Some examples include drinking 6 glasses of water a day, getting exposure to outdoor light for at least 30 minutes, or eating healthier meals.

Make a reminder list on the next page. This will help you avoid forgetting important tasks like setting up health appointments, buying groceries, doing laundry, or having personal time.

It is also important to dedicate time to identifying and writing down your triggers. These are things that could cause an increase in your symptoms that you need to be aware of. Some examples could include:

- anniversary dates of trauma or loss
- feeling overwhelmed
- the end of a relationship
- spending too much time alone
- physical illness

Make a list of warning signs that you could be having a setback. This may include anxiety, lack of motivation, avoiding others, increased irritability, or restlessness. Be specific to what happens to you. Ask your support system what they notice and write down a plan of what to do when these symptoms occur.

Being able to identify symptoms and responding early helps reduce the chances you will be in a crisis. However, this needs to be considered and a section in your binder needs to be dedicated to what you would do in this situation. You may feel out of control but planning ahead could help others care for you when you are not well.

Do crisis planning when you are feeling well. Do not rush with it. You may even need to discuss it with your support system and your providers. Remember, this is a directive for someone else and it needs to be concise.



Describe symptoms that others can look for when you are not well. Be clear so others can understand. Next, list the people who you want to help you or takeover when the symptoms you listed arise. Start with 5 people so you can have someone available when you really need them.

Indicate who your health care providers are and list your medication, dosage, and why you are using them. You could also indicate what medicines you prefer and what has and has not worked for you in the past. Write down your medication allergies and the medication to be avoided.

Describe a plan for your care in a crisis situation. Some people may indicate a preference in facilities. Indicate to your family or friends what options are available.

Give special attention to describing what your supporters can do to help you feel better. Be specific in what you need from them. If you indicate that they play you good music, tell them what kind. Write down what helps comfort you, like listening, being held, being heard, etc.

Provide a list of specific tasks you would like others to do for you. This could mean buying groceries, feeding the pets, paying bills, or taking out the garbage.

On the opposing end, tell them what you do not want them to do like scolding you or forcing you to do anything.

Lastly, tell your supporters how to recognize when you have recovered enough to take care of yourself. Update this information as it changes. Give revised copies to your support system when anything has changed.

When you are finished with your binder, you should find a wealth of information for you and your supporters. Review the binder daily so you will eventually know how to respond without looking at the book.

People who use these plans regularly find they have fewer difficult times. When they do have a hard time, they find it is not as bad as it used to be or does not last as long. ■

There are 10 parts to recovery according to SAMHSA. Each aspect needs attention in order to be successful.

- **Self-Direction:** You should lead and determine your path of recovery by exercising independence and control of your resources. You define your own life.
- **Individualized and Person-Centered:** Recovery will be different for everyone based on your unique strengths.
- **Empowerment:** You have the authority to participate in decisions about your treatment. Speak for your own needs and wants. Control your own destiny.
- **Holistic:** Consider your whole life (mind, body, and spirit) in the recovery process. Recovery embraces all aspects of your life, including such things as housing, employment, education, health care services, and support systems.
- **Non-Linear:** Recovery is not a step by step process but one based on growth, occasional setbacks, and learning experiences.
- **Strengths:** Recovery should focus on your strengths, coping skills, talents, and worth.
- **Peer Support:** Sharing knowledge and skills with others plays a large role in recovery. Engaging with others can provide you with a sense of belonging.
- **Respect:** It is important to be accepted and appreciated. Protect your rights and help to educate people to reduce stigma.
- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for your own journey of recovery. Taking steps toward your goals takes courage.
- **Hope:** Recovery equals a better future. Remember that people can overcome the obstacles that confront them.

Resources: Having your own personal resources and support can help determine the success of your recovery. You will need tools to overcome setbacks and move forward. ■

Emotional Well-Being

Emotional well-being and mental health issues are major health concerns. They can greatly affect your physical health. Stress and depression can lead to a host of physical ailments like lack of energy, digestive disorders, and sleep disturbances.

Statistics from NIMH show 26.2 percent of adults suffer from a diagnosable disorder in a given year – that's one in four adults.

Mental health is how we think, feel, and cope with life. It helps determine how we deal with stress, relate to others, and make choices. Like physical health, mental health is important to every stage of life, from childhood to adulthood.

Many things can be done to assure an increased ability to maintain life's events. The primary objective is to plan properly. If we have set up a strategy ahead of time, we will be better able to manage without those extra bumps in the road.

Tips on avoiding problems include the following:

- Learn how to express feelings in appropriate ways and keep those close to you informed when something is bothering you. Your support system is very important to your well-being and can provide a different perspective.
- You should also think before you act because sometimes emotions can cause us to do or say things we regret.
- Striving for a balance in your life may help because you would make time for things that make you happy. This would help you focus on the more positive things in your life.
- Most importantly, we should take care of our physical health because we know it can affect our emotional well-being. Exercise, eat healthy, and get plenty of sleep. ■