

10 steps toward mental health

psy.ch

Guide to mental health in canton Bern

10 STEPS TOWARD MENTAL HEALTH

Most people know how to improve their physical health – for example, through a healthy diet and daily exercise. It is also known that a positive environment and a good work atmosphere contribute to good health. Mental health, on the other hand, is rarely addressed. This is where “10 steps towards mental health” comes in. It offers tips and suggestions that contribute to mental well-being and maintaining a positive outlook on life. They are intended as food for thought – try to incorporate one or more of these suggestions into your daily routine and allow yourself to be surprised!

HERE'S WHERE YOU CAN FIND:

- Telephone numbers for emergencies
- Help in your language
- Looking after your mental health

THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS CAN HELP YOU:

- Region Bern-Mittelland, Emmental, Oberaargau:
Isa Bern: 031 310 12 72
- Region Biel/Bienne, Seeland, Berner Jura:
Multimondo Biel: 032 322 50 20
- Region Thun, Berner Oberland:
KIO Thun: 033 223 50 75



Accepting myself

NOBODY'S PERFECT.

I accept myself - that means I know and use my skills, and I know what I want and need. I am aware of my body and its signals and I find that reassuring. I can recognise my feelings and make good decisions. I know my strengths and abilities, and I can accept my mistakes and weaknesses as part of me. Caring about myself means thinking about myself, even if others don't like it. That takes courage. I set boundaries and I can sense what's good for me and what's not.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- I focus on my strengths and not on my weaknesses: which aspects of my life are good? What makes me happy in my relationships? What do I like about my job? What have I accomplished today that I can feel good about?
- Could I sometimes just laugh at my own mistakes?



Talk about it

IT STARTS WITH WORDS.

To talk, to listen, to explain, to empathise, to express myself, to put into words the things that move me – this reduces tension and pressure. It is not always easy for those affected directly and indirectly to talk openly about their worries. However, when I gather the courage to talk to other people about my problems, both sides find new perspectives or solutions. It is natural for people to want to share joy and sorrow.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- Did I make time today to speak to somebody about personal things?
- Who can I share my feelings with when things are getting me down, or when I am joyful? Who is prepared to listen to me?
- What has annoyed me for a long time and is sapping my energy? With whom can I share my sense of my frustration?

A photograph showing the lower half of a person hiking across a rocky stream bed. The person is wearing khaki pants and brown shoes. The water is splashing around their feet. The background is a lush, green forest.

Remain active

MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF YOUR LIFE.

Physical exercise can provide balance to our frequently stressful, hectic and overstimulated lifestyle. Yet we are moving less and less. As a rule of thumb we should exercise for at least 2.5 hours per week. This could be any form of exercise longer than 10 minutes that slightly increases the heart rate and pace of breathing.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- Are there periods of regular exercise in my life?
- What activities – swimming, hiking, running, dancing, etc. – do I enjoy? Why not go out for a walk from time to time and “air” your thoughts?
- Have I already exercised with gusto today?



Learn something new

LEARNING IS DISCOVERING!

Learning new things is like going on a journey, taking me away from everyday life, giving me new insights and raising my self-esteem. People who are open to learning are also willing to grow – both personally and professionally. The learning process not only happens on a mental level: all of our senses are engaged. It is never too late to try something new.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- What would I like to do well? And what keeps me from learning that skill? Why not join a dance class, attend an open training session at a table tennis club or learn a new musical instrument?
- What are my aptitudes and abilities? How do I want to use them?
- How have I already benefitted from things I learned?



Stay in touch
with friends

FRIENDSHIPS ARE INVALUABLE.

I have close friends and we can talk about everything. Personal things remain confidential. I don't feel pressured by them, yet I am always there for my friends when they need me. Friends are allowed to criticise me, but they accept me as I am.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- Do I make time for genuine friendships?
- Do I have a “best friend”?
- What do I expect from a friend?
- What am I prepared to contribute to a friendship?
- Who do I want to spend time with? Or not?
- I nurture my friendships by calling or sending messages.
- I take the initiative and get in touch with old friends I haven't seen in a while.



Relax

FIND NEW STRENGTH IN CALMNESS.

Our thought process is a continuous stream of images and thoughts; in effect, a state of constant upheaval. That's why it is important that phases of mental activity are followed by a period of relaxation and unwinding. When we are relaxed, we feel at ease. We are calm, unfettered, yet alert. Someone who is relaxed can also take better stock of themselves and others, and make decisions without feeling under pressure. Relaxation can be achieved anywhere and costs nothing.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- Does my daily routine allow me to consciously relax?
- Where can I retreat to and relax?
- Which activities help me relax and “switch off”? Listening to music, meditating, walking, doing yoga or painting?
- Could I walk to work once a week to help me relax?



Ask for help

IT TAKES COURAGE TO ASK FOR HELP.

Asking for help shows strength, not weakness. There are people willing to help when I confide in them. I am free to ask for help and it does not mean I'm weak. Asking for help also means trusting others. It empowers me and I no longer feel like I am at the mercy of my worries or anxieties. In particularly stressful situations it is important to stay focused, to delegate tasks and to accept help. This requires trust and confidence – on all sides.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- Do I feel confident that help will be available when I ask for it?
- Do I accept that other people will do things differently than I would?
- Do I know what it feels like to let others support me?
- If you yourself are in a helping profession: “When did I last allow myself to accept help?”
- Who do I turn to in confidence when I need help?



Get creative

WE ARE ALL CREATIVE!

Many people harbour longings, desires, fears and thoughts that they cannot express in words. Creative activities – painting, making music, crafting, cooking, picking flowers and much more – allow them to express such feelings. Creativity creates a counterbalance for the many tensions that constrain me. It enables me to relax and recharge my batteries.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- Do I allow myself to be creative?
- What have I always wanted to do: Paint in watercolours at last? Learn to play the guitar? Plant and tend to a small garden? Attend a course in creative writing?



Participate

PEOPLE ARE SOCIAL BEINGS.

One of life's most rewarding experiences is to belong to a community. It takes courage to engage with other members of the community. To participate means to share wishes, interests, abilities, fears and hopes for things that are important to me. I feel supported by and, in turn, I support my community.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- In which group do I feel comfortable?
- Is there a community, a club, or an organisation in which I want to participate?
- What initial steps do I take to join a community? Who could support me in this?
- When was the last time I had a big party?



Don't give up

MASTERING LIFE'S CRISES.

It takes time to process the emotions associated with shock, grief and traumatic events. That's why it is important to take this time for yourself, but also to give this space to others in times of crisis. When you feel there is no way forward anymore, it is helpful to concentrate on life's vital rhythm (nutrition, breathing, sleep, exercise). I do not have to go through this alone. I am entitled to seek and accept professional help in times of crisis.



IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

- Are there any “lifelines” for me to grab during a crisis?
- Do I know people who are in danger of giving up on themselves?
- Where can professional help be obtained in times of crisis?
- What gives me strength when in a state of crisis?