



minute mental health

21-day programme for
improved mental health

This program is designed by various mental health experts to teach you how to deal with your milder mental health issues.

For serious disorders or suicidal thoughts please contact your doctor.

This program will enable you to cope better with daily challenges including moderate to mild stress, anxiety and depression. As well as increasing well-being. The most important aspect of the program is that it should be manageable, short and only used evidence-based theory.

Thank you for starting and good luck on the journey!



Day 1

Identify one negative belief or thought you have about yourself. Put this thought into a sentence. (examples I am lazy, I am not worthy, I am stupid).

Now rephrase the sentence. Instead of saying, for instance, "I am stupid", say "I notice I am having the thought that I am stupid". Also, try to remind yourself to put the phrase "I notice I am having the thought that I am stupid" whenever this particular thought comes up.

More Info:

The purpose of this exercise is to separate our thoughts from ourselves. As humans, our mind is always drifting, and old unhealthy patterns often make them drift into negative thoughts. These negative thoughts have developed through hurtful experiences where we felt we were not good enough. Try reminding yourself through the day every time these thoughts come up to put the phrase "I am having the thought that.....". The goal is to separate our thoughts from reality. Powerful and effective, but simple.



Day 2

Think about one uncomfortable thought you are frequently experiencing. It can be the same one as you were thinking about yesterday or something else.

Now repeat the thought 20 times in your mind. For example, say "I am anxious about work, I am anxious about work, I am anxious about work" say it until the sentence starts sounding silly.

Well done on completing the task for day 2.

More Info: This is an Acceptance and Commitment therapy-based exercise. It may sound silly. However, when the mind says something several times, research indicates that it helps disarm the thoughts and makes them less scary.



Day 3

Find a place where you can sit down and plant your feet on the floor.

Put an alarm on for 2 min and 40 seconds.

Take ten deep breaths.

Close your eyes and try to focus on your inhale and exhale until the alarm rings.

Feeling relax? Try to take some time every day to close your eyes and concentrate on nothing.

More info: Meditation and mindfulness are associated by many as unscientific. The truth is that meditation and relaxing exercises are some of the most tangible and evidence-based actions you can take towards mental health.



Day 4

Today you are going to do yet another task that might feel silly. Identify a negative thought you sometimes experience. Either one you have used before or a new one.

Then say it to yourself in a silly voice (for instance a cartoon character voice, or a spoiled child's voice).

Say it out a few times.

More info: Similarly, to before, this exercise is designed to separate your thought from yourself. We all have thoughts that are unhelpful and sometimes even unrealistic. By putting a silly voice on it, we sometimes can easier recognize how distracting these thoughts are.



Day 5

Now we have spent five days addressing unhelpful thought. They will always be with us. But we want to reduce them.

Today you will do a small ceremony to reduce these kinds of thoughts. Identify one of your negative thoughts and phrase it in a sentence.

Write it down on a piece of paper.

Now take the piece of paper and throw it either in the toilet or trash bin.

More info: ceremonies and symbols have always been important for humans throughout history. Psychological research also shows that performing physical ceremonies like this can help us reduce unwanted thoughts.



Day 6

Reframing is a psychological concept therapists use to help their clients change their thinking patterns.

You will try to reframe some of your thoughts now.

Identify one area of your life you do not like (it can be boring work, someone you currently are not getting along with or whatever you currently do not like about your life).

Now, despite the fact it sounds counterproductive, try as hard as you can to identify three positive things (if it is possible), this seemingly negative part of life brings you.

More Info: When people feel depressed, the depression often paints every aspect of their life, and all things are dark. Everyone will occasionally feel some degree of mild depression. When finding oneself in that kind of situation, it is crucial to force oneself to find positives. Depression dramatically changes one's perceptions of the world. One has to fight the urge to let the dark thought cloud every aspect of life.

Day 7

- ▶ Think of a few short activities that you like to do and that is easy to perform. It can be whatever as long as you like it and something that can be scheduled realistically today. Now, when you have a free moment today, perform this activity. It does not have to be life-changing or require a lot of effort, but schedule one activity that feels good for you today.
- ▶ **More info:** If one feels down, one often lacks the initiative to do enjoyable activities. Also, in a stressful life, one often falls victim to the same boring routine. This exercise is based on behavioural activation from CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy). It is all about committing to behaviours that increase well-being.



Day 8

Yesterday was all about enjoyment....but the way to self-improvement is not always comfortable.

Today you will identify one small task you have been putting off. It can be an email that needs answering, something that needs to be cleaned or whatever little challenge life has given you today.

If you can do it now do, do it right now! If not put an alarm on your phone at the earliest time, you can do it then! It does not have to be life-changing.

More info: This task is based on behavioral activation like yesterday. Yesterday you planned something enjoyable, today you committed to taking a small step to relieve your stress.

Day 9

Identify one important value to you (many people choose family, health, being successful or gratitude). After you have identified one value, commit to one action you can commit to that is aligned with this value. For instance, if your value is family, an action to commit to could be reaching out to a family member now by sending them a text message.

More info: Values are extremely important to human beings. If we do not live according to our values it causes great discomfort to us. Therefore the goal of day 9 is to taking a small step towards living in accordance to own values

Day 10

Fear is often something that holds us back.

Today you will identify one thing that you fear or are nervous about. Please spend a few minutes thinking about it.

Now imagine if the event you fear happens, what is the worst thing that can happen? What would you do in this situation? Is it something you can prevent by thinking about it? Is it likely to happen? Please spend a few moments reflecting around this and try to be as logical as possible and challenge yourself.

More info: Often we worry about something unspecific. By reflecting and articulating what we are afraid of, there are many psychological processes that enable us to tackle the problem in a more realistic way.



Day 11

Feelings always fluctuate. Sometimes we feel down, sometimes we feel better. Today's task is to identify one event in your life that makes you nervous. It can be today, or it can be in a few weeks.

For a moment. Dwell on the nervousness this event makes you feel.

Now, reflect on how you will feel when this event is finished. Also, reflect on the fact that feelings are always changing. This is a part of life. We need to accept it and remember it when we are in periods of negative emotions.

Well done! You are today over half ways on the 21-day program for guaranteed better mental health.

More info: Often, when people are experiencing uncomfortable emotions, one tries to avoid it at all costs. This brings a great deal of distress. Psychological research shows us that accepting and exposing oneself to negative feelings are a far more effective way of coming to term with negative emotions.



Day 12

Today you will spend a few moments identifying one emotion you feel that is unusual or shameful. Something you feel makes you weird. Now, articulate the thought and type it into an internet search engine. You will find that this feeling is something millions across the world also feels.

More info. Many therapy forms put a puzzling feeling or a feeling of shame into a context of normality. Knowing you are not alone with a problem helps. It is a cliché, but all clichés have come up for a reason.



Day 13

Think of one event where someone hurt you in the past. Ideally, choose something that often crosses your mind, and that isn't easy to think about.

Today's task is to identify one thing that you can tell yourself when this thought comes up. What you will say to yourself has to be more productive than how you deal with it today.

It is always room for improvement. Use your imagination

More info: Having a plan on how to deal with negative thoughts is always useful. This exercise gives you a plan and forces you to develop critical thinking skills on how you deal with personal issues.



Day 14

Today's task is connecting with other people. Specifically, take contact either digitally or in-person with a friend. Just reach out with whatever feels natural to you.

More info: Being socially connected to others has been one of the most critical factors in living a happy, fulfilled life. A good social life is essential for mental health.



Day 15

Spend 30 seconds to look at your hand and analyze each point of the hand.

After the 30 seconds look at them again for 15 seconds and this time try to examine every small detail of it.

Ask yourself what judgements come up when you are looking at your hand. Recognize how easy your mind is judging and evaluating.

More info: The goal of this exercise is to get aware and be conscious of how your mind works. It also helps you to be present at the moment. A lot of people find this exercise to be freakish.



Day 16

Today, your task is quite simple. Close your eyes for 2 min, ideally in a somewhat quiet place with few distractions.

Just let your mind drift to where it naturally goes—starting now. Now reflect on where your mind goes.

More info: To assess one's mental health is vital to have an idea of where one's mind goes. If your mind is thinking about random daily stuff, there is a strong chance your mental health is good. If your mind is ruminating, you should consider taking action and increasing your knowledge about how rumination works. Some good places to start would be typing in defusion techniques in ACT, or CBT resources for unwanted thoughts in your search engine

Day 17

- ▶ Today's task is to think about what gives you meaning. Meaning can be a problematic term to come to grip with. But try as hard as you can to think of a few activities where you feel purpose, meaning or can "let go" of thoughts. Now schedule to do one of these activities one time during the next week.
- ▶ **More info:** Feeling meaning is central to well-being. One way many describe how meaning feels to them is described as "flow state". Flow state is a state where a person is entirely in the moment, with no thoughts and enjoys completing the action at hand.



Day 18

Today, you are going to perform yet another defusion technique.

Identify one negative thought. Either a new one or one you have used before.

Now, sing out the thought. Sing it out five times.

More info: the point of this exercise is again to make your "scary" thoughts less "scary"



Day 19

Today's exercise is to spend some time reflecting on the last 24 hours in a specific way. In the previous 24 hours, what three things have you been grateful for? Try to visualize these three things clearly and ask yourself why you are thankful for them.

More info: Several empirical research pieces show that focusing on what one is grateful for makes us happier



Day 20

The task for today is to complete a 10 min exercise. For those who already exercise regularly, the task is to do 10 min with another exercise form than your regular one. Most crucial thing is to do something you will for sure complete.

More Info: Several studies have shown exercise to be more effective than several medication forms against several mental disorders.



Day 21

Today, you will thank your mind. This might sound weird.

Our minds are great problem solvers and risk management machines. In fact, our minds are too good at problem-solving.

Today, try to identify one or more unwanted thoughts you have that you feel are unproductive.

When the thought comes up, say to yourself

"thank you mind, for reminding me, I will keep it into consideration".

The purpose of the exercise is to acknowledge that our mind coming up with many solutions. However, many are just thoughts and do not mean anything.

More info: This exercise is designed to normalize people's relationship with their mind. Often people are guilty about thought. However, the reason humans have evolved to this point is that our minds always look for a possible solution, just because our minds evaluate a solution does not mean you have to feel guilty about it.

Congratulations. You have now completed the 21 days to a better mental health program. You should take all the short techniques you have learned with you in the future and continue your path of self-exploration and better well-being.