

I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, 'Where's the self-help section?' She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.

George Carlin

SELF-HELP MODULE 5

Self-help Techniques

- Do not self-medicate
 - Alcohol is for celebration, not medication
- Go easy on yourself
- Avoid inflated or perfectionistic expectations



Self-help Techniques

- Maintain normal schedules
- If you cannot sleep or feel too anxious, discuss this with someone you can trust
- Express your feelings in ways other than talking (art, movement, music, etc.)
 - Focus on what you did well or the positive aspects of the experience

Discussion

How do you take care of yourself, when you are tired, overwhelmed, but absolutely have to stay on the job?

- What “routine” or less complicated tasks can you take on as part of your job?

Sleep Hygiene

- Keep a regular sleep schedule
 - Go to bed at the same time, get up at the same time
- Avoid exposure to blue light for an hour before bedtime (TV, computers, etc.)
- Have a “wind down” ritual
- If you can’t sleep, get out of bed
- Shift workers should stay awake for a few hours after work (share this with family)
- If poor sleep continues, see a professional

Self-Efficacy

(Belief in your ability to deal with challenges)

- Self-efficacy means reminding yourself that:
 - I will bounce back
 - I can handle this
 - I can handle this day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute
 - If I need help, it's available

Do Something!

Step 1: Define the problem: (Isolation, inactivity, feeling sluggish, etc.)

Step 2: Set the Goal: (increase exercise, take time for a hobby, social activities)

Step 3: Brainstorm: (What do you enjoy doing?)

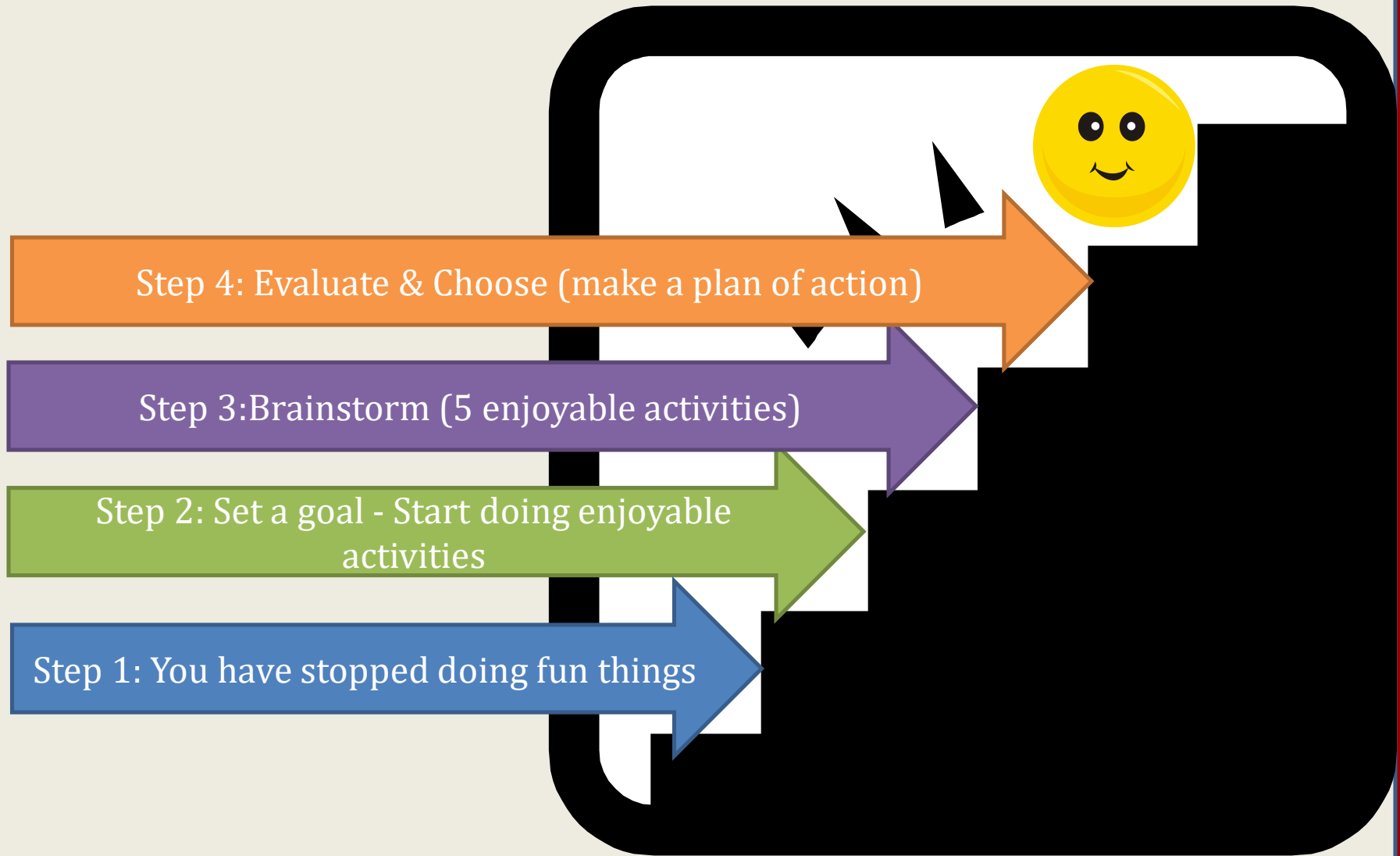
- Go to the gym or a movie
- Make something, play baseball, go to coffee with a friend

Step 4: Evaluate & Choose an option for action: (What can you do to make this activity happen?)

- Get a babysitter
- Prepare your workout bag, or needed equipment
- Find a workout buddy
- Make an appointment
- Set a schedule

Adapted from National Institutes of Mental Health (2008), Depression (NIH Publication No. 08 3561), available at:
<http://www.wellnessproposals.com/mental-health/handouts/nimh/depression.pdf>

Practice



Remind yourself about what has worked in the past

- How were you able to overcome obstacles you have faced?
 - What actions did you take?
 - What did you tell yourself about the experience?
- Were there particular people who were helpful?

Healthy avoidance

- Going to the scene of the incident
- Memorials
 - If you can't avoid them, have a plan to handle the situation
- Media
 - Don't read online reports about what happened, especially where the public can comment
 - Let others screen your television viewing for the time being
 - Screen your telephone calls in case media is trying to get something from you

Unavoidable exposure

- Discussion
 - What do you do when you can't avoid event reminders or places? (For example, what if the event happened in your workplace?)
 - What would your plan for handling this include?

Seek assistance from a professional if:

- You have extreme difficulty talking about your feelings
- Your personal reaction is distressing you
- Anxiety, depression, sleep problems, or irritability last longer than 2 weeks, or interferes with your functioning
- People around you suggest you see someone

Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS), Bethesda, MD.
http://www.cstsonline.org/wp-content/resources/CSTS_FS_Mass_Death.pdf