



# Getting **better...** my way

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SELF-MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

# Getting better... my way

## SELF-MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

### Why use this tool?

Are you having difficulties related to depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder? You may find this tool useful. You can regain a sense of balance and feel good again, despite this challenge.

This tool complements the usual treatments such as psychotherapy and medication. It does not replace them. The tool is designed to help you identify strategies to get better and to take care of your health.

### What is self-management?

Self-management is taking control of your recovery through the little things you can do to get better.

Much like for physical health, each action counts to improve your mental health. To feel better on a daily basis, it's useful to plan, prioritize and schedule actions or activities that make you feel good. There isn't a "one-size-fits-all" recipe for recovery. Each person can find their own ways to get better.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

The tool gathers a variety of strategies to get better, divided into five categories that correspond to the dimensions of recovery.




## How to use this tool?

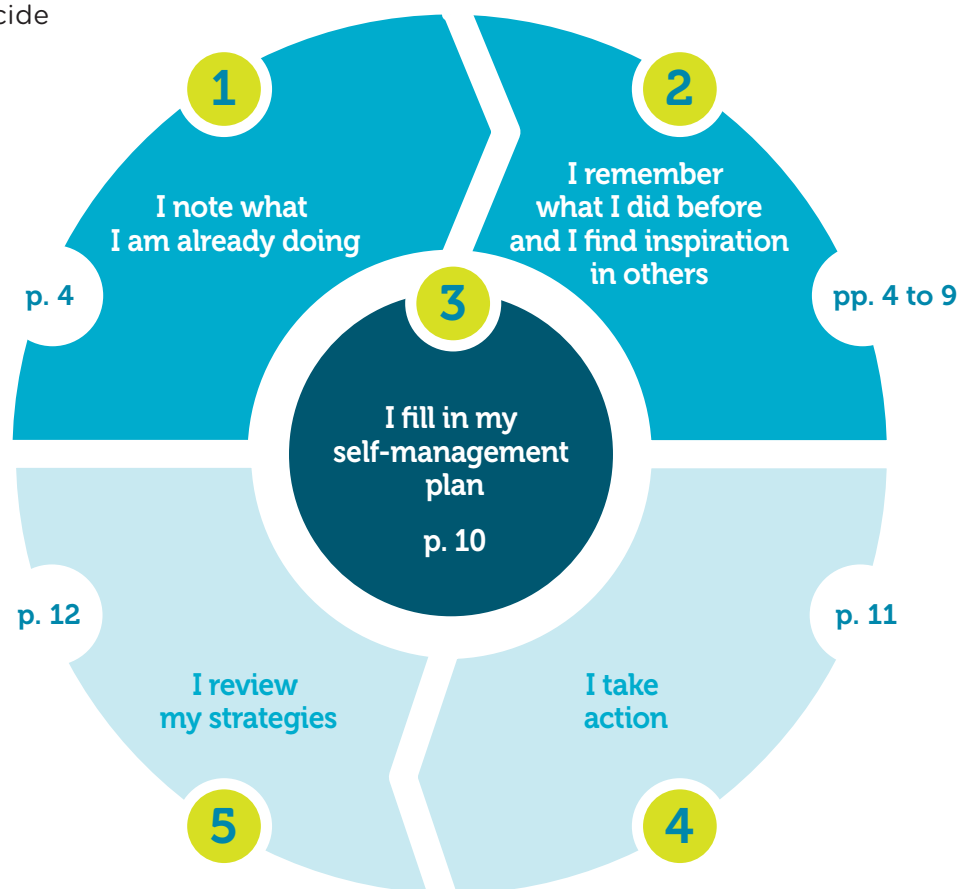
The good news is, you've already started using self-management! By consulting this tool, you are taking charge of your mental health by informing yourself on the different ways of getting better.


We suggest you use this tool to help you identify more clearly what you're already doing to get better and to plan actions to take care of your mental health.

## We suggest a five-step process:


We suggest filling out steps 1 through 3 at your own pace. Steps 4 and 5 are optional. They could be of use to you if you decide to pursue this process.


Note the strategies you are currently using to get better (p. 4). 



 Note the strategies you have used in the past to get better (p. 4).

You can explore the tables to be inspired by suggestions made by 50 people in recovery (pp. 5 to 9).

 Review your strategies regularly to see what worked or not, and for what reasons (p. 12).

 Choose one or two strategies and plan how to put them in place to get better (p. 11).

Consult the online resource directory to help plan your strategies ([vitalite.uqam.ca](http://vitalite.uqam.ca)).

## 1 I note what I am already doing

You are already taking a concrete step toward recovery by reading this document. Take a moment to think about other strategies that you are already using to get better. You can write them in the table on the right.

A **strategy** is any action—even a small one—you take to get better. Examples include going out for a walk, seeing a friend, and enjoying a favourite activity.



### Strategies I am using now

E.g. *I am learning about self-management by reading this document.*



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### Strategies that I have used in the past

E.g. *I used to regularly get together with friends.*



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## Are you short on inspiration?

Are you having trouble remembering what you did in the past?

You can read through the strategies presented on the following pages. These are ideas shared by 50 people in recovery. They shared them as part of a scientific study<sup>1</sup>.

The strategies (pp. 5 to 9) are sorted into five categories of self-management<sup>2</sup> shown on page 2. We suggest that you start by the **category that interests you the most**.

<sup>1</sup> Villaggi, B., Provencher, H., Coulombe, S., Meunier, S., Radziszewski, S., Hudon, C., Roberge, P., Provencher M.D., Houle, J. (2015). Self-management strategies in recovery from mood and anxiety disorders. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 1-13.

<sup>2</sup> Whitley, R., & Drake, R.E. (2010). Recovery: A dimensional approach. *Psychiatric Services*, 61 (12), 1248-1250.

## I function well day-to-day

**IMPORTANT :** It is not necessary to use all these strategies to get better. Choose the ones that suit you best, based on your personality, tastes and needs. Think of it in terms of taking small steps.



You can add your own ideas in the spaces provided.

I am already  
doing this

I did this  
before ...  
to reconsider?

I would like  
to explore  
this\*

Does not  
interest me/  
does not apply



### I create a routine for myself when...

I keep a list or agenda of things to do.

I organize my days around a schedule  
(e.g. times to get up and go to bed, take a shower or bath, eat, activities).

### I respect how I function when...

I make my schedule keeping my capacities in mind.

I do things that make me feel good about myself.

I set realistic goals for myself.

I organize my home in ways that meet my needs  
(e.g. having curtains that block the light so that I can sleep better).

### I take action when...

I stay busy to avoid thinking about my difficulties all the time.

I reserve myself some time to do things that I enjoy.

I go to public places in my neighborhood (e.g. the library, a coffee shop, a park).

\*You can consult the resource directory ([vitalite.uqam.ca](http://vitalite.uqam.ca)).

## I deal with my difficulties

**IMPORTANT :** It is not necessary to use all these strategies to get better. Choose the ones that suit you best, based on your personality, tastes and needs. Think of it in terms of taking small steps.



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I would like  
to explore  
this\*

Does not  
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does not apply



### I try to understand what I am experiencing when...

I note or pay attention to my thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

I learn about depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder  
(e.g. on the Internet or TV, by reading, or by attending conferences or workshops).

I consult a mental health care professional  
(e.g. psychologist, social worker, psychotherapist, sexologist, occupational therapist).

### I seek help when...

I contact a mental health organization (e.g. a help line, support group or workshops).

I consult a professional (e.g. doctor, pharmacist, nurse).

I take prescription medication for my mental health problem.

I use complementary treatments (e.g. art therapy, light therapy or acupuncture).

### I deal with what is not going so well when...

I change my view of things and how I talk to myself (self-talk).

I try to confront my fears.

I solve my problems one step at a time.

### I stay vigilant to the risks of a relapse when...

I continue to use the strategies that have helped, even when my condition improves.

I learn to recognize the signs of a relapse.

I take some distance from the things that are bothering me  
(e.g. I take a situation less seriously, I take time to think about things).

## I take care of my physical condition

**IMPORTANT :** It is not necessary to use all these strategies to get better. Choose the ones that suit you best, based on your personality, tastes and needs. Think of it in terms of taking small steps.



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I would like  
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Does not  
interest me/  
does not apply

### I take care of my body when...

I monitor or reduce my substance consumption (e.g. drugs, alcohol, energy drinks, coffee).

I maintain a healthy diet (e.g. eating fruits and vegetables, avoiding fast foods).

I play sports or engage in physical activity.

I consult a professional (e.g. doctor, nurse, nutritionist, kinesiologist).

I use complementary resources (e.g. a chiropractor or osteopath, natural products).

### I manage my energy when...

I adopt good sleeping habits (e.g. I get enough sleep, at regular hours).

I enjoy relaxing activities (e.g. yoga, tai chi, breathing techniques).

I take time to rest when I need it (e.g. naps, vacations).

\*You can consult the resource directory ([vitalite.uqam.ca](http://vitalite.uqam.ca)).

## I maintain positive relationships with others

**IMPORTANT :** It is not necessary to use all these strategies to get better. Choose the ones that suit you best, based on your personality, tastes and needs. Think of it in terms of taking small steps.



You can add your own ideas in the spaces provided.

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to reconsider?

I would like  
to explore  
this\*

Does not  
interest me/  
does not apply



### I spend time with people who are good for me when...

I get together with friends or family.

I ask friends or family for help (e.g. services, supplies, comfort, someone to listen).

I attend a support group or a self-help group.

I have activities and outings with people.

### I participate in the well-being of others when...

I take care of an animal.

I take care of one or more people (e.g. my spouse/partner, children or friends).

I help people living with difficulties like mine (e.g. by volunteering).



## I foster hope

**IMPORTANT :** It is not necessary to use all these strategies to get better. Choose the ones that suit you best, based on your personality, tastes and needs. Think of it in terms of taking small steps.



You can add your own ideas in the spaces provided.



I am already  
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to explore  
this\*

Does not  
interest me/  
does not apply

### I focus on the positive when...

I pay attention to the here and now.

I use words of encouragement and inspiring images or quotes.

I take inspiration from people with difficulties like mine.

I appreciate beautiful things and simple pleasures.

I use humour.

I congratulate myself for my achievements, whether large or small.

I try to stay hopeful during difficult times.

### I take care of myself when...

I invest time in my spiritual life (e.g. religion, philosophy, meditation).

I do things that draw on my strengths.

I avoid comparing myself too much to others.

I learn to live with my strengths and limitations.

I learn to see my mental health problem as separate from me as a person.

### I empower myself when...

I go at my own pace, based on my abilities.

I express what I think, how I am feeling.

I speak up about things I don't like.

\*You can consult the resource directory ([vitalite.uqam.ca](http://vitalite.uqam.ca)).

### 3 My personalized self-management plan

Here is your self-management plan. Feel free to make changes and share it with those around you. It belongs to you.

Based on the strategies you have chosen, write in the ones that you find the most useful. Don't forget to take things step by step. It's useful to keep your plan close at hand.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Here you can note any of your successes that make you proud or feel good.



I foster hope

I function well day-to-day



I deal with my difficulties



I take care of my physical condition



I maintain positive relationships with others



Self-management

## 4 I take action







We suggest that you take it step by step with 1 or 2 strategies. For each strategy, think about how you will implement it **realistically**.

The resource directory **vitalite.uqam.ca** presents many suggestions that may be useful to you.

You can ask someone you know or an organization such as Revivre (**revivre.org**) to help you plan your strategies.

Feel free to show this tool to your doctor, psychologist or other health care provider. He or she can help you in this process.

### I choose my strategies on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Strategy	Description What actions? Where? When?	Helpful resources E.g. family members, friends, community organization, doctor, etc.
<p><b>E.g.</b> <i>I play sports or engage in physical activity.</i></p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>E.g.</b> <i>I will go for a 15-minute walk, 3 times a week.</i></p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>E.g.</b> • <i>My friend</i> • <i>My dog</i> • <i>A walking group</i></p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

## 5 I review my strategies

**You will find that self-management changes over time.** You can review your strategies on a regular basis to see what is working and what is not, and why. Do this once a week or once a month, whatever suits you best. You can also add strategies to your list or even remove those that aren't working for you anymore.

Use the following table to make adjustments to your plan based on what you are going through right now.

Be sure to celebrate your successes as often as possible!

### I review my strategies on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Strategies to be reviewed	What worked best?	What didn't work so well?	Do I continue? Should I make some changes?
<p><i>E.g. I set aside time for me, for doing things that I enjoy.</i></p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><i>E.g. I relaxed by reading a novel.</i></p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><i>E.g. I was distracted (by phone calls or household tasks).</i></p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><i>E.g. I want to continue. I'd like to set aside another hour per week, just for me.</i></p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

# My personalized self-management plan

Here is your self-management plan. Feel free to make changes and share it with those around you. It belongs to you.



Based on the strategies you have chosen, write in the ones that you find the most useful. Don't forget to take things step by step. It's useful to keep your plan close at hand.



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_





Here you can note any of your successes that make you proud or feel good.





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## My personal notes

## Contact the following resources for help, or speak to family members and friends if you need to.



Self-management does not mean that you are on your own. There are resources available to help you.

### Revivre

**Revivre** is an organization that helps people suffering from anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder, as well as their family and friends. They offer support and information by phone, email, and via support groups or self-management workshops.

 **1-866-738-4873**

 **revivre.org**

### Centre local de services communautaires (CLSC)

CLSCs provide medical and psychosocial care. CLSC caregivers can also refer you to community organizations in your region.

 **1-877-644-4545** ou  **8-1-1**

 **<http://sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/repertoire-ressources/>**

### Pharmacist

Pharmacists offer free counsel on your medication and its side effects. Consult them at your neighborhood pharmacy.

### For a family doctor

Contact your local CLSC to learn about how to proceed, or visit the website:

 **<http://sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/repertoire-ressources/recherche/>**

### In case of an emergency or crisis: 8-1-1 the Info-Santé and Info-Social line (24-hour service, 7 days a week)

The Info-Santé/Info-Social help line is a major component of primary health care services. It provides answers to everyday questions on health, or directs you to the right point of entry into the health and social services system.

### If you are having suicidal thoughts: 1-866-277-3553 (24-hour service, 7 days a week)

This help line provides immediate help to people who are in distress or suicidal, their family and friends, gatekeepers, caregivers and people affected by suicide. All discussions are on a confidential basis, and the services are provided free of charge.

**[santemontreal.qc.ca/en/public/support-and-services/crisis-centres/](http://santemontreal.qc.ca/en/public/support-and-services/crisis-centres/)**

This website can help you find a crisis center or resources online.

### Psychologists

Psychologists and psychotherapists can help to reduce your psychological distress and to solve your psychological difficulties.

To find the psychologist or psychotherapist in private practice closest to you, contact the Ordre des psychologues du Québec:

 **1-800-561-1223**

 **[www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/trouver-de-aide](http://www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/trouver-de-aide)**  
(in French)

### Social workers

Social workers can help you acquire competencies and resources to improve your social functioning.

To find a social worker:

 **1-888-731-9420**

 **<https://beta.otstcfq.org/public/trouver-un-professionnel>**  
(in French)

In the table below you can note the contact information for the resources in your network.

### My resources



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**Suggested Citation:**

Houle, J., Radziszewski, S., Beaudin, A., Saint-Onge, K., Martel, B., Jourdain, Y., Doray, P., Lavoie, B., Labelle, P., Cloutier, G., Collard, B., Coulombe, S., Gilbert, M., Jetté, F. et Brouillet, H. (2019). Getting better... my way – Self-management support (version 3). Montréal : Vitalité - Laboratoire de recherche sur la santé, 16 pages.

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