

THE  
**i'MPOSSIBLE**  
PROJECT



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# PUTTING ON YOUR OXYGEN MASK FIRST

Practical Tools for Self-Care, Mental Health Tips, and Helping Others

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# WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

A Person's Psychological and  
Emotional Wellbeing

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# MENTAL HEALTH MYTHBUSTERS

## What Mental Health is Not

- ▶ Not necessarily debilitating
- ▶ Not mutually exclusive with an illness or disorder
- ▶ Not a character flaw or weakness

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# MENTAL HEALTH MYTHBUSTERS

## What Mental Health IS

- ▶ It affects everyone (disorder or not)
- ▶ A little different for everyone
- ▶ Takes time and energy to develop
- ▶ Has to do with biology, life experience, and/or family history

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# WHY MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT

## Personal Benefits

- ▶ Healthier Relationships
- ▶ Improved Overall Wellbeing
- ▶ Enhanced Physical Health
- ▶ Increased Resilience
- ▶ Increased Self-Awareness

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# WHY MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT

## Professional Benefits

- ▶ Improved Work Performance
- ▶ Increased Creativity and Problem-Solving
- ▶ Stronger Communication Skills
- ▶ Improved Teamwork and Collaboration
- ▶ Enhanced Leadership Skills

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# CREATING A MENTAL FITNESS PLAN

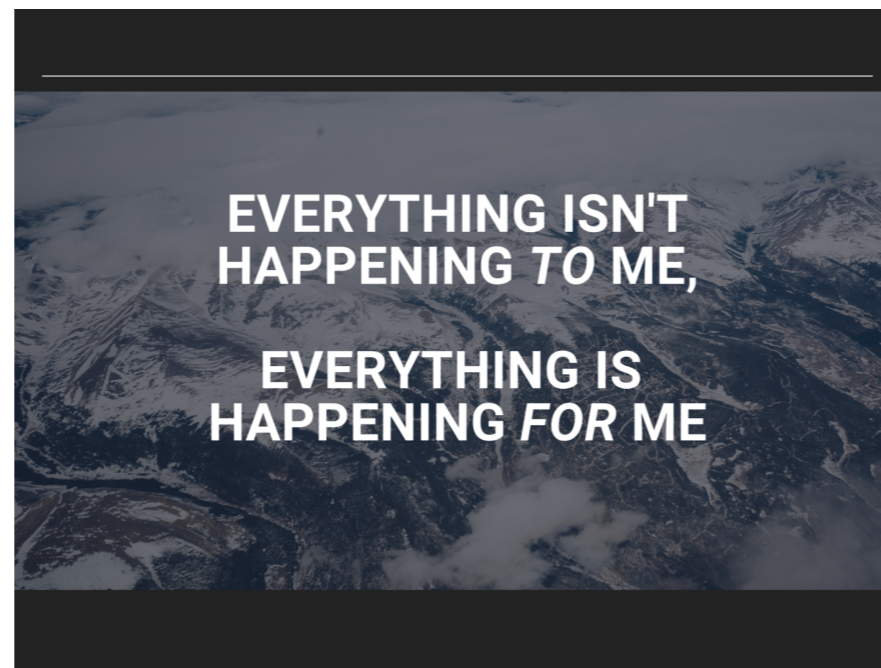
*A basic template to customize*

- ▶ Things you consume: food, supplements, alcohol, drugs
- ▶ Relaxation activities or self-care: talking a walk, yoga, saying “no,” TV (how much and when), doctor appointment
- ▶ Reflection: journal, or meditating, or prayer
- ▶ Energetic activities: gym, hiking, swimming, sex, playing with kids
- ▶ Service based activities: teaching someone to tie their shoes, holding the door, volunteering, intentionally being in the service of others
- ▶ Support system: engaging with the healthy by giving and receiving, disengaging with the unhealthy and leaving those behind or limiting time with them

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# TIP TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE

## Psychological Reframing/ Cognitive Restructuring



- Can help one cope with: addiction, anxiety, chronic pain, caregiving, grief and loss, relationship issues...and more.
- Allows for: feeling of control, enhanced self-esteem and wellbeing, reduction in symptoms of anxiety, less burnout, less inflexible thinking

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# TIP TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE

## Practicing Gratitude



- Psychological benefits: feeling of calm, less focused on ruminating thoughts, unshackles from toxic emotions, generosity
- Allows for: perspective, enhanced self-esteem and wellbeing, reduction in symptoms of anxiety, less burnout, less inflexible thinking

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# IMPORTANCE OF RITUALS AND ROUTINES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

**Humans are creatures of habit. Our established patterns...**

- ▶ Affect mental health
- ▶ Influence stress levels
- ▶ (Help) define emotional well-being
- ▶ Assist with resilience

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# RITUALS AND ROUTINES

- ▶ Serve as anchors in a chaotic world
- ▶ Provide structure, predictability, resilience, and a sense of control

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# PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF ROUTINES

- ▶ Regulates stress (reduced levels of cortisol)
- ▶ Reduces cognitive load
- ▶ Increases productivity
- ▶ Frees us up for more creative tasks

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# A PERSON IN DISTRESS

## Your Observations

- ▶ Social isolation
- ▶ Inability to focus
- ▶ Outbursts
- ▶ Substance abuse/misuse
- ▶ Change in manner/style/hygiene
- ▶ Disappearance from work/class for long periods

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# A PERSON IN DISTRESS

## Symptoms

- ▶ Marked anxiety, extreme restlessness
- ▶ Marked increase or decrease in sleep or appetite or both
- ▶ Loss of interest in things once enjoyed
- ▶ Chronic fatigue
- ▶ Overwhelming financial obligations
- ▶ Suicidal thoughts

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# A PERSON IN DISTRESS

## Potential History/Background

- ▶ History of emotional disturbances or self harm
- ▶ Recent traumatic experience or history of trauma
- ▶ Recent loss of an important person (e.g., breakup or death)
- ▶ Recent loss of esteem
- ▶ Previous period of inefficient/poor functioning

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# A PERSON IN DISTRESS

## Tips on Being a Helper

- ▶ Remain as calm as possible
- ▶ Empathy and curiosity
- ▶ Private meeting if possible
- ▶ Multi-tiered layers of support (let others know)
- ▶ Avoid general answers
- ▶ Encourage reaching out to additional supporters
- ▶ Refer and know resources