

Creating Change- Taking Action



When we are experiencing symptoms of depression, we may find it difficult to do things to help ourselves feel better.

We may have the desire to feel better but are not sure if we have the energy or ability to begin doing things differently. Asking ourselves to remember a time when we overcame something difficult in the past may help us now. Reaching out to a friend or family member for support may also be helpful. Making the decision to change and taking the first steps are often the hardest parts. But choosing to help ourselves feel better is worth it.

Please read the excerpt below for tips on how to take control of your life or how you can help a loved one.

It is not always easy to take the action necessary to create change. However, without taking some action, you cannot make changes in your life that may be necessary to help you feel better. Every time you take a positive step in creating change in your life, give yourself a pat on the back or reward yourself by doing something nice for yourself like taking a warm bath, going for a walk, or spending some time with a friend. You also may want to keep a written record of the change you are creating in your life in a notebook or journal.

Change takes time and may be difficult. You may have to overcome many obstacles. Take small steps. Don't give up. Be persistent. Keep working toward whatever it is that will help you to feel better and enjoy your life more. Making change is being able to see beyond yourself to what the solution might be.

Creating change is something you need to do for yourself. No one else can do it for you. Others can help you and support you as you create change but it is up to you to do what needs to be done. You will be the one that benefits from successful change.

Benefits of Taking Control of Your Life:

- Feel better physically and emotionally
- Have less stress
- Have more time to do the things you enjoy
- Have time to take good care of yourself
- Feel more fulfilled
- Improve the quality of your life.

Taking Charge-Regaining Control of Your Life

If you feel you have control over your own life, you have gotten over the first hurdle to creating change in your circumstances. If you don't feel you have control over your life, it is important that you take back control. It is very difficult to feel well when you are not in charge of your own life. Answering the following questions and making the suggested lists could help you figure out how to regain control of your life.

- Do you feel that you have control over your own life?
- Or do you feel other people control your life and you can't do anything about the way your life is?
- What controls your life? List things such as your children, your spouse, a disability, lack of money, etc.

List things you could do to take back control over your life.

For instance, you could...

- talk with your spouse about issues related to control perhaps the two of you could see a counselor together
- ask your children to take care of some of their own needs and help out with chores
- get a part-time or full-time job doing something you enjoy attend a class on money management
- learn sign language

List what you think is keeping you from doing the things you need to do to take back control over your life.

For instance, you...

- have lack of motivation or have low self-esteem
- feel like it's too much trouble or feel scared
- do not want to upset others or want to avoid the anger of family members

List the benefits of taking back control over your life.

For instance, you would...

- feel better physically and emotionally
- have less stress or have more time to do the things you enjoy
- have time to take good care of yourself or feel more fulfilled

Note: Excerpt from Recovery and Wellness Lifestyle-A Self-Help Guide, Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration (SAMHSA) retrieved from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA-3718/SMA-3718.pdf>

