

Automated Emotional Self-Help in 3 Easy Steps

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During the 20+ years of my clinical experience in acute psychiatric practice, I have seen an unspeakable amount of emotional pain. From loss to anger, trauma to abuse, and from dependencies of all types of addictions, and daily acute suicidality/homicidality; I have seen it all. I have learned how to efficiently deal with these problems, but I have also seen, up close and personally, how our typical care delivery system fails to respond to these overwhelming needs in various ways, including long delays and insensitivity. As a result, I am often asked how one can easily achieve emotional wellness. While emotional wellness is not always easily achieved, and most often requires dedicated work and change, I have broken things down as simply as possible through what I term the "RATE" process, an acronym that means to "Rapidly Assess, Treat and Evaluate".

Step 1-Rapidly Assess

It is my belief that the most competent psychiatric care begins with a thorough assessment, followed by rapid feedback about how to achieve relief from any pain and suffering. Unfortunately, a major way in which current systems of care have found greater "efficiency" is to ask fewer questions during the data-collection process, which often results in more mistakes and omissions. As a busy physician myself, I realize that asking questions that have no impact on medical care can quickly fade from routine practice. To "Rapidly Assess" your needs most quickly and thoroughly, you may wish to consider the use of web-based, automated assessment tools. The advantages of these web-based tools allow for access anywhere an internet connection is available, and allows you to complete them within the schedule and environment of your choosing. By completing the assessment in this manner, you will likely be more relaxed, honest, thoughtful, as well as more thorough and accurate in completing your responses; thus, ensuring your provider more complete and accurate details. Additionally, an assessment that encourages completion in partnership, with an opportunity for the partner to also share their own "collateral" comments and information with the provider, can prove most insightful.

Step 2-Treat

Although one can dive in and begin psychoeducation for alleviating symptoms immediately, it is not always recommended. Even if you should be structuring your own care, it is a bit like a health care provider giving a prescription or treatment plan without a consultation first; therefore, I recommend before seeking treatment that you first take the time to properly assess your needs. (With that being said, some people really do know what they need help with and prefer to begin the educational process as soon as possible.) After efficient assessment, it is important that you most efficiently get connected to your journey of recovery as early as possible, preferably immediately, just as our current culture has come to expect. This immediate access can easily be accomplished by

the use of automated, web-based psychoeducational methods of intervention, which can be conveniently accessed online at any time, and usually at a much lower cost than conventional therapy.

Generally speaking, with any treatment, safety issues always come first, followed by addictions and other issues that would interfere with a life worth living. Subsequently, other conflicts and growth opportunities could be explored, including self-esteem and goal setting, anger, guilt and shame, loss, stress, anxiety and depression, eating disorders, abuse, trauma, diet and exercise, or others.

(A Note About Partnership): Ideally, the psychoeducational process takes place in the context of the best possible collaborative relationship. Of course the most ideal relationship would be an ethical and competent therapist, however, not everyone has access to this. Therefore, the healthiest possible partnership for processing the education is advised; perhaps a close friend or family member, or someone who has "been there" before and mastered a challenge, and now wants to help someone else. Of course, you could certainly complete the process alone, but partnership is always encouraged.

Step 3-Evaluate

We tend to be most successful in any endeavor when we are clear about what it is that we are working on and measure the effectiveness of our intervention, as well as our improvement. This is why outcome measures are felt to be an essential element of one's overall treatment. Of course, outcome measures are not absolutely necessary, but they most likely will improve your overall experience.

Summary

There it is... a simple 1-2-3 process to emotional health. If you are struggling with emotional issues, I encourage you to get started on your journey to wellness today!

*Dr. Brent R. Coyle is a practicing board-certified adult psychiatrist with over 20 years clinical experience, and the founder of **MyTherapySession.com**.*

MyTherapySession.com is an online resource that provides hope and help to individuals with various emotional health concerns. Through the use of web-based assessment tools and stepwise video learning modules with reflective journal prompts and selected (optional) spiritually sensitive observations, both consumers and healthcare providers can more efficiently and effectively address a variety of essential mental health concerns, including weight management, stress, anxiety and depression, self-esteem and goal setting, assertiveness, anger management, comprehensive addictions treatment, eating disorders, overcoming guilt and shame, and many more.