

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR
CULTURE AND ARTS PROFESSIONALS

**CULTURE HELPS:
HOW TO TAKE CARE OF
MENTAL HEALTH
IN TIMES OF WAR**

2025

"Culture Helps: how to take care of mental health in time of war" is a practical guide for culture and arts professionals, offering adapted training and facilitation materials for self-help in crisis situations—for themselves, their colleagues, and the communities they work with.

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The recordings can be accessed on [Vimeo](#) and [YouTube](#) via the QR code below:



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INTRODUCTION.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Before we begin our journey, I would like to invite you to take a second look at the concept of mental health. It's a phrase we hear a lot, but do we really understand it?

The World Health Organization defines mental health as follows:

Mental wellbeing is a state of being in which a person is aware of their capabilities, able to cope with the stresses of daily life, work productively and effectively, and participate in social life. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective ability to make decisions, build relationships, and shape the world we live in¹.

If you look at mental health from the perspective of an ordinary person, it may seem that a healthy person is the same individual who is in good health (forgive me for the simplicity of the wording), who does not have any diseases that affect the functioning of this head in any way, shape or form: **"Who** is this person when we all live in a time of full-scale invasion?"

¹ WHO. Mental health: strengthening our response [Electronic resource] // World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>.

From this point of view, it appears that a person with depression or a person who has panic attacks or, for example, is in a state of emotional burnout is no longer mentally healthy. This is sad. Especially given the growing prevalence of these conditions.

That's why I propose to pay attention to the fact that it is **the state of well-being** that is important in defining mental health. Next, we will look at a comprehensive model of mental well-being. And, accordingly, we will figure out where, for example, a person suffering from panic attacks is on the map.

Mental health is about both well-being and functioning. That is, whether we feel good emotionally, whether we are able to cope with the challenges of life. And it's not just about the presence or absence of diseases.

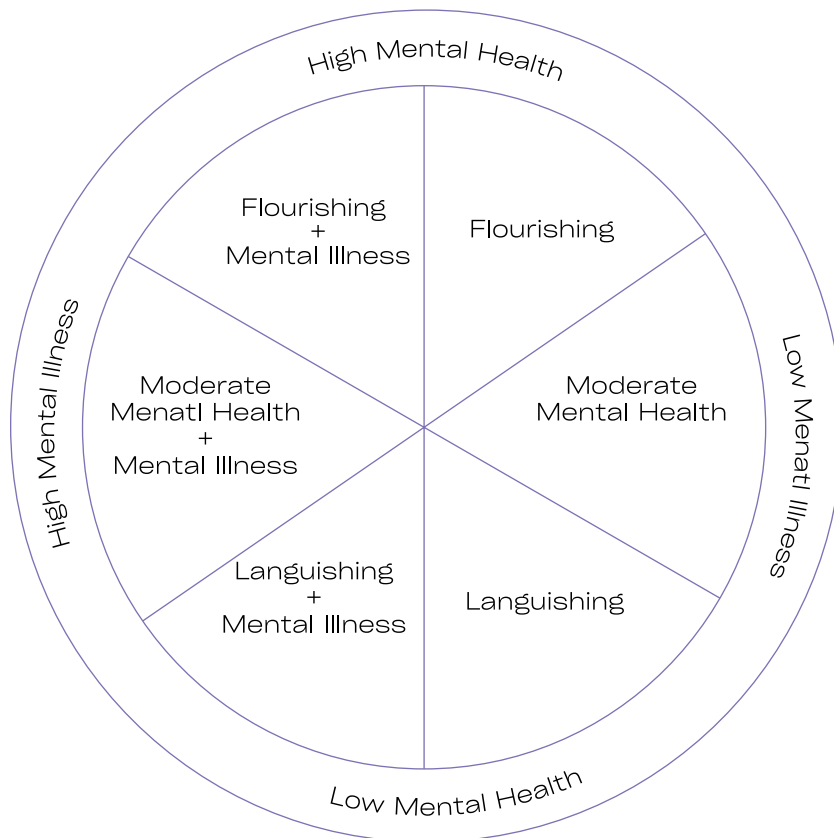
Imagine two axes of coordinates, where the vertical axis defines mental well-being and the horizontal axis defines the presence or absence of a mental disorder.

Let's imagine that Mr Ivan is helping us to deal with this.

Mr Ivan is an imaginary character. He is a creative man who creates creative content for Ukrainian brands. He loves creativity in all its forms, often speaks about it at open events, supports young artists and runs a YouTube channel.

One day, Ivan woke up famous. His content had gone viral, and in the morning several well-known bloggers were already inviting him to their special projects. Ivan did not expect such sudden fame, although he wanted it very much. Since then, it has been difficult for him to fall asleep because of the thoughts of what else he needs to do, what interviews he needs to prepare for, and how to respond to all those who have already written to him (and his email address was flooded). Behind these worries, Ivan would forget to eat or grab a slice of pizza on the go. One morning, he suddenly felt sick: his heart was pounding, his palms were sweating. He thought he was suffocating and about to die - he grabbed the wall with his hand to keep himself up. Mr Ivan had never had any major health problems before, and this condition scared him. It happened more and more often, and eventually Mr Ivan went to

A HOLISTIC MODEL OF MENTAL HEALTH²



his family doctor. The doctor explained that this condition was called a panic attack and recommended that he see a psychotherapist.

Ivan decided to stabilise his health.

At first, together with the therapist, they figured out what could have caused this condition: the work and social load on Mr Ivan had increased dramatically, and Mr Ivan was used to doing everything very well, so his demanding nature only added to the stressful cauldron. The anxiety and stress became too much and manifested as panic attacks.

Mr Ivan made a list of things he needed to support himself:

- Sleep at least 7 hours
- Eat at least 3 times a day
- Add sports (he actually wrote "add recreation")
- Remember that he or she does not die during a panic attack and that it will pass
- On very busy days, remember to take short breaks for warm-ups or breathing practice

There were other points, but you can find them on page 33, so let's get back to the mental wellbeing model.

When Mr Ivan started having panic attacks, he was in **Zone 1** of moderate mental health: his body reacted to stress with panic attacks, making his daily life uncomfortable.

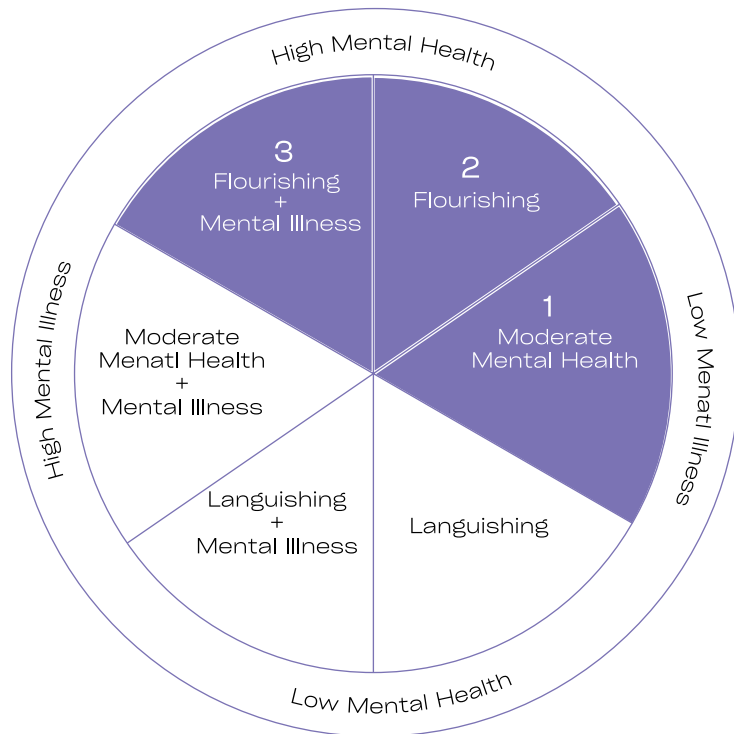
After a few months, with the support of friends and a therapist, Ivan felt that everything was falling into place: mindfulness, a new daily routine, mindful breathing breaks and warm-ups improved his condition. He decided to add these habits to his daily routine.

In this case, Mr Ivan is in **Zone 2** of the mental well-being model: with his new skills, he feels healthier and his panic attacks no longer return. And if they do, he knows what they are and what to do. But that would be another story.

Accordingly, as you have seen in the story of Mr Ivan, the mere presence of a mental disorder or disease does not make a person mentally ill.

² Mjøsund, Nina. A Salutogenic Mental Health Model: Flourishing as a Metaphor for Good Mental Health // [Electronic resource]: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-63135-2_5.

If a person with PTSD, for example, has undergone treatment, acquired self-regulation skills, stabilised sleep and is able to cope with strong emotions, they are in the stage of recovery or stabilisation. This means they are in a zone of mental well-being, in this case, **Zone 3**.



In the second part, we will get acquainted with the phenomenon of post-traumatic growth and techniques for balancing not only between spheres of life, but also how our daily lives are intertwined with the context of war.

The third part of the manual is dedicated to the daily cultivation of mental well-being: how to support yourself in your daily life through your body, environment and thoughts.

Our guide is designed to help you understand what stress looks like, what conditions it can lead to and what to do about them, and at the same time how to take care of yourself in a way that will help you cope with the complexities of the modern world, no matter where you are.

The first part of our guide is dedicated to a brief introduction to the common challenges we (and our psyche) face. We'll talk about stress (which I'm sure you know is where it all starts), traumatic events and conditions that can affect our well-being, and how to support ourselves when we're stressed.

SECTION 1.

STRESS

STRESS AND SUPPORT DURING STRESS

I'm sure you've heard a lot about stress, so you probably know that the way we react to it affects our mental health. And our physical health, too.

Let me remind you what we mean by stress:

Stress can be described as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference on our overall well-being³.

Stress is a normal reaction to everyday pressures, but can become unhealthy when it disrupts your day-to-day functioning. Stress involves changes affecting almost every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. For example, it can be manifested by palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, shortness of breath, fidgeting, rapid speech, augmentation of negative emotions (if already being experienced), and longer duration of stress fatigue.

By causing mind-body changes, stress contributes directly to psychological and physiological disorder and disease and affects mental and physical health, reducing quality of life⁴.

Let's look at the different reactions to stress; if you've heard of them before, I suggest you recall them again.

This is:



Each of the reactions corresponds to a certain set of hormones and the activation of a certain part of the autonomic nervous system.

" BY THE WAY, THE WORD 'AUTONOMOUS' SUGGESTS THAT WE CAN CONTROL VERY LITTLE, AND OUR BODY TAKES OVER."

What does this mean?

- **fight** — an active reaction aimed at protecting ourselves, showing the person who attacked us that we are not such easy prey and can defend ourselves. This is where the sympathetic nervous system is activated, along with the hormones adrenaline and cortisol, and their goal is to fight off the stressor and thus get out of the stressful situation.
- **run** is also an active reaction that is triggered when we intuitively determine that our attacker is much bigger and stronger, and the only realistic way to do something about the stressful situation is to run away from it. Cortisol and nor-epinephrine are also active.

³ WHO. Stress: questions and answers [Electronic resource] // World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/stress>.

⁴ American Psychological Association. Definition of Stress [Electronic resource] // APA Dictionary of Psychology: <https://dictionary.apa.org/stress>.

In both of these reactions to stress, blood flows to the muscles, and the heart starts to beat, so that we can more effectively either fight back or run away. And of course, in order to get this blood from somewhere, our body pumps it away from organs that are less important at the moment, such as the digestive system.

- **freeze** — the body's response to stress, which differs from the previous two in the way the nervous system is activated. We freeze when we don't have enough strength to fight back because the danger is too great, and we don't have time to run away because we have reflexively determined that an escape will be unsuccessful. This is where we experience a "short circuit", often both bodily and mental. This is the responsibility of another branch of our nervous system, the parasympathetic⁵. It slows down all processes so that we "appear dead" to our potential enemy. Breathing can become shallow, thoughts can become confused, and we can feel powerless. And while in nature this can save lives because the animal pretends to be dead, in human realities it can cost us time that could be used to either escape or fight back.

There is nothing wrong with either of these reactions. At certain points, it is important to fight back or respond sharply to protect yourself or your loved ones. Sometimes freezing is all we can do because we don't have the energy to do anything else at that moment. And that's okay too.

⁵ The role of stress hormones in the body [Electronic resource]: [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5332864/#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20stress%20hormones,%20and%20noradrenaline%20\(norepinephrine\)%20and%20noradrenaline%20\(norepinephrine\)\).](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5332864/#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20stress%20hormones,%20and%20noradrenaline%20(norepinephrine)%20and%20noradrenaline%20(norepinephrine)).)

AN IMPORTANT POINT I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASISE is that in today's world, where the real and the virtual are intertwined, our brains are unable to draw a dividing line, so everything we see and hear **is real** to us.

Remember watching your countrymen perform at the Olympics or Eurovision. Remember how you felt. Maybe you cried with pride, maybe you raised your hands in the air because you were happy, maybe you were ashamed of something. **For us, the virtual is close and real at the level of the body.**

The problem is that the traumatic events we see on the screen are as close to us as the real ones.

And if we see terrible news about our hometown, even if we are hundreds of kilometres away, our body reacts in the same way: it is a potentially traumatic event for us, which means stress. And we need to fight, run or freeze.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE FREEZING, RUNNING OR FIGHTING?

IMPORTANT:
first make sure you are physically safe and/or distanced from the source of the danger

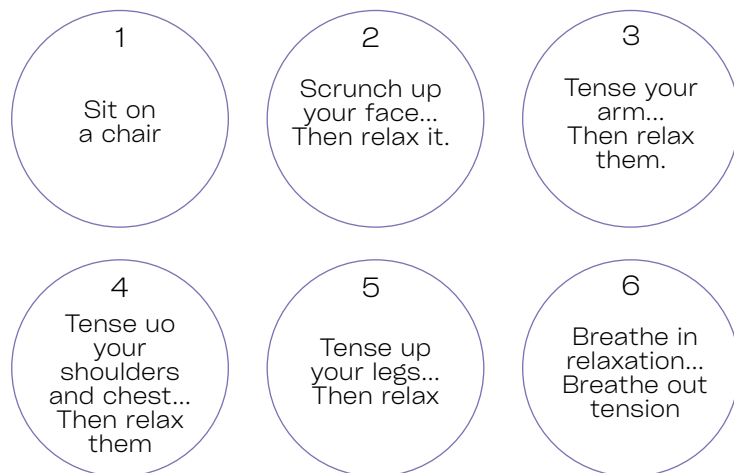
WHAT SUPPORT CAN YOU PROVIDE TO YOURSELF AND YOUR CLOSE ONES IN A STATE OF ACUTE STRESS?

I would like to offer short, effective methods that you can do on your own or with your loved ones if you find yourself in a situation of acute stress or have experienced a potentially traumatic event. We can get the fastest results through bodily exercises and emotional connection, so:

BODILY SUPPORT

1. Returning to the body and relieving tension:

- tap the body to feel it and each part of the body separately
- jump on
- scream (you can scream into a pillow if there are other people nearby or you are shy about screaming)
- do 2-3 cycles of muscle relaxation: to do this, alternately tense muscle groups according to the following scheme



2. Water helps you recover:

- drink small amounts of water in slow
- Gently wet your face and neck with cool water (if you want to take care of another person, ALWAYS ask if you can help them wash their face with water before doing so)

3. Focus on your breath

- try to pay attention to how you breathe: which part of your body (stomach, lungs, nose)? Where do you feel the air moving? Is it warm or cold? Is there any tension in your body now?
- make 5 conscious breathing cycles (inhalation and exhalation): start with conscious EXHALATION, observe changes in sensations and emotional
- do 3-4 cycles of breathing in a square



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

1. Connecting with loved ones

- stay close to or talk to a person you trust (in this case, it is important that this person is not under the same stress as you)
- Hug your loved ones if you and they feel comfortable doing so. It is important to feel that you are hugging another person. It can also work for those who are close to you and are also stressed, such as children. But be sure to ask if you can hug them!
- Play with or take care pets

2. Connecting with something bigger

- Observe nature: the movement of leaves, tree branches or water
- meditate or do a gratitude practice: you can focus on being present in the here and now, grateful for life or even for challenges, or list 10 things you are grateful for right now (maybe you can think of more?)
- Pray if it fits your worldview, or just thank yourself for being you and

HOW ACCUMULATED STRESS AFFECTS OUR HEALTH

Usually, after stress, the body resumes its normal functioning in 20-60 minutes. However, if we are constantly under stress, we recover more slowly, and this can lead to long-term changes that also lead to mental disorders and diseases, as well as affect the quality of life⁶. We face the same risks when exposed to a potentially traumatic event.

It all starts with the body, because all processes, including cognitive processes such as thoughts or ideas, are supported by the body's internal systems (and not just the nervous system). That is why, when our body is under stress for a long time, we may notice that it becomes more difficult for us to concentrate, remember, and even reproduce information that we have known for a long time. General exhaustion of the body leads to disorders or conditions that require increased attention and self-care.

In the following, we'll take a brief look at common mental health conditions and disorders. They can arise as a result of accumulated stress, trauma, or for physiological reasons.

I would like to remind you that regardless of the presence of a mental disorder, a person's life can be of high quality and balanced (*see page 3 for evidence*).

⁶ American Psychological Association. Definition of Stress [Electronic resource] // APA Dictionary of Psychology: <https://dictionary.apa.org/stress>.

ANXIETY

A creative brain is often an anxious brain. So, I'm sure anxiety is a familiar feeling to you. "What will happen tomorrow? What if I fail? And then what?" — and other questions can be disturbing with their uncertainty both situationally and on a daily basis.

On the one hand, anxiety can seriously damage our quality of life. On the other hand, it is an evolutionary mechanism that helps us identify dangers, avoid them, and survive.

In the realities of the war, in which we have been for almost 3 years, various manifestations of anxiety are common, so the first thing to remember is that anxiety is part of the norm.

ANXIETY CAN BE RECOGNISED BY THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- palpitations
- numbness or tingling in the body
- feeling hot / "sweating" / sweating palms
- leg tremors / "shaky legs"
- hand tremors
- dizziness
- blood flow to the face
- inability to relax
- feeling of suffocation or difficulty breathing

BEHAVIOURAL AND COGNITIVE

- постійне переживання, що станеться щось погане
- a constant worry that something bad will happen
- problems with concentration
- rumination — obsessive thoughts about an event that has

happened or may happen - a kind of "chewing over" the situation

- underestimation of own strengths and fear of starting/avoiding tasks or processes (e.g. "I am worried that I will do a bad job, so I do not start doing it, and therefore I am even more worried")
- nervousness and
- avoidance of actions, places, people, phenomena that cause

Public speaking anxiety is a useful anxiety that helps us to prepare well and think about what we will do in the event of force majeure. Such useful anxiety disappears along with the cause — after the speech is over. But if anxiety haunts you for no particular reason, interferes with your life and daily routine, and is very intense, **it may be a sign of an anxiety disorder that requires a doctor's consultation.** Currently, both psychiatrists and family doctors who have completed the mhGAP (Mental Health Gap Action Programme) course can provide initial consultations at .

PANIC ATTACK

I'm sure it is familiar to many people - if not from their own experience, then from the experience of their surrounding.

PA is a sudden, short-term attack of intense fear that can last for several seconds and is accompanied by the following symptoms:

- heart palpitations,
- difficult or shallow breathing,
- the feeling of not being able to breathe,
- a feeling of pressure in the chest,
- trembling of the whole body,
- trembling of the limbs,
- sweating, numbness of the limbs or certain parts of the body.

At the level of feelings, a panic attack is often accompanied by a fear of death or loss of control, a feeling that something terrible is going to happen, a fear of suffocation or dying of a heart attack. At the level of consciousness, thoughts can be confused and it is difficult to concentrate on what is happening.

A panic attack itself does not pose a health risk, despite the fact that it is experienced and felt as a critical condition.

At the same time, panic attacks can be associated with a reaction to traumatic events, high emotional stress, mental illness, and diseases of organs and systems.

A person without mental illness or somatic disorders can also experience a panic attack. At the same time, it is important to rule out these disorders, because the symptoms of a panic attack can be hidden

behind the symptoms of hyperthyroidism or other endocrine diseases, heart or lung disease, or substance abuse.

ASSISTANCE DURING PA CONSISTS OF

1. being physically next to / close to a person
2. creating a safe space
3. activating contact with the moment - "here and now"

BEING PHYSICALLY CLOSE IN THE MOMENT

If the person next to you is having a panic attack, stay with them. Don't touch them without asking or force them to talk if they don't want to. Show them that you are there and will stay for as long as they need.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

Offer to move to a more comfortable place or sit down, if the person agrees, find a place where there is a stable support for the body.

ACTIVATING CONTACT WITH THE MOMENT — "HERE AND NOW"

Use the simple 3-3-3 technique: find three different objects in space, listen to and identify three different sounds, and move three different parts of your body. You can use the same technique if you are experiencing a panic attack yourself.

The second easy-to-use technique, both for self-use and for providing support during a panic attack to others, is the breathing technique "5-5-5": inhale for five seconds (here you should additionally count to yourself) — pause for five seconds (count again) — exhale for five seconds (and count again). The cycle can be repeated.

DEPRESSION

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders⁷, which directly threatens the healthy functioning of a person. Depression can manifest itself in different ways in different people: long-term low mood, constant fatigue, decreased pleasure in things and activities that used to be enjoyable, including eating, and problems with sleep.

It's important not to confuse depression with feeling bad about yourself. After all, most people may feel tired, irritable or in a bad mood in certain circumstances — and this is part of normal human life. If your mood improves after a short time, it is not a direct sign of depression.

Depression affects daily functioning, decision-making, enjoyment of life, and communication. It can be mild to severe, and the symptoms should last for at least two weeks.

⁷ National Institute of Mental Health. (n.d.). Depression. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression#:~:text=Depression%20is%20one%20of%20the,or%20family%20history%20of%20depression.>

World Health Organization. (2017). Mental health action plan 2013–2020 (WHO-MSD-MER-2017.2). World Health Organization: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/254610/WHO-MSD-MER-2017.2-eng.pdf>.

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION⁸:

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- continuous low mood or sadness
- feeling hopeless and helpless
- having low self-esteem
- feeling tearful
- feeling guilt-ridden
- feeling irritable and intolerant of others
- having no motivation or interest in things
- finding it difficult to make decisions
- not getting any enjoyment out of life
- feeling anxious or worried
- having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming themselves

THE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- moving or speaking more slowly than usual
- change in appetite or weight (usually a decrease, but sometimes an increase)
- [constipation](#)
- pain and discomfort without obvious causes
- lack of energy
- low libido ([loss of sexual desire](#))
- disturbed sleep — for example, finding it difficult to fall asleep at night or waking up very early in the morning

SOCIAL SYMPTOMS

The social symptoms of depression are as follows:

- yawavoiding contact with friends and taking part in fewer social activities

⁸ National Health Service. (n.d.). Depression in adults: Symptoms: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/depression-in-adults/symptoms/>.

- neglecting your hobbies and interests
- having difficulties in your home, work or family life

As you can see, the manifestations of depression are very different, there are many of them, so I will allow myself to summarise and focus on some of them.

Important: Pay attention to the symptoms of depression below. If they last for at least two weeks, it may be a sign of the disorder.

- Deterioration of mood most of the day
- Anhedonia
- Loss or gain of weight (or appetite)
- Sleep disorders
- Slowing down or being too active
- Fatigue, loss of energy
- Increased feelings of worthlessness and fatigue
- Reduced concentration
- Recurrent melancholic or suicidal thoughts

IMPORTANT. ONLY A PSYCHIATRIST HAS THE RIGHT TO DIAGNOSE A PERSON WITH DEPRESSION.

Seeking advice from this specialist does not make you or your loved ones "stupid". A consultation with a psychiatrist is the same as a consultation with an ophthalmologist, dentist or family doctor. Therefore, if you suspect that you or your loved ones may be depressed, seek help as soon as possible. You can also get an initial consultation from a family doctor who has completed the mhGAP course.

PTSD - POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Around **70 %** of people globally will experience a potentially traumatic event during their lifetime⁹, but only a minority (5.6%) will go on to develop PTSD¹⁰.

"Traumatic events are those that go beyond typical stress: death, serious bodily injury, various types of violence, natural disasters, hostilities, which a person is a direct participant or witness to. For children, situations related to domestic violence — in particular, when a child witnesses such a situation, surgical interventions, bullying at school - can be traumatic¹¹."

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a reaction to such events and can develop, as a rule, within 3-6 months after the traumatic event and interfere with normal, healthy functioning, participation in daily life and relationships. At the same time, people's reactions to the same traumatic event can be radically different: under the same circumstances, someone will survive the event without health consequences, while another will develop PTSD.

PTSD affects a person's entire life and functioning and manifests itself as:

1. **Reliving the traumatic event(s):** flashbacks (a realistic sense of the traumatic moment, often with sounds and other sensations that were present at the time), intrusive memories and thoughts, dreams and nightmares about the traumatic event, and a strong reaction to sounds, smells, objects, and events that remind one of the traumatic event. At the same time, contact with reality may be impaired, and a person may not feel their own body or have a feeling that what is happening around them is unreal.
2. **Excessive excitability or Overreactivity:** irritability, outbursts of anger, excessive vigilance for dangers around, sleep disturbances (trouble falling asleep, lack of sleep, shallow or very short sleep), risky behaviour.
3. **Avoidant behaviour:** avoiding reminders of the traumatic event (thoughts, objects, sounds, spaces, etc.), using alcohol or drugs to avoid memories or emotions associated with them.
4. **Negative changes in mood and perception of the world:** negative perceptions of oneself, loved ones, and the world, distance in communication with loved ones and the wider environment, decreased or absent trust, inability to experience pleasant emotions, loss of interest in activities that used to be enjoyable.

⁹ Kessler, R. C., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., Alonso, J., Benjet, C., Bromet, E. J., Cardoso, G., et al. (2017). Trauma and PTSD in the WHO world mental health surveys. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 8(sup5), 1353383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2017.1353383>.

¹⁰ World Health Organization. (n.d.). Post-traumatic stress disorder. Retrieved January 10, 2025, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/post-traumatic-stress-disorder>

¹¹ Mental Health for Ukraine (n.d.). What is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)? Retrieved January 10, 2025, from <https://www.mh4u.in.ua/shukayu-dopomogu/shho-take-posttravmatychnyj-stresovyj-rozlad-ptsr/>.

If you observe similar manifestations in yourself or someone close to you, the fastest solution is to seek advice from a psychiatrist. This does not mean that the treatment will be medication only. According to modern treatment protocols, the primary care for PTSD is psychotherapy using the method of CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR — Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing). The doctor may also prescribe medication, depending on the severity of the condition and the presence of concomitant diseases.

One of the most important aspects of PTSD is the distance in relationships with loved ones and lack of trust. It affects the decision to receive help for your condition or not. So it's important that when you offer help to someone you suspect of having PTSD symptoms, you do so in a gentle and open way, and give them time to make a decision at their own pace.

CHAPTER 2. LOOKING FOR BALANCE

POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

When traumatic events happen to us, our bodies and minds can react in different ways (and as we said earlier, all of these are normal), depending on the amount of resources available at the time, the overall health of the body and, in particular, the availability of support from loved ones and the wider community (see *Chapter 9: Communicating and connecting with like-minded people*). On the one hand, exposure to traumatic events can lead to negative changes, such as PTSD, as discussed above, and on the other hand, some people who have experienced traumatic events experience post-traumatic growth. At the same time, research shows that these two processes can occur in parallel in the same person¹².

Post-traumatic growth is a positive psychological change that occurs as a result of coping with trauma or very difficult situations. Post-traumatic growth can manifest as positive changes in self-perception, relationships with others, and attitudes towards life in general¹³.

Here are some key ways in which post-traumatic growth can manifest itself:

¹² Kadri, A., Gracey, F., & Leddy, A. (2022). What factors are associated with posttraumatic growth in older adults? A systematic review. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07317115.2022.2034200>.

¹³ Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (1995). *Trauma & transformation: Growing in the aftermath of suffering*. Sage Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483326931>.

AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF LIFE

Gratitude for every day and gratitude for the little things in life, priorities change. It is important to cultivate gratitude.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND PROSPECTS

The traumatic event makes certain aspects of life inaccessible and lost, but you can try to find new perspectives in your life that you have not seen before.

BUILDING DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS

People start to show more empathy, compassion and care for others, become more sensitive to the pain of others, and can form deeper connections and relationships.

FEELING OF INCREASED STRENGTH

After the experience, we have the opportunity and experience to go through anything, relying on ourselves and our own strength. We develop self-assertion and our own "I can do it!".

SPIRITUAL, EXISTENTIAL CHANGES - SEARCHING FOR A NEW MEANING OF LIFE

Living through a traumatic event gives rise to a reconsideration of the perception of death and life, a rethinking of meanings and values, and a person begins to seek answers to big philosophical questions: *what is the meaning of life? what is my purpose? what is valuable?*

Let's go back to the example and imagine Ms Y.

Ms Y had recently gone through a divorce and was suffering greatly. For more than six months, she could not pull herself together, she did not want anything, and she cried for long periods of time in the evenings, thinking that no one else needed her. Time has passed and now, despite the gloomy weather outside, Ms Y feels empowered to make changes: the divorce gave her space and the opportunity to look at herself outside of the relationship, and it has helped her develop her professional career and relationships with friends. Ms Y now feels more confident and has a more positive outlook on the future. This, in turn, makes Ms Y confident that when the time is right, she will have a meaningful relationship in her life.

Post-traumatic growth can relate to various areas of life: values, relationships, self-perception and self-determination, lifestyle, and understanding of meaning. This does not mean that a person forgets or devalues traumatic experiences. On the contrary, it is this experience that becomes the foundation — the fertile ground on which the tree of change grows.

As I mentioned above, the quality of living through traumatic events depends to a large extent on the resources we have. There are many theoretical models, some of which are presented below, which help to analyse the available life resources. You can choose to work with the one that is closer to you, or if you are working in a team, you can divide into groups, work with different models and then analyse the results together.

1. FIVE-PILLAR MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY

Everything you said can be grouped into the following groups:

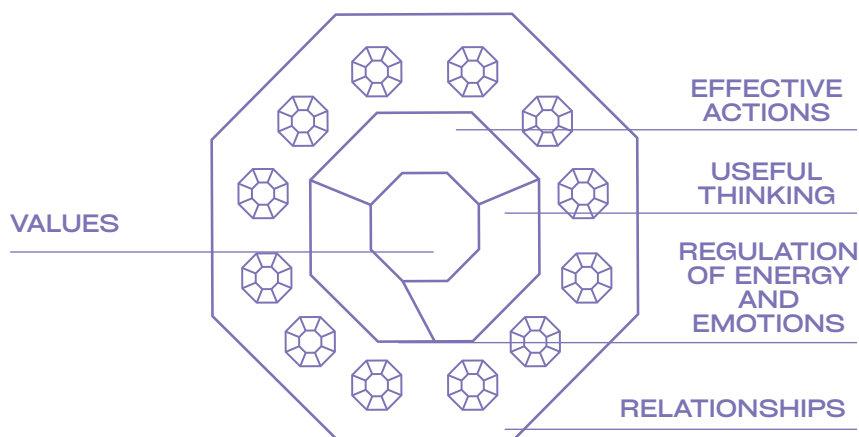
Values: the meanings and guidelines we live by

Actions and lack thereof

Useful thinking: what do I think about this or that event

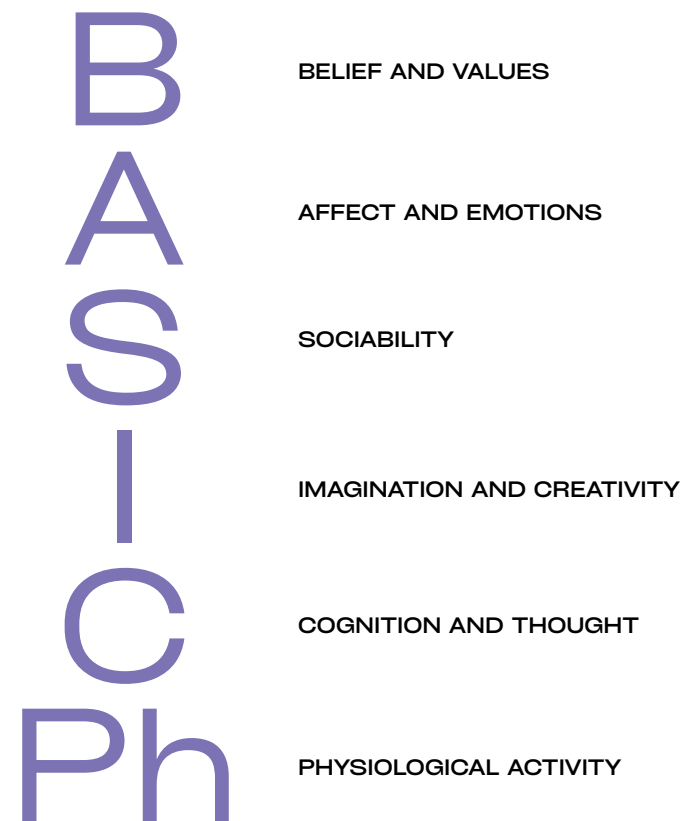
Emotions: regulation of energy, feelings

Relationships: healthy relationships with yourself and others, the ability to unite



2. RESOURCE MODEL OF STRESS MANAGEMENT "BASIC PH"

A model that collects the resources available to us and presents them as channels of adaptation and overcoming the crisis.



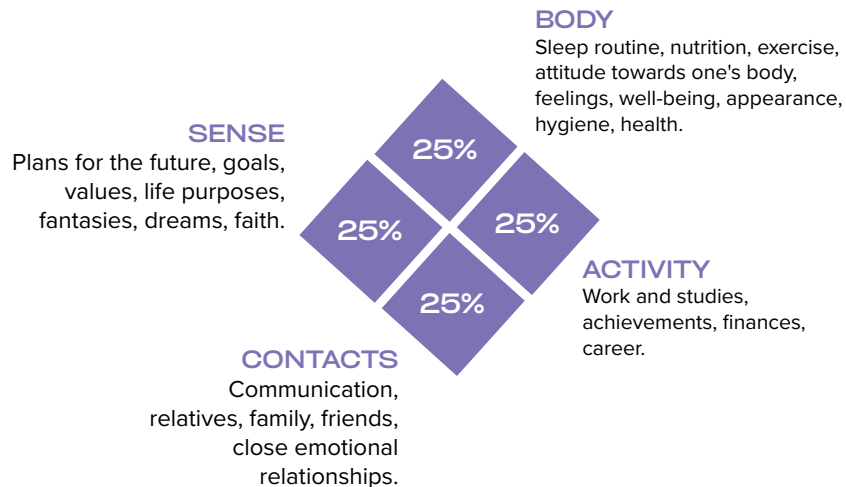
The model presents five channels. I suggest that you think about what might fit into each aspect of this model for you. I recommend taking 20 minutes to do this and mapping your resources through the model.

[illegible]This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

You can do the same with your team or loved ones to identify what common resources you might have available to you all together, or what resources you might not have noticed but might notice through the experiences of others.

3. FOUR QUALITY OF LIFE BALANCE MODEL^{14 15}

Another model, also called the "balance rhombus", helps us assess our balance using a simplified formula as four areas. The idea behind the model is that each of the four areas accounts for 25% of our attention. If each area of life is given enough attention, the resources of the different areas complement our balance.



The methodology is very simple to apply. First, write down each area — what you do for yourself in this area, what is important, what needs attention — and determine what percentage of your life this area currently occupies. It is unlikely that you will achieve perfection, so a certain imbalance in all four areas is normal.

It is worth paying attention if one area draws attention away from the others and takes up more than 25%, or vice versa, if one of them receives significantly less than a quarter of the attention. In this case, we move on to the second part of the balance model.

¹⁴ Positum. (n.d.). History. Retrieved January 10, 2025, from <https://www.positum.org/history/>.

¹⁵ Peseschkian Foundation. (n.d.). Balance model. Retrieved from <https://en.peseschkian-stiftung.de/balance-model>.

WHAT AREAS NEED MORE ATTENTION?

PERHAPS THE BODY NEEDS MORE REST?

OR DO YOU NEED TO RECONSIDER YOUR MEANINGS? COMMUNICATION? ACTIVITIES?

Analyse what you can do for each of the areas in this model that needs attention. You can also look at the whole model and think about what actions or processes can balance all areas at once.

If you are assessing resources together as a team, put the findings in a common area for discussion and comparison. Identify those resources that can be activated and used by the whole team and those that are relevant to you personally at this stage.

Analyse how they can be integrated.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT AFTER THE FULL-SCALE INVASION, YOU WOULDN'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO DO, OR DIDN'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO DO?

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'VE FINALLY ALLOWED YOURSELF TO DO?

WORKING HOURS AND TIME TO REST

We live in an environment where productivity, speed of task completion, and constant presence in touch are becoming not only opportunities, but also requirements of the environment. Sometimes the environment of life and almost always the environment of work.

The information environment dictates that we should always be connected, and network coverage and smartphones make it possible. But how aware are we of the consequences of being always on?

The depletion of the nervous and endocrine systems, a decrease in the speed of memorising and processing information, and a decrease in creativity are often the consequences of being in "work mode" all the time.

Our brains need breaks and a complete disconnect from chats, social media, emails and calls. At the same time, our bodies need quality rest. If our bodies could give us signals, then statements such as "Switching between types of tasks is already rest" would be declared toxic.

**TO DO OUR JOB WELL,
WE NEED QUALITY REST.**

What does this mean in practice?

- For every 20-60 minutes of intellectual work, we need 10-20 minutes of rest away from the workplace and the smartphone screen: go for a short walk, eat an apple, do some warm-ups.
- We need days off to take a break from work, including communication in work chats or "one small task for 20 minutes on Sunday that is not workday".
- It is important for us to have a good rest. It's okay to get stuck into a screen or TV series from time to time, but it's not okay to rest only in this way. Remember what makes you happy and spend time on those activities. At the same time, just sleeping when you are tired is also okay.

Just having free time can be frightening, because we are used to being distracted and switched on. Therefore, if you realise that you are at this point, try to start small — one or two **conscious breaks** during the working day and 3-4 hours of **conscious rest** on the day off.

What to do if it's hard to find time to relax?

- Plan your holidays in advance — put them on your calendar and book time for them. Yes, just like with work meetings or tasks.
- Make arrangements with friends or acquaintances to spend time together when you are relaxing. This will increase your chances of doing just that, rather than jumping back into the workflow.
- After hours, put work chats on "mute", turn off notifications on your gadgets, or turn off your smartphones altogether if you are not dealing with crisis or urgent communications.

THINK ABOUT your own ways of switching to separate your work and non-work space.

SECTION 3.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

RECOGNITION OF EMOTIONS AND SELF-COMPASSION

Our first task for self-help in times of stress is to recognise that we are stressed.

We can be afraid, angry or confused. But none of this exists for our consciousness until it is named. The ability to understand and name your own emotions and those of others is sometimes called "emotional intelligence", and in mindfulness practice this skill is related to a broader term — self awareness.

Why do we need to understand emotions?

- This allows me to quickly (and sometimes in the moment) understand the true motivation behind why I act in a certain way. For example, I fight with my family because they hurt me with their actions.
- This gives us the opportunity to observe ourselves more and to go through emotionally charged events more easily or, for example, not to get involved in petty conflicts. That is, instead of riding the emotional rollercoaster, we are able to choose what is important right now: another adrenaline rush or perhaps switching to constructive solutions.
- We can empathise — show compassion and a deep emotional understanding of what other people are feeling. Our relationships, both romantic and friendly, are built and developed on this ability.

Sometimes we are able to recognise our own emotions and feelings, but at the same time we are too demanding of ourselves. In this case, we often ignore our own needs (see the previous section on time for work and time for rest).

I'm sure you know people like this: creative and inspired, but terribly tired, so much so that they can't remember the last time they had a good night's rest or a good night's sleep. And when you meet up with friends or family, the likelihood of forgetting what they look like is increasing.

To be honest, I used to have this trait too - to give up on myself, because there are **big goals, big ambitions**, and with the war, there is also **big volunteerism**, and in general, most people are much worse off, and we have to row in this boat together. All of these parts of motivation are important, and if we didn't do so much, maybe (okay, I'm sure) we wouldn't exist as a nation for several years, but there is one "but". This is how emotional burnout and most mental disorders, including depression, begin — with a lack of self-compassion.

Self-compassion is the ability of a person to be a friend to himself/herself: to be kind to ourselves when we are suffering, tired, or have made a mistake.

Self-compassion is the foundation of a healthy relationship with yourself, especially if you are prone to perfectionism, high expectations of yourself and/or overestimate your own strengths. Would a good friend force you to ignore yourself, tolerate things that cause you pain, or criticise you incessantly? So don't do the same. Yes, yes, it's easy to say.

What can we do to cultivate self-compassion and build the ability to recognise emotions?

I'll say right away that there are many ways, so as the author, I'll give you just a few.

- Take "mindful pauses" - stop for a few minutes and ask yourself questions:
 - "What do I feel now?"
 - "How am I doing now?"

You can set several alarms throughout the day and, when they go off, pay attention to the awareness of the moment and yourself in it.

- Keep a diary of emotions or any notebook in which you describe what you feel in any form and look for connections:
 - Why did I feel that way?
 - What can I do differently?
 - How can I support myself in this situation?
- Talk to your loved ones about how you feel (yes, this is an asterisked task). My friends even have a separate ritual for this — a separate day and time when they gather as a family and discuss which events of the week were the most emotionally difficult and why, and how they can support each other next time. It is important to do this when everyone is calm and happy. You can do this during a conflict a little later, when all participants have taken the first steps in self-awareness.

When we are able to recognise our emotions, we are able to recognise more quickly that we are stressed, tired or in need of support. This helps us to feel and understand the needs of the people around us and, most importantly, our own.

At the same time, the skill of self-compassion helps us not to miss the moment when it is important to take care of ourselves. We will talk about self-care in the following.

SELF-CARE AS THE BASIS OF WELLBEING SLEEP AND SELF CARE

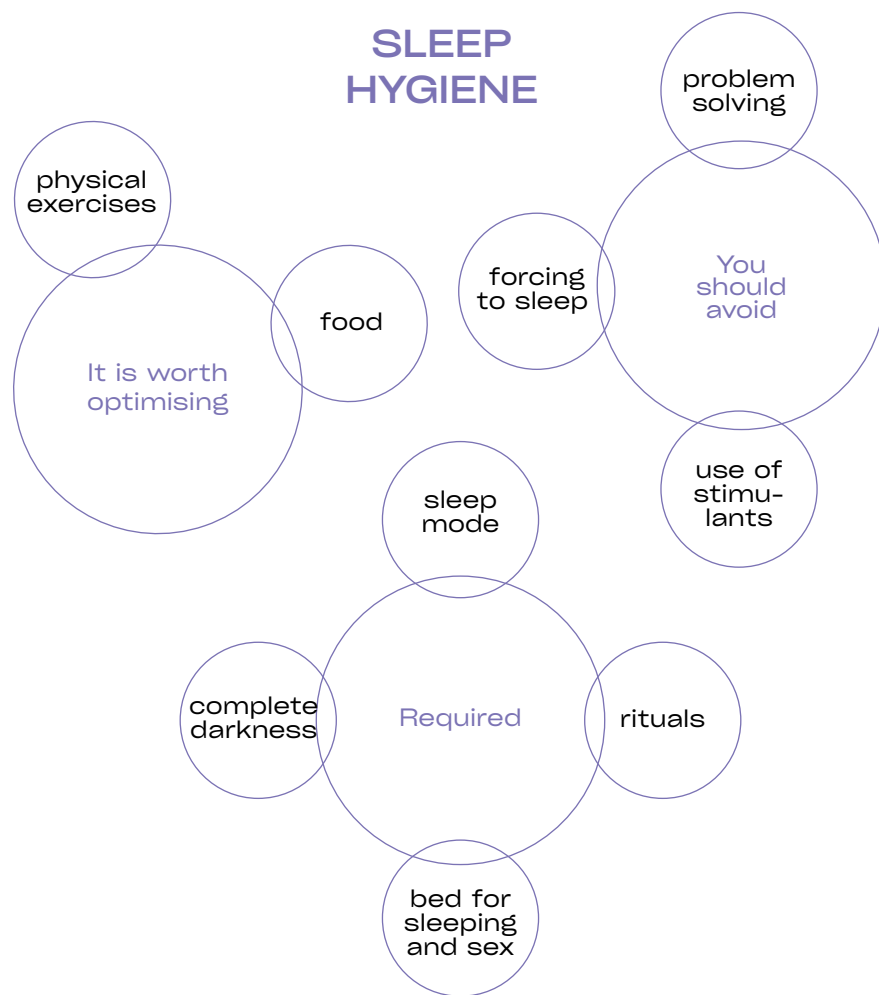
Sleep is an essential basic human need. The way we sleep affects our health, well-being, and life satisfaction¹⁶. Among the factors that affect the quality of our sleep, in addition to external circumstances, are our individual characteristics regarding the length of sleep and the best time to fall asleep, the importance of sleep patterns and the quality of the environment around us - evening lighting, darkness during sleep, and room temperature.

How we wake up affects how we sleep at night.

The ideal sleep duration is individual, including genetically determined. To explore your sleep duration and the best time to fall asleep, it's worth investigating this over time, at least 7-10 days. You can start a short sleep diary to record when you are most active and creative. Record the time you fall asleep, the time you wake up, when it's easier to do so and when it's harder. You can also follow yourself and analyse how food or physical activity affects your sleep. Conclusions should be drawn no earlier than 7 days after the start of the observations.

**We start
getting ready for bed
when we wake up.**

¹⁶ Lemola, S., Perkinson-Gloor, N., Brand, S., Dewald-Kaufmann, J. F., & Grob, A. (2013). Quality of sleep, health, and well-being in a population-based study. *Journal of Adolescence*, 36(5), 1033-1040.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.08.003>.



The most dangerous thing for our health is to lose sleep on a regular basis. Half an hour to an hour of regular sleep loss leads to changes in body processes. Therefore, under any circumstances, it is worth getting at least 6 hours of sleep at night. If we have lost sleep once, for example, due to a rocket attack, the body perceives this as acute stress and, if we return to sleep, quickly restores resources. Usually, after a sleep deprivation, we compensate — we can sleep longer than usual or stay up later in the day. At the same time, if sleep lasts more than 11 hours for a prolonged period, this is a signal from the body that something is wrong.

HEALTHY SLEEPING PROTOCOL

1. Allow 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Its duration and the ideal time to go to bed are individual.
2. Try to keep the same sleep schedule on weekdays and weekends. Avoid shifting your schedule by more than 2-3 hours.
3. Change the lighting throughout the day. Bright, cold light during the day, dim, warm light in the evening, and darkness at night.
4. Sleep in a cooler room than during the day, with access to fresh air. But do not give up on a blanket and warm enough clothes to keep warm. An additional life hack is to take a hot shower or bath 2-3 hours before bedtime.
5. Create evening and morning rituals to help you get ready for sleep and wake up.
6. Do not eat 3 hours before bedtime.
7. Switch your gadgets to "night mode" and try to spend less time in front of the screen.
8. If it is not possible to ensure darkness at night, cover your eyes mechanically, for example, with a sleeping mask.
9. The bed is only for the "C" word: sleep and sex. If there is not enough space and you also need to eat on the bed, create the illusion of changing places — sit in a different position, use a bedspread.
10. Daytime naps should be necessary and short, so that they do not interfere with nighttime sleep. As an exception, temporary extreme conditions such as shelling, childcare, etc. may be considered — then you can sleep at any time.

TAKING CARE OF SLEEP IN TIMES OF WAR: TIPS FOR DIFFERENT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS¹⁷

1. For those who spend most of the day in a shelter:

- Try to ensure a designated sleeping spot with your own items — at least a blanket.
- Take care of achieving the most comfortable temperature for sleep.
- As much as possible, adopt a comfortable position: stretch your legs, lie away from drafts, etc.

2. For those who are at home but run to a shelter during air alerts:

- Minimize preparation for leaving to the shelter, have everything within reach.
- Do not turn on bright lights; choose a dim nightlight instead.

3. For those who have gone to a safe place but are struggling with sleep disorders:

- Follow sleep hygiene rules for peaceful times as much as possible, try techniques that work for you, such as meditation, yoga nidra, etc.
- Consult with psychologists and doctors and, if necessary, take sleeping pills.

4. Do not abandon routine activities,

At least keep them minimal in your life. They provide landmarks throughout the day. For example, if you apply your favorite cream before bed, it won't harm anyone.

5. Low-key yoga nidra

Try to focus on your breathing. The simplest and most difficult thing at the same time: breathe and count your inhales and exhales.

¹⁷ "Sleep during the war: How to fall asleep if anxiety does not give you peace of mind". Village Ukraine: <https://www.village.com.ua/village/life/health-knowledge/325051-son-pid-chas-viyini>.

FOOD AND SELF CARE

When we are stressed, and even more so when stress (see the previous section on stress and stress support) and anxiety are constant, when we face a life-threatening situation, our body reacts instantly and our attitude towards food changes.

During traumatic events, we may experience dry mouth, sometimes nausea, and sometimes an urgent need to go to the toilet. These physiological reactions are normal.

When stress is chronic, it affects our eating patterns — we can either overeat or forget to eat. When a person overeats, they may not register that they have just eaten something and may not eat because they are hungry, for example, regularly grabbing a biscuit while working on their laptop. In this case, it can be difficult or almost impossible to know how much food has been consumed.

Forgetting to eat is often the case for those whose schedule is overloaded with work meetings and tasks. And in the morning, without a pause, a person gets involved in the work process. The body either did not have time to give a signal that it was hungry, or in the whirlwind of events, the person did not recognise this signal. Usually, the first signs of hunger in this case appear in the afternoon, or even in the evening.

Sound familiar?

One of the basic components of self-care is to establish a rhythmic, regular, healthy (I know, I know, most of us are already allergic to this word in combination with the word "nutrition") food intake.

A good guide for balanced food consumption can be the so-called "Harvard plate"¹⁸. It shows what types of food should be present and in what proportions.

Another important element of taking care of yourself through food is the regularity of its consumption. In addition to the usual breakfast-lunch-dinner, plan 2-3 snacks per day.

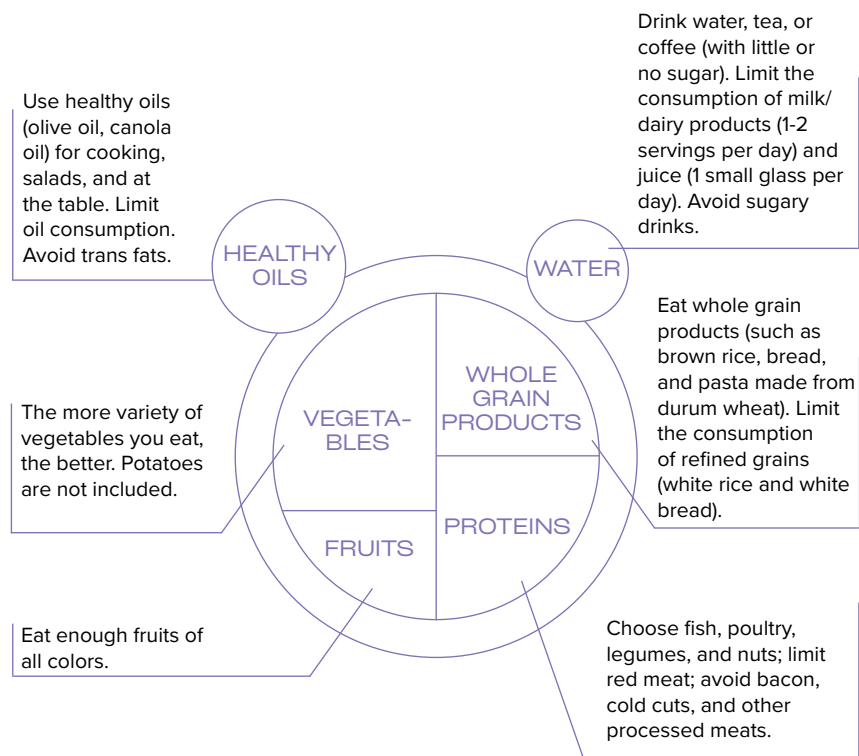
We won't go into details that I'm sure a healthy eating expert could tell you, such as the amount of vitamins from different sources or the specifics of replacing animal proteins with vegetable ones.

I will only outline **the key tips that will have a significant impact on your mental health:**

- Establish your eating habits: record the time of your meals, at least breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Choose a variety of foods according to the categories of the Harvard Plate — let vegetables, fruits, side dishes and proteins settle on your plate every day
- Eat 2-3 snacks: fruit, crispy bread or something that tastes good to you.
- It is better to consume food that is not too processed. Likewise, local products are better than those from another part of the world, because preservatives are needed to keep them in good condition.
- Try not to "trample" before going to bed - it's good if there are three hours between the evening meal and bedtime. Yes, I know from experience how difficult it is.
- Keep an eye on the amount of sweets, saltines and snacks - chips, crisps, bars and everything else we want to shove into our mouths first when we are very hungry.
- Plan. Plan what you will eat for a week or at least a day. Think about where you will be at lunchtime or what is important to have on hand for dinner.
- Don't beat yourself up over buns or fried potatoes — sometimes it's the best thing we can do for our mental health. As long as it's not the only thing.

¹⁸ Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health: <https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-eating-plate/>.

HEALTHY EATING PLATE¹⁹



If you are in an environment where there is no electricity, water, or any basis for safety, take something that provides enough energy and does not require cooking — dried fruits, berries, nuts, dried or smoked snacks, including meat, cereals that can be poured with boiling water, bread.

On the one hand, it may seem extremely trivial and "hackneyed" to talk about food or sleep, but on the other hand, the secret is that without performing these basic "asanas" of caring for our bodies, we will not be able to do anything meaningful for a long time. After all, we live not only in the mental world of decisions and ideas, but also in an ordinary, sometimes not flawless body that needs rest and care. And the sooner we find time to pay attention to it, the sooner we will have the strength to cope with new challenges.

¹⁹ Harvard School of Public Health. The Nutrition Source
www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource
 Harvard Medical School. Harvard Health Publications
www.health.harvard.edu

SPORT AS CARE

You may have noticed that throughout this practical guide we have emphasised the inextricable link between our mental processes and our bodies, and our bodies and our mental health. This section is another reminder of this unity.

Any emotional state affects the body: from muscle tone, heart and stomach function, to the functioning of the body's defence system — the immune system. Think about when you are angry or anxious, for example. In the first case, your muscles are tense, and you feel like you're "ready to jump". In the latter, we often feel tension too, but it is localised, for example, in the shoulders and can easily turn into a feeling of fatigue throughout the body. Have you ever experienced this?

I see physical activity as part of my routine health care and also as a first aid for stress.

When we are moderately safe after (and sometimes during) a stressful event, **simple physical exercises can help to "switch on" our bodies after strong experiences. Examples of exercises:**

- Stretching or stretching will help you feel the whole body
- Squats - moderate, not fast - will help you get involved in the here and now if your brain has "flown away" somewhere
- Conscious movement - both arm movement and any moderately dynamic movement to feel the spine, limbs and feet
- Jumping on the spot - when you have a lot of energy and want to get some of it off, it also works well to shake off a past experience or event and move on.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS ROUTINE HEALTH CARE.

IMPORTANT: If you have any medical contraindications or are in any doubt, please consult your family doctor before undertaking any of the activities suggested.

Keeping fit doesn't have to be a motivation for regular exercise. Moderate physical activity in accordance with your body's current capabilities has a good effect on your emotional state and improves your overall body's resilience: not only at the level of immunity, but also at the level of mental health.

Choose something that is closer to your temperament or energy level at the moment for regular self-care. You can start with a 15-minute walk at a moderate pace, and your body will thank you for being outdoors, getting more light (even in winter) and being more dynamic.

For moderate energy levels, you can choose:

- morning - or any other time — warm-up — 10-15 minutes is better than nothing
- moderate exercise yoga
- walks in the fresh air - from 15 minutes to 40 minutes, this will be enough to start with
- cycling around the city
- qigong, sandao or similar breathing and movement practices for general body stabilisation

When you have a lot of energy and emotions, you can choose:

- squats, push-ups, burpees (crossfit exercises) — short-term cardio will stabilise you, but take into account the condition of your joints and cardiovascular system when you start this type of exercise
- running, running, running — helps to unload the brain and train the cardiovascular and respiratory systems. As with oth-

er sudden changes, I urge you to start moderately and listen to yourself;

- dancing — both social and solo: jazz-funk, contemporary or any dance you like or have been tempted to try for a long time;
- boxing or any kind of pair wrestling — ideal for high levels of aggression, both after traumatic events and during chronic stress;
- swimming — stabilises all body systems and helps to train the respiratory system and relieve the muscles of the neck, shoulders, and arms. .

Personally, I like to have several formats of physical activity and choose according to the time of my life, energy level and challenges I face.

You can start by making a list of things you'd like to try, scheduling time for physical activity, or committing to a few minutes of physical activity between work meetings.

It's also a good motivator at the start if you set a reminder on your smart-watch or phone to get up and stretch every hour during the workday.

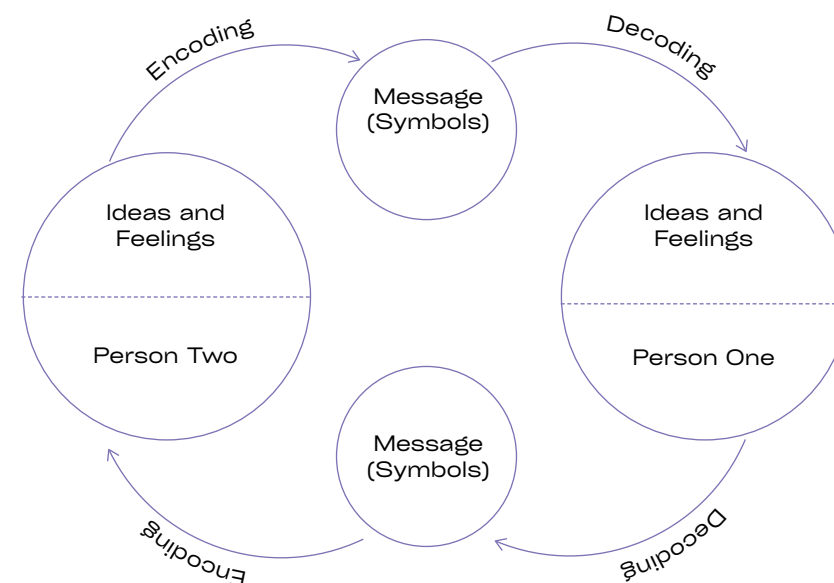
Will you try it?

COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY

We communicate because we are social beings. But not only that. We need a sense of connection, support, and sometimes we need to convey an important message or meet a need, find out information, or invite others to co-create.

Our communication takes place simultaneously on several levels or only on some of them: verbally — through words and sentences, non-verbally — through gestures and facial expressions, visually — through the way we look, how we dress, what visuals we choose for social media and presentations. Here we can also add the interpretation of emojis, stickers and memes, but for now, let's refer to them as visual communication.

The diagram below shows how the communication process looks like:



None of us can read minds. That is why we can only find out what another person lives for, their ideas and feelings, through communication¹⁹.

To be successful in communication, we really don't need much. Just two skills: listening and speaking.

Let's take a closer look at each of these skills.

Let's start with **the ability to listen**, which includes:

- eye contact
- focus on the individual
- lack of judgement (we learn more about the person's point of view and their world, even if we disagree)
- respect
- open questions
- paraphrasing what you have heard
- inclusion and empathy

The **skill of communicating** includes:

- clarity and simplicity in wording
- respect for the interlocutor
- self-confidence
- combining information with context
- empathy
- storytelling
- appropriate humour
- ability to ask questions

**Everything is
a message**

¹⁹ Communication. Encyclopaedia Britannica Kids: Students - Access mode: <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/communication/273754..>

MAGIC WORDS

I see you
I hear you
I am here with you

These words work with friends and strangers, family and colleagues, and what's important is that they work when you say them to yourself. Because sometimes all we need is to see ourselves, hear ourselves and just give ourselves space. That's where peace and new ideas are born.

The most important thing is in the end: in a world where we are always connected, it can be difficult to be present with other people. Think of a time when you were listening to your colleagues or a loved one and suddenly noticed that your mind was elsewhere and you couldn't remember what they had been talking about for the last few seconds.

Sometimes we forget dates, birthdays, important events or situations in the lives of our colleagues and loved ones. Sometimes we have so little energy that it takes us a week to respond to a "*how are you?*" message. Sometimes we want to call, write, or share ourselves, but we get distracted by daily worries, workload, or simply fall asleep before we get to the meeting. Sometimes we all find it hard to keep in touch with others. And yet, it is this connection - the feeling of participation, co-creation, and empathy — that nourishes us and is the basis for real change in society.

What should you do to be able to stay in contact with other people, even when the rhythm of your life and work is not conducive to this?

- 1. Audit your social circles.** When was the last time you wrote down or sketched who you communicate with? Do it now or schedule it in your calendar in the near future. Write down who you call close people, who on your team is in constant contact with you, and who you need to be in constant contact with. Think about who you would like to keep in touch with more regularly. Perhaps someone close to you hasn't been in your life for a long time? Think about who and why. You can write down these thoughts or make a sign: the circle of communication, who is in it, whether you are comfortable with the way you are now, what you can do to make it comfortable.
- 2. Remember the important ones.** Put important dates and birthdays, team holidays on your calendar. Pay attention, and

if it's hard to do without a reminder, set aside time outside of work during the week when you write to important people and support each other.

3. **Print out photos of important people and hang them in a prominent place.** I heard this advice at one of the speeches by Simon (simonsinek.com), an American coach and motivational speaker, author of the book *Start with Why* (more details at [. If you have a huge workload, like I do, and sometimes you don't have the energy to remember when you called your loved ones, this idea is for you.](#)

Think about how you can maintain communication with your family and team. Everyone has unique needs, capabilities, and ideas. And if you've already taken care of yourself, it might be time to think about how to bring people together for support and co-creation.

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DIARY OF PERSONAL GRATIFICATION

WHAT SMALL ACTION OF JOY CAN I DO FOR MYSELF TODAY?

[illegible]

[illegible]

WHAT AM I SAYING "THANK YOU" FOR TODAY?

DIARY OF PERSONAL GRATIFICATION

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced, horizontal blue lines running across the width of the page. The background is a solid off-white color, providing a clear contrast for the blue lines. There are no margins, text, or other markings present on the page.

