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### ***General Instructions***

Here are some general instructions for good mental health that we encourage all of our patients to follow.

1. **Avoid Alcohol and Drugs.** (These substances worsen mental health conditions, making our job of trying to help you harder.) Even if you drink responsibly, alcohol is making your medications less effective and less predictable.

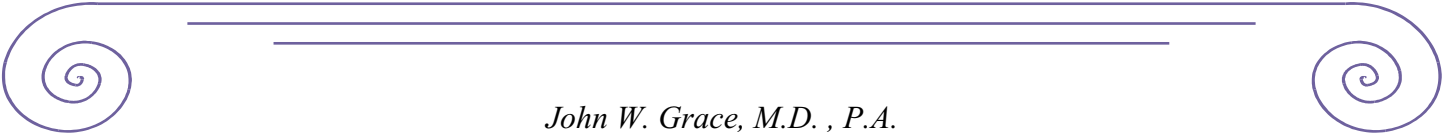
2. **Cannot emphasize enough how important it is to value and cherish your bodies circadian rhythm.** Our bodies are designed to function in a rhythm and function better when it is consistent.

Keep a reasonable schedule. Stay active in the day. Shut down at night. Avoid stimulation and light in the evening (including computer screens and caffeine.) Put your body into a consistent rhythm where you are active in the day and sleeping at night. Try to live each day with a similar pattern of activity. (For example, mental exercise in am, physical exercise in pm and relaxation in evening.)

3. **Monitor your progress.** Use either a journal of some sort or a mood chart to monitor how you feel each day. Some phones have downloadable applications where you can chart your mood.

Your report of how you have been is always very inaccurate without daily monitoring. At the very least get in the habit of writing two numbers on your calender: how many hours you slept the night before and how you feel on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 is worst you've ever felt and 10 is way too good. 6 to 7 is a good day.





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4. Journal writing also gives you a way to examine and change how you interact with yourself. Try being different with your self-dialogue. Try being supportive. It is a tool for change.

5. Avoid access to firearms. Firearms are dangerous with mental conditions and medications associated with their treatment. You dramatically increase the risk of them hurting you or someone you care about.


6. Do not change your medications without consulting a physician. This can be life threatening for some medications.

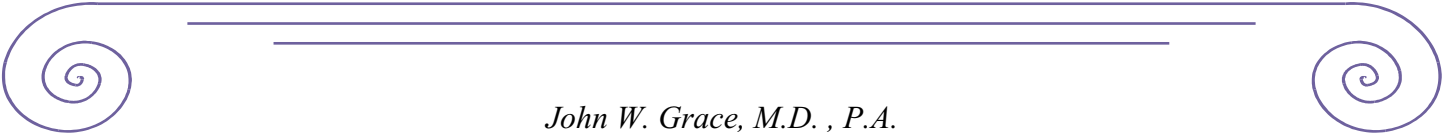
7. When you feel better, keep yourself well. In other words, if you feel better after a few days of treatment don't run out there and take on a lot more stressful tasks.

8. Eat omega three fatty acids. Either naturally or in supplemental forms.

9. Get your laboratory evaluations. We ask people to make sure they get the laboratory evaluations we request. Many medical conditions can appear to be psychiatric for instance a rapid heart rate could be anxiety or hyperthyroidism.

10. Practice daily relaxation. The ability to calm yourself and control your emotions is a valuable one. Practice it every day for a few minutes when you are calm.





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11. Never consider acting on suicidal thoughts. Sometimes medications we give can actually make people feel more suicidal. Thoughts are NOT actions. Make a commitment to keep yourself safe INDEPENDENT of how you feel. Just because you feel like being destructive that doesn't mean you have to act destructive. DO WHATEVER YOU NEED TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE UNTIL YOU ARE IN A CLEARER STATE OF MIND.

Thank you for your concern and support in this matter.

Sincerely,

John W. Grace, M.D.

