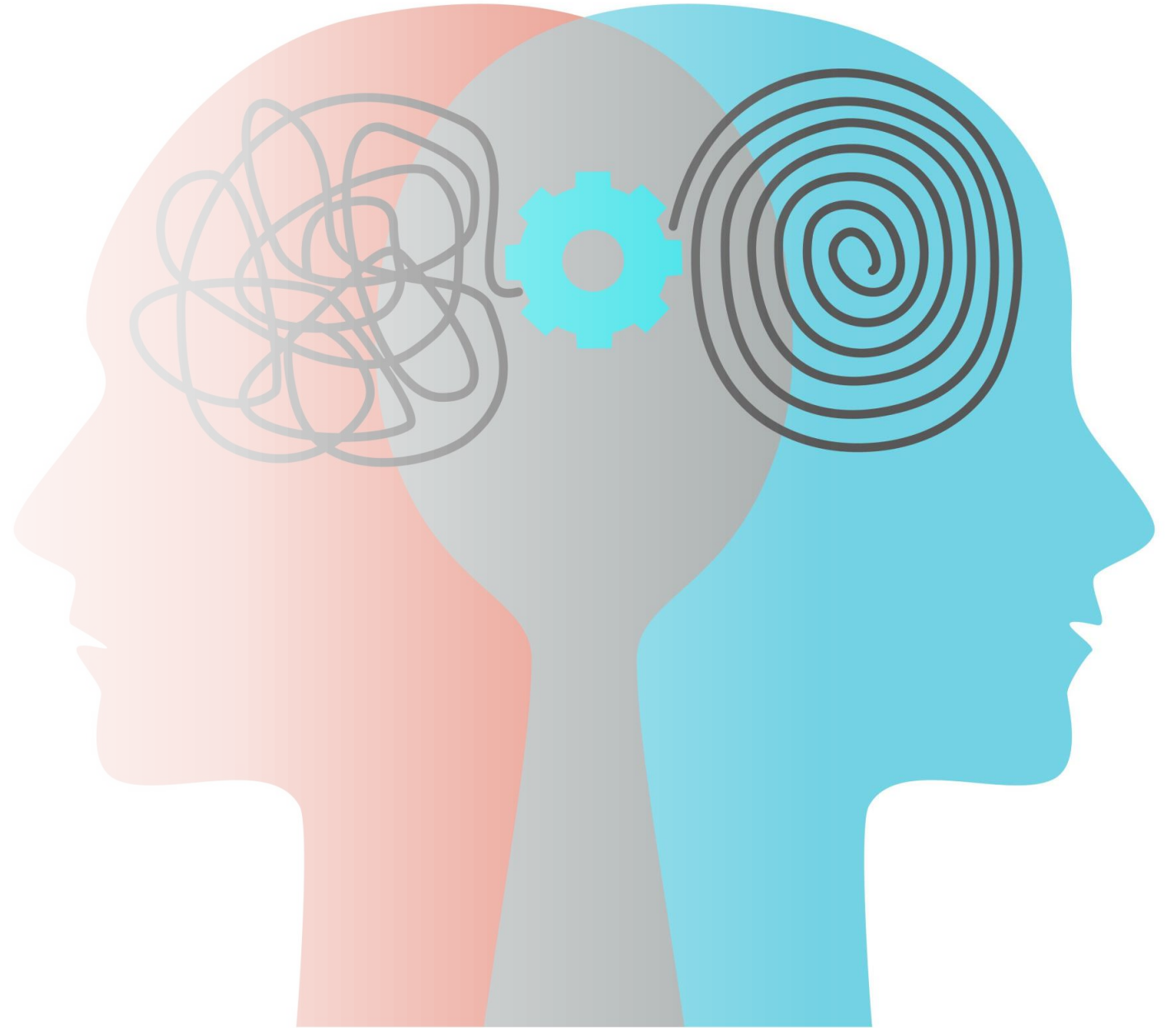


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# Mental Health

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A Practical Guide





**Mark Kelly, LPC, LCDC**

What is "mental health" ?

Is it the opposite of mental illness?

All of us experience some sort of stress.

Today we will look at the most common forms of mental distress and tools that ANYONE can use to navigate the challenges of life.

When do we seek help, and when do we just need to make a few changes?

# MENTAL HEALTH

- Mental Health is when our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are aligned to allow us to live out our lives according to our values.
- Mental illness is when our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are **disordered** and keep us from living out our lives according to our values.





# VALUES

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- Values are the substance of our dreams, goals, and ambitions.
- Values are – to provide for ourselves and families, to do fulfilling work, to have good relationships, to feel content in the choices that we have made in life.
- Mental health problems – anxiety, depression, addictions – keep us from doing the things that we want to do.

# MOST COMMON ISSUES

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**ANXIETY**



**DEPRESSION**



**ADDICTION**

# ANXIETY

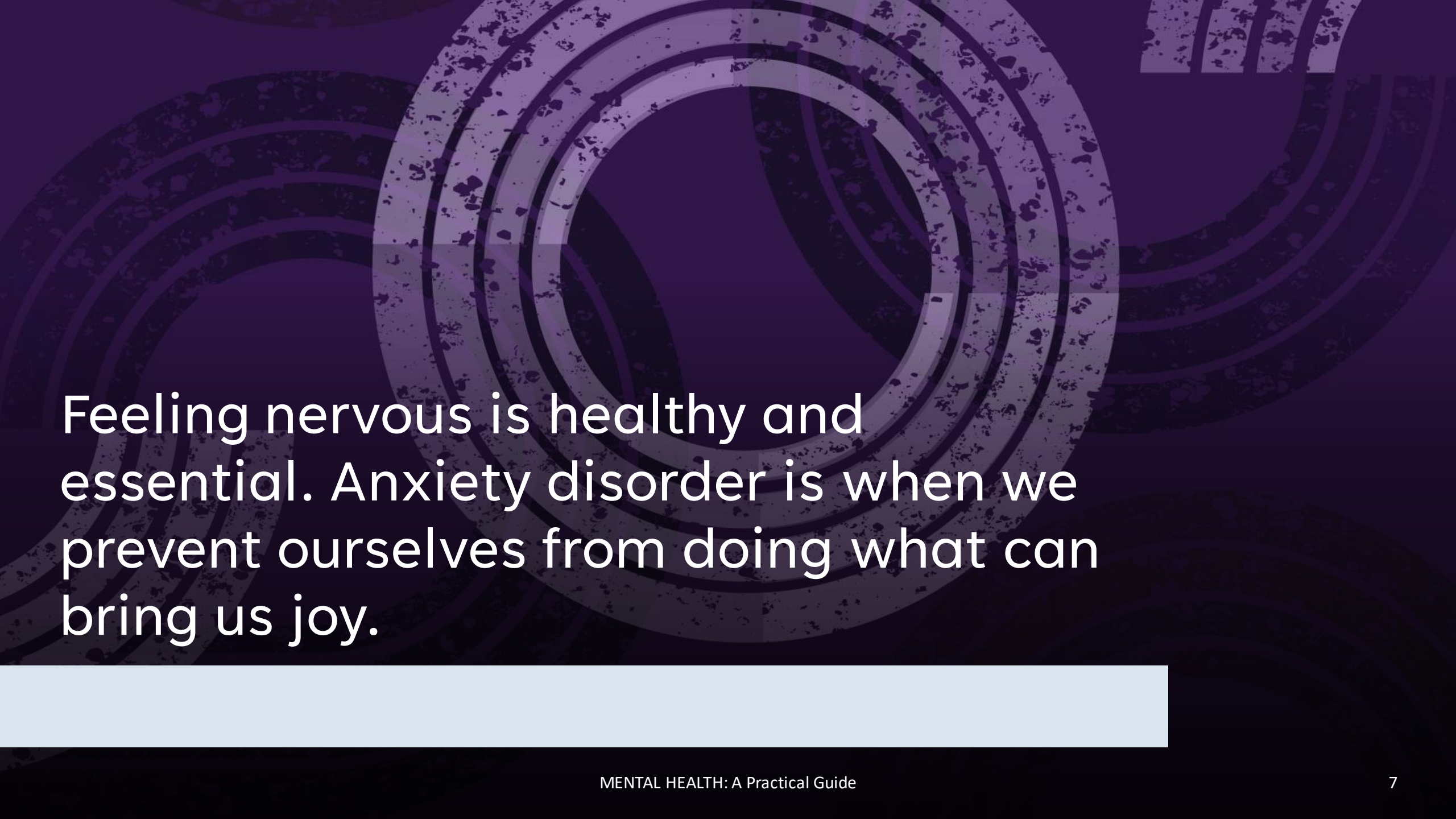
## Normal nerves or anxiety disorder?



ALL anxiety is a vital survival tool that puts our body in a state of heightened awareness.

When the mind perceives a threat, it activates our sympathetic nervous system. This prepares the body for **fight, flight, or freeze**.

This is critical to our survival if there's a bear in the woods, not so much if we are giving a speech or asking our crush on a date.



Feeling nervous is healthy and essential. Anxiety disorder is when we prevent ourselves from doing what can bring us joy.



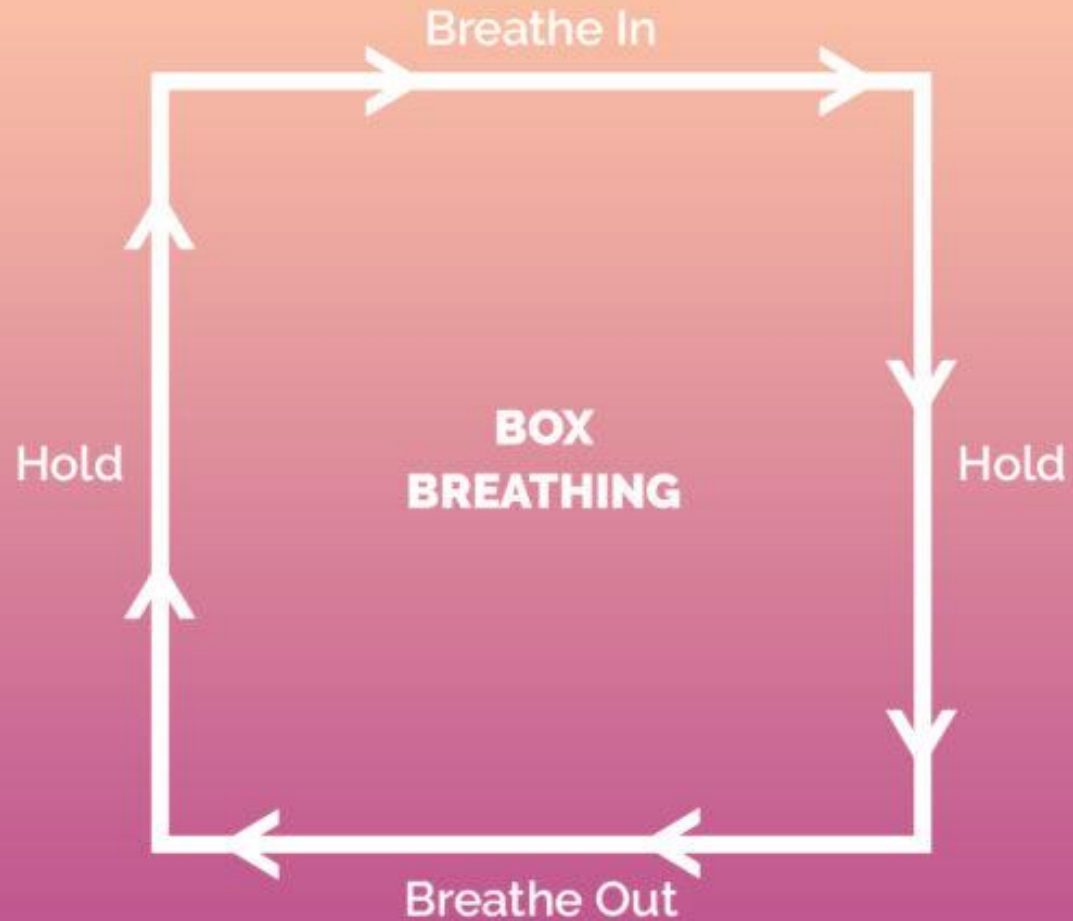
**Tools for anxiety and nerves.**

- Box Breathing
- Inner Coach



# BOX BREATHING

Box breathing deactivates the body's flight or fight system and puts the body into a relaxed state of its parasympathetic nervous system, the 'feed and breed' system of the body.

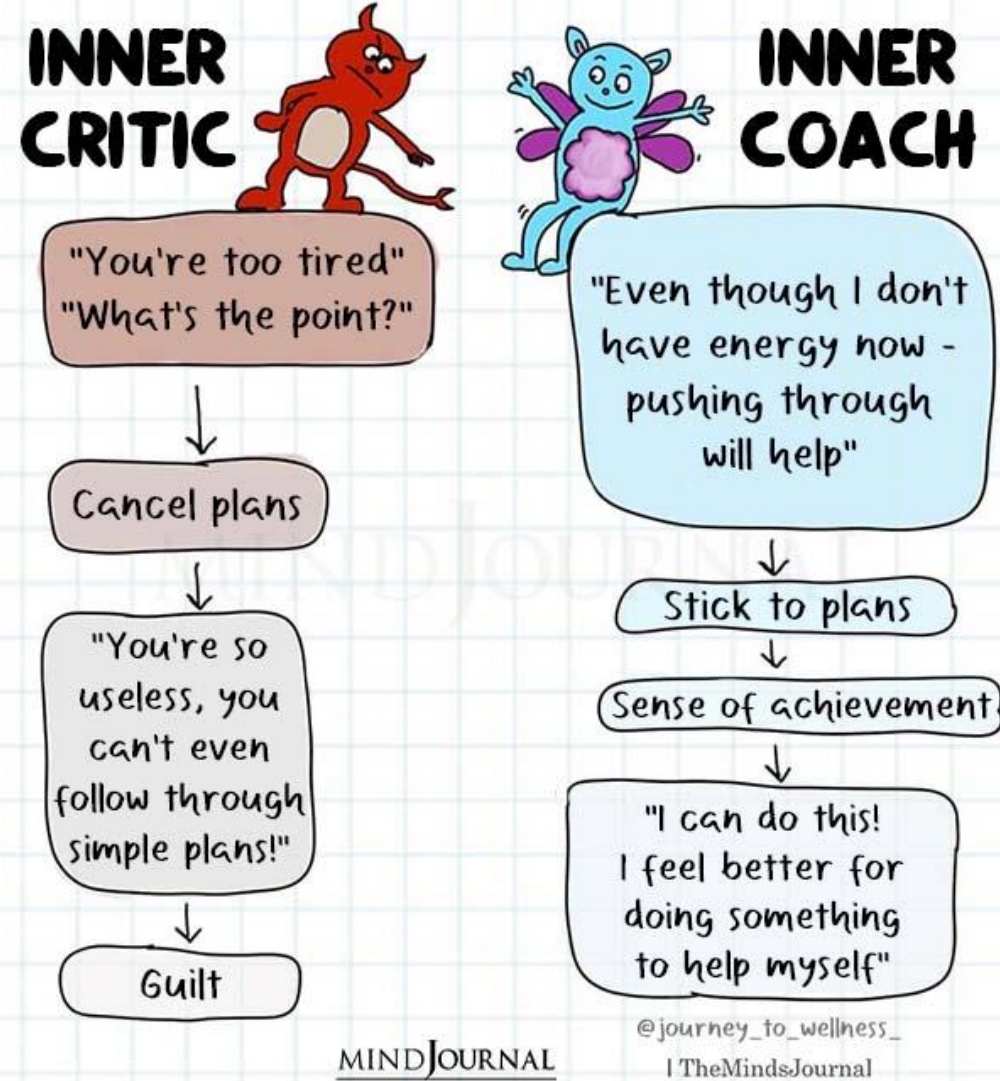


# INNER CRITIC, INNER COACH

Anxious feelings are driven by our **self-talk**. Have you ever felt like you were your own worst critic? Most people are.

The inner critic voice can be helpful, but if it's driving our anxiety then we need to change it. Here's some pointers -

1. Write down who your inner critic is. What kind of voice is it? What does the critic look like?
2. Think of an "inner coach" voice that speaks positivity to you – What does this coach look like? What does the voice sound like? Is it someone from your life, is it a spiritual figure, or someone in your imagination? Be specific!



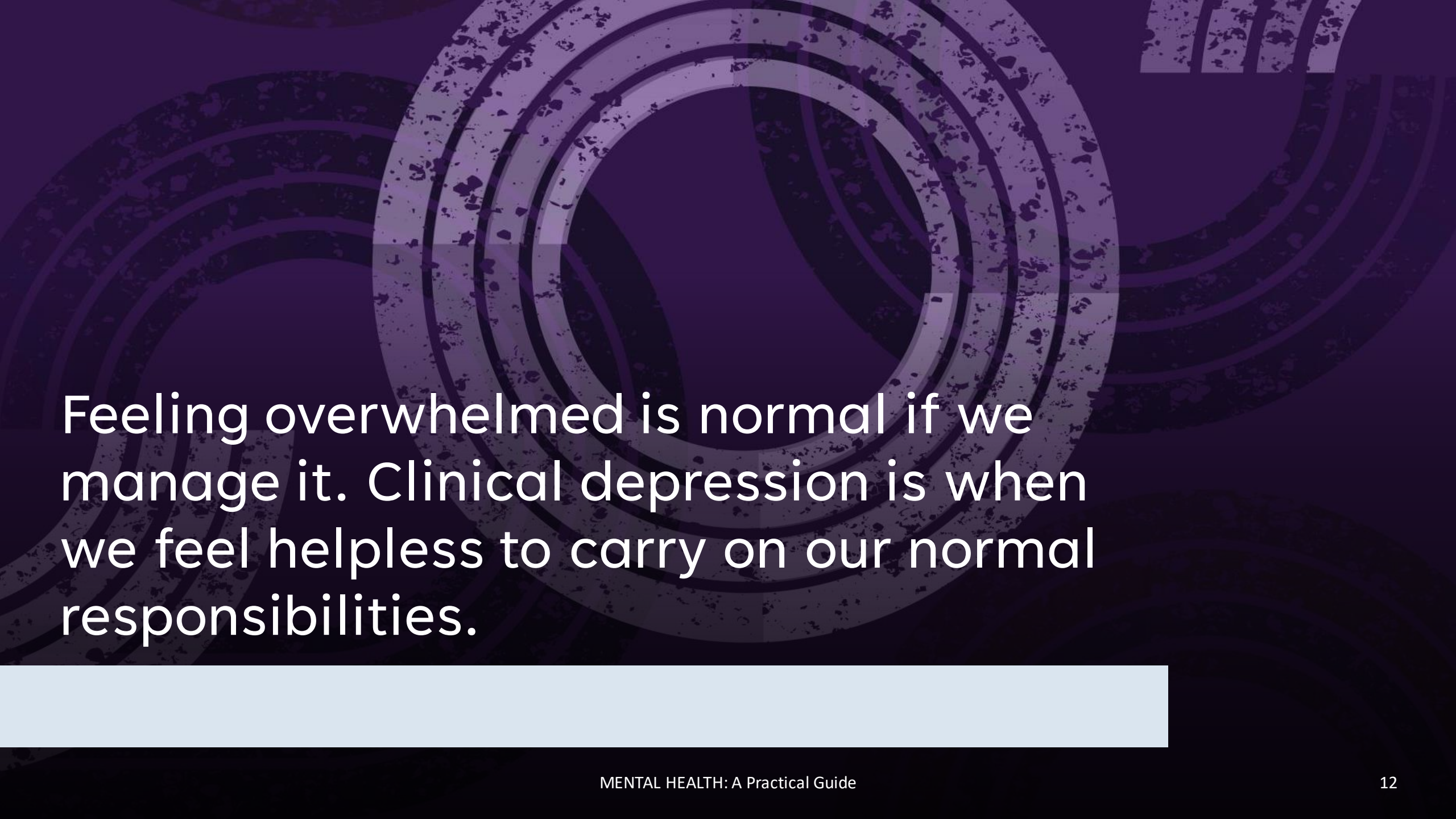
# DEPRESSION

## Normal blues or depressive disorder?

Depression is **not sadness** but a form of helplessness.

Feeling depressed is a feeling that nothing you do is going to make a difference.

This can be a survival skill, giving up when it's smarter than pushing forward, but it also becomes disordered when nothing seems worthwhile anymore. This is clinical depression.



Feeling overwhelmed is normal if we manage it. Clinical depression is when we feel helpless to carry on our normal responsibilities.



**Tools for feeling  
overwhelmed.**

- SMART goals
- Positive Affirmations

# THE POWER OF SMART GOALS

- New Years resolutions fail because they are often too broad in scope. The most common resolution is "I'm going to get in shape!" Or "I'm going to save money!" Which almost always leads to disappointment.
- Always write a positive affirmation and put it on your mirror or door where you can see it daily.

**Setting SMART goals** BiteSize Learning



**Specific**

The goal is concrete and tangible - everyone knows what it looks like.



**Measurable**

The goal has an objective measure of success that everyone can understand.



**Attainable**

The goal is challenging, but should be achievable with the resources available.



**Relevant**

The goal meaningfully contributes to larger objectives like the overall mission.



**Timely**

This goal has a deadline or, better yet, a timeline of progress milestones.



**It is enough**  
TO DO MY BEST

**Positive Affirmation**

# ADDICTION


## Just a bad habit? Or something more?

Addiction is a progressive brain illness that starts to slowly consume a person's life.

More than just a bad habit, addiction will begin to take priority over relationships, work, family, and other important values.

What are the warning signs of addiction?



The background features a dark purple color with a pattern of concentric circles and a central cross-like shape. The circles are slightly offset and have a textured, speckled appearance. The cross is formed by overlapping circles, creating a central square with rounded corners.

A normal drinker enjoys the effects of alcohol. A problem drinker is uncomfortable being sober.



## **Tools for bad habits.**

- 30 Day Challenge
- Dopamine Reset

# 30 Day Challenge

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- If you feel a habit is getting out of control, challenge yourself to 30 days of abstinence.
- Journal about your experience each night.
- If you are unable to accomplish this, it's time to get help.



# Dopamine Reset

- Bad habits are fueled by the dopamine rush we use as a distraction and coping tool for stress.
- Make small changes such as social media cleanse, caffeine detox, and start walking daily.
- Consistency is key. You need at least 14 days of a change.

**Reset Your Dopamine**

**Walk Outside**

**Turn Off Notifications**

**Get Physical Exercise**

**Practice Mindfulness**

**Journal**

SANDSTONE CARE

# Summary

- Talking to someone about what you're struggling with is important. There are many available therapists and treatment centers that can help with your problem, and counseling is completely confidential.
- I am more than happy to help anyone listening with finding or securing therapy.



# Thank you

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