

17. List those coping skills that you are working to develop or have developed as part of your plan to manage stress and your mental illness.

18. a. Define stress.

b. Describe the physiological response to stress.

c. Create a diagram which accounts for the role of stress, neurotransmitters, glucocorticoids (GC) and brain derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). Explain how neuronal (brain cell) dysfunction and death is thought to play a role in some cases of Major Depression and PTSD.

19. a. Explain how medications and therapy aid in the treatment of mental illness.

b. What is therapy? What types of therapy are there?

20. What factors go into the construction of an effective therapeutic relationship with your doctor? Please comment on the role of communication, listening, being open-minded, acceptance, motivation (to change), honesty, trust and empathy.

21. Make a detailed review of your plan (i.e. Relapse Prevention Plan) to address possible recurrences of your disorder. Please comment on each of the components in your plan:

a. Improved awareness of the signs and symptoms (s/s) of recurrence:

i. Early s/s:

ii. Late s/s:

b. Medication(s) and s/s targeted by each:

c. Support systems (family, friends, church, AA, etc):

d. Daily routine

e. Coping skills

f. Mental health providers

g. Other

BRAIN DO'S AND BRAIN DON'TS

Dr. Daniel Amen, M.D.

A Summary of Ways to Optimize Brain Function and Break Bad Brain Habits

Based on my research and the research of many other neuroscientists here is a list of brain Dos and Don'ts to optimize your own brain function.

Brain Do's:

1. Wear a helmet in high risk situations
2. Drink lots of water
3. Eat healthy
4. Take ginkgo biloba, Vitamin E and ibuprofen everyday
5. Think positive healthy thoughts
6. Love, feed and exercise your internal anteatater to rid yourself of ANTs (automatic negative thoughts)
7. Everyday focus on the things you are grateful for in your life
8. Watch the Disney movie Pollyanna
9. Spend time with positive, uplifting people
10. Spend time with people you want to be like (you are more likely to become like them)
11. Work on your people skills to become more connected to enhance limbic bonds
12. Talk to others in loving, helpful ways
13. Surround yourself with great smells
14. Build a library of wonderful experiences
15. Be nice to others
16. Exercise
17. Eat in ways specifically tailored to your brain
18. Learn diaphragmatic breathing
19. Learn and use self-hypnosis and meditation on a daily basis
20. Remember the 18/40/60 rule
21. Effectively confront and deal with conflictual situations
22. Develop clear goals for your life (relationships, work, money and self) and look at them everyday.
23. Focus on what you like a lot more than what you don't like
24. Collect penguins, or at least send them to me
25. Have meaning, purpose, excitement and stimulation in your life
26. Do not be another person's stimulant
27. Use brainwave biofeedback or audio-visual stimulation when needed
28. Notice when you're stuck, distract yourself and come back to the problem later
29. Think through answers before automatically saying no
30. Write out options and solutions when you feel stuck
31. Seek the counsel of others when you feel stuck (often just talking about feeling stuck will open new options)
32. Memorize and recite the Serenity Prayer daily and whenever bothered by repetitive thoughts (God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.)
33. Don't try to convince someone else who is stuck, take a break and come back to them later
34. Use paradoxical requests in dealing with cingulate people
35. Make naturally oppositional children mind you the first time (through a firm, kind, authoritative stance)
36. Strive for wonderful experiences
37. Enhance your memory skills
38. Sing and hum whenever you can
39. Make beautiful music a part of your life
40. Make beautiful smells a part of your life
41. Touch others often (appropriately)
42. Make love with your partner
43. Move in rhythms
44. Use a skilled psychotherapist when needed
45. Use an EMDR therapist to deal with trauma
46. Take head injuries seriously, even minor ones
47. Take medications when needed
48. Take herbal remedies when needed to optimize brain function

49. Look for underlying brain problems in substance abusers
50. Do full brain evaluations for people who do terrible things

Brain Don'ts

1. Isolate a developing baby
2. Use alcohol, tobacco or drugs or much caffeine when pregnant
3. Ignore erratic behavior
4. Lie around the house and never exercise
5. Ignore concussions
6. Smoke
7. Drink much caffeine
8. Drink much alcohol
9. Do drugs (NO heroin, inhalants, mushrooms, PCP, marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamines (unless in prescribed doses for ADD)
10. Eat without forethought on what foods are best for your brain
11. Drive without wearing a seatbelt
12. Ride a motorcycle without a helmet
13. Ride a bicycle, skateboard, roller blade, snowboard, etc. without a helmet
14. Hit a soccer ball with your head
15. Bang your head when you're frustrated (protect the head of children who are head bangers)
16. Bunje jump
17. Hang out with people who do drugs, fight, or are involved in other dangerous activities (unless you are looking for brain damage)
18. Allow your breathing to get out of control
19. Think in black-or-white terms
20. Think in words like always, never, every time, every one
21. Focus on the negative things in your life
22. Predict the worst
23. Think only with your feelings
24. Read other people's minds
25. Blame other people for your problems
26. Label yourself or others with negative terms
27. Beat yourself or others with guilt (very ineffective)
28. Personalize situations that have little to do with you
29. Feed your ANTs
30. Use sex as a weapon with your partner
31. Talk to others in a hateful way
32. Push people away
33. Be around toxic smells
34. Be around toxic people
35. Focus too much on what other people think of you (odds are they aren't thinking about you at all)
36. Allow your life to just happen without you directing and planning it
37. Take the "stimulant bait" from other people
38. Allow thoughts to go over and over in your head
39. Automatically say no to others, think first if what they want fits with your goals
40. Automatically say yes to others, think first if what they want fits with your goals
41. Argue with someone who is stuck
42. Isolate yourself when you feel worried, depressed or panicky
43. Allow naturally oppositional children to be oppositional
44. Listen to toxic music
45. Blame substance abusers as morally defective
46. Refuse to take medications when needed
47. Self-medicate, when there are problems get help from professionals
48. Deny you have problems
49. Refuse to listen to the people you love who are trying to tell you to get help
50. Withhold love, touch and companionship to those you love as a way to express anger

Name: _____ Date: _____

“What do I want for my life?”

One-Page Miracle

(from Dr. Amen’s book, *Change Your Brain, Change Your Life*)

I. Relationships

Spouse/lover:

Children:

Extended Family:

Friends:

II. Work (To be the best _____ I can be)

III. Money (Money is for needs, wants, and security)

Short term:

Long term:

IV. Myself (To be the healthiest person I can be)

Body:

Mind:

Spirit: