Tricks of the Trade

By Li Faustino, Ph.D.

At MDSG, we know that having a place where you can speak openly about struggling with a mood disorder can be very relieving and curative. In support groups people get support, community, and companionship. They gain information about their illnesses, doctors, therapists, and treatment options. Very often, the very existence of the group provides much needed structure so that people get out and interact with others. Whether it is the only thing someone does in their week or if they have a very busy life, coming to groups can combat feelings of isolation that often accompany mood disorders.

One of the unique features of support groups is they offer knowledge that only others with the illness possess. Mental health professionals and other supportive entities may learn them, but they are borne out of trial and error, suffering, and learning from the ups and downs of life with a mood disorder. Additionally, because the support groups are peer-run the information can be delivered in a way that only a fellow sufferer can impart.

These bits of learned information may be seen as “tricks of the trade.” They are helpful and insightful tips that are like an insider’s guide to managing life with a mood disorder. Here are a few that circulate our groups:

1. If you are starting a new medication, do it Friday evening or Saturday morning so if there are new side effects, you can deal with it over the weekend before you go to work on Monday.
2. Set multiple alarm clocks to get up and put at least one of them far from your bed.
3. Sleep in exercise clothes so that it is easier to get up in the morning to do it.
5. Learn how to do deep breathing exercises. It turns out it is impossible to deep breath and ruminate at the same time.
6. Tell a close friend to text you at the time you want to get up so you can start interacting to help get you up.

From the Friends and Family group:

1. If you suspect your loved one is not forthcoming with their doctor and the doctor does not have consent to talk to you, leave the doctor a voicemail in the middle of the night with information you want them to have. So then they get the information without you speaking to each other.
2. When shopping around for a psychiatrist, there are often long waits for appointments. Make an initial appointment with three recommended doctors. Then you can go to the first and if you like them you can cancel the

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Items of Interest

HealthyPlace.com: To Get Out of Bed with Depression Use This Checklist. https://www.healthyplace.com/other-info/mental-health-newsletter/to-get-out-of-bed-with-depression-use-this-checklist#bed


Brain & Behavior Research Foundation: Multi-Year Benefits of Deep Brain Stimulation in Depression. https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=c6e89b4de3df70e795490632&id=2cb1d8a173&e=d038832d9b

Healthy Place.com: Can Mental Illness Be Diagnosed with Online Psychological Tests? https://www.healthyplace.com/psychological-tests

Brain & Behavior Research Foundation: Fatty Acid levels in the Brain Are Found To Correlate with Serotonin Transport and Depression Severity. https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=c6e89b4de3df70e795490632&id=2cb1d8a173&e=d038832d9b


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After the secrets are out, they can be helpful to even more people. New tricks always come up since life changes and the world changes. Insiders' knowledge will always be relevant.

Li Faustino is Chair of the MDSG Board.