

CHRONIC ILLNESS SELF-MANAGEMENT

A PLAN SHOULD SUPPORT YOUR LIFE - NOT BECOME ANOTHER WAY TO FAIL

Self-management can include medication, monitoring, appointments, sleep, nutrition, activity, symptom tracking, and problem-solving. Perfect adherence is not a realistic identity standard.

KNOW THE ESSENTIALS

- What medication, monitoring, equipment, follow-up, or warning signs are most important for safety?
- Ask your healthcare team to clarify priorities when the plan feels too complicated.

MAKE THE PLAN EASIER

- Use pill organizers, alarms, written schedules, accessible labels, automatic refills, transportation planning, meal shortcuts, or help from others when appropriate.
- Design around real life rather than willpower alone.

TRACK WITH A PURPOSE

- Track symptoms or health numbers when they help treatment decisions.
- Do not collect so much data that monitoring becomes overwhelming or compulsive.
- Ask what changes should trigger a call to the healthcare team.

PROBLEM-SOLVE BARRIERS

- Cost? Side effects? Memory? Transportation? Food access? Work schedule? Sensory needs? Fear? Cultural fit?
- A barrier is a problem to solve, not evidence of bad character.

USE REALISTIC ACTIVITY GOALS

- CDC advises that some activity is better than none for people who cannot meet general activity guidelines.
- Work with a clinician on goals that fit your condition and abilities.
- Condition-specific restrictions still matter.

RESET AFTER A HARD WEEK

- Return to the next useful action rather than trying to 'make up' for everything at once.
- Tell the healthcare team when the plan is not workable.
- Self-management is collaborative and adjustable.

Good self-management is workable, informed, and flexible - not perfect.

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