

**From Kevin Hines**

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**1. Therapy.** I will use anything that works, from cognitive behavioral, breathing, art, music, to blue wave light box therapies. All of which help me either stay stable or find a balance.

**2. Proper Nutrition.** Eating foods that directly feed the brain with good nutrition, will help you stabilize your overall health. Learning what foods help you personally is paramount. Eating healthily and routinely can help to keep your body and mind at an equilibrium. Not only does this benefit you, but by sheer example it gives you the ability to inspire others around you to make these kinds of good healthy choices. It helps you use this guide to have great health, not just good health. Life with less toxins and processed foods can help any body and mind heal and recover faster, as well as live longer. If it comes in a box, wrapping, or plastic packaging, it’s probably not the best choice. I will freely admit that I love, love, love Taco Bell. Even so, I no longer eat it. It only made me feel sick, and fast food tends to have that effect because it is not “real” food.

**Find Sources of the following:**

Essential Antioxidants: Tomatoes and carrots

Smart Carbs for a Calming Effect: Oatmeal and quinoa

Food that Boost Alertness: Exercise and broccoli

Vitamin B,C,D and E: Milk and eggs

**\*Absolutely refrain from drugs and alcohol.** I used to binge drink until blackout while on psychotropic medications. This is something that could have ended in an early death or even damage to parts of my brain. I never have used any other drug other than alcohol. My biological parents had the co-occurring diseases of manic depression (today bipolar disorder) and the serious disease of addiction. They both died horrible, and tragic deaths because of these factors. For that reason, recreational illicit drugs have always been off the table in my book. If you battle the disease of addiction, I hope this helps you consider seeking professional help to change your lifestyle, and find tools to help retrain your brain to live without such self-destructiveness.

**3. Exercise.** My motto: if you are physically capable of exercise, it is simple, move that body. Do the deed not for vanity, but to increase levels of sanity. It has been proven that rigorous activity, and exercise for 23 minutes a day, leads to 12 hours of better, or improved mood. I often do 23 minutes of rigorous nonstop workouts twice a day, leading to 24 hours of better mood. This one really helps not just you, but everyone near you. It is important to acknowledge how each and every action affects

**What is your favorite exercise? Biking**

**4. Sleep.** Redeveloping a good to great circadian rhythm, a sleeping pattern that allows me at least five nights of 7-8 hours of sleep out of a seven days week. This gives me the rejuvenation my brain needs to function on its highest, and safest level. Lack of adequate rest, and sleep, can lead to insomnia (where I was), and insomnia leads to psychosis. Adding that to bipolar disorder type one with psychotic features is just dangerous.

**How many hours do you sleep per night? 6-10 hours**

**Name 3 ways to improve your sleep habits**

1. Don’t look at electronics before sleeping
2. Don’t eat or drink sofa/caffeine
3. Have a sleep schedule

**5. Education.** This would be the education of my diagnosable mental illness, and the study of the various and most up to date, reputable, proven treatments available. Constantly reading about my struggle, and subsequent learning how to address the disease, fight it and continually beat the symptoms as they come, would allow me to be my better self; a well-rounded, and happier self.

everyone else around us. We are not alone and when we hurt, the people who love us are in pain as well.

**Name 1 legitimate web-site that provides information**

**https://www.webmd.com/**

**6. Medication.** This one is mainly for those with diagnosed mental health, and behavioral health conditions. Personally, I take medications every day, around the same time a day. I take them with 100 percent accuracy each day, because I understand they help me stabilize and keep off the crooked path. Truth be told, they don’t help everyone. Over the years, I have managed my BPD best with them. My suggestion, having lived now almost 18 years with a severe diagnosable mental illness, is if you have been prescribed meds, be compliant enough to take them properly. Do not skip doses, at the same or nearly the same time daily, and never while on illegal, or drug substances including alcohol. Try never to take them with a foreign substance in your system, as they will most likely counter-act with one another. This can prove very dangerous, and debilitating to you and your well-being.

**7. Meditation.** Practicing regular daily meditation and focused breathing methods can help the body recuperate from mild, modern and immense stress. This gives us the ability to keep on keepin’ on. Meditation has been proven to help people calm, and quiet their minds, bodies and look inside for peace and tranquility. It helps me in a panicked state, create serenity internally, and externally. These two qualities can be achieved with different forms of proven meditation are key factors to staying calm, cool, and collected.

**8. Advocacy.** 2 types if Advocacy.

#1. Self-Advocacy is the process that involves identifying the obstacles you face as a patient, developing the strategies to overcome them, and then, putting your plan into action

#2. Public Policy/ Legislative Advocacy is the act of trying to influence public policy at the state and federal levels through a wide range of activities.

\*Both are EMPOWERING!

**9. Coping mechanisms.** Hobbies, tools, and helpful activities that help you stay grounded when fighting a brain disease. I walk in nature, sketch on sketch pads, read comic books, watch newly-released movies, go on date nights with my wife, exercise for fun, and read a lot. All of these activities are my way of coping with my mental battles. When I hallucinate (which I do often enough), I ground myself with one of my coping mechanisms. I grasp my hands left to right, back and forth when I am self aware enough to know that what I am seeing or hearing may not exist in anyone else’s reality. Simultaneously, I ask the person nearest to me if they hear or see the perceived hallucination. Those closest to me do not invalidate my reality, they acknowledge that it is real to me, but that they are not experiencing the same things. Over time, with the coping and grounding exercises, I get past the distorted reality and eventually come back to our true reality.

**Name 3 coping mechanisms that would personally help you:**

1. Listen to music
2. Taking a walk
3. Talking to friends and family

**10. The Plan.** I created my very own mental and brain health emergency plan. The emergency plan has all of my doctors’ and clinicians’ names, phone numbers, email addresses, physical addresses. It also includes descriptions of my symptoms, signs, episode triggers, and more. It contains copies of release forms signed by my personal protectors. These are people who I have I opted in to my plan so that if any one of them wanted to call any one of my doctors at any time to discuss my treatment plan and/or symptoms, they have authority to speak with my doctor(s). They would be able to get a play by play, usurping HIPA laws, and giving those closest to me the ability to be a part of my change, and safety efforts at any given day. Why? The answer is simple, no one with a mental illness, a brain disease, or behavioral health battle can do this alone, and everyone needs help sometime.

So there it is. This is how I fight to stay all kinds of well. This is how I strive to live with my best brain ever.

**Name 3 things you learned about Mental Health:**

1. You cannot easily control your mental health.
2. Mental health can become dangerous if not handled.
3. Mental health can be treated

**My Self Care Plan**

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| **A compliment that someone has given me:**  **You’re kind** | **Good qualities my friend or family would use to describe me:**  **Intelligent** | **What I like to do for fun:**  **Talk to friends** |
| **My favorite healthy snacks: Cereal** | **2 words I would use to describe myself: Tired and bored** | **3 things I am good at:**  **Typing, reaction time, sprinting** |
| **One thing that makes me laugh:**  **Family** | **My Name:**  **Quang Huynh** | **One good deed I have done for someone else:**  **I was there for people when they needed it.** |
| **3 people I trust:**  **Mom, dad and close friends** | **1 thing most people don’t know about me: I have a blue birthmark.** | **Name 1 healthy thing you can do when you are feeling down: Take a walk** |
| **I can make myself happy when:**  **Listen to music.** | **2 things you do to relax: Lay down or listen to music.** | **The best thing about you: Understanding people.** |