5 Signs You Might Need a Mental Health Reset *(& 5 Things You Can Do!)*
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Our culture today prizes work and productivity, and it's easy to slip into an identity based on being busy – at work, at home, and with our families and friends. With all this pressure to keep moving, have a productive work life, *and* have fun outside of work, it can be hard to make sure we're taking care of our mental health along the way.

Below are some signs that you might need a mental health reset:

1. **Difficulty Paying Attention** – When our brains and bodies our stressed, our ability to stay focused for long periods of time starts to shrink, and we may notice patterns of forgetfulness or feeling disorganized and "scattered". If you find yourself frequently "zoning out" during meetings or during your drive home, you might need a mental health reset!

2. **More Easily Startled** – Our startle reflexes are easily triggered when stress and anxiety levels are high. If you find yourself jumping at the smallest noises or being spooked by a coworker talking suddenly from behind you, you might need a mental health reset!

3. **Too Much or Too Little Sleep** – Sleep disturbance is a key indicator that our brain is working overtime! When we're feeling anxious, sleep can feel "shallow", restless, and unsatisfying; when we're feeling depressed, sleep can feel like an escape from our worries and troubles. If you find yourself troubled by unusual nightmares, waking up repeatedly throughout the night, having difficulty falling or staying asleep, or having a lot of trouble waking up, you might need a mental health reset!

4. **Feeling "Crabby", Sad, or Numb** – Our mood is directly impacted by our stress levels. When we are feeling pressured by that big work event, home project, or family conflict, our mood can easily become more irritable and snappish. Similarly, when we're feeling overwhelmed by life, it can become a lot harder to feel any emotions at all. If you find yourself feeling down, easily annoyed, or even nothing at all, you might need a mental health reset!

5. **Other Signs** – In addition to those listed above, things like changes in appetite (i.e. being abnormally hungry or accidentally skipping meals), physical fatigue, loss of self-esteem, and increased feelings of loneliness can all be signs that our brains need a break!

If you notice these changes in yourself, here are some steps you can take to reset:

1. **Go For a Walk** – It may feel like a simple solution, but getting outside, moving our bodies, and breathing fresh air truly does improve our mood and decrease stress.

2. **Take Some Grounding Breaths** – Place a hand on your upper chest and one on your abdomen (belly). Breathe in slowly through your nose and try to get the hand on your abdomen to move as you do so. Hold your breath for a few seconds, and exhale slowly through your mouth.

3. **Be Creative** – When we take a break and slow down, we give ourselves space to be more creative and thoughtful. Whether it's learning to fold some sticky note origami at your desk, or finger painting with your kids, being creative just for the fun of it can feel particularly restoring in a productivity-focused society.

4. **Set Good Boundaries** – Establishing strong boundaries for work, sleep, personal self-care, and relationships is crucial to keeping our mental health on-track.

5. **Seek Help** – As the song goes, we get by with a little help from our friends. As humans, we aren't meant to do life alone. Seeking help and support from loved ones and trained professionals can give us the boost we need to manage our responsibilities, reach our goals, and achieve our dreams.