

Ask S.A.A.M.

Source: Chris Malcolm | Counsellor and Facilitator, Hawkes Bay Prostate Cancer Support Group

A simple mnemonic for monitoring your mental health is “Ask SAM”
(Note there are two ‘A’s in my Sam)

SAAM stands for: Sleep; Appetite; Activity; Mood

What do we do about Sam?

There are three things:

1. **Notice** - Pay attention to any change or any extreme for instance sleeping more or less than usual eating more less than usual feeling more sad, angry, even happy than usual.
2. **Name** - Record or talk about these changes. Describing these or giving them a name gives you some power over them and gives you permission to do something about it.
3. **Nudge** - Don't fight these (If you do they often push back) - just nudge them in the right direction.

Some specific tips for each letter in SAAM

Sleep

- Reduce your caffeine intake particularly at the end of the day
- Keep a regular routine as you prepare to sleep and also wake-up times
- Keep off the flickering screens, before going to bed (if you have to use a screen, use the blue filter for night time)
- White noise, like a fan, can help you get to sleep.

Appetite

- Your gut and your brain are closely connected
- Reduce your intake of sugar and also simple carbs
- Know the kinds of foods that help or don't help with your mood.
 - make sure your food includes Trace elements
 - red and purple foods are good for moods

Activity

Do some activity each day that gets your heart going and your muscles moving

- the exercise helps but also the oxygen helps – so get some fresh air
- also, a change of scene a help to clear the mind

Mood

- Remember: Notice, Name and Nudge - don't try and fight your moods
- Make small changes to your behaviour that help small changes with your mood
 - add 3 smiles a day
 - find three things to be grateful for
- Name your moods and forgive your feelings but don't feed them.
- Make space in your day to share these with another person or your journal - simply describe your feelings don't analyse, problem-solve or ruminate on them
- Find your happy place even if it's online and spend some time there each day

S.A.A.M is an adaptation of the **Self Help for Anxiety Management ‘SAM’ app** developed by a university team. The content is accurate and based on current psychological models...

<http://sam-app.org.uk/>