

5 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING



1. SLEEP

WHY'S IT IMPORTANT?

Sleep provides an opportunity for the body to repair and rejuvenate, helping us recover from physical and mental exertion.

If you are not getting enough quality sleep:

- Your stress coping abilities will be reduced
- Your fatigue will increase, impairing your ability to regulate emotions
- Over time can increase depressive symptoms

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Stick to a consistent sleep routine
- Avoid going to bed too early as it isn't the right time for 'deep sleep'
- Avoid caffeine, smoking, vigorous exercise and drinking alcohol in the evening
- Allow yourself time to wind down
- Avoid using electronic devices in your bedroom or within 30 minutes of your bedtime
- Check your bedroom temp...if you're too hot, you won't go into a deep sleep.

GOOD NUTRITION

2.

WHY'S IT IMPORTANT?

Poor nutrition is just as important to your mental health, as it is your physical.

Many symptoms of depression can be directly linked to:

- Vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- Highly processed foods
- Caffeine
- Sugars

Stick to a diet of healthy food, you're setting yourself up for:

- Fewer mood fluctuations
- An overall happier outlook
- Improved ability to focus

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The research supports eating a 'Mediterranean style diet' including:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Unprocessed grains
- Modest amounts of lean meats, fish and eggs

This type of diet is low in processed foods and refined sugars and instead high in fibre and natural sugars. It's also low in saturated fats and high in omega 3 fatty acids 'healthy fats'.

EXERCISE

3.

WHY'S IT IMPORTANT?

Research shows that keeping active can:

- Help lift mood through improved fitness and the release of natural chemicals in the brain
- Help improve sleeping patterns
- Increase energy levels
- Help block negative thoughts and/or distract people from daily worries
- Help people feel less alone if they exercise with others.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

You will feel the benefits of exercise by doing as little as 30 min of moderate exercise, five days a week.

Here's some tips to get started and stick with it:

- Start simple
- Do what is enjoyable
- Include other people
- Make a plan

STAY CONNECTED

WHY'S IT IMPORTANT?

Strong ties with friends, family and the community provide us with support and security and are known to lower levels of anxiety and depression, and raise self-esteem.

If you are experiencing a mental health condition, you may want to withdraw and avoid connecting with others. But this can make it harder to cope and recover.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Who:

- Family
- Friends
- A pet
- Community
- Colleagues
- Neighbours

How:

- Sports
- Phone Calls
- Hobbies
- Volunteer
- BBQs
- Online
- Family trips
- Help a friend

4.

GIVE YOUR BRAIN A BREAK

5.

WHY'S IT IMPORTANT?

Finding time to relax might seem difficult in this busy world, but it's incredibly important in reducing stress and the symptoms of mental health conditions.

Relaxation is simply the state of being free from tension and anxiety.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Relaxation can be achieved in many ways whether it's doing a hobby we enjoy, spending time in nature or trying mindfulness.

Find a relaxation technique that works for you and make it part of your daily routine, even if it's just for 5 or 10 minutes a day.