

Tips for Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Enhancing Good Brain Chemicals

- **Exercise** – as little as 10-20 minutes of aerobic activity are shown to improve mood (endorphins are released)
- **Mindfulness** –be present, meditate
- **Good nutrition**-In order to make dopamine, your body needs tyrosine which can be found in foods like almonds, bananas, avocados, eggs, beans, fish, and chicken. Even chocolate. Avoid foods such as sugar, trans-fats, cholesterol, and refined foods interfere with proper brain function and can cause low dopamine.
- **Adequate Rest** – 7-9 hours per night
- **Music** – Listening to music that you enjoy can release dopamine (makes us feel good)
- **Get outside in the sun!** - Get some vitamin D which helps to release dopamine
- **Get more human contact** – Hugs, shake hands... you can even snuggle your pet
- **Do something creative**
- **Make a list or write down your goal** - and check off your accomplishments
- **Take a cold shower**

Coping Strategies

- **Spend time with family or friends**
- **Keep a regular routine**
- **Spend time in nature for 30 minutes a day**
- **Positive Self Talk** – For example, telling yourself that it will get better or that this feeling won't last for forever
- **Write down your personal goals**
- **Make your home safe**
- **Make time for things that bring you joy**
- **Learn to deal with stress in a healthy way** – exercise, meditate, deep breathing
- **Learn skills to manage conflict** – problem solving, conflict resolution and non-violent ways of handling disagreements
- **Access professionals** - mental health, physical health and substance abuse services

Avoid

- **Being alone**
- **Drugs and alcohol**
- **Doing things that make you feel worse** – listening to sad music, reading old letters, visiting a loved one's grave
- **Focusing on negative thoughts** – Find a distraction, give yourself a break from the stressful thoughts

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Healthy Social Media Use

Using social media can affect mental health. For example, it can cause increased anxiety, depression and isolation; it can damage relationships; can interrupt sleep; and can be a way that we waste our time, causing a loss of productivity.

To help establish healthy social media use:

- **Limit where and when you use social media** – Don't check social media when with family or friends
- **Have 'detox' periods** - Schedule regular breaks from social media to lower stress and lead to higher life satisfaction
- **Pay attention** to what you do and how you feel
- **Approach social media mindfully**
- **Prune** (unfollow, mute or hide)
- **Stop social media from replacing real life**

If someone you know is thinking about suicide, you can help by staying with them, listening to them, and getting them help. **Stay, Listen, Get Help.**

24/7 help is free and confidential for *anyone* in distress.

Crisis Text Line: 741-741

Chat: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK

The Trevor Project Lifeline (LGBTQ): 1-866-488-7386

Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860

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