

Depression

With depression, one cannot simply “snap out of it” and feel better spontaneously but these few things can help.

- Move – be active – oxygenate – even mild exercises can help with blood flow, and transport oxygen throughout your body and help you feel mentally alert.
- Eat healthy – Begin your day with protein intake (eggs, peanut butter, nuts, meat or fish.) Your body, when you wake up is prepared to convert food, especially protein into long-lasting energy.
- Make social connections – Do not isolate. Although you may not feel like it, talk with someone you enjoy chatting with on topics that excite you. You could engage with your pet.
- Music – Listening to uplifting music is a great way to manage depression. Explore humour
- Limit / Avoid caffeine, sugar intake. They make you feel alert for a while but later you can crash. Caffeine increases the release of insulin in the blood. Insulin lowers blood sugar level which leads to low energy – depression.
- Have a routine but change it often. Ask for help from a friend/family member to establish healthy routines
- Develop supports – volunteering, join small groups
- Reach out to a professional – seek counselling.
- Be open to taking medication if needed.

Anxiety

As we journey through these issues, here are a few things you can do to help manage the symptoms of anxiety

- Meditate – On the word of God. It calms the anxious brain, reduces cortisol
- Avoid people and places that make your anxiety worse.
- Listen to soothing music
- Live within a structure – Plan your day and do not leave things to the last minute
- Keep a journal – writing things out enable you not to focus too much on what is going on
- Seek professional help – talk to a therapist and do not hesitate to discuss medication with your physician, if it becomes necessary

Suicidal Thoughts

Feeling unsafe? Go to your local emergency room (ER) for help

- Call for support from trained professionals on local crisis lines

Examples of crisis lines:

Good2Talk – 1 866-925-5454

Here24Seven – 1844 -437-3247

Kid Help Phone – Text CONNECT to 686868

Canada Suicide Prevention Service – 833-456-4566

All these helplines offer 24/7 support

- Connect with a therapist and talk about the challenges you are facing
- Write down the names/numbers of at least three people you can call / text for support
- Have the numbers handy (in your purse or wallet.)
- Distraction may help – do something purposefully – go for a walk, being mindful of your environment using your senses – smell, taste, hear, touch, sight.
- Write in a journal. Writing down your thoughts, however dark can help you get out of your head.
- Draw or paint if needed. Also, you can or listen to music that instils hope.
- Reflect on things that instil hope in your, look for a purpose to live either for family, friends or pets.

Addiction

Addictions come in different forms:

- Alcohol
 - Pornography
 - Prescription drugs
 - Gambling
 - Shopping Nicotine
 - Drugs
 - Eating
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- Seek professional help- work with an addiction counsellor – a specialised form of therapy
 - Be part of a support group like AA, NA, Celebrate Recovery.
 - Be accountable to someone – a friend you trust, a mentor – keeping the behaviour a secret makes it difficult to quit.
 - Take practical steps to avoid places and people who encourage the behaviour.

Self- Harm

Here are some things to consider:

1. Change your environment – leave the environment you usually self-harm if the urge is strong.
2. Make the effort to keep yourself busy with meaningful activities during the periods of the day you are likely to self-harm.
3. Ensure that the tools/weapons you use are as inaccessible as possible. Have them locked up with someone else having access to the key.
4. Add or remove steps to rituals that you have adapted to around the behaviour. This may cause some discomfort but will help stop the behaviour
5. Create a support system – friends, family. If you feel the urge to self-harm, call someone to chat or stay with you.
6. Write or describe your emotions in a journal.
7. Use alternatives to self-harming behaviour. Though these actions may cause some discomfort, they would not hurt you.
 - Lower your face in a bowl of ice water.
 - Punch a soft pillow or punching bag
 - Squeeze Ice
 - Eating chillis or spicy food may be helpful
 - Taking a very cold shower
 - Drawing on your body instead of cutting
 - Engaging in a strenuous exercise