

Good mental health – remember A-B-C

Good mental health helps us to more fully enjoy and appreciate the people and environment around us. We respond better to the stresses and challenges of daily life, we're more creative, use our abilities to the fullest and make the most of opportunities when our mental health is strong.

To build and maintain your mental health there are three things you can do:

Act – Strive to keep yourself as active as possible, physically, socially and mentally— walk, swim, read...

Belong – Connect to your community — join a group, chat to a neighbour, meet a friend...

Commit – Look to the future and have a go — take a challenge, get involved, volunteer...

Simple ways to practice your ABCs

“Act”

- **Exercise** – regular physical activity improves psychological well-being and can reduce depression and anxiety.
- **Enjoy hobbies** – taking up a hobby brings balance to your life by allowing you to do something you enjoy and it also keeps your brain active.
- **Treat yourself well** – cook yourself a good meal, have a bubble bath, see a movie, call a friend or relative you haven't called for ages, sit on a park bench and take in your surroundings.

“Belong”

- **Invite** – ask someone new to come along.
- **Share a laugh** – life often gets too serious, so when you hear or see something that makes you smile or laugh share it with someone you know.

- **Do one thing at a time** – for example when you are out for a walk or spending time with friends, turn off your mobile phone and stop making that mental “to do list”.

“Commit”

- **Collect positive emotional moments** – recall times when you have experienced pleasure, comfort, tenderness, confidence, or other positive emotions.
- **Learn ways to cope with negative thoughts** – don't block negative thoughts but learn how to interrupt them and not let them take over.
- **Set personal goals** – for example finish that book you started three years ago, walk around the block every day, learn to knit or play bridge, call your friends instead of waiting for the phone to ring.
- **Keep a journal (or even talk to the wall!)** – expressing yourself after a stressful day can help you gain perspective, release tension, and even boost your body's resistance to illness.
- **Volunteer** – volunteering helps others, makes us feel good about ourselves, widens social networks, provides new learning experiences, and can bring balance to people's lives.