

# Practical Mental Health

These days, with all that's going on in the world, it's pretty easy to start feeling down. Family conflicts, personal disappointments, or a couple of weeks of bad weather can give you the blues, during even the best of times. So when you're facing the kind of stress we're all currently under, those negative feelings can easily grow into something worse.

If any negativity you're feeling lingers for several weeks and begins to interfere with your ability to enjoy life and function effectively, seek help. A therapist can assist you in exploring your feelings.

For those simply feeling a bit blue, however, some simple, positive lifestyle changes may be all that's needed to turn things around:

**Find support in others.** Try confiding in trusted family members and friends about how you have been feeling. An understanding loved one can give you the strength and support you need to help cope with unhappiness.

**Manage your stress.** Learn effective ways to reduce your stress and anxiety, which may minimize your feelings of depression.

**Exercise regularly.** Regular fitness activities can improve your mood and boost your self-esteem. Talk to your doctor about an exercise program that is right for you.

**Eat right.** Exercise discipline to not overeat. Avoid junk foods and environments that may encourage bingeing. Stick to a nutritionally balanced diet. Avoid alcohol, which is a depressant.

**Get the right amount of sleep.** Experts recommend at least seven to eight hours a night. Resist the urge to oversleep, and try to maintain a regular sleeping schedule.

**Make more time for fun, recreational activities.** Try to spend more time outdoors, especially on sunny days. Consider taking a vacation soon, perhaps to somewhere bright and warm.

**Be more social.** Stay in touch with friends and family. Get out more often, and participate in enjoyable activities such as attending social gatherings, going to the movies and having lunch or dinner with friends.

**Educate yourself.** Learn all you can about depression, support groups in your area and ways to manage your feelings.

Do not let feelings of depression and sadness control your life. Get help to manage your symptoms. Learn to feel comfortable talking about your difficult emotions. Take care of your mind and body by giving it the food, rest and activity it needs. Treat yourself to the things you enjoy more often. Focus on getting out of the funk you may be feeling and experiencing life to the fullest.

## Resource

- The World Health Organization: [www.who.int/topics/mental\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/mental_health/en/)