

Mental Health Promotion: Basic Strategies for Managing Mental Health

<p>Healthy Diet Regular meals and snacks Avoid too much carbohydrate late in the day Fresh fruit and vegetables (5 portions a day) Drink up to 3 litres of water a day Bananas, nuts (almonds, cashew nuts, sunflower & hazelnuts especially), oily fish, green vegetable, chocolate (in small doses), potato, turkey, chicken are all good for mental health improvement Avoid overeating cakes, biscuits, bread and cookies etc... Low salt intake Omega 3 fatty acids found in fish and green vegetables can lower cholesterol, improve memory and maintain mood Plenty of fibre</p>	<p>Healthy Sleep Keep a regular sleep pattern and avoid going to bed too late and then getting up too early in the morning. Avoid over stimulation before sleep such as inappropriate music, activity and TV Avoid caffeine and alcohol before sleeping Keep your bedroom a place for sleeping Avoid too many lie ins/sleep ins as it disrupts your sleeping pattern Remove distractions Sex helps you to sleep and relieves stress Have a nightly routine an hour before you go to bed, so your body is relaxed ready for sleep Have a notebook to write down any jobs/ideas/thoughts which may be in your head prior to sleep</p>
<p>Social Connection Keep in contact with other people, especially when feeling stressed and tired. Mix with people other than work colleagues. An early sign of stress for some people is to become withdrawn. We are social beings and being with others gives us a sense of connectedness, other perspectives on life and takes the attention off ourselves to other people. Have people you can confide in and can be honest enough to tell you when you are overdoing it and ask them for their advice or suggestions.</p>	<p>Exercise Regular daily exercise is vital for your physical and emotional health. Most experts recommend 30 minutes a day of brisk walking as a minimum. Exercise works out any adrenalin build up in your system and relieve stress and tiredness and helps to lower blood pressure. Exercise produces pleasure chemicals to increase. There can be dangers of using exercise when feeling very angry and only intensely exercising 2/3 times a week.</p>
<p>Pleasurable activities Find things/interests out of work that give you pleasure and you can have fun with. We all need to play and relax in order to re-strengthen and create that work-life balance. Try and make time for things that you actually like doing for yourself and make you feel good. Include fun things, relaxing things, things you have been putting off or things that give you energy</p>	<p>Processing thoughts and feelings Talk to people about your worries and concerns; do not 'bottle' things up. Write out your thoughts and feelings as this helps many people to offload the pressures of the day.</p>

Taken from Powell T. (2000) The Mental Health Handbook, Speechmark Books, Brackely, UK