



CENTRE DE COUNSELLING FAMILIAL DE TIMMINS

TIMMINS FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE

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EXERCISE & DEPRESSION

Feeling tired and less motivated are two very common symptoms of depression. This means that exercise is often the last thing that people feel like doing when they are feeling depressed. The following strategies can help motivate to gradually become more active:

Make a plan

- Start slowly and build up gradually e.g. if you have not been exercising at all, start with a 10-15 minute walk each morning, and gradually increase this to 30 minutes per day
- Set short-term realistic goals for exercising each week (e.g. 3 x 20 minute walks per week); plan to exercise at specific times of the day that fit in with your lifestyle and write your plan down
- A range of health professionals can assist with increasing your activity level

Keep motivated

- Keep an activity diary to document your daily exercise
- A pedometer can be helpful in keeping track of your activity levels
- Reward yourself when you achieve your short-term exercise goals

Keep it up

- You don't have to join a gym – try a variety of different types of activities to find those that you enjoy (e.g. swimming, walking the dog, jogging whilst listening to music, riding a bike, gardening, bushwalking, yoga, weight-lifting)
- Give yourself a break – if you don't stick to your exercise plan, simply start again from where you left off
- Remember that it can take time for the benefits of exercise to occur. Most exercise studies have shown a significant reduction in depression after eight weeks or more
- Get other people involved – ask a friend, partner or relative to join you. Although it is common to not feel like socializing when experiencing depression, it can be helpful to include others in exercise, to gain support and help with motivation
- Write down the specific benefits that you would like to gain from exercise, and refer back to these to help with motivation (e.g. to reduce stress, improve mood, get in shape and improve sleep)
- Write down the situations that you expect would make it more difficult to exercise, and develop a plan to address these. For example, if it rains, go for a walk in a shopping centre; if you feel too tired to do a full session or exercise, go for a short 10 minute walk instead).

Do you need more help?

Don't be afraid to reach out for more help. If you're not sure who to talk to, consider calling **Timmins Family Counselling Centre** to learn more about depression and if counselling is right for you.

You can reach us at **705-267-7333**.

You can also visit our website at www.timminsfamilycounselling.com