Movement and Mental Health:

How moving your body can improve your mind!

LAUREN DAOUST, MSW, APSW

DOOR COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER

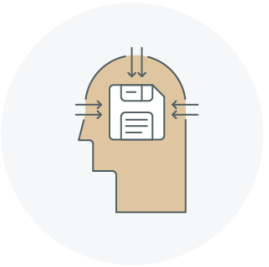
SENIOR LIFE SOLUTIONS


healthy
body
+
healthy
mind
=
happy
human!

Exercise Improves:

MENTAL HEALTH

COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING



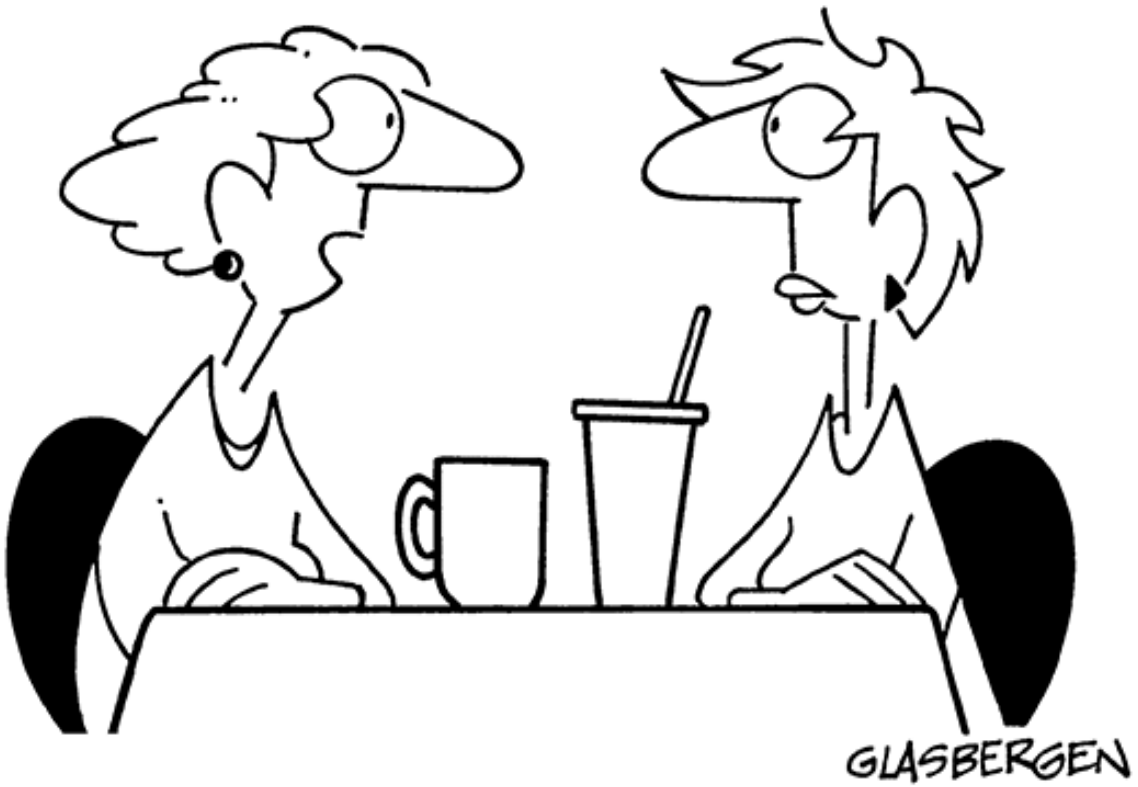
MEMORY

and reduces:

STRESS

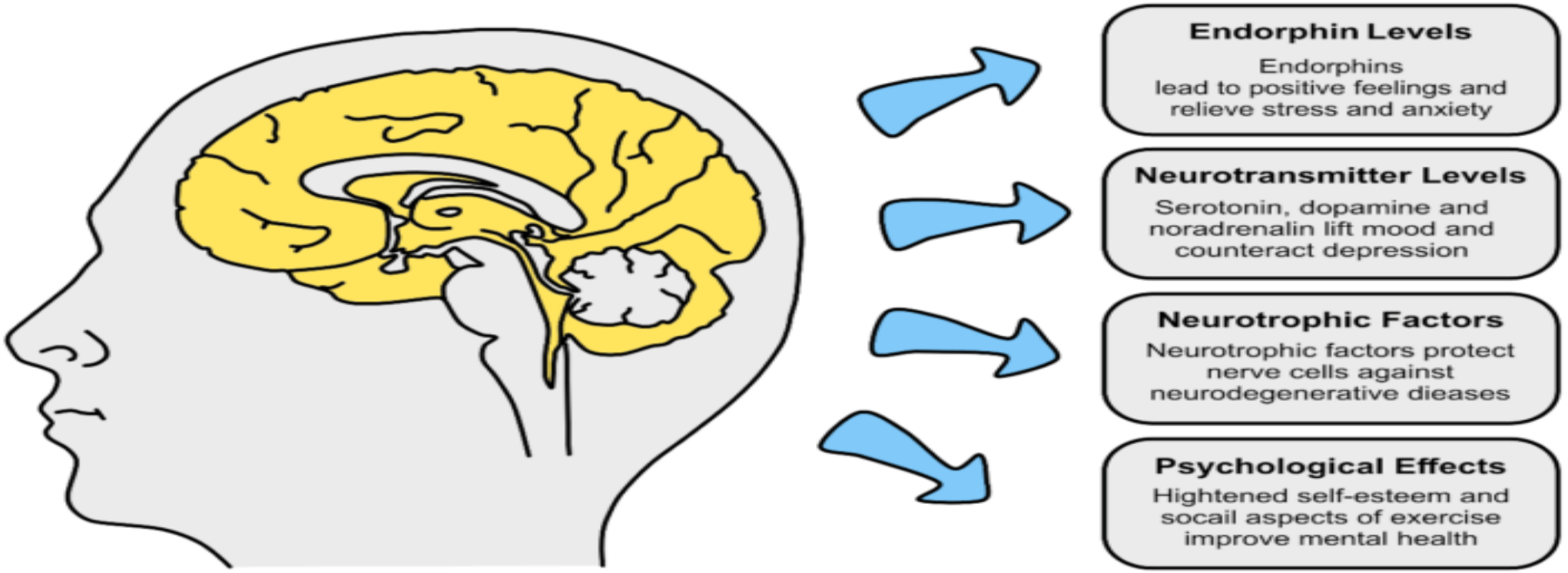
SOCIAL ANXIETY

DEPRESSION



"I do weights for muscle health, cardio for heart health and chocolate for mental health."

How exercise improves mental health.



Social Isolation and Loneliness

There is strong evidence that many adults aged 50 and older are socially isolated or lonely in ways that put their health at risk.

Recent studies by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) found that:

- More than one-third of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely, and nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated.
- Older adults are at increased risk for loneliness and social isolation because they are more likely to face factors such as living alone, the loss of family or friends, chronic illness, and hearing loss.
- Social isolation significantly increases a person's risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.
- Social isolation was associated with about a 50% percent increased risk of dementia.
- Poor social relationships (characterized by social isolation or loneliness) were associated with a 29% increased risk of heart disease and a 32% increased risk of stroke.
- Loneliness was associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.
- Loneliness among heart failure patients was associated with a nearly four times increased risk of death, 68% increased risk of hospitalization, and 57% increased risk of emergency department visits

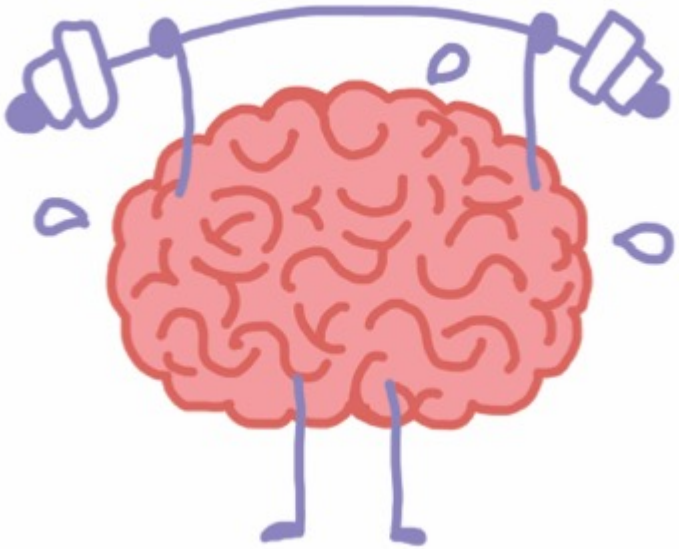
Exercise reduces loneliness!

"That's what I call a workout! One hour of walking and 2 hours of running our mouths."

Exercise Improves Cognitive Functioning

Much of the research done in recent years shows that even small amounts of physical activity can help keep your mind sharp and can significantly reduce your risks for dementia.

One study by the American Academy of Neurology showed that consistent physical activity has the potential to lower your risk for dementia by 34%.



Exercise Increases the Size of Your Brain

Exercising enlarges the areas of the brain associated with

- Memory
- Task management
- Coordination
- Planning
- Inhibition

This enlargement means that the developed parts of the brain function faster and more efficiently. When you exercise, oxygen flow to these parts of the brain is very helpful.

*https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/22/neuroscientist-shares-the-brain-health-benefits-of-exercise-and-how-much-she-does-a-week.html#:~:text=Imagine%20your%20brain%20as%20a,such%20as%20dementia%20and%20Alzheimer's.

Exercise improves your focus and concentration

One single workout can help improve your ability to shift and focus attention.

This is an immediate benefit that can last for at least two hours after 30 minutes of exercise.

Activities that increase your heart rate, such as brisk walking, running, swimming, cycling, playing tennis or jumping rope are recommended.

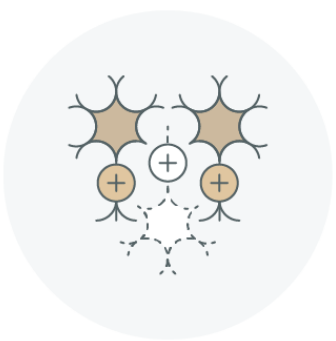
Studies have also shown that one workout session can improve your reaction times — which means, for example, that you're going to be much faster at catching that cup of coffee before it falls off the table.

*https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/22/neuroscientist-shares-the-brain-health-benefits-of-exercise-and-how-much-she-does-a-week.html#:~:text=Imagine%20your%20brain%20as%20a,such%20as%20dementia%20and%20Alzheimer's.

Why Exercise Is Good For Your Brain

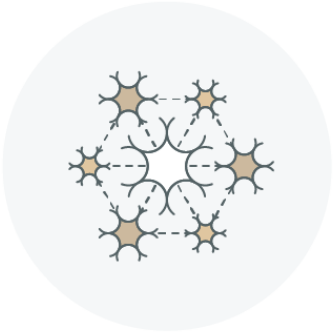
Moving your body can have a powerful effect on your mind.

Exercise positively influences your brain's:



NEUROGENESIS

creates new neurons



NEUROPLASTICITY

improves how existing neurons work

NEUROCHEMISTRY

releases neurotransmitters that improve brain function

Exercise Improves sleep

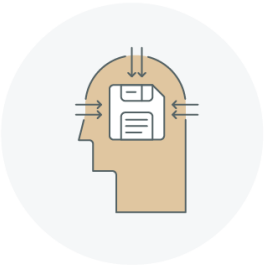
Another study done by John Hopkins Medicine states that moving your body each day can help prepare your body for a better night's sleep by helping to quiet your mind and stabilizing your mood.

It can also increase the amount of deep sleep your body gets, which allows your mind and body the time it needs to recuperate.

Exercise Improves:

MENTAL HEALTH

COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING



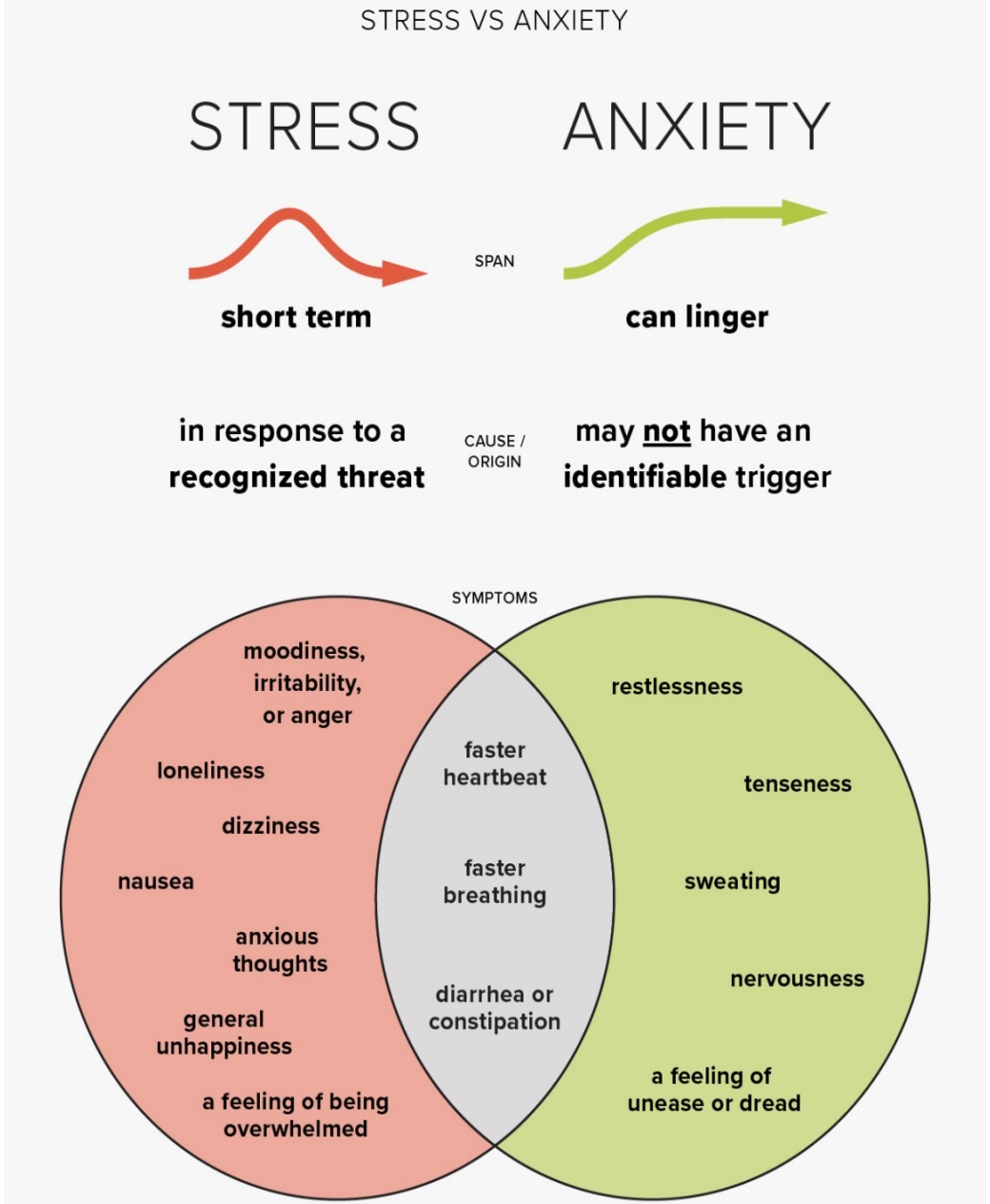
MEMORY

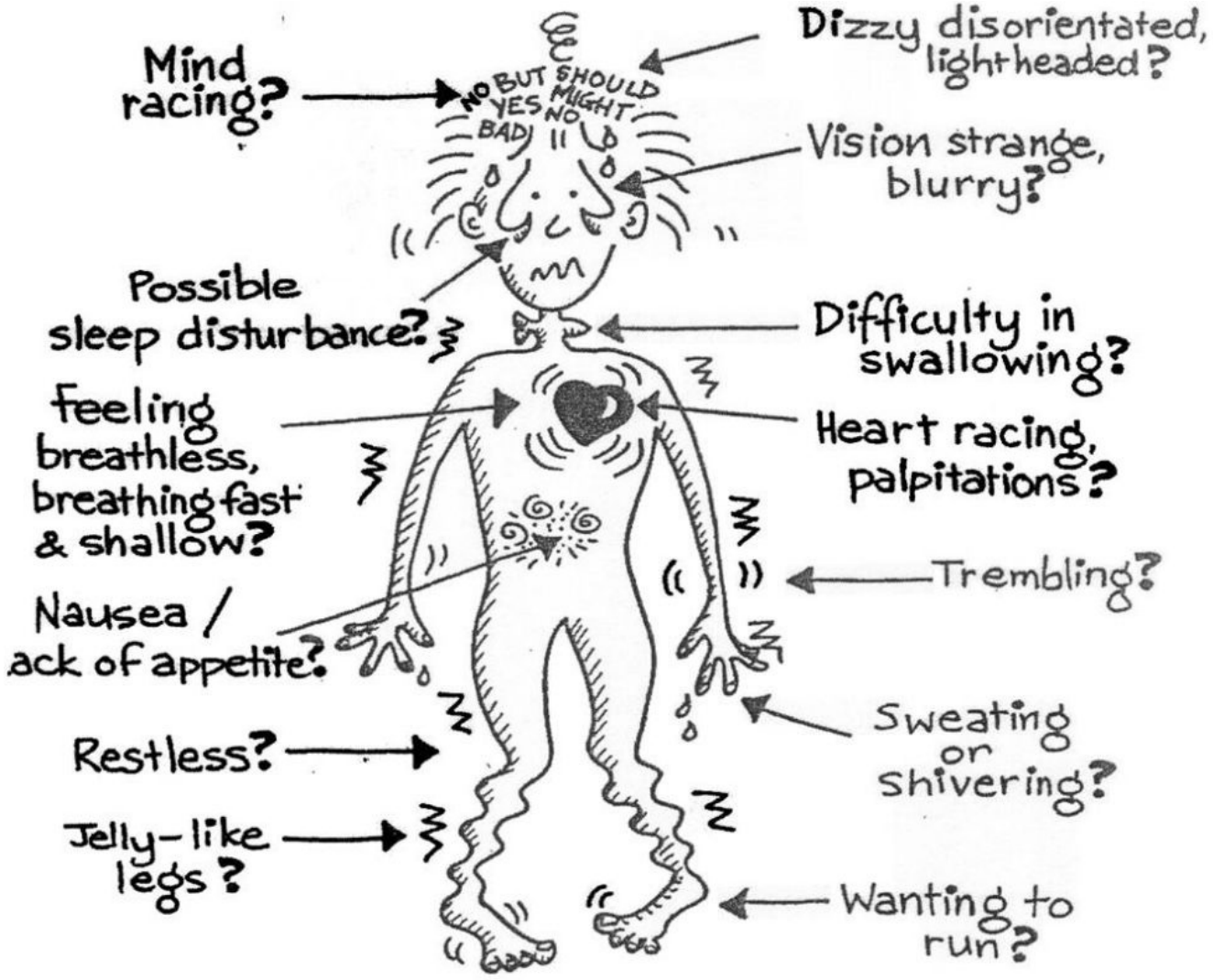
and reduces:

STRESS

SOCIAL ANXIETY

DEPRESSION


STRESS VS ANXIETY
STRESS
ANXIETY
SPAN
short term
can linger
in response to a recognized threat
CAUSE / ORIGIN
may not have an identifiable trigger
SYMPTOMS
moodiness, irritability, or anger
loneliness
dizziness
nausea
anxious thoughts
general unhappiness
a feeling of being overwhelmed
faster heartbeat
faster breathing
diarrhea or constipation
restlessness
tenseness
sweating
nervousness
a feeling of unease or dread
MEDICALNEWSTODAY


Mind racing?
Dizzy disorientated, lightheaded?
NO BUT SHOULD
YES NO MIGHT
BAD
Vision strange, blurry?
Possible sleep disturbance?
Difficulty in swallowing?
Feeling breathless, breathing fast & shallow?
Heart racing, palpitations?
Trembling?
Nausea / ack of appetite?
Restless?
Sweating or shivering?
Jelly-like legs?
Wanting to run?


FEAR TENSION DESPAIR PANIC ANGST
depression mood work
pressure failure MENTAL overload
nervous worry strain tense relationships
upset headache pain health sadness
stress fear tension despair
negative OVERWHELMED
loneliness fatigue bills money stress
upset headache pain health sadness
EXHAUSTED anxiety tension
despair panic angst MENTAL OVERLOAD
nervous strain tense NERVES relationships
family change negative worrying mood disorders
irritability temper agitated overwhelmed
loneliness FATIGUE bills money STRESS problems
work depression mood swings PRESSURE failure
worry upset HEADACHE pain
panic angst MENTAL overload
nervous worry strain tense
relationships

Anxiety Damages the Brain

Anxiety is harmful to the brain, but how? Evidence exists that individuals who experience anxiety are 48% more likely to develop dementia.

This is due to cortisol, the stress hormone, which damages parts of the brain involved in memory and complex thinking.

Working towards minimizing your stress, or viewing certain stress as positive, can benefit your brain health.

Exercise is one of many ways you can reduce the effects of stress and reduce anxiety. If you suffer from chronic stress or anxiety talk with your doctor or a mental health professional about treatments in addition to exercise.

How does exercise help ease anxiety?

Engaging in exercise diverts you from the very thing you are anxious about.

Moving your body decreases muscle tension, lowering the body's contribution to feeling anxious.

Getting your heart rate up changes brain chemistry, increasing the availability of important anti-anxiety neurochemicals, including serotonin

Exercise activates frontal regions of the brain responsible for executive function, which helps control the amygdala, our reacting system to real or imagined threats to our survival.

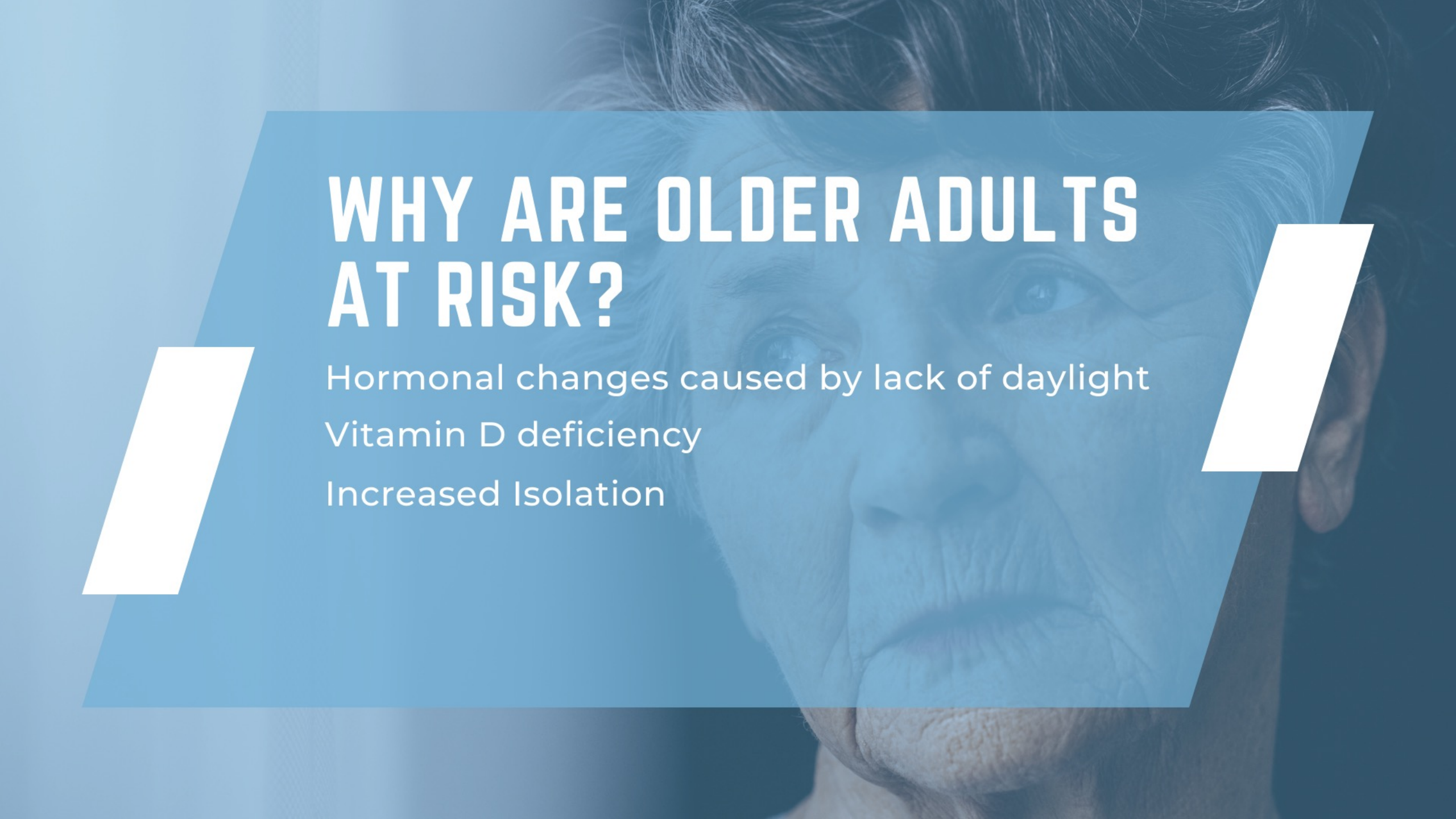
Exercising regularly builds up resources that bolster resilience against stormy emotions.

Exercise reduces the risk of Depression or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

WHAT IS S.A.D.?
SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

“Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons — SAD begins and ends at about the same time every year. If you're like most people with SAD, your symptoms start in the fall and continue into the winter months, sapping your energy and making you feel moody. Less often, SAD causes depression in the spring or early summer.”

- Mayo Clinic-



WHY ARE OLDER ADULTS AT RISK?

Hormonal changes caused by lack of daylight

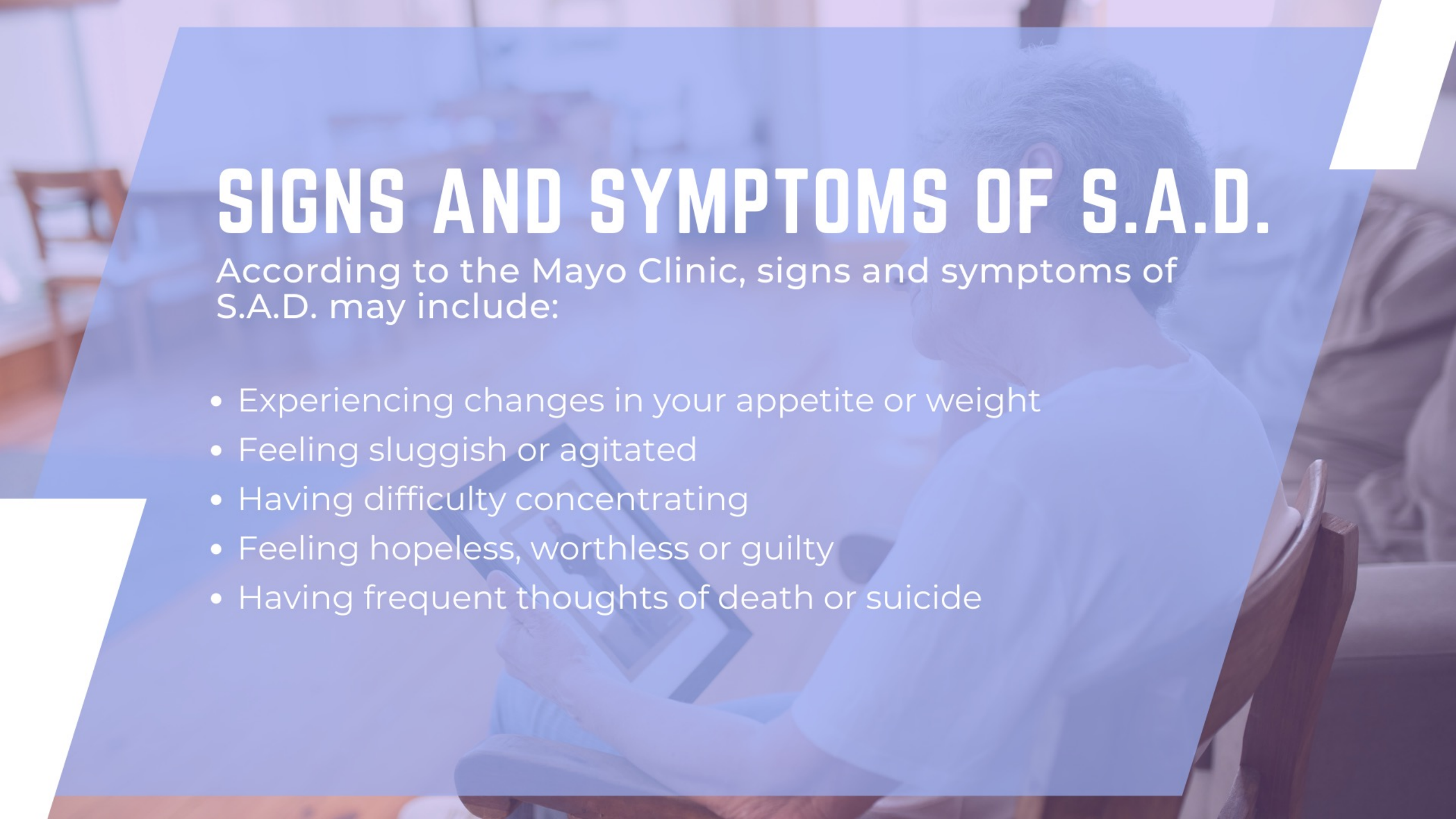
Vitamin D deficiency

Increased Isolation

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF S.A.D.

According to the Mayo Clinic, signs and symptoms of S.A.D. may include:

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Having low energy
- Having problems with sleeping



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF S.A.D.

According to the Mayo Clinic, signs and symptoms of S.A.D. may include:

- Experiencing changes in your appetite or weight
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide

CONNECT THOSE AT RISK, TO THOSE WHO CARE

- We are an intensive outpatient group therapy program designed to meet the unique needs of older adults typically ages 65 and older struggling with symptoms of depression and anxiety often related to aging.
- We focus on helping seniors in the community navigate difficult life transitions and regain their quality of life not just during the holiday season, but year-round.

Check-in with Yourself

Do you feel like you've lost your "zest" for life? Take a look at the checklist below and check your mood.

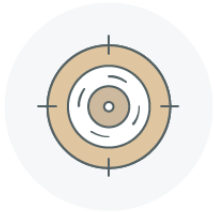
- ✓Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities;
- ✓ Feelings of sadness or grief lasting more than two weeks;
- ✓ Loss of energy, feeling tired all the time;
- ✓ Physical symptoms that can't be otherwise explained (headaches,
- ✓stomach aches, constipation, etc);
- ✓ Feelings of worthlessness;
- ✓ Feelings of hopelessness;
- ✓ Feelings of guilt;
- ✓ Not able to concentrate or think clearly;
- ✓ Changes in appetite (either eating too much or too little);
- ✓ Change of sleeping patterns (sleeping too much or too little)

Overcoming Barriers

Which Exercise Is Best?

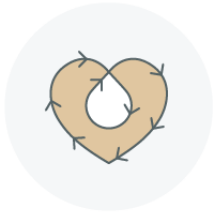
"Not all exercises are created equal" (Gadd, 2018)

To positively impact:



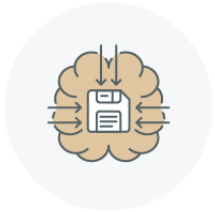
CONCENTRATION

Yoga
Tai chi
Aerobics



BLOOD CIRCULATION

Cardio activities



MEMORY

Aerobics
Walking
Cycling

STRESS AND ANXIETY

Yoga

DEPRESSION

Aerobics
Resistance training

PositivePsychology.com

TIPS TO BEGIN USING EXERCISE TO SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Schedule workouts when your energy is highest.

Try something new. Focus on activities you enjoy!

Be comfortable

Reward yourself

Make exercise a social activity

Exercise SMART to reach long-term fitness goals.

Use small, measured steps to stay committed and keep up the progress.

#MoveItMonday

MoveItMonday.org

MOVE IT MONDAY!

"Vigorous exercise can improve your mood.
It's hard to feel blue when your cheeks are pink!"