

THE LITTLE BOOK OF MENTAL FITNESS.

INTRO.

THE LOOSEHEADZ LITTLE BOOK OF MENTAL FITNESS HAS BEEN DESIGNED AS A BRIEF INTRO TO HELP YOU START YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS IMPROVING YOUR MENTAL FITNESS.

WE'VE TRIED TO PROVIDE THE CONTENT IN SHORT CHUNKS SO IT'S EASY TO TAKE IN & INCORPORATE INTO YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE. IT IS NOT DESIGNED AS A COMPLETELY COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH, BUT RATHER SOME SIMPLE TIPS & ADVICE THAT YOU CAN PICK & CHOOSE AS TO WHICH ARE MOST RELEVANT TO YOU.

THE KEY THING TO REMEMBER WITH THIS IS THAT WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH, & BY TRAINING IT EVERY DAY USING SOME OF THE TECHNIQUES & SUGGESTIONS OUTLINED IN THIS BOOK, YOU CAN HELP TO IMPROVE YOURS A LITTLE EVERY DAY.

REMEMBER, IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING, HELP IS AVAILABLE. THERE IS SOME MORE INFORMATION AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE ABOUT WHERE YOU CAN GO TO GET SUPPORT.

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WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH.

- + LIKE PHYSICAL HEALTH, WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH.**
- + MENTAL HEALTH EXISTS ON A SPECTRUM.**
- + FOR SOME IT WILL BE GOOD, WHILST OTHERS MAY EXPERIENCE MENTAL ILL HEALTH.**
- + WE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO TRAIN OUR MENTAL FITNESS IN ORDER TO THRIVE IN OUR LIVES.**
- + THIS RESOURCE HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO HELP YOU THINK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL FITNESS.**





CONNECT WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY.

- + LONELINESS IS A SIGNIFICANT RISK FACTOR FOR DEVELOPING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.**
- + RUGBY CLUBS CREATE AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPING MENTAL FITNESS BY MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS WITH LIKEMINDED PEOPLE & PROVIDING A SENSE OF BELONGING.**
- + YOU CAN CONNECT WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY & COLLEAGUES IN PERSON, OVER THE PHONE OR VIA TECHNOLOGY LIKE ZOOM OR GAMING CONSOLES.**

WORKOUT.

- + PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENHANCES OUR MENTAL HEALTH.
- + IT CAN TAKE MANY FORMS; FROM WALKING THE DOG, THROUGH TO HEADING TO THE GYM.
- + EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT PEOPLE WHO EXERCISE EXPERIENCE FEWER DAYS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH.
- + THE LARGEST ASSOCIATIONS HAVE BEEN SEEN FOR DURATIONS OF 45 MINS, 3-5 TIMES PER WEEK.
- + TEAM SPORTS LIKE RUGBY APPEAR TO BE PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE.





ENJOY THE MOMENT.

- + IN OUR BUSY LIVES, IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO FIND TIME TO FEEL GRATEFUL FOR THE POSITIVES IN OUR LIVES.**
- + TRY TO TAKE TIME TO NOTICE THE WORLD AROUND YOU, YOUR OWN THOUGHTS & FEELINGS.**
- + PRACTICING MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES FROM YOGA TO KEEPING A GRATITUDE DIARY CAN REALLY HELP.**
- + IT'S IMPORTANT TO FIND A WAY THAT FEELS RIGHT FOR YOU.**

KEEP LEARNING.

- + MENTAL STIMULATION HAS BEEN SHOWN TO PROTECT OUR MENTAL HEALTH.
- + THINK ABOUT TAKING UP A NEW HOBBY, LEARN A LANGUAGE, OR DISCOVER AN OLD INTEREST.
- + KEEP IT EVEN SIMPLER BY READING, COOKING OR LISTENING TO A PODCAST.
- + TRY JUST SWITCHING UP SIMPLE EVERYDAY TASKS LIKE WRITING WITH YOUR NON-DOMINANT HAND.





DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEONE.

- + THE SMALLEST ACTS OF KINDNESS REALLY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**
- + RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT ACTS OF KINDNESS SUPPORT POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH BY CREATING POSITIVE FEELINGS & A SENSE OF SELF-WORTH & VALUE.**
- + TRY SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS MAKING SOMEONE A DRINK, OR GIVING THEM A COMPLIMENT.**

PRIORITISE SLEEP.

- + TO SUPPORT MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH, WE ALL NEED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SLEEP.
- + ADULTS REQUIRE AN AVERAGE OF 7-9 HOURS PER NIGHT.
- + THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT NO MATTER WHAT YOUR CURRENT SLEEP PATTERN, YOU CAN MAKE CHANGES BY IMPLEMENTING A SLEEP HYGIENE ROUTINE.
- + CHECK OUT THE SLEEP FOUNDATION FOR MORE INFO.





HAVE A LAUGH.

- + HUMOUR HAS BEEN SHOWN TO IMPROVE WELLBEING & REDUCE STRESS.**
- + LAUGHING AUTOMATICALLY TRIGGERS POSITIVE PHYSICAL & MENTAL CHANGES THAT HELP TO RELAX YOUR MIND.**
- + THE RUGBY CLUB IS OFTEN A GREAT SPACE TO HAVE A LAUGH WITH MATES, BUT YOU CAN ALSO THINK ABOUT WATCHING A COMEDY OR LISTENING TO A FUNNY PODCAST.**

NUTRITION.

- + A HEALTHY, BALANCED DIET CAN SUPPORT GOOD PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH.
- + TRY TO FOCUS ON A DIET RICH IN PROTEIN, FIBRE, FRUIT, LEAFY GREENS & OMEGA 3 FISH OILS.
- + IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO TRY TO LIMIT THE INTAKE OF HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS & SUGARY DRINKS.
- + AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE.





GET OUTDOORS.

- + GETTING OUTSIDE INTO GREEN SPACES HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH BENEFITTING OUR MENTAL HEALTH, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF REDUCING OUR STRESS LEVELS.**
- + TRY TO GET OUT INTO A PARK, FOREST OR EVEN A RUGBY PITCH - BASICALLY ANYWHERE WITH TREES.**
- + THINK ABOUT BRINGING NATURE INDOORS AS WELL WITH PLANTS & OTHER FORMS OF BIOPHILIA.**

BREATHE.

- + OBVIOUSLY BREATHING IS PRETTY IMPORTANT, BUT THINK ABOUT REALLY FOCUSING ON IT.
- + BREATH WORK, YOGA & TAI CHI HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO HELP COUNTER THE PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE BROUGHT ON BY STRESS.
- + TAKE THE TIME TO FIND OUT WHAT WORKS FOR YOU, & TRY TO ENSURE YOU REGULARLY MAKE TIME TO FOCUS ON DEEP BREATHING.





STAY HYDRATED.

- + ALMOST 60% OF OUR BODY WEIGHT IS WATER SO DEHYDRATION CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH.**
- + DEHYDRATION CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT OUR MOOD, ENERGY LEVELS & ALERTNESS.**
- + THINK ABOUT TRYING TO ENSURE YOU DRINK AT LEAST 3-4 LITRES OF WATER PER DAY TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH.**

PRACTICE EMPATHY.

- + TRY TO UNDERSTAND & APPRECIATE HOW OTHERS ARE FEELING.
- + IT CAN BE A DIFFICULT SKILL TO MASTER, BUT IT'S CRITICAL TO BUILDING & MAINTAINING CLOSE & HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.
- + FEELING CONNECTED & HAVING A SENSE OF BELONGING IS IMPORTANT FOR GOOD MENTAL HEALTH.





APPRECIATE OTHERS.

- + APPRECIATION & GRATITUDE HELPS US TO APPRECIATE WHAT WE HAVE, NOT WHAT WE DON'T.**
- + WHEREVER POSSIBLE, TRY TO THINK ABOUT NICE THINGS OTHERS HAVE DONE FOR YOU, & MAKE SURE TO THANK THEM.**
- + THIS CAN HELP US TO FEEL POSITIVE EMOTIONS, COPE WITH ADVERSITY & BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS TO HELP SUPPORT POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH.**

TRY TO CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS.

- + UNHELPFUL NEGATIVE THOUGHTS CAN LEAD TO UNHELPFUL NEGATIVE FEELINGS & ACTIONS.**
- + IT CAN BE HARD TO REPLACE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS WITH POSITIVE ONES, & THAT'S OK.**
- + THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG, BUT TRY TO CONTINUE CHALLENGING THE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS TO REFRAME THEM IN A MORE HELPFUL & POSITIVE WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.**





TALKING REALLY DOES HELP.

- + IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK, & REALISING THAT CAN OFTEN BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS GETTING HELP.**
- + THERE IS PLENTY OF HELP & SUPPORT AVAILABLE, FROM SPEAKING TO A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL TO REACHING OUT TO FRIENDS, FAMILY OR CHARITIES.**
- + EARLY INTERVENTION REDUCES THE RISK OF LONG-TERM ILLNESS DEVELOPING, & CREATES OPPORTUNITIES TO PREVENT CRISIS SITUATIONS.**

TRY TO REDUCE SCREEN TIME.

- + SOCIAL MEDIA IS A PART OF MOST OF OUR LIVES & CAN HAVE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH.**
- + IT HAS ALSO BEEN RECOGNISED THAT ITS USE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH RISK, PARTICULARLY IN YOUNGER PEOPLE.**
- + THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT REDUCING OUR TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA CAN HELP POSITIVELY INFLUENCE MENTAL HEALTH & MAKE US FEEL HAPPIER & MORE RELAXED.**





SET YOURSELF GOALS.

- + THE PURSUIT OF GOALS, EVEN IF WE DON'T ACHIEVE THEM CAN SUPPORT GOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**
- + BY TAKING THE SMALLEST STEPS TOWARDS REACHING OUR GOALS, WE CAN FEEL A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT, SATISFACTION AND OUR SELF-ESTEEM CAN BE BOOSTED.**
- + RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT WHEN PEOPLE WERE PERSISTENT IN PURSUING THEIR GOALS, THEY TENDED TO HAVE LESS DEPRESSION & ANXIETY.**

PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING.

- + ACTIVE LISTENING CAN HELP US BUILD & MAINTAIN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WHICH PROTECT OUR MENTAL HEALTH.**
- + IT CAN ALSO HELP US TO SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES.**
- + THE AIM OF ACTIVE LISTENING IS TO LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND, NOT NECESSARILY TO RESPOND.**





DITCH A BAD HABIT.

- + CERTAIN THINGS WE DO CAN BE BAD FOR OUR MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH.**
- + MAKING POSITIVE CHANGES TO OUR LIVES CAN HELP BRING ABOUT A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT, PRIDE & SATISFACTION WHICH CAN HELP TO BOOST OUR SELF-ESTEEM & SUPPORT GOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**
- + IT CAN ALSO REDUCE THE RISK OF PHYSICAL ILLNESS, THEREBY REDUCING THE RISK OF DEVELOPING A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM.**

DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY 'NO'.

- + SAYING NO CAN BE INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT, HOWEVER IT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF SETTING BOUNDARIES.**
- + TAKING ON TOO MUCH CAN LEAD TO STRESS & FEELING OVERWHELMED.**
- + SAYING 'NO' CAN MAKE US FEEL RUDE & GUILTY & LEAD TO LENGTHY EXPLANATIONS.**
- + HOWEVER, ACCEPTING THAT 'NO' IS A COMPLETE SENTENCE SUPPORTS OUR WELLBEING IN THE LONG-TERM.**





FOCUS ON YOURSELF.

- + TAKING SOME TIME FOR OURSELVES CAN LEAD TO FEELINGS OF GUILT, BUT 'ME TIME' GIVES US A CHANCE TO IMPROVE CONCENTRATION & PRODUCTIVITY.**
- + THIS CAN ALLOW US TO FREE UP MORE TIME TO GIVE TO OTHERS.**
- + ULTIMATELY TAKING SOME TIME FOR OURSELVES CAN HELP US FEEL LESS STRESSED, & IMPROVE OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS.**

SUPPORTING OTHERS.

- + IT IS VITAL THAT WE ENSURE WE ARE LOOKING AFTER OUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH, BEFORE TRYING TO HELP OTHERS.
- + IF SOMEONE DOES SHARE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS WITH YOU, IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOUR LIMITS.
- + ENCOURAGE THEM TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT, & EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS.





POSSIBLE SIGNS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH.



LOW MOOD.



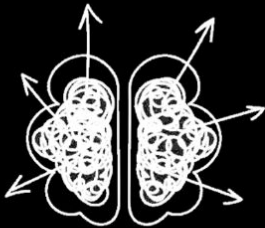
LOW ENERGY LEVELS.



SLEEP PROBLEMS.



FEELING OVERWHELMED.



RACING THOUGHTS.



UNHEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS.



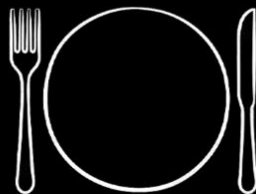
REDUCED PERFORMANCE.



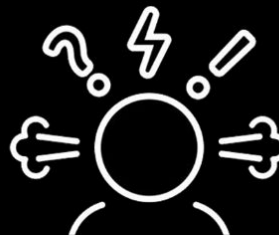
FEELING TENSE.



UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR.



CHANGE IN APPETITE.



FEELING IRRITABLE.



NOT FEELING GOOD ENOUGH.



LOSS OF FOCUS.



SOCIAL ISOLATION.



(HOBBS, 2017; HEALTH & SAFETY EXECUTIVE, 2018; NHS, 2017, SHEFFIELD, 2015).



HELP & SUPPORT.

**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 999 OR
IMMEDIATELY GO TO YOUR LOCAL A&E.**

**WHEN IT'S NOT LIFE THREATENING BUT
YOU NEED URGENT ADVICE, CALL 111.**

LISTENING SERVICES;

SAMARITANS (24 HRS) - 116 123.

CALM (5PM - MIDNIGHT) 0800 585858.

CHILDLINE - 0800 1111.

SUPPORT & ADVICE;

MIND - 0300 123 3393.

RETHINK - 0300 5000927.



TEXT
RUGBY
TO
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here for you 24/7



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