THE TOP 7

THINGS TO DO TO HELP BOTH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS AND MENTAL ILLNESS

1 **EST. CONSISTENT SLEEP-WAKE CYCLE**

Sleep deprivation is a precursor for **many** mental health issues. In addition to sleeping 7-9 hours each night - your body needs you to provide a consistent sleep-wake cycle that works with your circadian rhythms. Go to bed & wake up at roughly the same time every day to help.

2 **EAT FOODS THAT NOURISH YOUR BRAIN**

Mental health is directly tied to what is happening neurobiologically in your brain. Help your brain by eating whole, natural foods so that it has the essential amino acids, vitamins, and minerals it needs to function correctly. Boost this choice by not consuming any processed sugar.

3 **MOVE YOUR BODY MORE**

The research is so strong here. Movement/exercise are excellent for relieving mental health issues. So much happens in the brain when you move that counselors in other countries 'prescribe exercise' before they will prescribe medication.

4 **GO OUTSIDE FOR 30 MINUTES**

Allow nature to help 'reset' your autonomic nervous system and de-activate overproduction of cortisol (a hormone that in high amounts can exacerbate anxiety and depression) by going for a 30 minute walk outside.

5 **ENGAGE SOCIALLY FOR 60 MINUTES**

When possible, be with other people in real life for at least 60 minutes each day. If that is not possible, talk to a friend or family member online. This time of connection is crucial for mental health.

6 **CHOOSE PHYSICAL CONTACT 12X/DAY**

Appropriate hugs, touching someone on the shoulder, holding their hand, even fist pumping 12x each day initiates the release of oxytocin, vassopressin, and possibly even dopamine which assist with attachment and bonding. Experiencing attachment with safe people dramatically impacts mental health.

7 **DECREASE YOUR 'CATS'**

'CATS' stands for caffeine, alcohol, tobacco and sugar. Decreasing your intake of these items each day helps your body not have to process so many toxins known to cause significant shifts in mood.