



The Summer Blues

HOW TO STAY MENTALLY HEALTHY OVER THE SUMMER

Summer is here! Most, if not all of us, are usually counting down the days to the summer. We look forward to the warm weather, longer days, and the chance to sit back and relax. However, to the surprise of many, summer also brings with it a wave of depression and anxiety. Though for some, summer depression has a biological cause, for others there are particular stressors of summer that can pile up and manifest into feelings of misery and melancholy. Such stressors include body image issues, disrupted schedules, keeping the children entertained, and post-vacation depression. As a result, summer is a time that requires continuous mental health checks.

There are many signs we should be on the lookout for when monitoring our mental health this summer. From loss of appetite and weight loss, to anxiety, and even trouble sleeping. There are many practices to engage in to help alleviate the stress we might feel during this time.

Physical Wellness



The warm weather brings with it pressure towards achieving and maintaining a 'summer body.' Avoiding participating in outdoor activities due to concern about physical appearance can substantially affect an individual's mental health. This can propagate feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and anxiety. As such, it is important that during the summer months we engage in healthy practices. This can vary from exercising 30-45 minutes every day to get the endorphins pumping, to maintaining a regular eating schedule, and engaging in

social activities with others whether that be inside or outside. Our body is a vessel that fuels us, and as such, we should take the time during the summer to rejuvenate our physical bodies alongside our minds. Summer is a time for self-love, so remember that treating yourself to an ice cream cone or a popsicle, enjoying yourself at a barbecue, or even skipping a day or two at the gym is completely alright.



Emotional/Social Wellness



For some parents, having the kids home during the summer can be hard. The work/life balance possible during the school year is harder to achieve in the summer, with having to constantly make plans to keep the children entertained and having less time for one-self. It can be overwhelming and thus it is important to take a few minutes every day to do the things that you enjoy. Take a walk, meet up with a friend, sit down with a book – make sure to keep yourself a priority this summer. Taking time to reflect, journaling, and meditation are all easy ways to improve your mental health during the summer.

Vacations are a huge part of the summer. We look forward to them year-round, anticipating their arrival and the opportunity to get away from work and other life stressors. But vacations also disrupt our schedule from when we eat to when we sleep. If you've experienced depressive symptoms

before, you might have found that having a reliable routine often helps mitigate the symptoms. Without the comfort of routine, we can find ourselves anxious and more reactive to unexpected situations. As such, though vacations encourage late nights, try to get your 8 hours of sleep, and coordinate your meal intervals to match when you eat at home. Ultimately, try to tailor your vacation to your needs. Maybe instead of taking a whole week off at once, take several long weekends spread throughout the summer. What about a staycation? Time off, but in the solace of your own home might just be what you need. Being on vacation does not mean you have to forgo your comforts, rather you can bring them along with you.

As exciting as it can be to go on holiday, more often than not it is less exciting coming back home. Individuals can often experience post-vacation depression. Feeling like you have nothing to look forward to for the remainder of the summer, can make the following months feel bleak. To alleviate this, try to plan ahead. Have small activities planned throughout the summer months, so that your vacation is not the only thing you have to look forward to.

Financial Wellness



Summer is known as the time of relaxation - lounging in the sun, eating out, going to concerts, and countless other expenses. Small activities here and there, especially with children, can add up and result in individuals experiencing great financial stress. Therefore, during the summer months it is very important to stick to a budget. Being money conscious while on vacation or when out with friends ensures that the summer fun you have is not tarnished by financial stress. This does not mean you have to limit your summer fun, as there are many summer activities that can be enjoyed free of charge!

BUDGET FRIENDLY SUMMER ACTIVITIES!

- Go to the beach
- Host a movie night
- Go for a hike
- Plant a garden
- Go for a picnic
- Camp in your backyard
- Start a book club

For confidential assistance, contact
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