

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



## Looking after your Mental Health and Well-being

Mental health, which includes psychological (mental), emotional, and social well-being, is an important part of overall health.

It is important to get into the habit of routinely practising good **self-care** - taking care of your body, your mind and your heart.

### Physical

- Eat well
- Exercise regularly
- Get enough sleep
- Adhere to your HIV medication and any other medical treatment you are on.

### Psychological

- Engage in activities that clear or calm your mind:
  - Journaling- writing down your thoughts and feelings
  - Breathing exercises (focus on your breathing, breathe in deeply, breathing out more slowly than you breathe in)
- Pay attention to what causes you stress
- Challenge negative thoughts, practise stopping "what if..." thoughts

### Emotional

- Find activities that improve your mood
  - Listen to music, dance
  - Do things that make you laugh
- Make a list of things you like to do- that you can do alone and things you can do with others.



## Social

- Spend time with people who help you feel good and bring out your best, and who you have fun with
- Talk over your problems with a trusted family member or friend
- Connect with people through social media if you can't in person.

## Spiritual

- Pray
- Attend worship
- Spend time in nature
- Meditate.



## Stress

Stress is the body's normal reaction to situations that cause you to feel worried, overwhelmed, or threatened. Low amounts of stress help motivate us. High stress over time can have negative effects on both physical and mental health.

Unaddressed stress can cause physical problems, negative thinking, poor decision making, irritability, anger, withdrawal, depression and many other problems.

Learn to recognize and manage your stress.

Find activities that help you relax and calm your thoughts. Things like exercise or meditation can help, or try singing, dancing or drawing. Talking to others, discussing your thoughts and hearing another person's view can help you manage stress.

**Looking after your mind as well as your body is the key to health, happiness and hope!**

