

# staying healthy

Whatever form of treatment you have been receiving for your difficulties – medication or psychotherapy – it's important that you maintain whatever gains you have made. If you have been seeing a mental health practitioner, keep practising the strategies you might have learned in therapy. This means continuing to apply all the useful skills and insights about yourself you might have gained and they will soon be integrated into your lifestyle.

There are also some other things you can do in order to make the most of what you have learned to stay well or gain that extra improvement. Here are some suggestions:

## 1. Keep to a balanced routine & lifestyle

A chaotic lifestyle can be stressful in itself. Try to keep to a reasonably structured routine and a balanced lifestyle. This means making sure you maintain good eating, sleeping, and exercising habits, and engage in social activities that can be both fun and challenging.

## 2. Develop a good social support network

It is wise to find someone with whom you can sit down and have a good talk. This doesn't mean a therapy session where you pour out your heart but rather just a chance to talk through what's going on in your life, what your goals are, and generally just to ventilate with someone you trust. Often, problems seem bigger than they really are when a person tries to deal with them on their own. Hearing yourself talk through something can help to put it into perspective. Socialising is also fun and will help you to keep on track with scheduling of pleasant events.

## 3. Develop a good professional support network

Professional help is an important resource. Find a doctor or mental health practitioner with whom you can have a good professional relationship based on mutual trust and respect. Talk to them about your needs and concerns. Learn as much as possible about your illness and take an active role in making decisions about treatment and after-care.

## 4. Expect slip-ups and down days

Slip-ups in progress can happen at any time and are to be expected. Try not to fall into the trap of believing that you are 'back to square one' as this will only make you feel worse. Use your skills of challenging your thinking to help when this situation occurs. It might be useful to remind yourself that most people have 'down days' or days where life's hassles are harder to deal with – its part of being human! Also, you can use setbacks as a way of learning something new about yourself to help avoid similar problems in the future.

Remember – progress may be a bumpy road at times but it will be a rewarding journey on the whole!!!

Use the spaces below to jot down a few things you could do to remain healthy.

Thinking		
Social Activities	<i>Healthy</i>	Pleasant Activities
Exercise		Relaxation
Professional Support		Social Support