

PACE Activity Exercise

Our mood is significantly influenced by how we behave, what we achieve and how we engage in different activities. We can use the acronym “PACE” to identify and organise activities that can help sustain improvements in emotional wellbeing and our overall level of motivation:

| Physical | Achieve | Connect | Enjoy |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Exercise, healthy eating / drinking, rest and sleep. | Work, study, household tasks and caring for children / other dependents. | Friends, family, social groups and community. | Play, fun, interest and pleasure. |

Depression is maintained by avoidance or withdrawal from activities that provide a sense of physical wellbeing, achievement, connection or enjoyment. Stress is normally experienced when we are solely focused on achievement at the expense of undertaking enjoyable activities and connecting with others. Anxiety is maintained by avoidance of tasks, activities, places or people that reinforce beliefs about not coping.

The way we act and engage in different activities directly influences our brain chemistry by causing the release of neuro-transmitters, promoting emotional wellbeing and providing a natural anti-anxiety and anti-depressant affect. These neuro-transmitters include endorphins, dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin.

- Physical exercise stimulates endorphins.
- Achievement stimulates dopamine.
- Connecting with other people stimulates oxytocin.
- Enjoyment stimulates serotonin.

Use the table on the next page to plan out activities that promote a healthy emotional balance. Remember that emotions constantly change and that an overall shift in our mood requires a shift in the balance of our behaviour.

Weekly Activity Planner

| Day | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| Physical Exercise Healthy Eating Relaxation Sleep | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM |
| | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM |
| Achievement Work Chores Responsibilities Study | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM |
| | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM |
| Connect Friends Family Colleagues Community | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM |
| | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM |
| Enjoyment Play Fun Interest Pleasure | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM | AM |
| | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM | PM |