

Coping with Illness

Use your Mind to Manage Illness.
There is a strong link between mental & physical health.

Unhappy feelings, depression & anger are normal responses to illness.

Just like pain or fatigue, learning to deal with difficult feelings is important for learning to live with illness.

CAUTION:

Some people turn to alcohol & other drugs as a way to cope with illness or to relax.

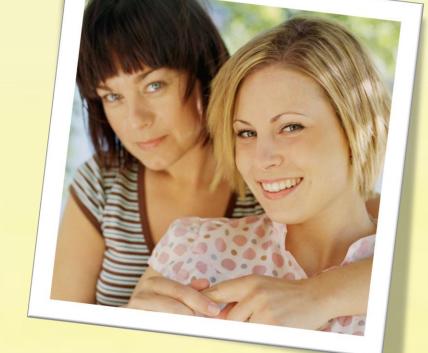
Alcohol is a depressant & may add to feelings of sadness. It may also interact with certain medications.

Consult your doctor or pharmacist before drinking alcohol.

Positive Ways to Cope with Difficult Feelings:

- Learn to communicate feelings using "I statements".
- Know your limitations. Realize you may not be able to do everything you did before but you can still do many things.
- * Focus on things you can still do & on the things that make you feel good.
- Continue daily activities even if you don't feel like it (ex: get dressed, cook meals).
- Visit or call friends & family. Plan an outing with relatives or friends.
- Volunteer Join a support group or get involved in the community.
- Look to the future & make plans for things you will enjoy.
- * Make a list of rewards that you can look forward to each day.
- * Take care of yourself. Exercise everyday, get enough sleep & eat healthy.
- Practice Relaxation Techniques Deep Breathing, Stretching, Guided Imagery, Visualization, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Meditation.
- Use Positive Self-Talk Say "I know I can" instead of "I just can't do...".
- Seek Professional Help if you feel like hurting yourself or someone else or if unhappy feelings last more than a few weeks. Talk to your doctor about depression.

Information adapted from Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions, 3rd Edition.





For more information or support, contact your local Mental Health & Addiction Services Office.

Mental Health Crisis Line 1-888-737-4668 NL Health Line 1-888-709-2929

