



When you're depressed, it's common to withdraw. It can be hard to do things that you did before, you might stop reaching out to others, lose your confidence to try new activities, or even get out of bed. It can feel impossible to find the energy to shower, go for a walk, or even do much of anything. However, did you know that when this lack of motivation or lowered energy sets in, **the inactivity is actually feeding the depression, and will make it worse?** For most people, the less you do, the worse you feel – and the worse you feel, the less you do. It can be a hard cycle to break!

If you experience depression and find it hard to do almost anything, but you do want to get better, here are some strategies that might be helpful:

- 1) **Set small goals.** Self-care is a great place to start. If you've gotten out of the habit of showering, take a shower. Brush your teeth. Clean your room. Notice how much better it makes you feel. Then do it again the next day!
- 2) **Be kind to yourself.** Depression can be incredibly frustrating and discouraging. It's so much harder to do anything, and you may feel like a failure because of that. Try to be gentle with yourself! If you are really depleted, you may only be able to get some basic self-care done. If you have a little more energy on a particular day, maybe try a hobby you used to love or walking for 15 minutes. Even a few minutes of being active can have a ripple effect -- each positive action is a deposit toward healing and recovery.
- 3) **Develop awareness about your choices.** Remember, depression feeds on withdrawal, isolation, and inactivity. Try to develop an awareness of your choices and where they lead. For example, when mealtime comes around, you can choose to eat a "real" meal or a bag of chips or skip eating entirely. When you come to the moment of making a decision, try to be aware of which choice will move you toward healing (eating real food) and which will feed the depression (eating chips for dinner or skipping meals). Can you make the choice, in that one moment, which positively supports your body and mind and helps you get well? Another choice might arise on the weekends - how are you going to spend your time? It might be easiest just to sleep or sit in front of a screen, but that inactivity and withdrawal will feed the depression. Could you pick up the phone and call someone instead? Or invite someone over to hang out with you? Or spend a little time on a hobby or interest that stimulates you - the kind you used to do before you started feeling so down?
- 4) **Track your progress.** Keep activity and mood logs so you can start to see the relationship between what you do and how you feel. Set goals, and use meaningful rewards to stay motivated – then document your success. This can be hard work, so be proud even of small steps!