

Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser
to the Government of India

in partnership with
Armed Forces Medical College



Building Positive Mental Health in Nine Simple Steps

Effective habits for a healthy life



Take simple steps every day to improve mental health and enhance well-being



Get Good Sleep



Exercise Regularly



Avoid Alcohol and Drugs



Practice Meditation



Connect Socially



Reduce Screen Time /Media Exposure



Learn New Skills



Eat Healthy



Connect with Nature

1. Get Good Sleep

Practice sleep hygiene to rest the mind and body every day. Insufficient sleep creates a cycle of stress.



How Sleep Deprivation Cycle Affects Individuals

- Sleep in a quiet, dark and well ventilated environment
- Keep a regular sleep schedule, and try to sleep and wake up at the same time every day
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine or other stimulants before going to sleep
- Exercise regularly, as physical activity promotes deep and restful sleep
- Avoid watching TV, or using the phone immediately before going to sleep



Sleep Duration Recommendations
(hours of sleep every night)

ADULTS at least

7-8 hrs

CHILDREN at least

10 hrs

2. Get Regular Exercise



World Health Organization recommends at least:



ADULTS

150 mins of moderate-intensity or **75 mins** of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity in a week.



CHILDREN

60 mins of moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.



OLDER ADULTS

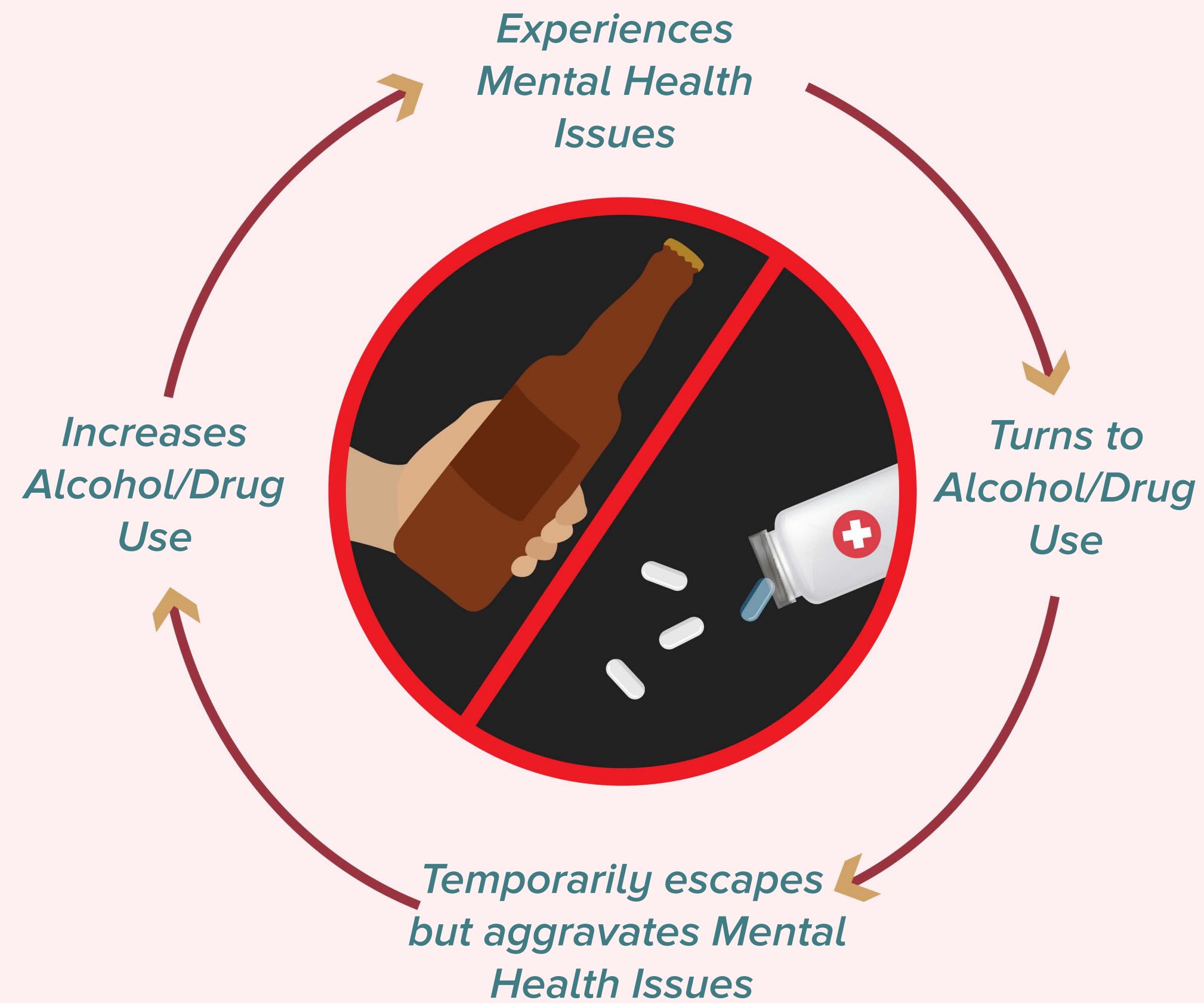
3 days of physical activity a week to enhance balance and prevent falls for older adults with poor mobility.

3. Avoid Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol and drug abuse exacerbate mental health issues, creating a negative cycle of dependence.

- Avoid situations and people associated with cravings
- Learn to say no! Don't give in to peer pressure
- Engage in social and creative activities

* Refer to this [NIMHANS document](#) on de-addiction for more details



How Alcohol/Drug Abuse Cycle Affects Individuals



4. Practice Meditation

Yoga techniques—*asanas* (postures), *pranayama* (deep breathing) and *dhyaan* (meditation)—improve mental health. Meditate for at least 15 minutes every day, and combine it with some asanas. *And remember, it takes two months of daily practice to change a behaviour into a habit!*

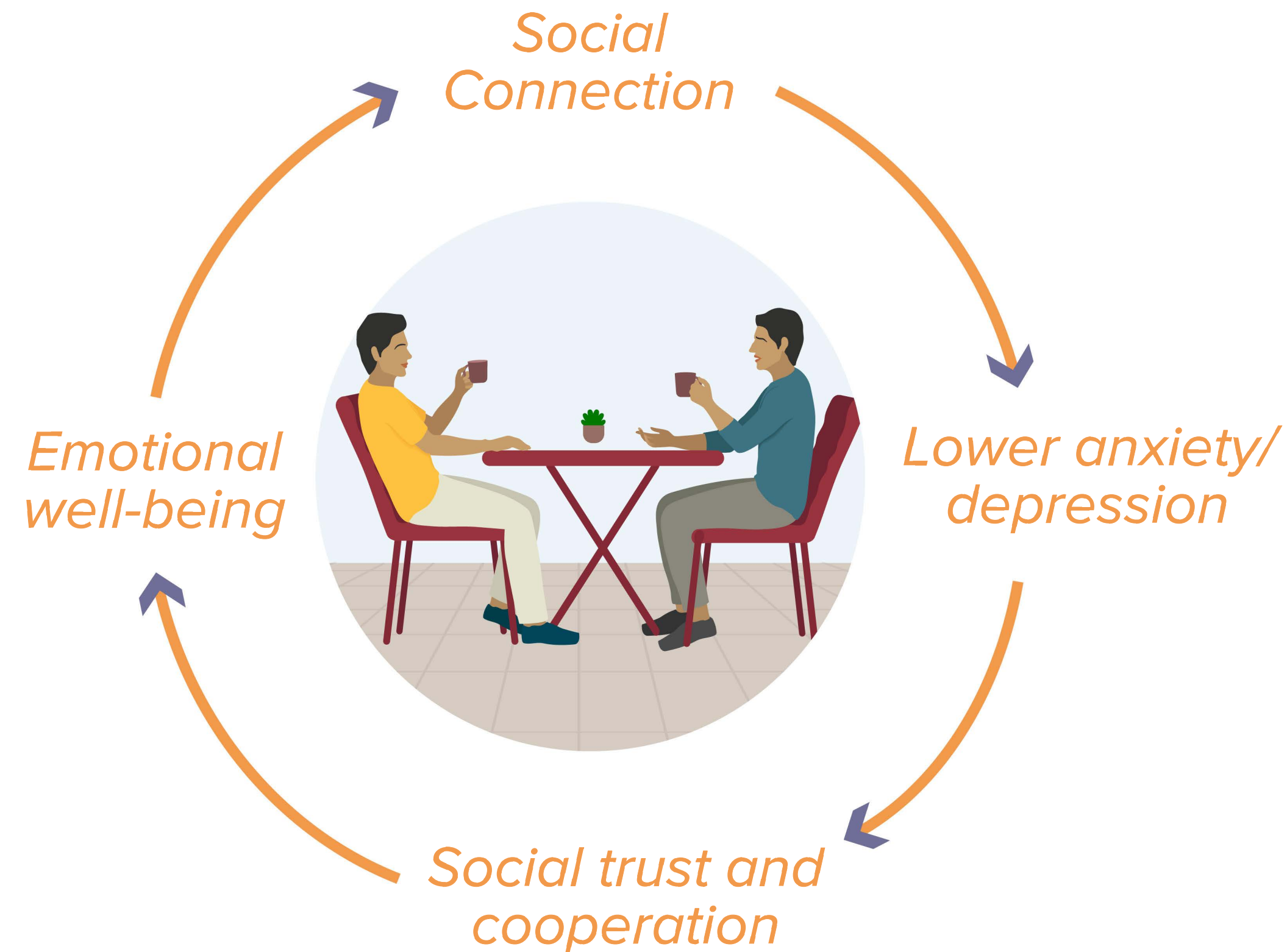
You can visit the Centre for Yoga (NICY) classes created to cope during the COVID-19 Pandemic by NIMHANS:
<https://nimhansyoga.in/>

Begin by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position, close your eyes, breathe gently and focus on your breath.



5. Stay Socially Connected

Spend time with family and friends and volunteer for causes you genuinely care about. Meaningful social connections significantly improve mental health.



How Social Connectedness supports Mental Health



- Be open to sharing and listening
- Be kind and empathetic to those around you
- Keep regular connection with close friends/family
- Connect on calls/video chat if you're unable to go outside
- Listen to music you enjoy

6. Learn New Skills

Learning new skills boosts self-confidence and self-esteem. It provides a sense of purpose which triggers positive emotions in the brain.

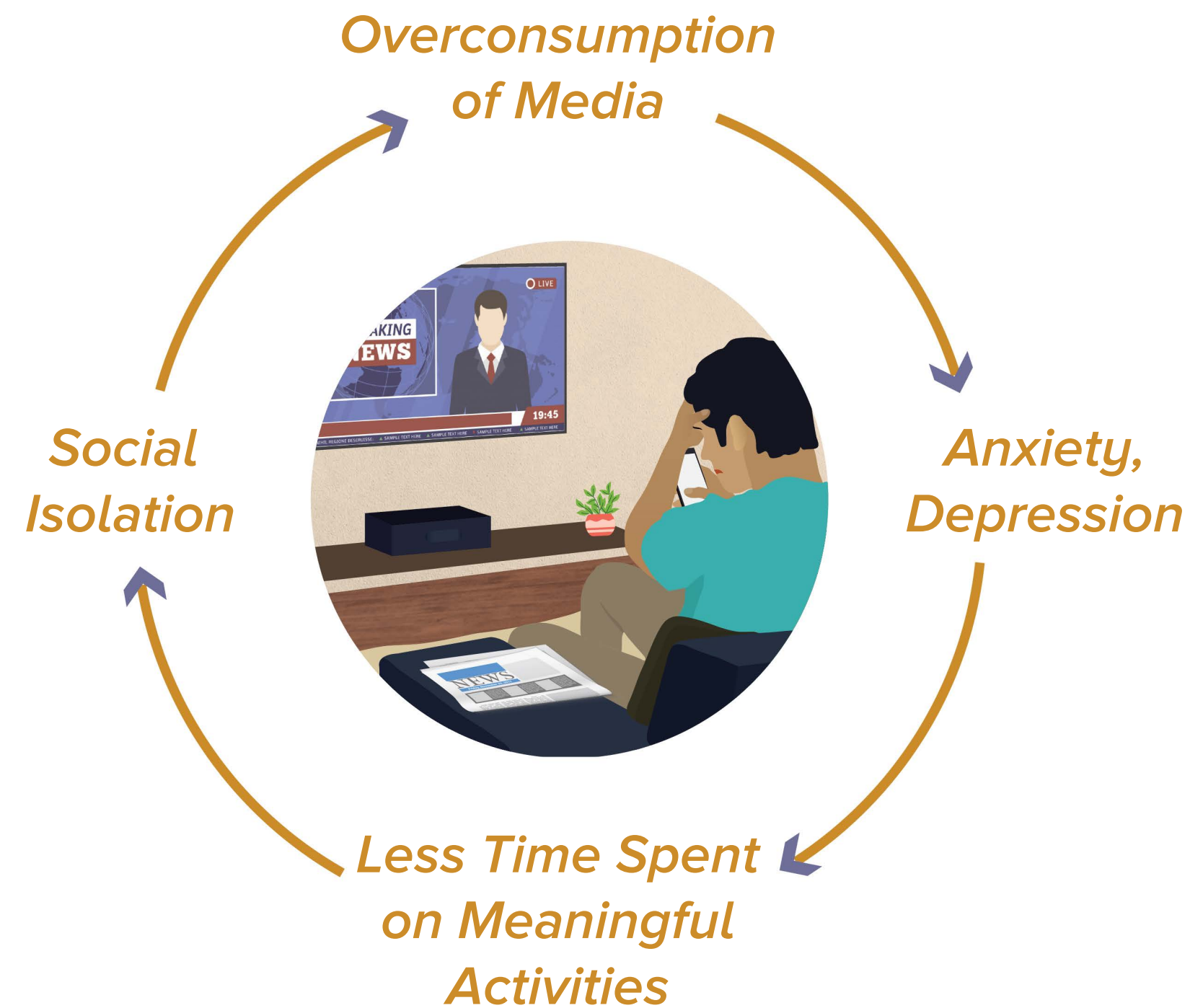
Pick up new skills—craft making, drawing, singing, dancing, cooking, coding etc.

Engage in fun and play based activities. Even small experiences that trigger pleasant emotions promote overall well-being.



7. Reduce Screen Time/ Exposure to Media

Excessive use of social media leads to stress, anxiety and depression. Exposure to repeated negative content from news and other media, generates negative emotions that adversely affect mental health.



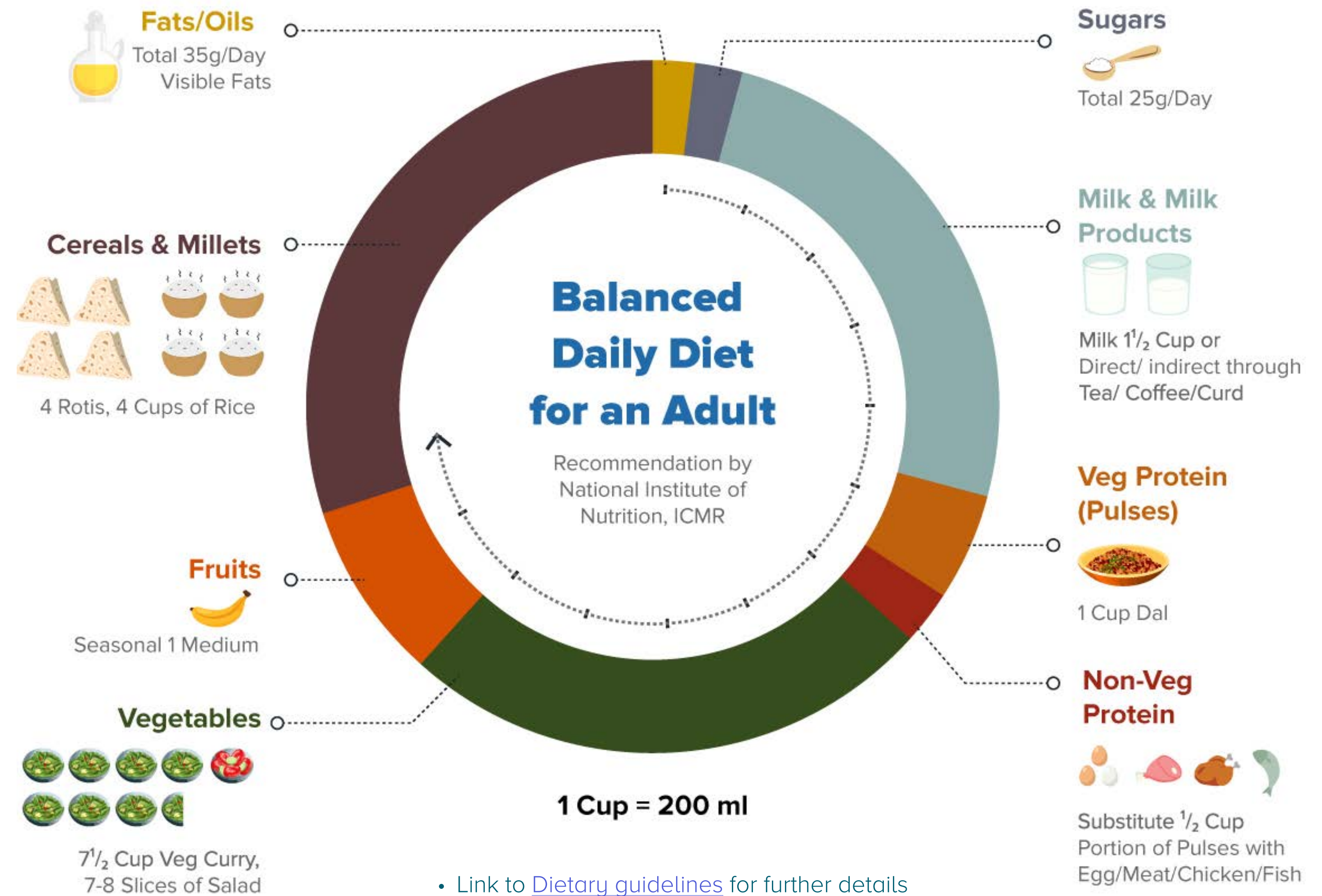
How Overexposure to Media Affects Individuals

- Limit social media consumption
- Limit exposure to TV/Online News etc.
- Replace media consumption with social interactions



8. Eat Healthy

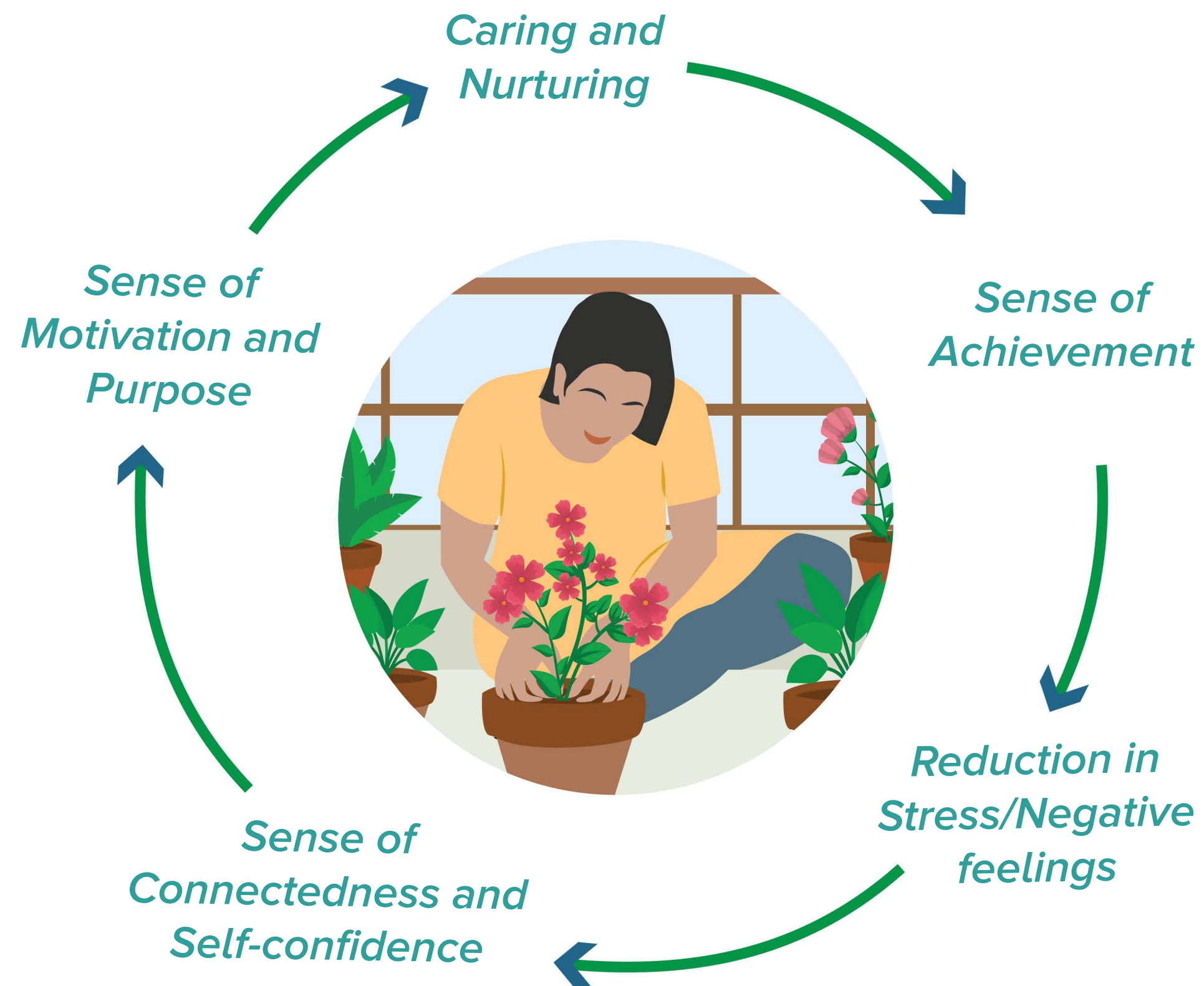
Eat a balanced diet—combination of vegetables, whole grains, protein and fruit—to maintain brain health.



Nutritional deficiencies have shown to cause symptoms of depression, fatigue, cognitive decline, and other mental health issues.

9. Connect with Nature

Spending time in the natural environment reduces depression and anxiety. Maintaining indoor plants also has a positive impact on mental health.



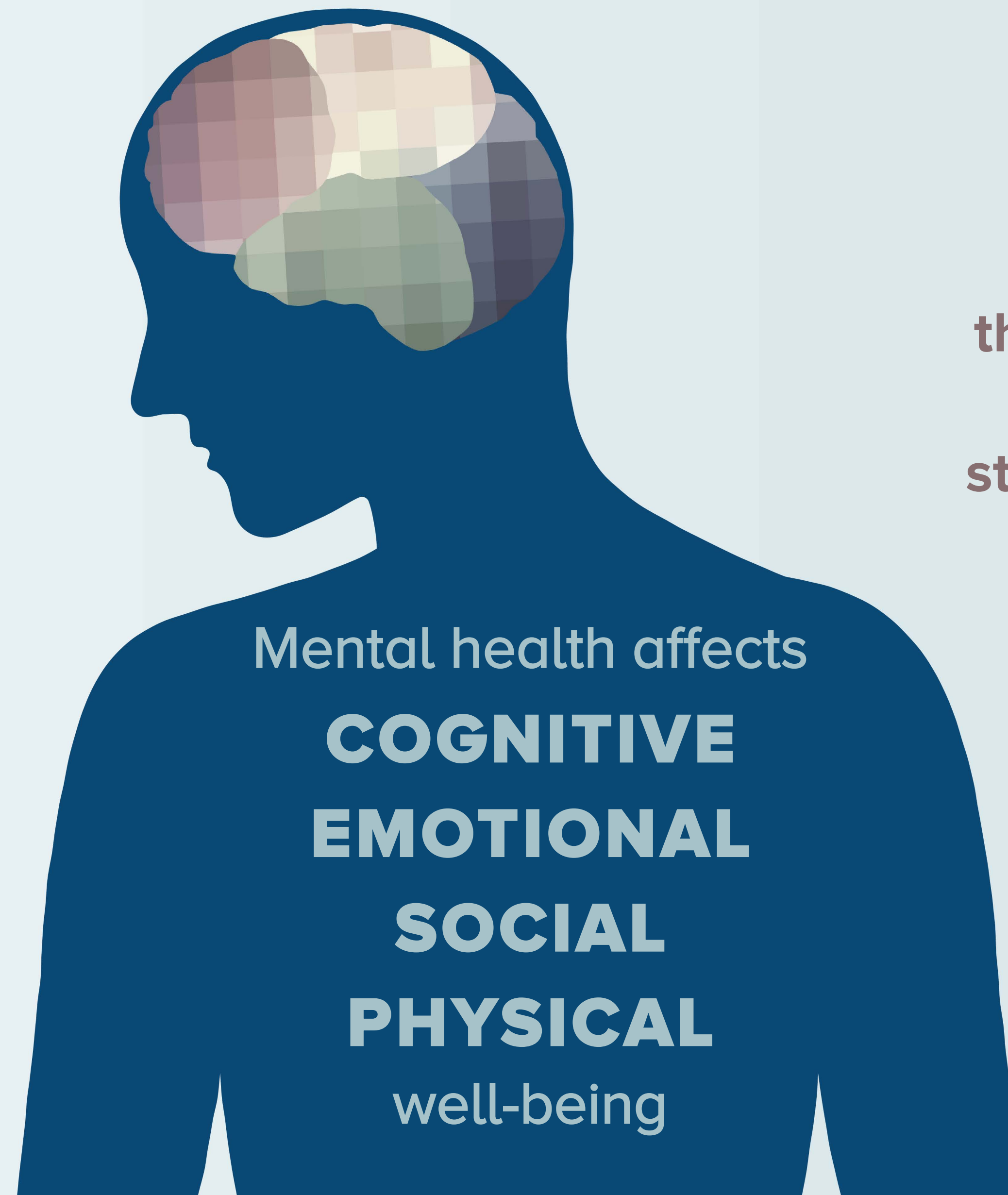
How Growing Plants Creates a Positive Emotional Cycle

Try to spend at least two hours a week in outdoor green spaces. Create a small green area at home with potted plants.



Do not neglect your mental health

Everyone experiences mental health issues in life. Taking individual steps to build mental health resilience, and seeking external support when necessary, makes it easier to cope with such issues.



Mental health affects
COGNITIVE
EMOTIONAL
SOCIAL
PHYSICAL
well-being

Positive mental health enables people to realize their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities.

Help someone going through mental health issues

The needless stigma and shame associated with mental health issues, prevents people from asking for help.

If you know someone who may be experiencing such issues, encourage them to take steps towards building positive mental health.

Do not discriminate against those undergoing mental health issues!

STIGMA



LISTEN - Listen to the person closely, with empathy, and without judging

INQUIRE ABOUT NEEDS AND CONCERNS - Assess and respond to various needs and concerns—emotional, physical, social and practical (e.g. childcare)

VALIDATE - Show that you understand and believe the person. Assure the person that he/she is not to blame

ENHANCE SAFETY - Discuss a plan to protect the person from harm

SUPPORT - Support the person by providing access to information, services and social support



Do not ignore the symptoms!

Mental health issues show up in many different ways. Learning to recognise these signs is an essential step towards building positive mental health.



Remember!
It is normal to
experience mental
health issues. You
can take control of
your mental health
by taking small
steps every day
for prevention and
treatment.





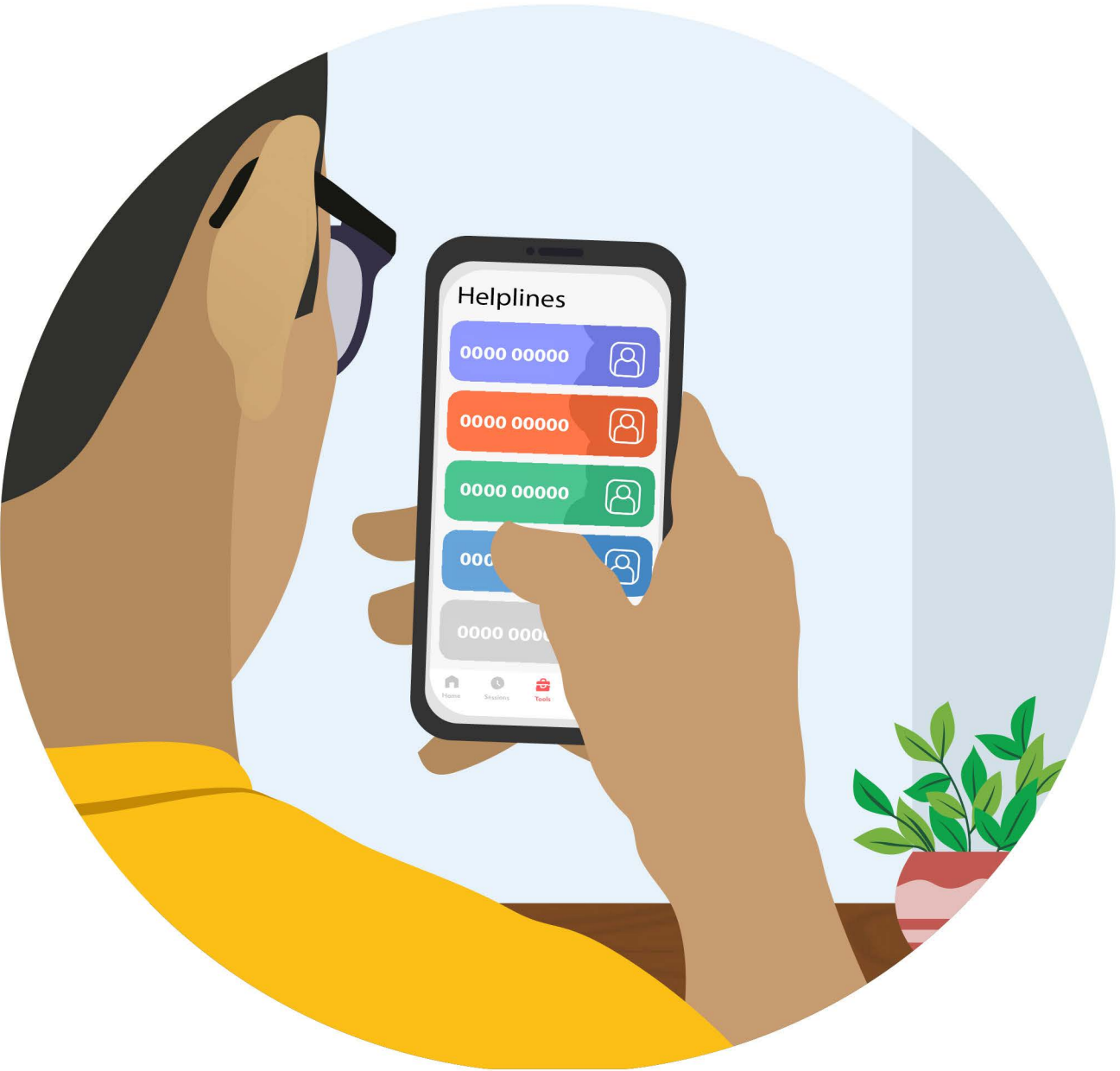
**Several resources
are available for
individuals who
need external support
to cope with mental
health issues.**

**Make sure you reach out if you
feel any sign of mental distress!**

Government and NGO Helplines

These are some government and NGO resources available on mental health. There are many more organizations and departments working on mental health across India.

| GOVERNMENT | NGOs and ORGANIZATIONS |
|--|--|
| <p>NIMHANS 08046110007 https://nimhans.ac.in/ NIMHANS Perinatal Mental Health Helpline Number for Women - 8105711277 (http://www.perinatalpsynimhans.org/) Day and time: Specialized Outpatient Services are available every Friday between 9 AM and 2 PM Phone – 080 – 26995547 Email: perinatalnimhans@gmail.com https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/MentalHealthIssuesCOVID19NIMHANS.pdf</p> | <p>Vandrevala Foundation 7304599836/37 Timings - 24x7 Languages - English, Hindi, Gujarati (For other languages, calls transferred to specific counsellors) Based in : Gujrat help@vandrevalafoundation.com</p> |
| <p>Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi 1800-345-1849 Timings : 24 hr helpline no. Can directly talk to psychologists https://cipranchi.nic.in/</p> | <p>Aasra Central Helpline Number 9820466726 Hours : 24 hours, 7 days a week Languages : English, Hindi. http://www.aasra.info/helpline.html (It contains information of Suicide Prevention Helpline Directory for 17 States and 3 UTs)</p> |
| <p>National Commission for Women Domestic Violence Help-line- Phone 181)</p> | <p>Sahai 080-25497777 sahaihelpline@gmail.com Languages – English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada Timings : 9.30-5.30</p> |
| <p>Student and Child Helpline 1098 For Ages : 0-18 years Timings : 24x7 hotline Languages : Available in all languages</p> | <p>Suicide, Depression and Addiction Helpline Numbers https://indianhelpline.com/SUICIDE-HELPLINE/ Contains information of 29 organisations working in most parts of the country</p> |



Mobile Applications on Mental Health

These are some of the numerous mobile applications in India that provide resources and support for mental health.



<https://www.oowomaniya.com/>



<https://www.theinnerhour.com/>



https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.epsyclinic.iwill&hl=en_IN

therapy in india

<https://www.therapyinindia.com/>



<https://yourdost.com/>



<https://www.wayforward.co.in/>



<https://www.wysa.io/>

HopeNetwork.in
Your channel for emotional wellness

<https://www.hopenetwork.in/>



<https://pinkymind.com/>



<http://www.ewellnessexpert.com/>



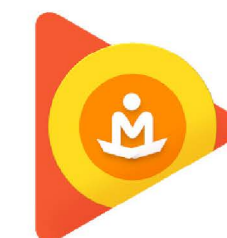
<https://www.healtheminds.com/>



<https://www.juno.clinic/>



<http://epsyclinic.com/>



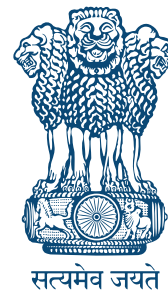
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.meditation.elevenminute&hl=en_US



<https://ticktalkto.com/>

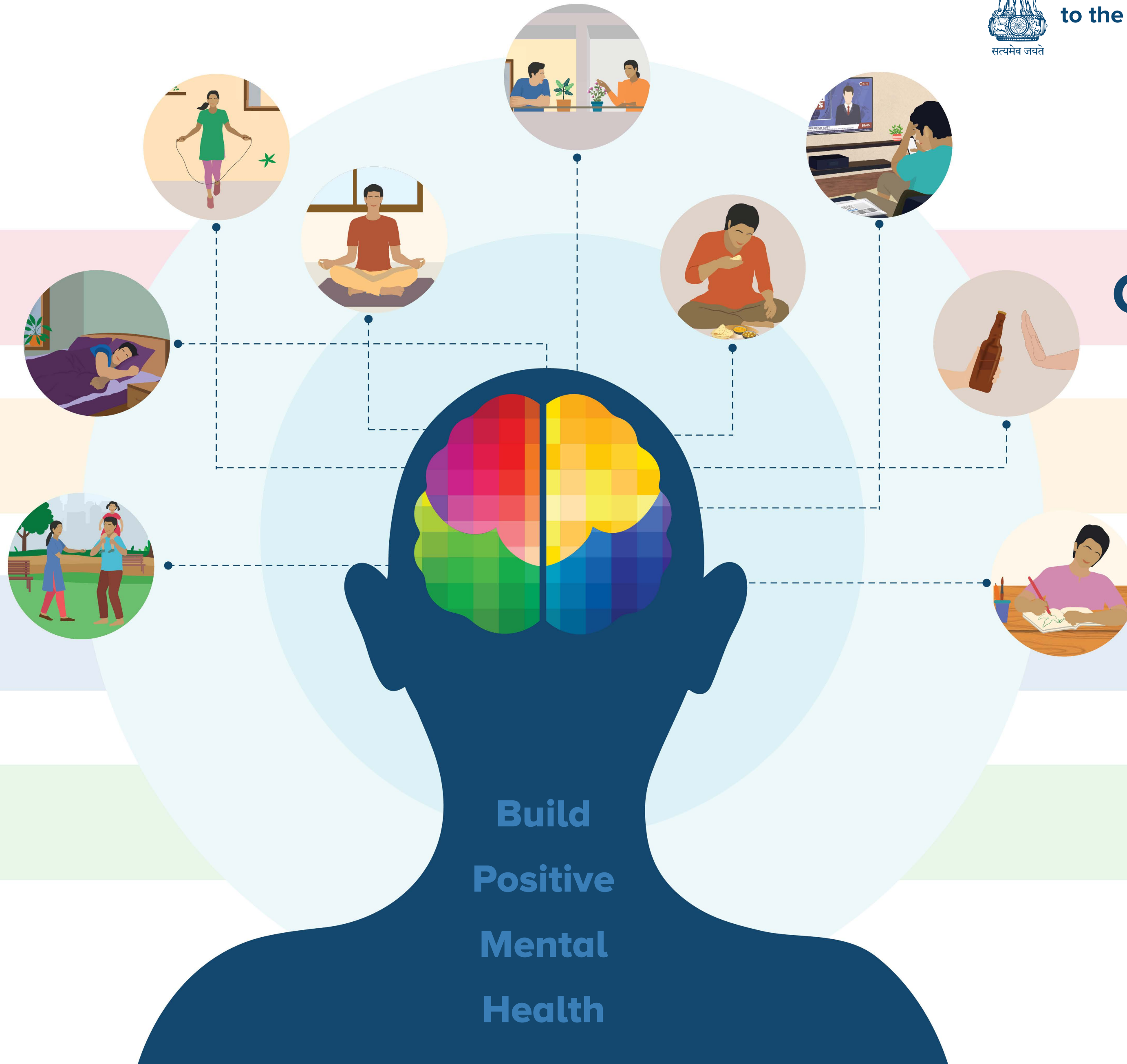
By taking these steps, you can slowly build positive mental health and cognitive, emotional, social, and physical resilience for a fulfilling life.





Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser
to the Government of India

in partnership with
Armed Forces Medical College



Cope with normal stresses of life

Contribute to community

Work productively

Realise full capabilities

**Build
Positive
Mental
Health**

Knowledge and Design Partner:
Vertiver Sustainability Foundation

Vertiver
enabling sustainability