# Depression Coping Guide

## Do things that make you feel good!

* One of the key coping strategies in managing depression is finding ways to introduce more serotonin and dopamine naturally into your brain. This can be accomplished by intentionally doing things that make you feel good!
* Sign up for a movement class you might enjoy, take a stroll through your neighborhood, check out a museum, watch your favorite movie, order your favorite food, spend some time in nature, write in a gratitude journal, or cuddle your pet!
* Develop a wellness toolbox: come up with a list of personalized activities or items that always make you feel good. Pull out your list when you're feeling depressed and try to complete 1-2 things.

## Do something small!

* Sometimes, when depression hits you hard, it can be difficult to get out of bed, or want to move around at all. The key in these very difficult moments is to set reasonable, small steps to accomplish in a day.
* Try to identify what you need most: Are you hungry? Does your space need tidying? Do you need connection? Do you need to tend to your own hygiene? Once you pinpoint your most prominent need, try to set reasonable, accomplishable steps to get this need met. (For example, if it feels too exhausting to go and take a shower, try simply brushing your teeth or washing your face.)
* Celebrate yourself for accomplishing these small, reasonable steps!

## Self-Compassion Practice!

* One of the most important parts of managing depression is paying attention to your thoughts and your internal self-talk.
* Practice intentionally giving yourself gentle, self-compassionate statements each day. (For example, “I am doing my best”, “This time is hard, but I know that I can get through it”, “It is okay for me to rest and take breaks when I feel overwhelmed”).

## Support your health!

* When our physical health is better taken care of, we tend to have a much easier time balancing our mental well-being.
* Do what you can to get outside or get sunshine every single day! Sunshine/vitamin D is significantly impactful in improving mental health.
* Eat foods that nourish your body and make you feel good.
* Try to move your body in small ways each day. This can be anything from running to stretching.

## Talk/Reach out/Stay Connected!

* Don’t be afraid to talk to people that you trust about your mental health.
* Use your support system, find a therapist and try talk therapy, or write all of your worries and thoughts into a special journal.
* Even simply calling a friend (or talking to a trusted pet) about mundane topics can increase dopamine levels in the brain!