

Taking Care of Your Mental Health

By Renee Uitto

The winter months can be long and boring with hardly anything to do. Many people find themselves to be sad and tired, with not much energy to do anything. Spending more time indoors can affect a person's brain which can affect attitude and outlook.

There are several ways to support your mental health and reduce the signs of the winter blues.

Here are a few of them:

- **Deep breathing** - whenever you feel moody or stressed, take a deep breath, then slowly exhale for about 10 seconds. Do this for about 10 times and you will start to feel more relaxed.
- **Find support in the community** - strong community means having support is just a phone call, email, or visit away. Spending time with positive people is a wonderful way to boost your mood.
- **Burn calories** - physical exercise is the best way to keep your brain healthy. Exercise increases levels of dopamine and can boost blood flow to deliver oxygen to the brain.
- **Remember happy times** - look through a scrapbook or a photo album or watch old family videos for enjoyment and happiness.
- **Write it down** - when something positive happens, write it down. It can also be a great way to unwind after a stressful day.

If you use these healthy habits, your mental health should be improved.