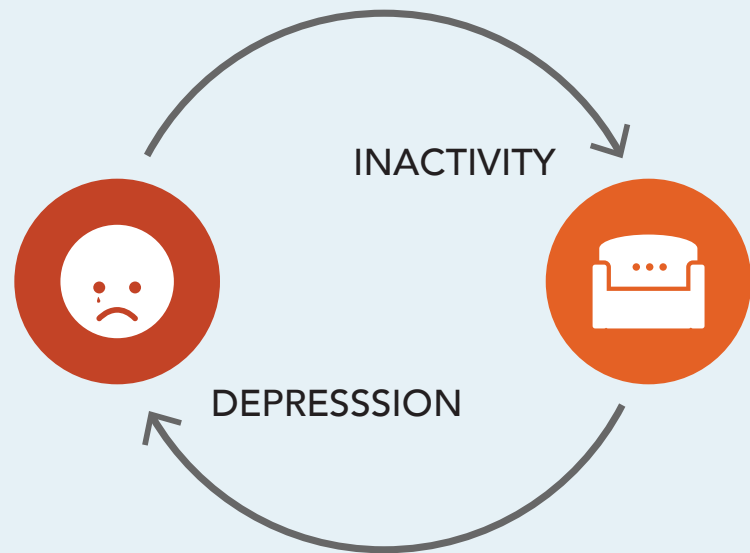


CYCLE OF INACTIVITY

When you have a disease like depression, 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 struggle to get out of bed. Sometimes, it might feel impossible to find the energy to shower, go for a walk, or 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!



Stuck in this cycle but want to get better? Here are some **strategies that might be helpful:**

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 if it makes you feel better. Even if it isn't enjoyable immediately, try it again the next day!

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. Plus, depression can make it hard to enjoy things, so it can take a while for activities to feel fun again! If you are really worn-out, maybe try just to get some basic self-care done. If you have a little more energy, 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 an investment toward recovery!

DEVELOP AWARENESS ABOUT YOUR CHOICES

For example, when mealtime comes around, you can choose to eat a "real" meal, 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). The right choice can help your body and mind begin to recover! On the weekends, you might have different choice: it might be easiest to sleep in or sit in front of a screen, but that inactivity and withdrawal will feed the depression. Try to get out of the house, even for a 20-minute walk! With time, those choices will get easier and easier!

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!