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about Mental Health in Sedgwick County Government

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Depression and Anxiety: Exercise Eases Symptoms

When you have anxiety or depression, exercise often seems like the last thing you want to do. But once you get motivated, exercise can make a big difference.

Exercise helps prevent and improve a number of health problems, including high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis. Research on anxiety, depression and exercise shows that the psychological and physical benefits of exercise can also help reduce anxiety and improve mood.

The links between anxiety, depression and exercise aren't entirely clear — but working out can definitely help you relax and make you feel better. Exercise may also help keep anxiety and depression from coming back once you're feeling better.

How does exercise help depression and anxiety?

Exercise probably helps ease depression in a number of ways, which may include:

- **Releasing feel-good brain chemicals** that may ease depression (neurotransmitters and endorphins)
- **Reducing immune system chemicals** that can worsen depression
- **Increasing body temperature**, which may have calming effects

Exercise has many psychological and emotional benefits too. It can help you:

- **Gain confidence.** Meeting exercise goals or challenges, even small ones, can boost your self-confidence. Getting in shape can also make you feel better about your appearance.
- **Take your mind off worries.** Exercise is a distraction that can get you away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed anxiety and depression.
- **Get more social interaction.** Exercise may give you the chance to meet or socialize with others. Just exchanging a friendly smile or greeting as you walk around your neighborhood can help your mood.
- **Cope in a healthy way.** Doing something positive to manage anxiety or depression is a healthy coping strategy. Trying to feel better by drinking alcohol, dwelling on how badly you feel, or hoping anxiety or depression will go away on its own can lead to worsening symptoms.

Mayo Clinic

If you or someone you love needs help with depression or anxiety, please call COMCARE of Sedgwick County at 316-660-7540 and start to feel better soon.