

Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor  
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**

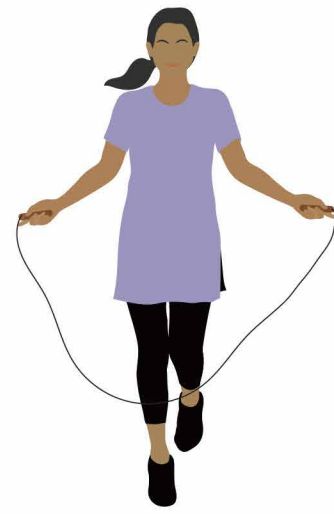
**CHILDREN** at least

**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 throughout the week.



CHILDREN

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



OLDER ADULTS

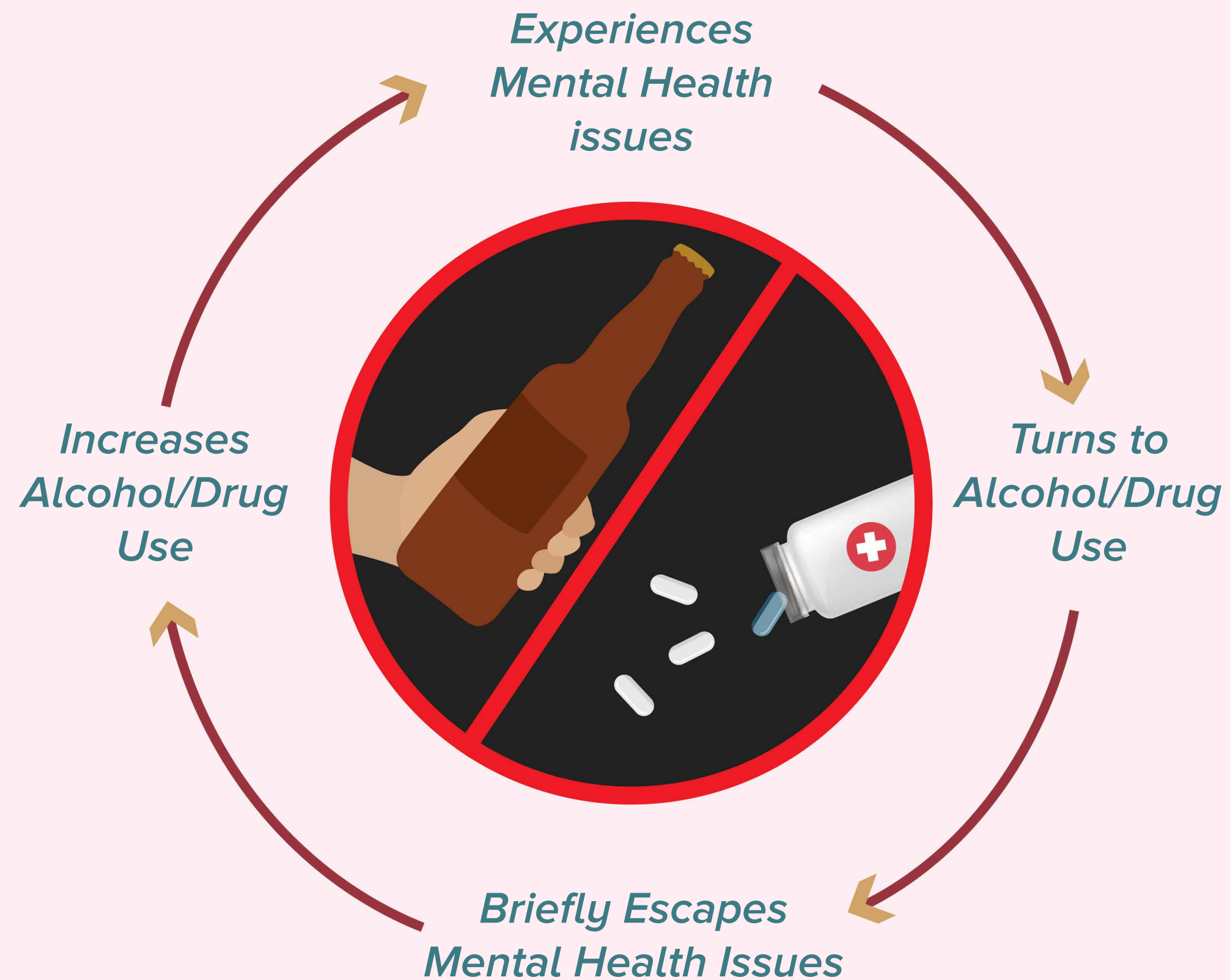
**3 days** of physical activity a week to enhance balance and prevent falls for older adults, with poor mobility.

# 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





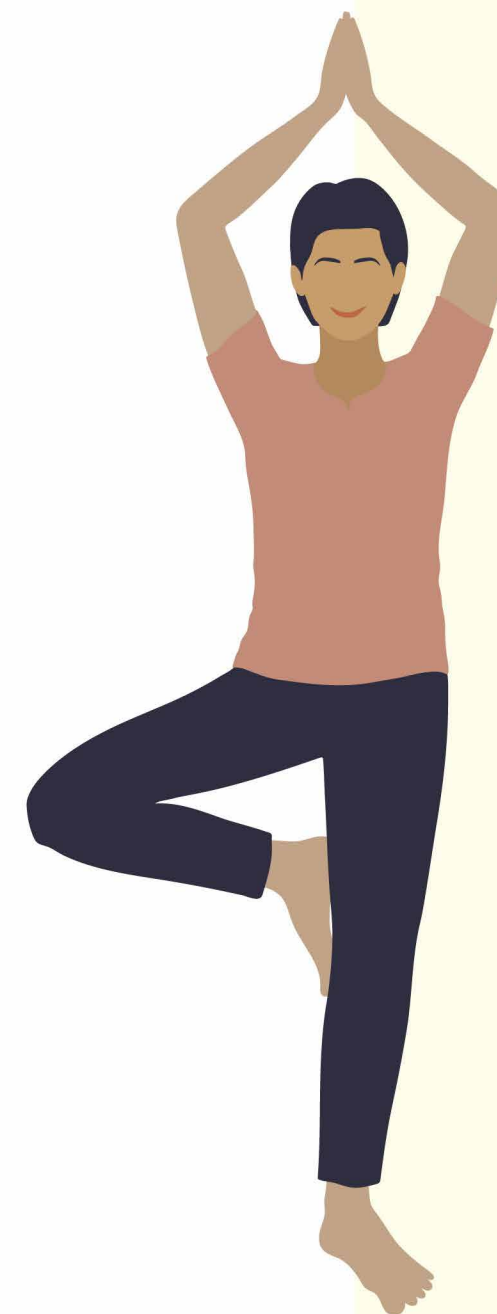
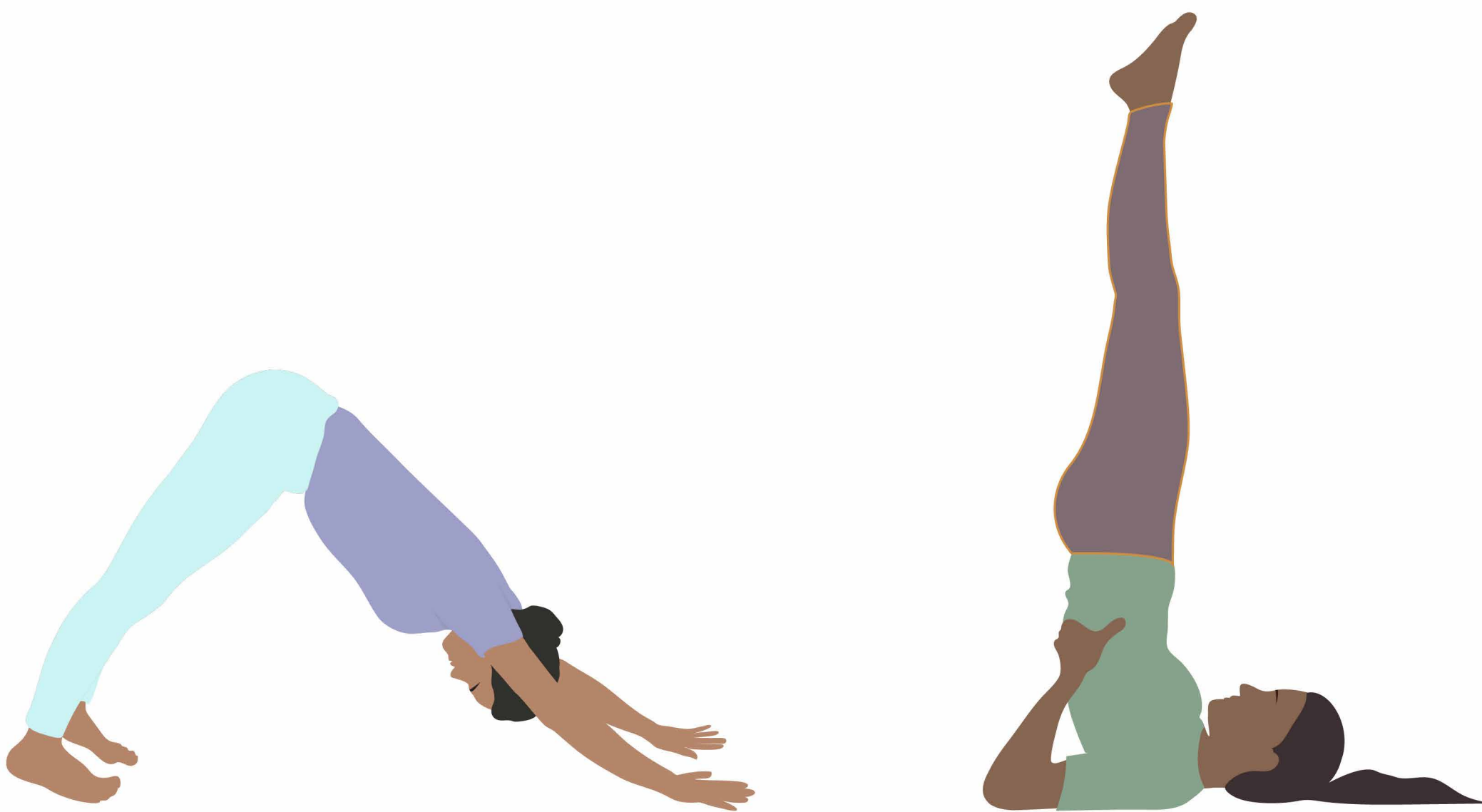
# 4. Practice Meditation

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 make a behaviour into a habit!*

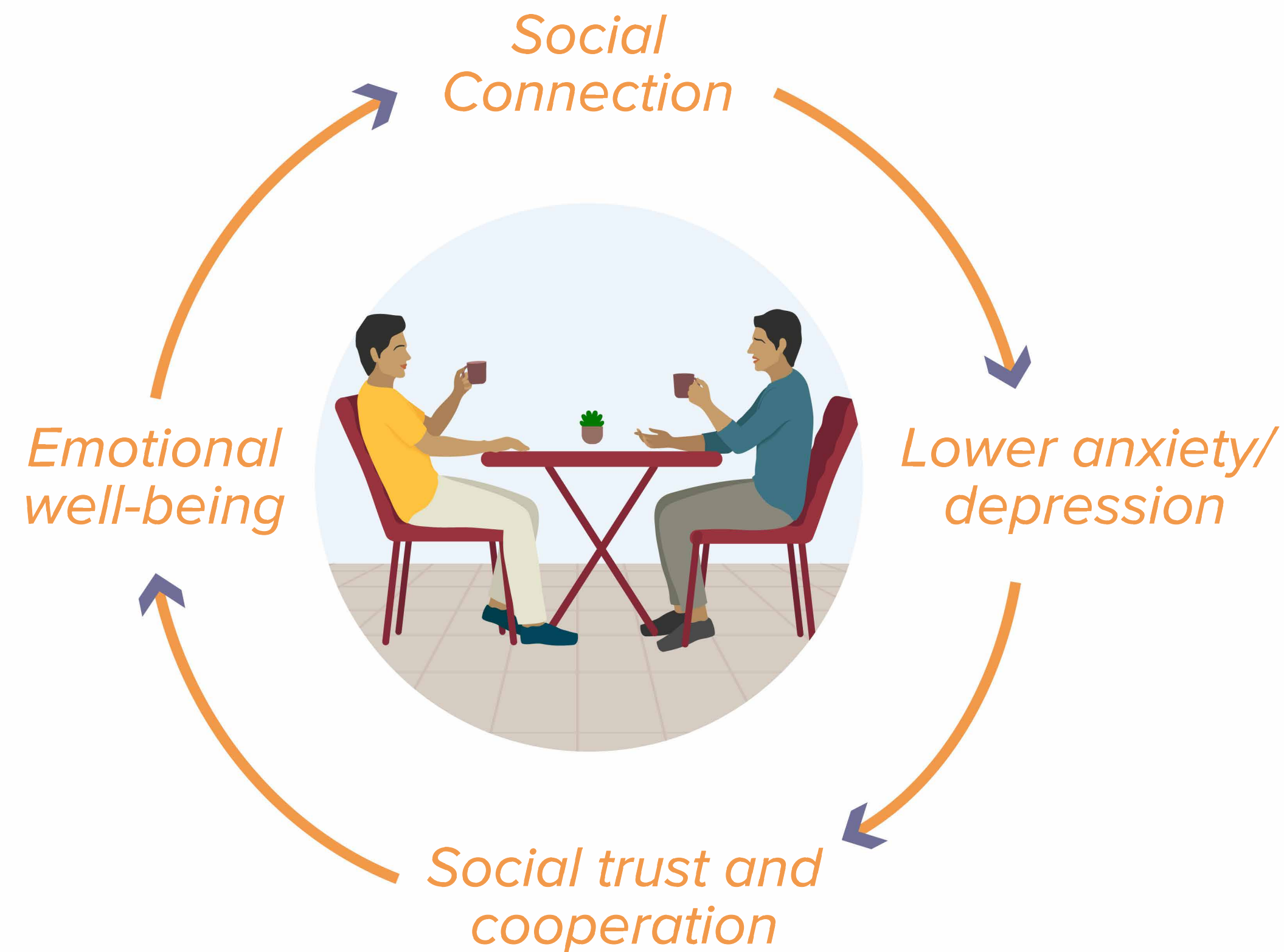
You can visit the Centre for Yoga (NICY) classes created to cope during the COVID-19 Pandemic by NIMHANS:  
<https://nimhansyoga.in/>

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



# 5. Keep Socially Connected

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



Positive Cycle of Social Connectedness



- 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.*

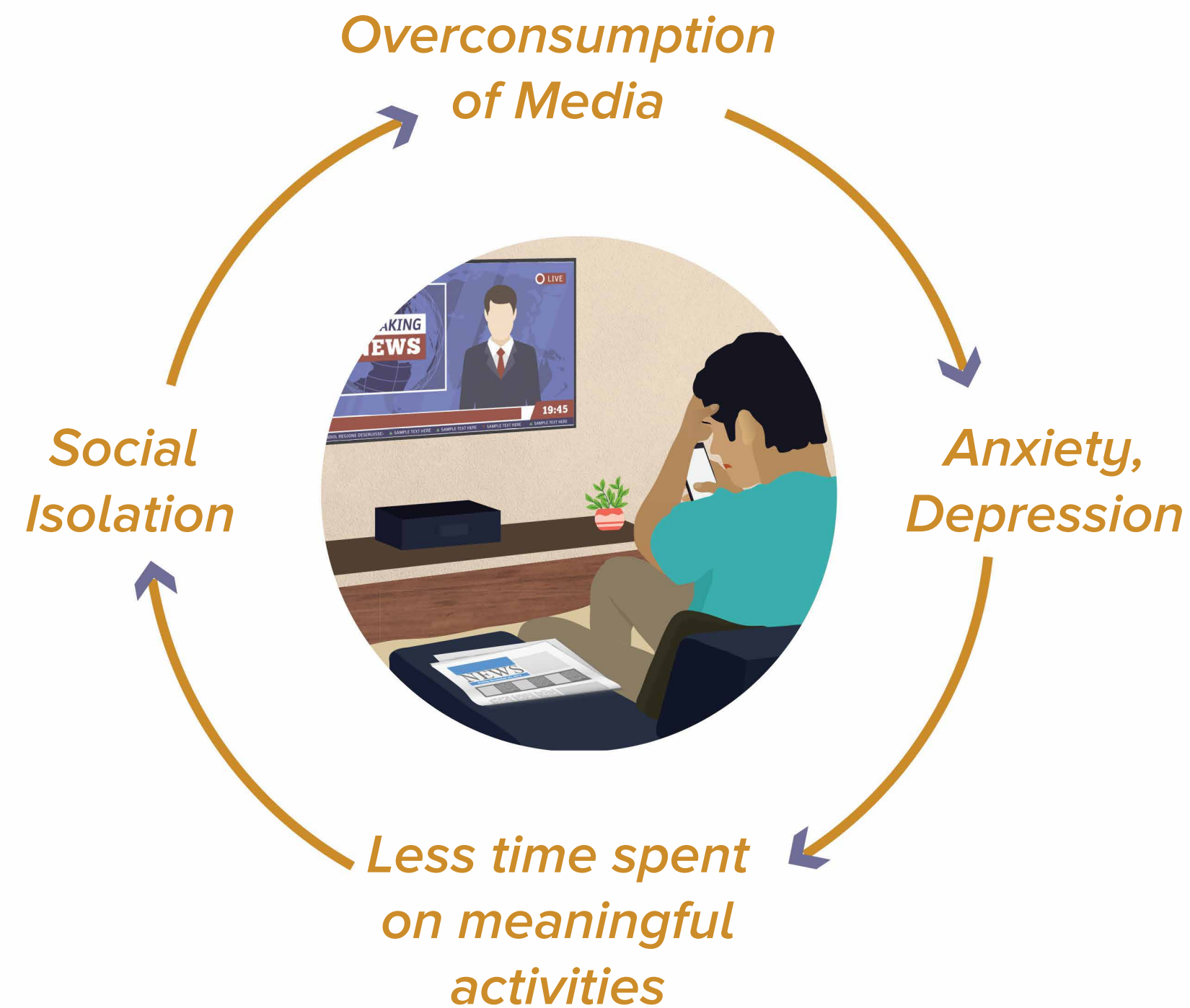
Engage in fun and play based activities. Even small experiences that trigger pleasant emotions promote overall well-being.





# 7. Reduce Screen Time/ Exposure to Media

Excessive use of social media leads to stress, anxiety and depression. Adolescents who spend more time on social media platforms and smartphones, are more likely to report mental health issues.



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

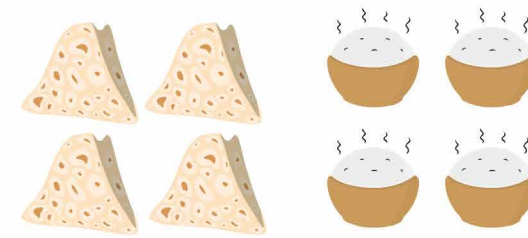
Eat a balanced diet— combination of vegetables, whole grains, protein and fruit—to maintain brain health.



## Fats/ Oils

Total 35g/Day  
Visible fats

## Cereals & Millets



4 Rotis, 4 Cups of Rice



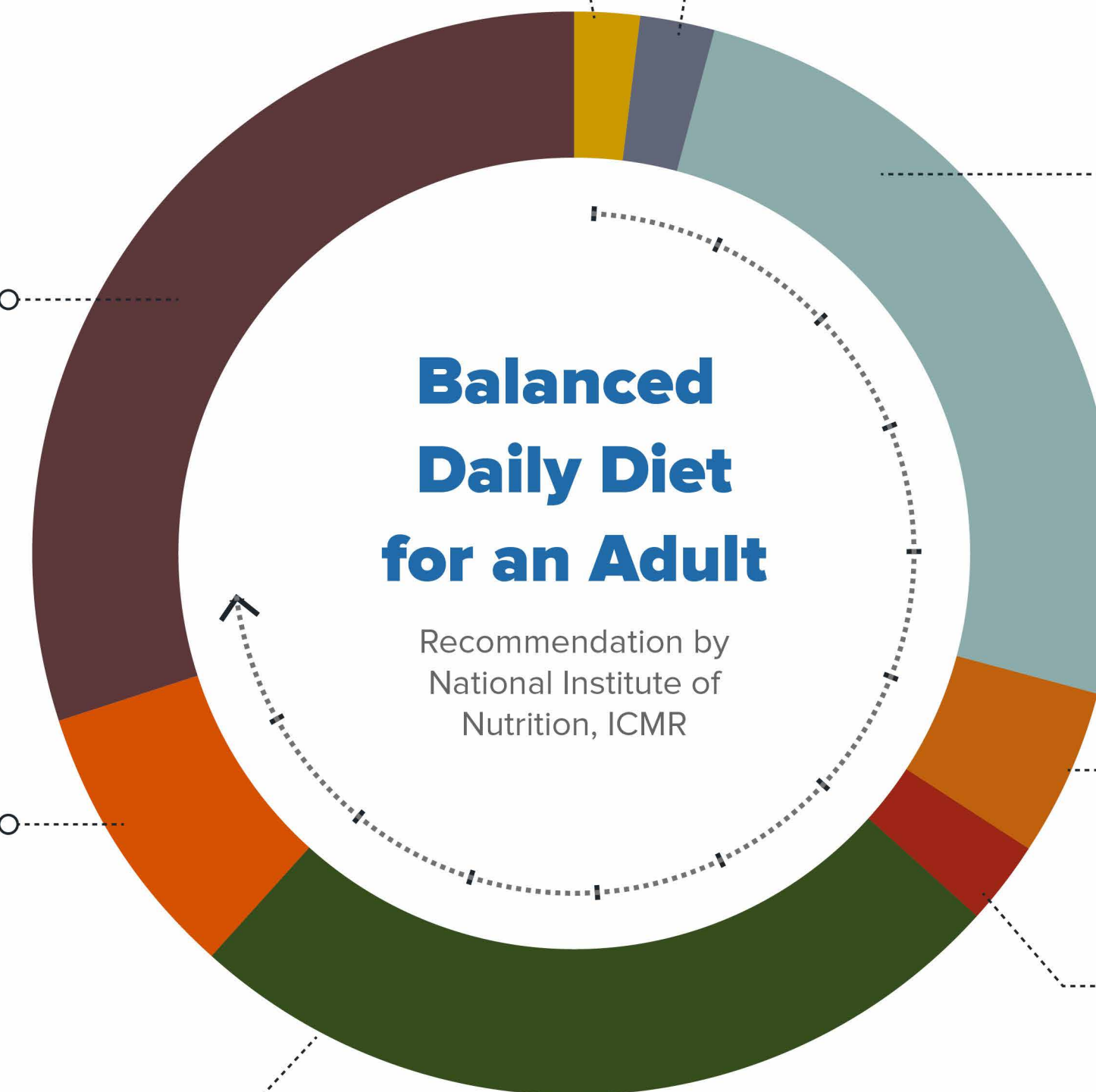
## Fruits

Seasonal 1 Medium

## Vegetables



7½ Cup Veg Curry,  
7-8 Slices of Salad



## Balanced Daily Diet for an Adult

Recommendation by  
National Institute of  
Nutrition, ICMR

1 Cup= 200 ml

• Link to [Dietary guidelines](#) for further details

## Sugars



Total 25g/Day

## Milk & Milk Products



Milk 1½ Cup or  
Direct/ indirect through  
Tea/ Coffee/ Curd

## Veg Protein (Pulses)



1 Cup Dal

## Non-Veg Protein



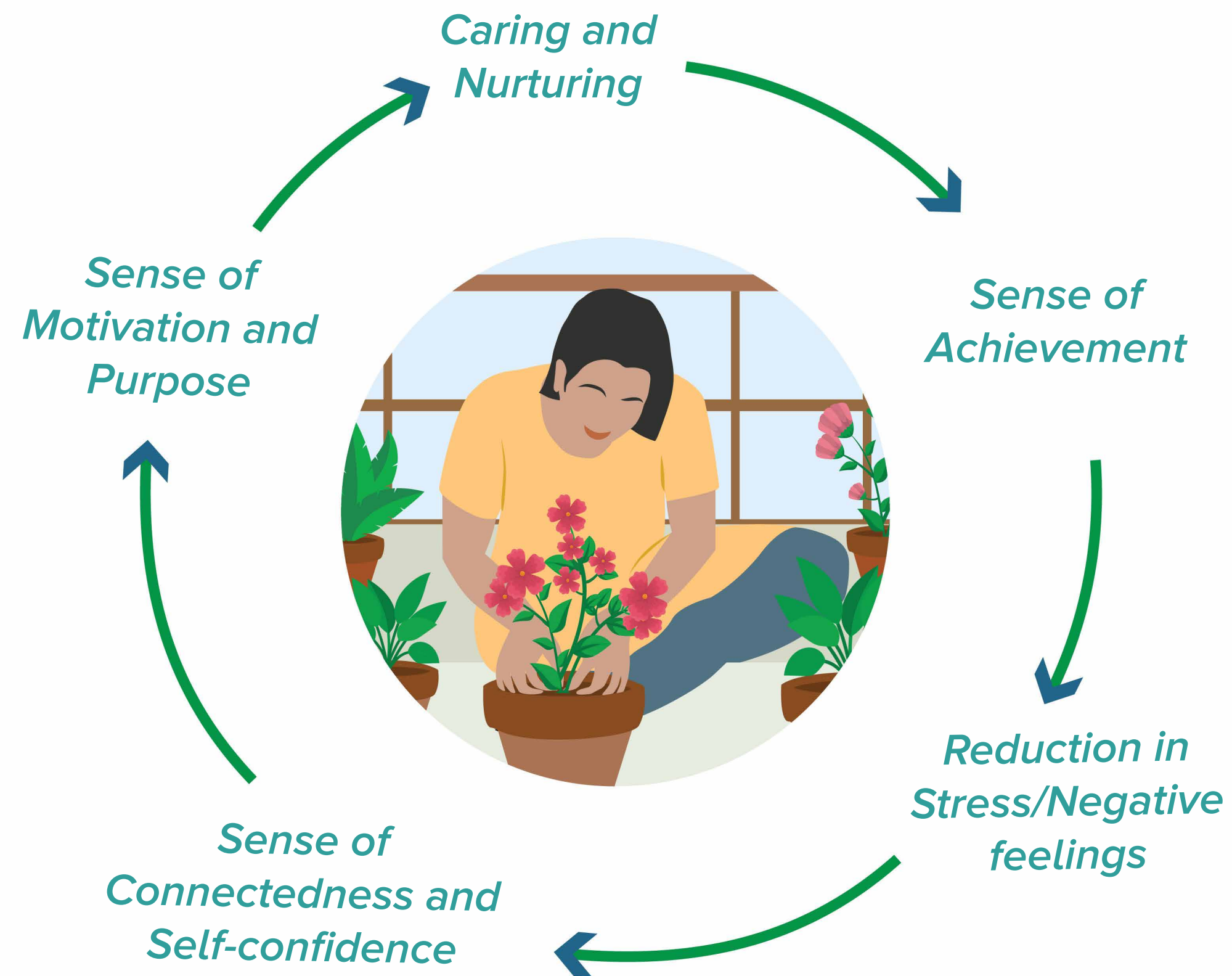
Substitute ½ Cup  
Portion of Pulses with  
Egg/Meat/Chicken/Fish

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



# 9. Connect with Nature

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



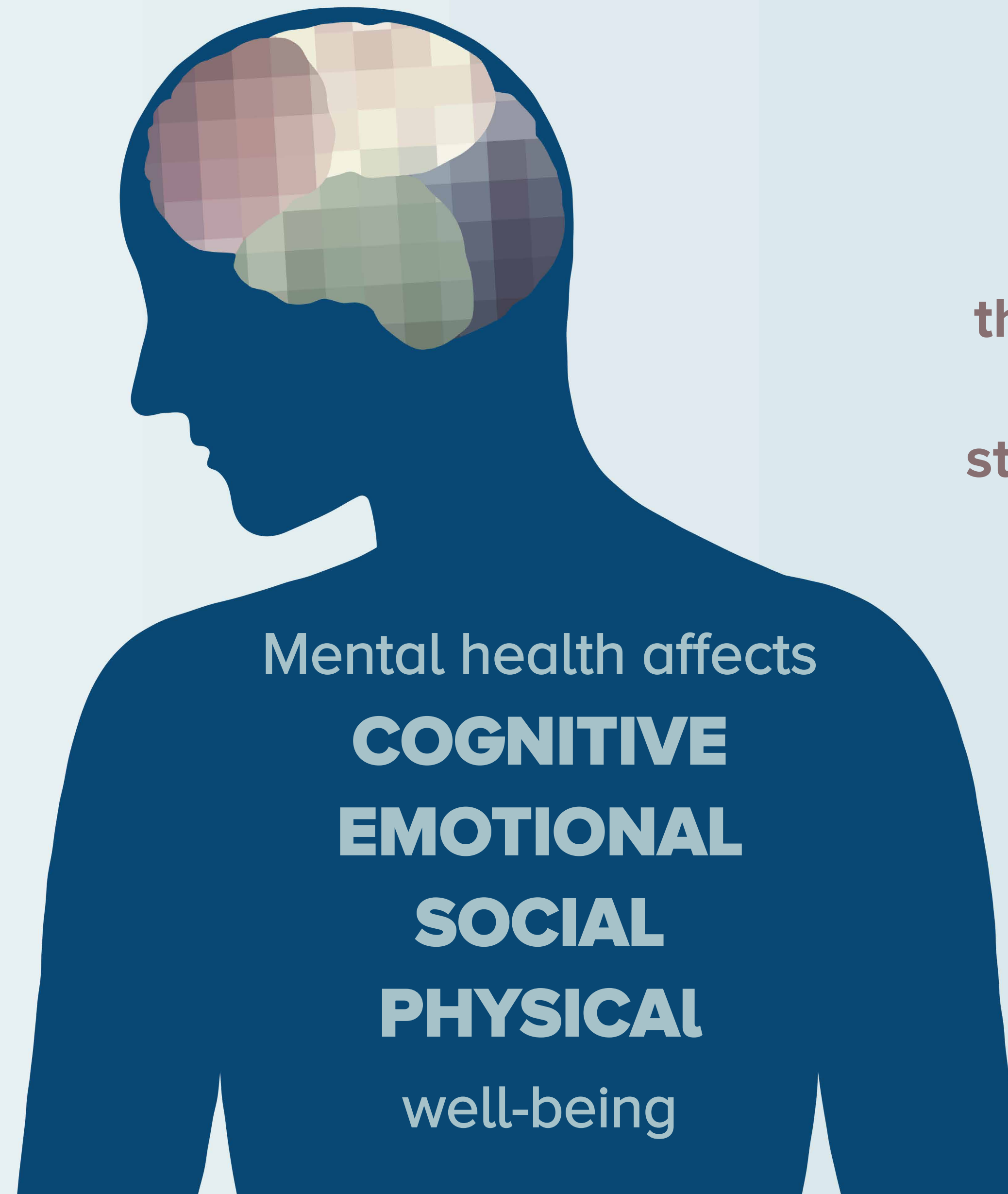
How Growing Plants Creates A Positive Emotional Cycle

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.



**L**ISTEN - Listen to the person closely, with empathy, and without judging

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

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

**E**NHANCE SAFETY - Discuss a plan to protect the person from harm

**S**UPPORT - 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**  
**conscious steps**  
**everyday for**  
**prevention and**  
**treatment.**





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

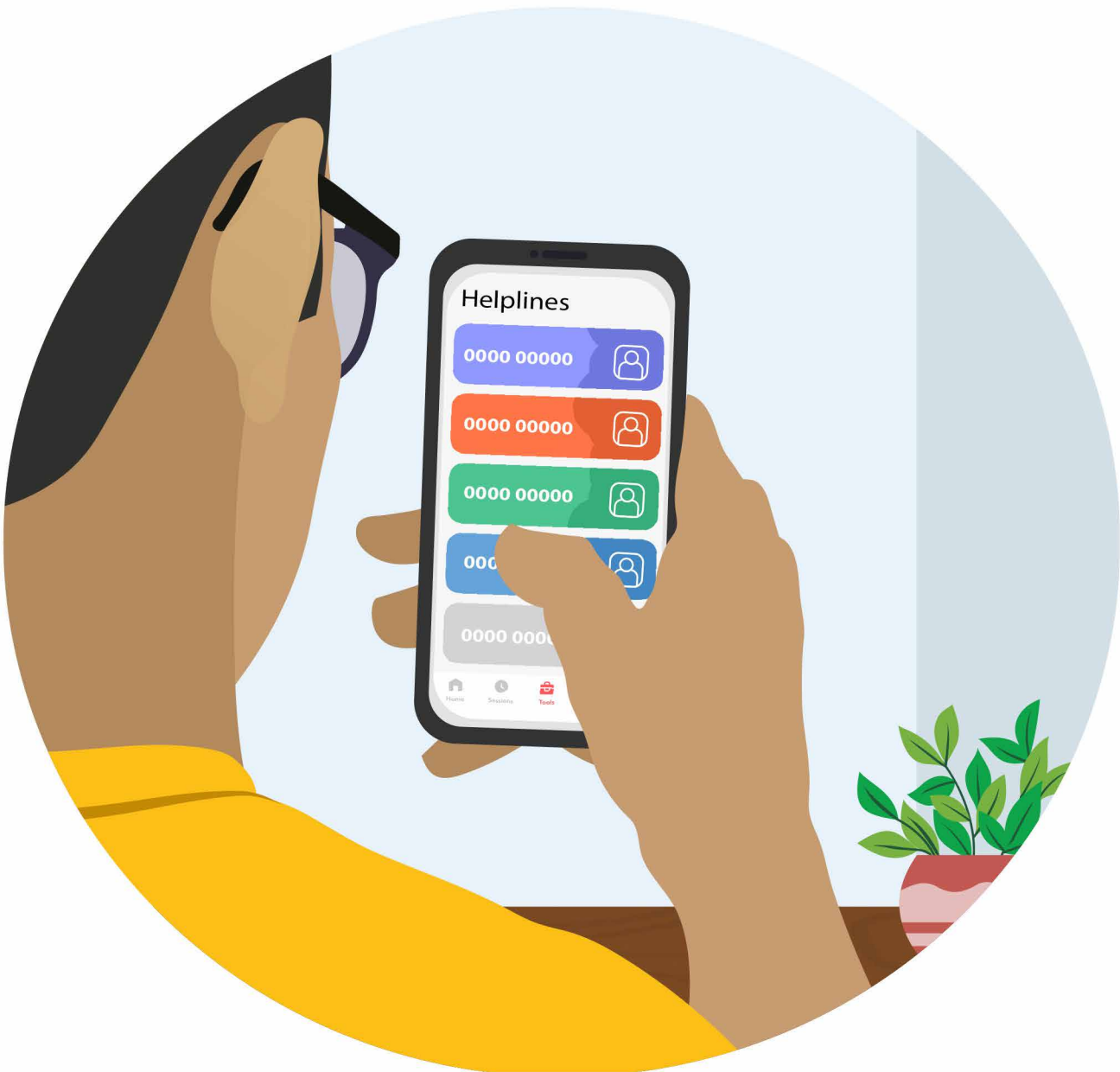
**Make sure you reach out if you  
feel any sign of mental distress!**



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



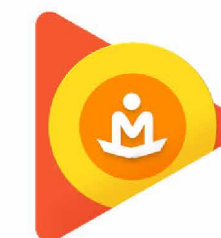
<https://www.healtheminds.com/>



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



<http://epsyclinic.com/>



[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.meditation.elevenminute&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.meditation.elevenminute&hl=en_US)

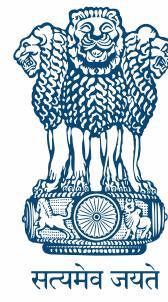


<https://ticktalkto.com/>



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





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**Cope with normal stresses of life**

**Contribute to community**

**Work productively**

**Realize full capabilities**

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