# GOOD HABITS TO MAINTAIN MENTAL HEALTH AND BAD HABITS TO AVOID

**Good habits (not an exhaustive list).**

Good mental health habits are habits and routines you can implement to maintain and improve your mental health. Remember the stress container. Examples include:

- Eat a balanced diet. It is well known our gut bacteria synthesise around 95% of the serotonin the brain uses to regulate mood and activity
- Exercise regularly
- Go outside – sunlight and fresh air are mood enhancers and also help with vitamin D production
- Stay hydrated
- Laugh more – it doesn't really matter what you are laughing at – within reason!
- Sleep well – the brain actually repairs itself during sleep
- Practice meditation
- Maintain good posture – another example of the physical linking with mental
- Take a break from technology. All technology!
- Keep a journal of your thoughts to help identify triggers and behaviour patterns
- Talk about it with people who care for you
- Get a pet. Not suitable for everyone but a possibility for some. Even a goldfish will do!
- Stop multi-tasking – it is exhausting and over-rated
- Consult a doctor and get a professional opinion. This is incredibly important as early intervention can dramatically shorten recovery times and improve outcomes

**Bad habits (not an exhaustive list).**

Bad mental health habits are behaviours that have a negative effect on the way we think or the way we feel about ourselves. Examples include:

- Perfectionism

- Lack of exercise
- Excess and uncontrolled stress
- Anger
- Overuse of a smartphone
- Overuse of social media
- Procrastination, which can lead to 'last minute' behaviour and more stress
- Co-dependency and maintaining toxic relationships
- Poor sleep
- Poor or unbalanced diet
- Overuse of alcohol or other substances
- Buying things you don't need

It stands to reason that it can sometimes be harder to break a bad habit than start or maintain a good one.  Some of the examples I have listed may even seem strange or counterintuitive, such as shopping less.

But knowing what the unhelpful behaviours are and working towards eradicating them will have a beneficial impact on mental health.

For further resources, please go to the Diversity Project website: www.diversityproject.com/mental-health