



NATHALIE LACOMBE

# 10 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH FITNESS WORKBOOK



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We know our services positively impact not only physical, but also mental health. Here are simple ways you can not only confidently support your clients and classes towards positive mental health within what you already offer, but also mindfully coach them to strengthening their resilience and cope with mental health challenges.

Incorporating wellness into your repertoire will support an even-more rewarding a sustainable career!





## 10 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH FITNESS WORKBOOK

1. STOP ASSOCIATING EXERCISE WITH PUNISHMENT

2. STIMULATE THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

3. BOOST SOCIAL HEALTH

4. STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE AND SELF-WORTH

5. BUILD RESILIENCE AND COPING MECHANISMS

6. MANAGE STRESS AND ALLEVIATE ANXIETY

7. IMPROVE COGNITIVE HEALTH

8. IMPROVE SLEEPING HABITS

9. MOVE TOWARDS WELLNESS

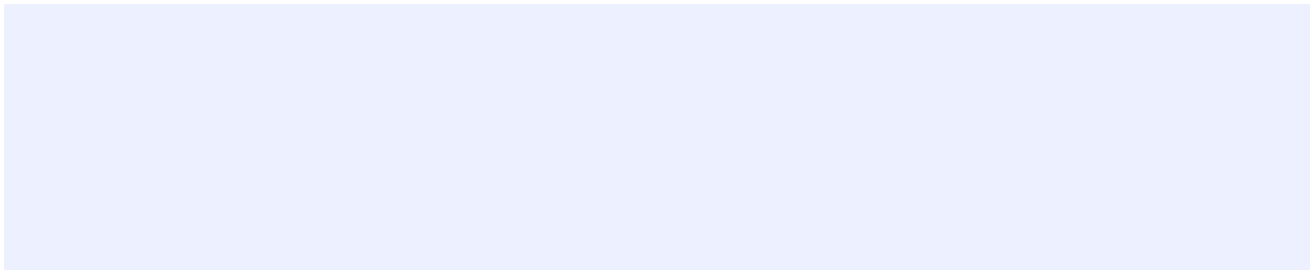
10. BUILD YOUR NETWORK

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# STOP ASSOCIATING EXERCISE WITH PUNISHMENT

Too many people have a horrible relationship with physical activity because it's been used as punishment since childhood. Remember those push-ups or laps we had to run if we did something wrong? Exercising doesn't earn you food, and any form of movement is an exercise in self-care.

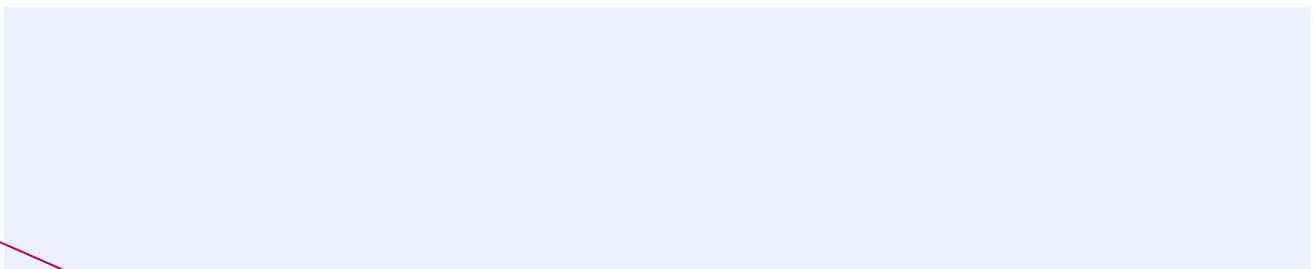
Brainstorm on cues you can use to communicate this mindset:



# STIMULATE THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Help your clients mitigate their anxiety by coaching them away from sympathetic nervous system fight/flight/freeze. Abdominal breathing that stimulates the diaphragm triggers the parasympathetic system associated with rest, digest, and healing.

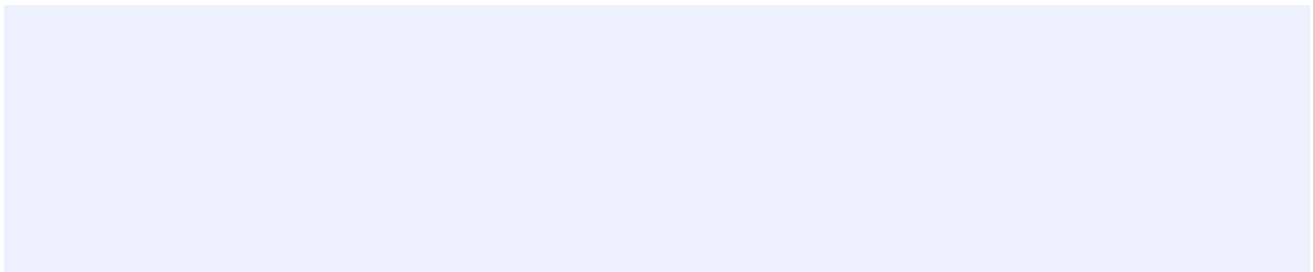
Brainstorm on how you can use this in your sessions:



# BOOST SOCIAL HEALTH

The shared experience of physical activity has a positive impact on feelings of belonging. This common interest is the perfect springboard to building a community amongst those who join your classes and sessions.

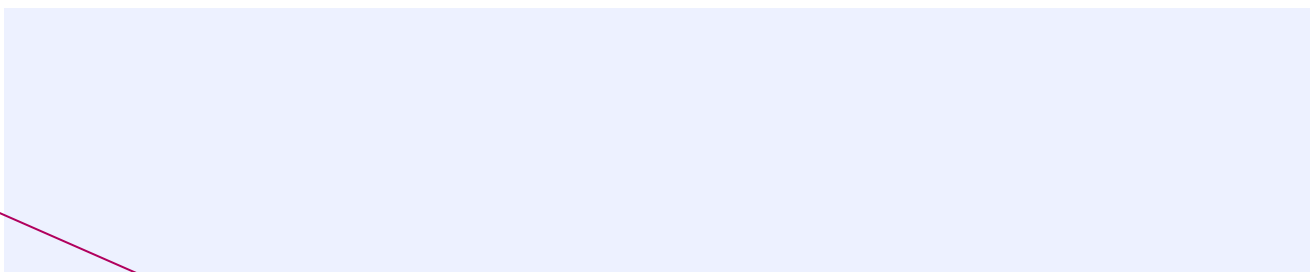
How can you encourage this in your sessions?



# STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE AND SELF-WORTH

Adherence to our programs and services is closely linked to how we make people feel. Getting the other 75% of the population to join in structured physical activity will mean focusing much less on the calories burned or the “beach body” attained, and much more on supporting their feelings of self-worth and confidence thanks to consistently engaging in healthy behaviors.

How can you encourage this in your sessions?

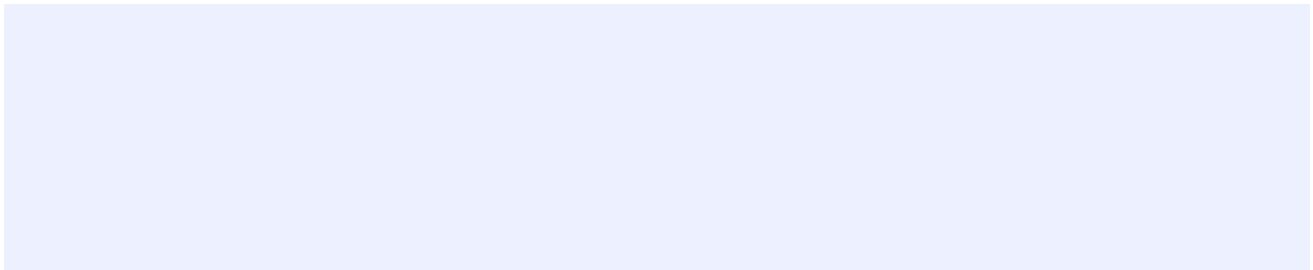




# BUILD RESILIENCE AND COPING MECHANISMS

Exercise alleviates symptoms of depression and helps regulate moods thanks to neural growth, reduced inflammation in the brain, and new activity patterns associated to feelings of calm and well-being.

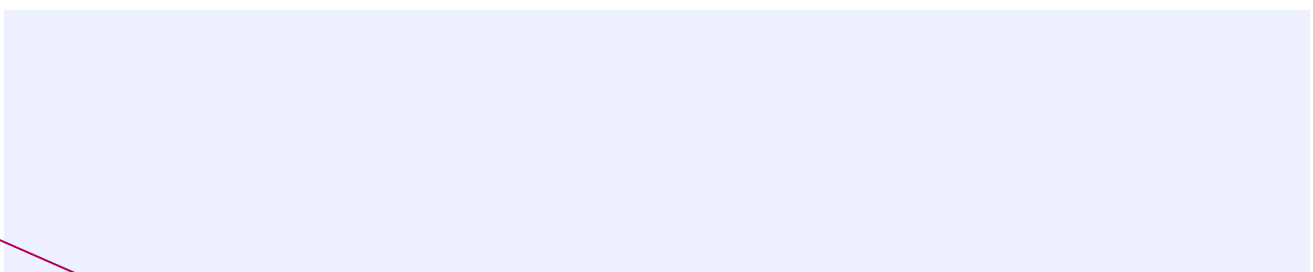
How can you call attention to this fact in your sessions?



# MANAGE STRESS AND ALLEVIATE ANXIETY

The stress hormones cortisol and norepinephrine are reduced by physical activity. Coach your clients to use the concentration required during exercise to tap into their creativity and focus on solutions in daily living.

How can you call attention to this fact in your sessions?



# IMPROVE COGNITIVE HEALTH

Exercise increases the size of the hippocampus. Encourage your clients by letting them know that their improved learning and memory protects them from normal, age-related decline.

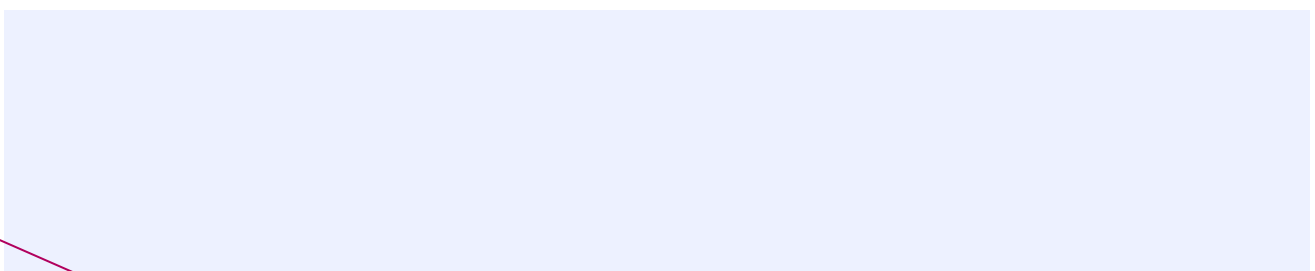
How can you educate your clients on this benefit?



# IMPROVING SLEEPING HABITS

People who are active have better quality of sleep thanks to regulated sleep patterns. Support your clients in having an active lifestyle because better sleep improves mental clarity, decision making, and how we process emotions.

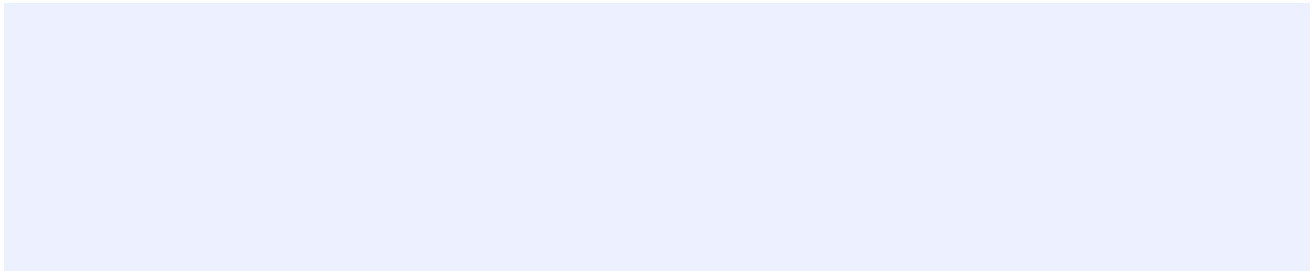
How can you educate your clients on this benefit?



# MOVE TOWARDS WELLNESS

People are seeking services that support not only their physical but also their mental, social, and immune health. Consider professional development that grows your confidence in offering programs and classes focused on mindfulness, family fitness, coaching, nutrition, and other areas of wellness.

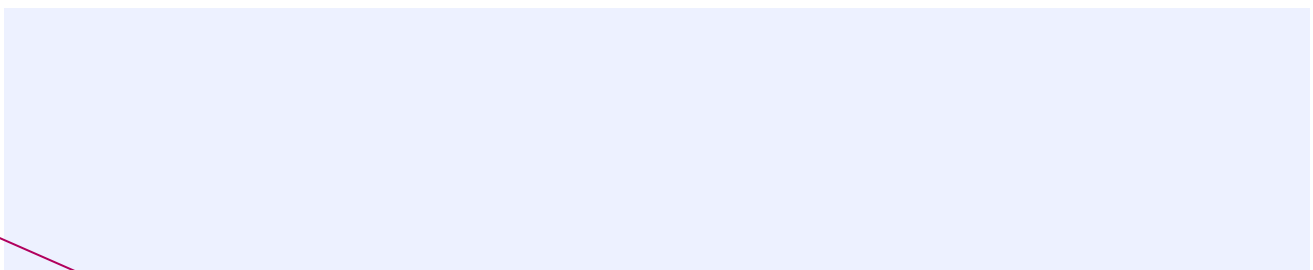
What resources should you investigate in the next year?



# BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Just like you've connected with allied health professionals when you identify a physical health need that goes beyond your wheelhouse, build a network that will do the same for their mental health. Have a list of resources available at the local, provincial/state, and national level.

What resources should you investigate in the next year?







The services you provide are of critical importance to the health of your communities! Bravo for taking some time to mindfully focus a bit less on the bodies we sculpt, and a whole lot more on the lives we save!



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