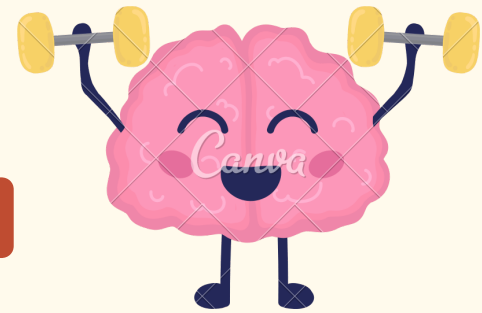# EXERCISE & MENTAL HEALTH

UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTION!

We all know that physical activity is good for keeping our bodies and heart healthy, but did you know that it also helps to keep our brain healthy?

Exercise boosts blood flow all over the body, including the brain! More blood flow to the brain allows brain cells to communicate and connect with each other faster. This has many wonderful effects on our mental health.

Check out some of the positive effects that exercise has on our mental health below!

INCREASED SELF ESTEEM

Studies have found that kids who engage in physical activity have increased self esteem. This means that they feel more confident and have a better overall view of themselves. Increased self esteem helps us to feel happier and cope with challenges we may face in a healthier way.

SOUNDER SLEEP

Exercise makes us tired and kids who exercise regularly fall asleep faster than other kids. They also tend to have longer, more sound sleeps! Sleep is very important for our mental health. When we are well rested, we are able to use good coping skills to deal with big emotions rather than reacting quickly. Sleep also allows us to feel less stressed!
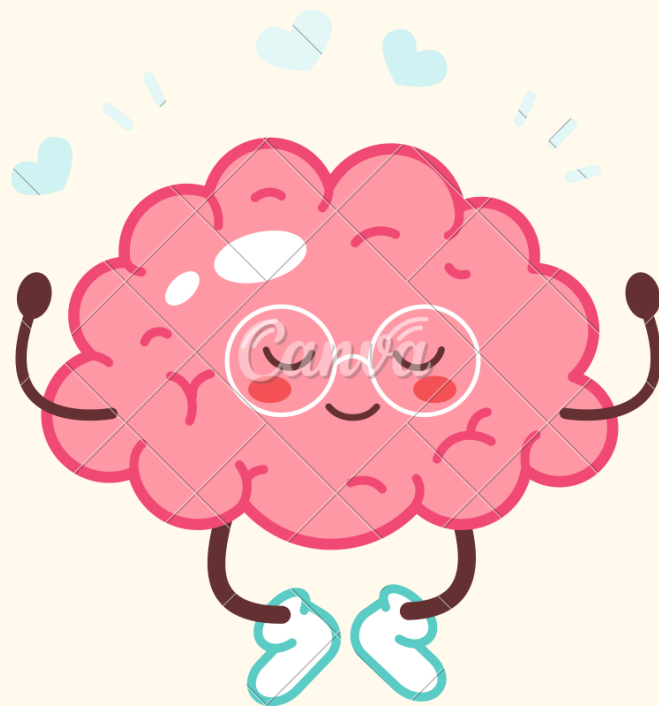
BETTER MOODS

Exercise releases good chemicals, called n**eurotransmitters,** into the brain. These neurotransmitters can help us to feel happier, less stressed and in a better mood overall! Even small amounts of exercise, such as walking your dog or riding your bike to the park can help release these neurotransmitters and increase your mood!