

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



**PROMOTING
MENTAL HEALTH
THROUGH
PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**



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● Physical activity benefits

- Physical activity has significant health benefits for hearts, bodies and minds
- Physical activity contributes to preventing and managing noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes
- Physical activity reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Physical activity enhances thinking, learning, and judgment skills
- Physical activity ensures healthy growth and development in young people
- Physical activity improves overall well-being



Health benefits of physical activity: a systematic review of current systematic reviews

Darren E R Warburton¹, Shannon S D Bredin

Recent findings: Systematic reviews and/or meta-analyses (based largely on epidemiological studies consisting of large cohorts) have demonstrated a dose-response relationship between physical activity and premature mortality and the primary and secondary prevention of several chronic medical conditions. The relationships between physical activity and health outcomes are generally curvilinear such that marked health benefits are observed with relatively minor volumes of physical activity.

Physical
activity



Physical
health



● Why is Physical Activity important for Mental Health?

- Mental health disorders
- 20 year lower life expectancy
- 80% of the gap in life expectancy is attributable to CVD, respiratory diseases, and cancer.
- Physical activity guidelines
- Complimentary behaviour



13 June 2015

Every where I read info about depression and anxiety and also, most of the people I talk to suggest exercise to be extremely helpful. I have trouble doing the smallest things when I am struggling. It seems impossible to contemplate walking to the mail box, let alone 30 minutes of exercise. Why are there not exercise programs set up that don't cost a bunch of \$\$\$ and don't rely on just my own motivation to get to? There are 10 billion things to not like about the gym. Fit people intimidate me. I'd just like to have a few people who get where I'm at to go walking together or maybe a gentle bicycle ride or a hit of tennis just for fun. Maybe some kind of coach who got mental illness who could help us keep going. Does this kind of thing exist? I can imagine that the majority of us on this site would be quite unfit. I have enough motivation to write this post, but will I do any exercise tomorrow?

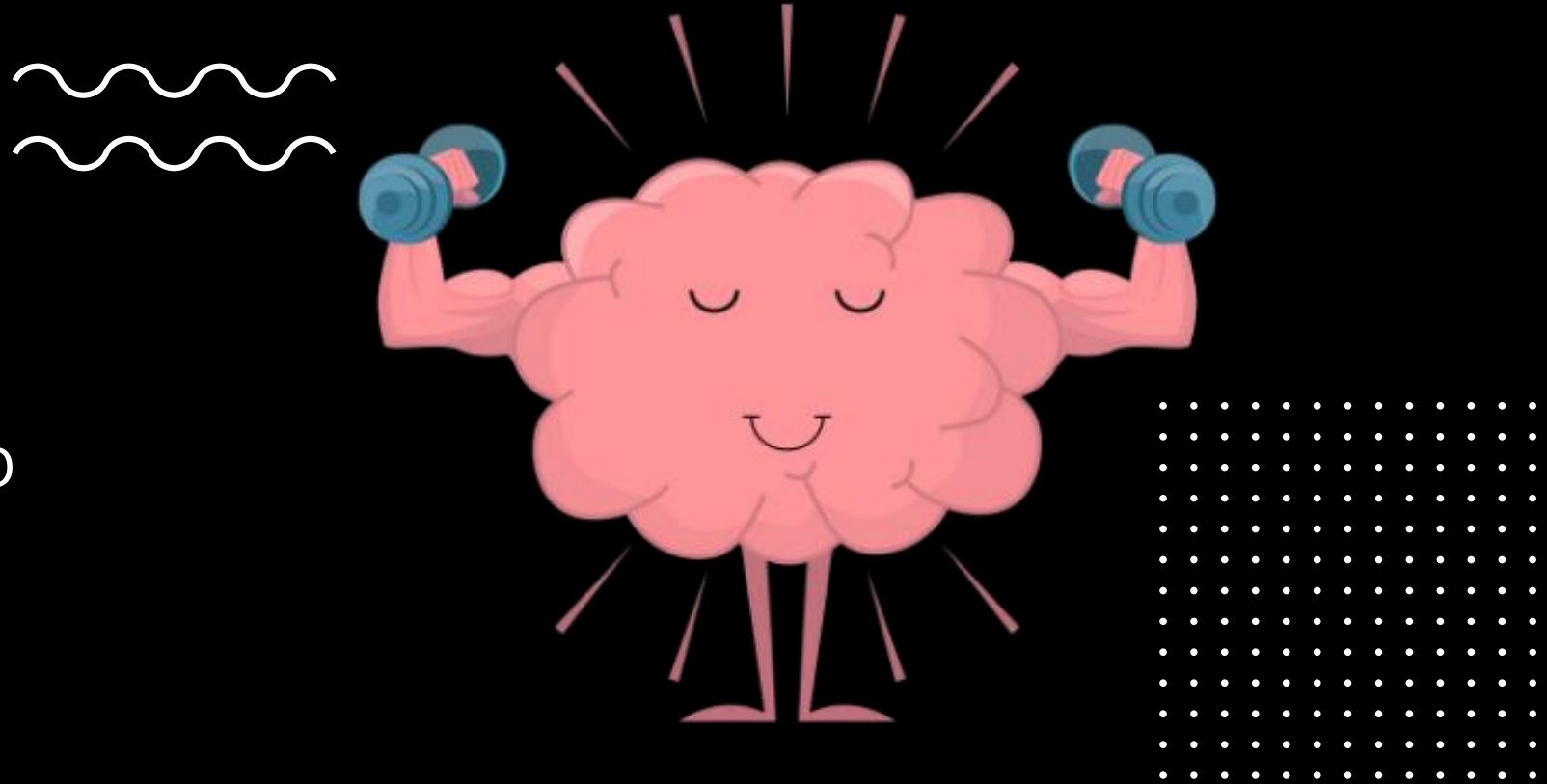


Mark this post as helpful



WHAT DO WE KNOW ? ○

THAT PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY IS GOOD
FOR MENTAL
HEALTH AND
WELLBEING.





WHAT DON'T WE KNOW? ○

WHO?

WHAT?

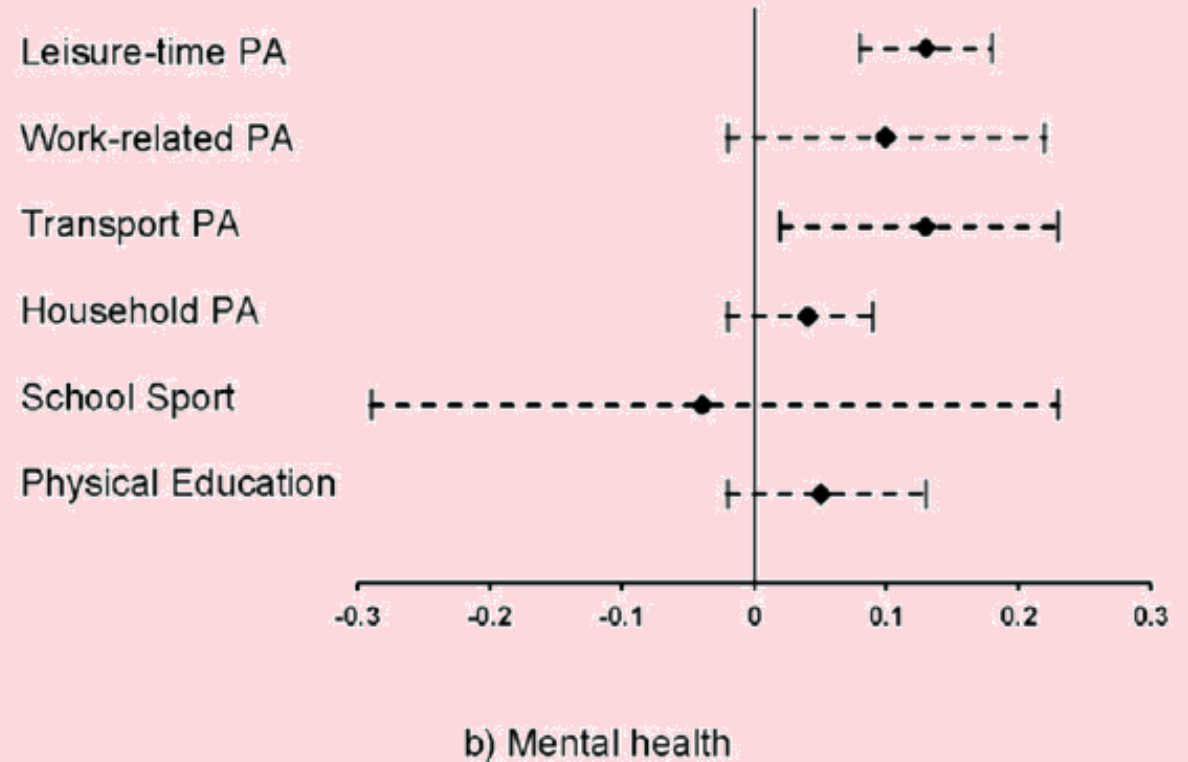
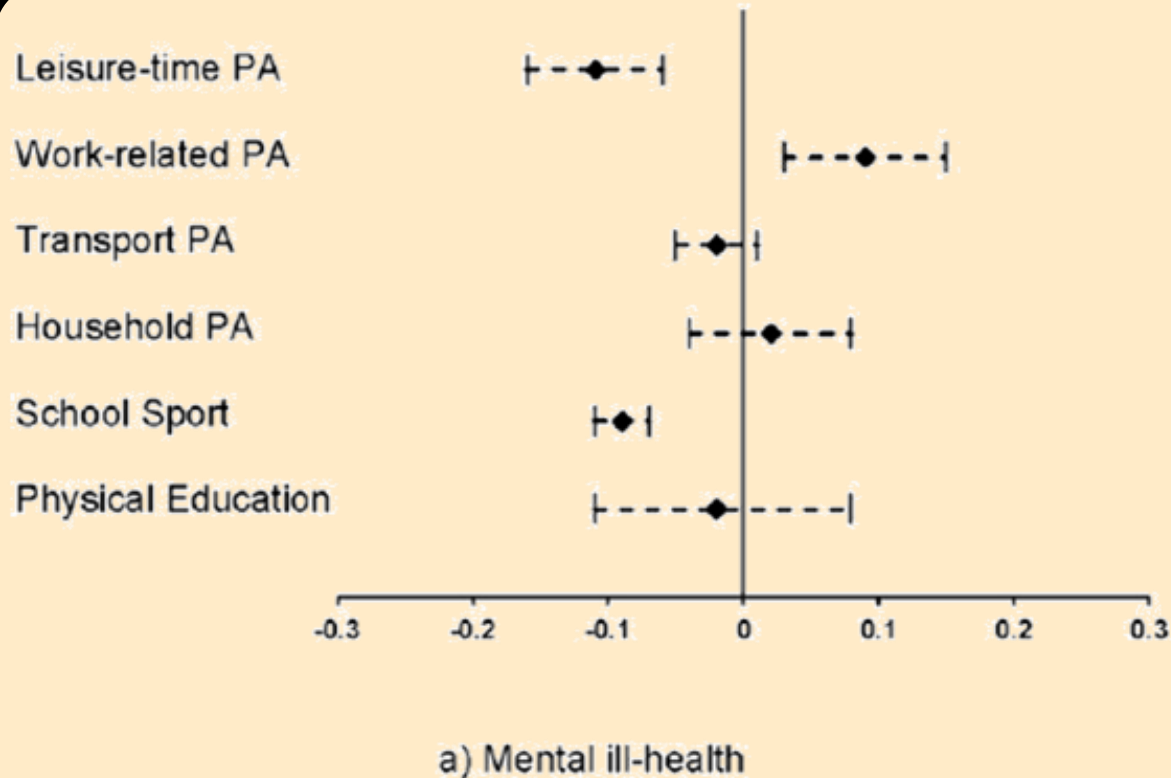
WHERE?

WHEN?

HOW?



Domain-specific Physical Activity

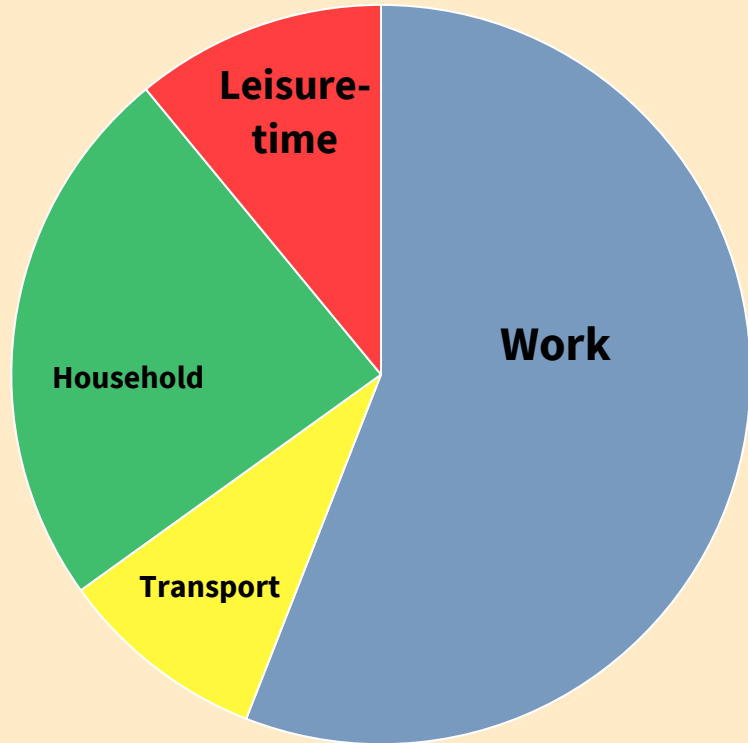


White, R. L., Babic, M. J., Parker, P. D., Lubans, D. R., Astell-Burt, T., & Lonsdale, C. (2017). Domain-specific physical activity and mental health: a meta-analysis. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 52(5), 653-666.

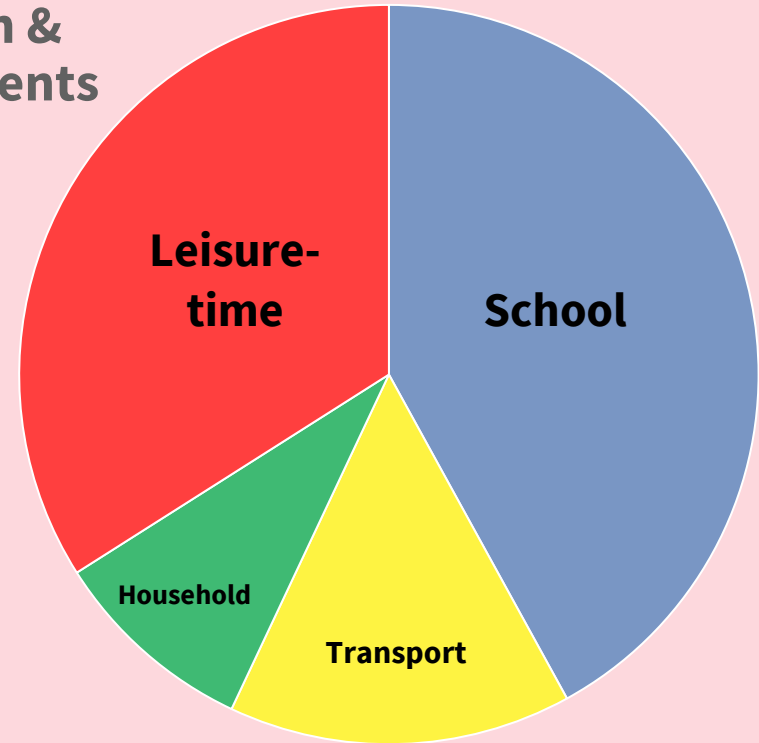


Domain-specific Physical Activity

Adults



Children & Adolescents



White, R. L., Babic, M. J., Parker, P. D., Lubans, D. R., Astell-Burt, T., & Lonsdale, C. (2017). Domain-specific physical activity and mental health: a meta-analysis. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 52(5), 653-666.



● The context

- Outdoors
- Nature
- Social environments
- Group settings / team sports
- Yoga
- High intensity



● The context of physical activity

“any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure”
(Caspersen, 1985)

“Physical activity involves people moving, acting and performing within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships” (Piggins, 2020)



Vella, S. A., Aidman, E., Teychenne, M., Smith, J. J., Swann, C., Rosenbaum, S., ... & Lubans, D. R. (2023). Optimising the effects of physical activity on mental health and wellbeing: a joint consensus statement from sports medicine Australia and the Australian Psychological Society. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*.



Optimising the Power of Physical Activity for Mental Health

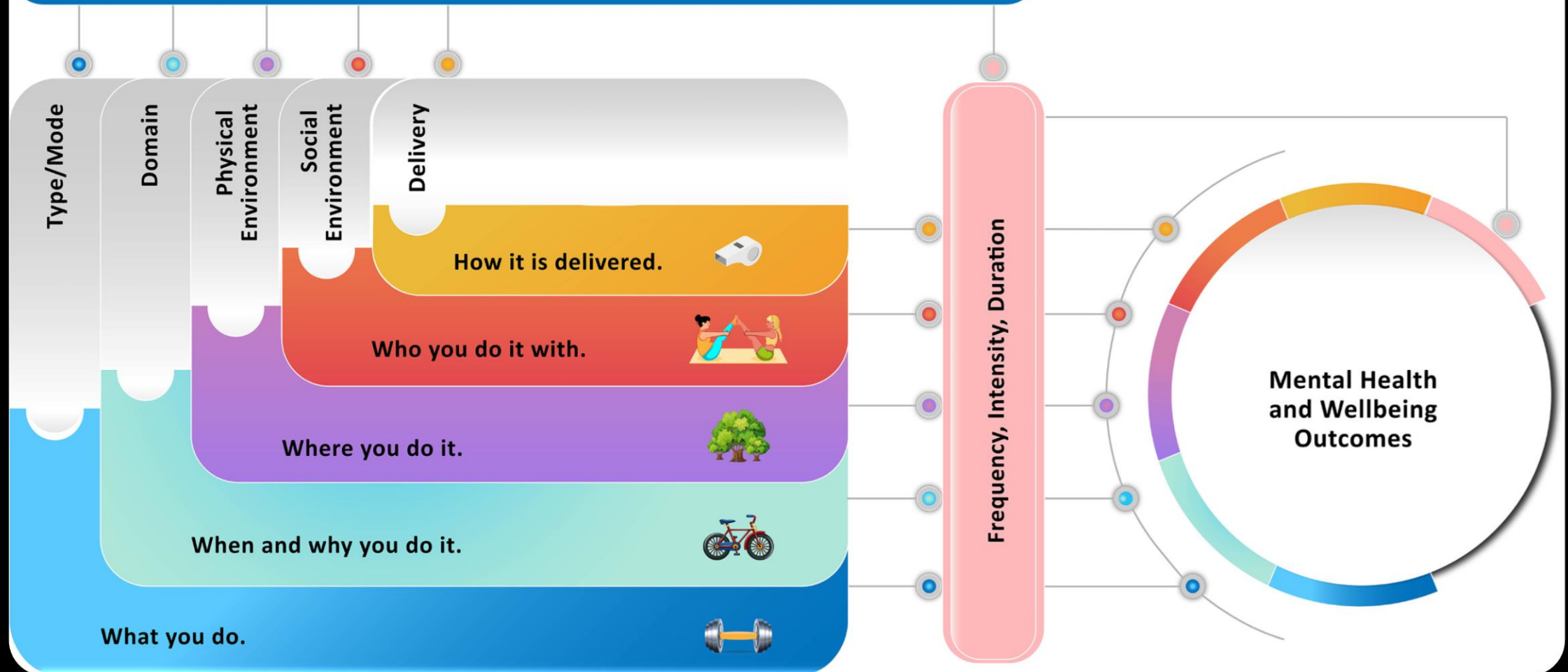
A summary of the joint consensus statement from Sports Medicine Australia and the Australian Psychological Society



Vella, S. A., Aidman, E., Teychenne, M., Smith, J. J., Swann, C., Rosenbaum, S., ... & Lubans, D. R. (2023). Optimising the effects of physical activity on mental health and wellbeing: a joint consensus statement from sports medicine Australia and the Australian Psychological Society. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*.



Personal preferences for physical activity



Vella, S. A., Aidman, E., Teychenne, M., Smith, J. J., Swann, C., Rosenbaum, S., ... & Lubans, D. R. (2023). Optimising the effects of physical activity on mental health and wellbeing: a joint consensus statement from sports medicine Australia and the Australian Psychological Society. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*.



Contextual factor	Recommendation
Type	Activity selection be guided by factors associated with adherence and enjoyment as opposed to any specific type.
Delivery	Facilitators (i.e., teachers, coaches, instructors, practitioners) deliver organised physical activity sessions using an instructional style that satisfies individuals' basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness). We also recommend the use of supervised physical activity sessions for clinical populations, which appear to be more beneficial than unsupervised sessions.
Social environment	Some physical activity be undertaken with others who provide support, facilitate positive interactions, or make people feel valued, so long as it does not undermine a preference to be active alone.
Physical environment	Where possible and appropriate, some physical activity be undertaken outside in pleasant natural environments (e.g., green or blue spaces).
Domain	At least some physical activity be undertaken during leisure-time or via active travel, where possible prioritising activities one enjoys or personally chooses to undertake.



● Why does this matter?

EVERY MOVE COUNTS

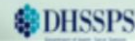
Being active has significant health benefits for hearts, bodies and minds, whether you're walking, wheeling or cycling, dancing, doing sport or playing with your kids.

STEP IT UP!



Physical activity. It all adds up.

www.getalifegetactive.com



On at least
2 days
a week

muscle
strengthening
activities

On at least
3 days
a week

multicomponent
activities for
balance and
strength

MOVE MORE FEEL GOOD

LIVELIGHTER

Move more...



MOVE MORE | SIT LESS!



Teychenne, M., White, R. L., Richards, J., Schuch, F. B., Rosenbaum, S., & Bennie, J. A. (2020). Do we need physical activity guidelines for mental health: What does the evidence tell us?. *Mental health and physical activity*, 18, 100315.

● How does the context of physical activity influence mental health?

- During Covid-Lockdown in 2020
- Open-ended questionnaire
- 234 active adults over 18 years in NSW
- Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021)

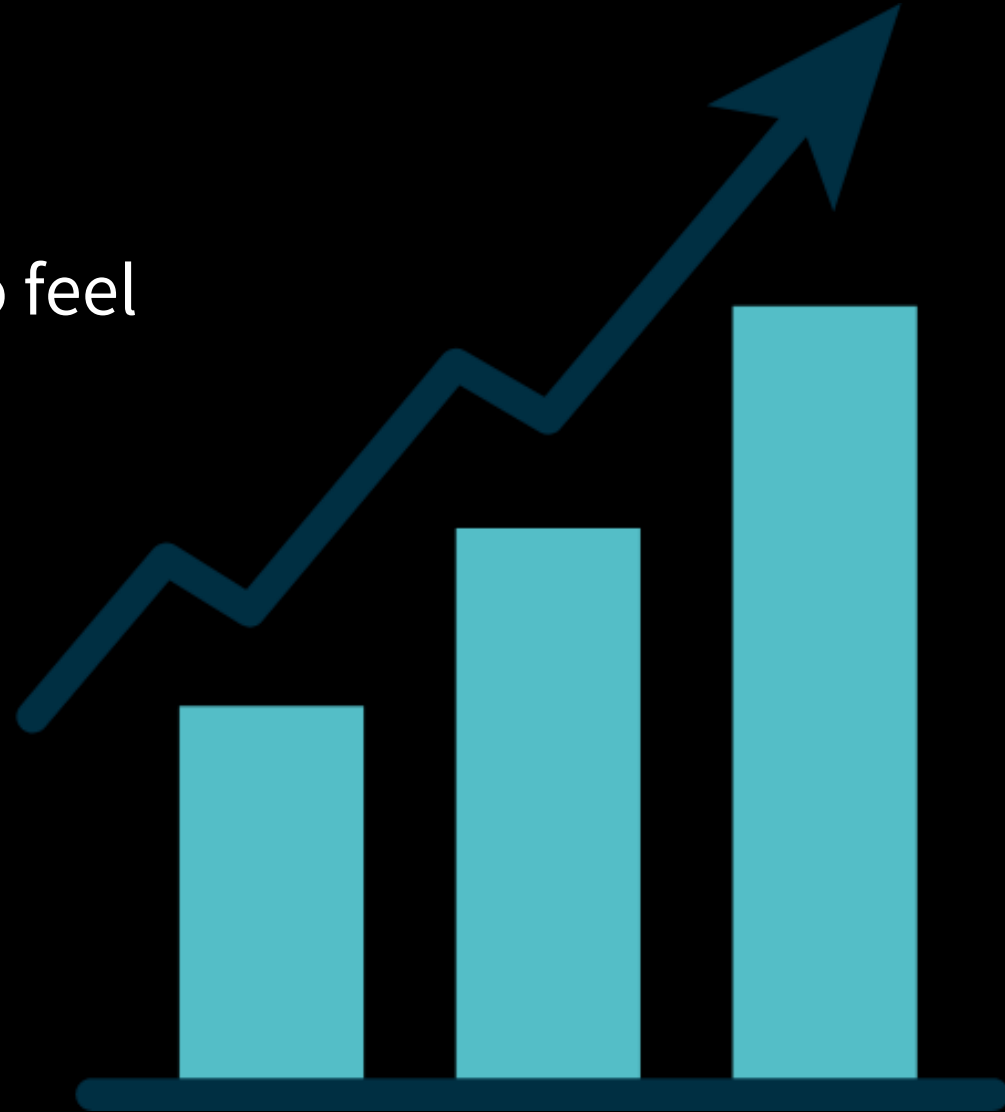


White, R. L., Ryan, D., Young, C., Elston, R., & Rossi, T. (2023). How does the context of physical activity influence perceived mood and wellbeing after exercise?. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 24, 100504.



● Theme 1

Exercise provides opportunities to feel accomplished, leading to positive internal rewards.



White, R. L., Ryan, D., Young, C., Elston, R., & Rossi, T. (2023). How does the context of physical activity influence perceived mood and wellbeing after exercise?. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 24, 100504.



● Theme 2

Exercise alone promotes thinking, while exercise with others generates happiness.

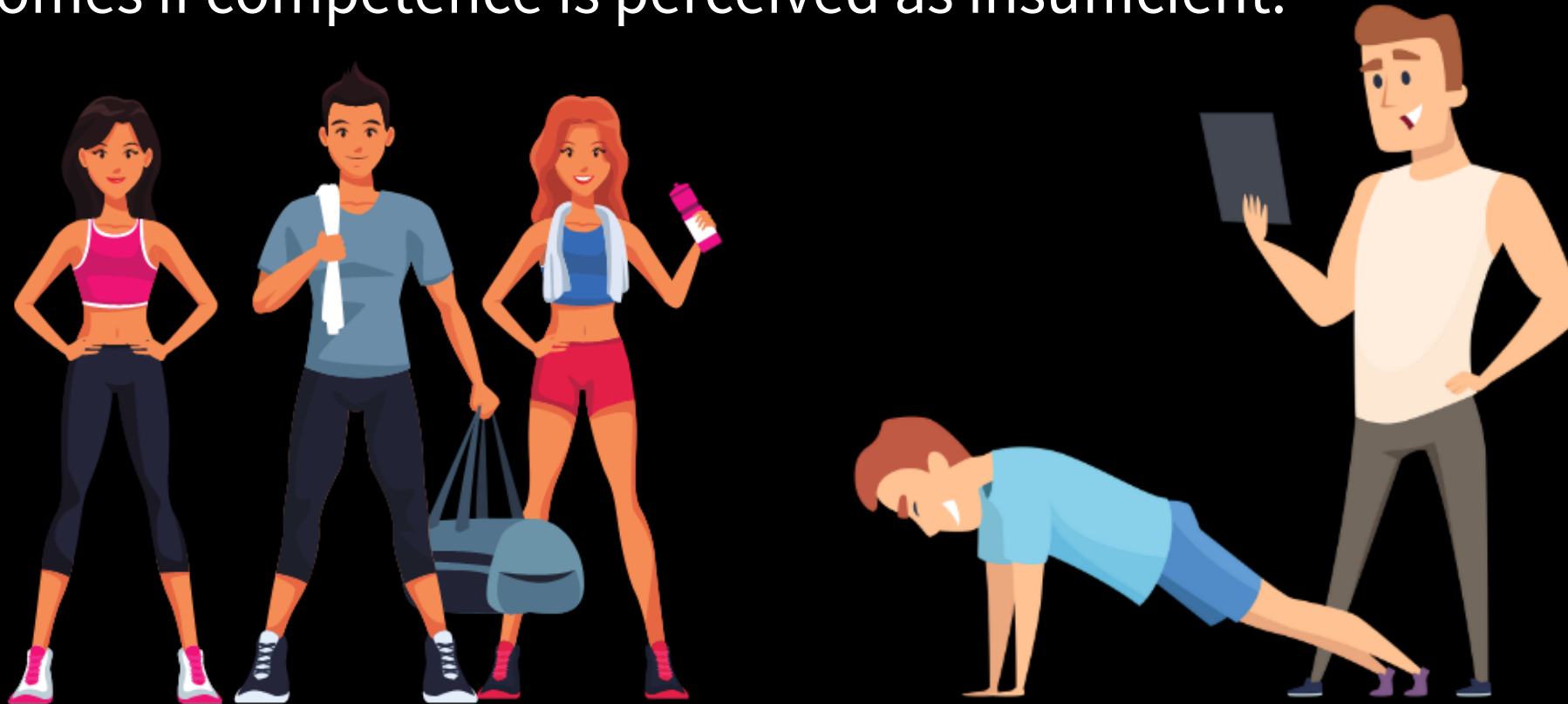


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● Theme 3

Judgement and unrealistic expectations contribute to poorer outcomes if competence is perceived as insufficient.



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● Theme 4

Morning exercise enhances confidence and vitality; afternoon exercise facilitates detachment.



White, R. L., Ryan, D., Young, C., Elston, R., & Rossi, T. (2023). How does the context of physical activity influence perceived mood and wellbeing after exercise?. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 24, 100504.



● Theme 5

The action of walking, and pleasant outdoor environments, provide an escape.

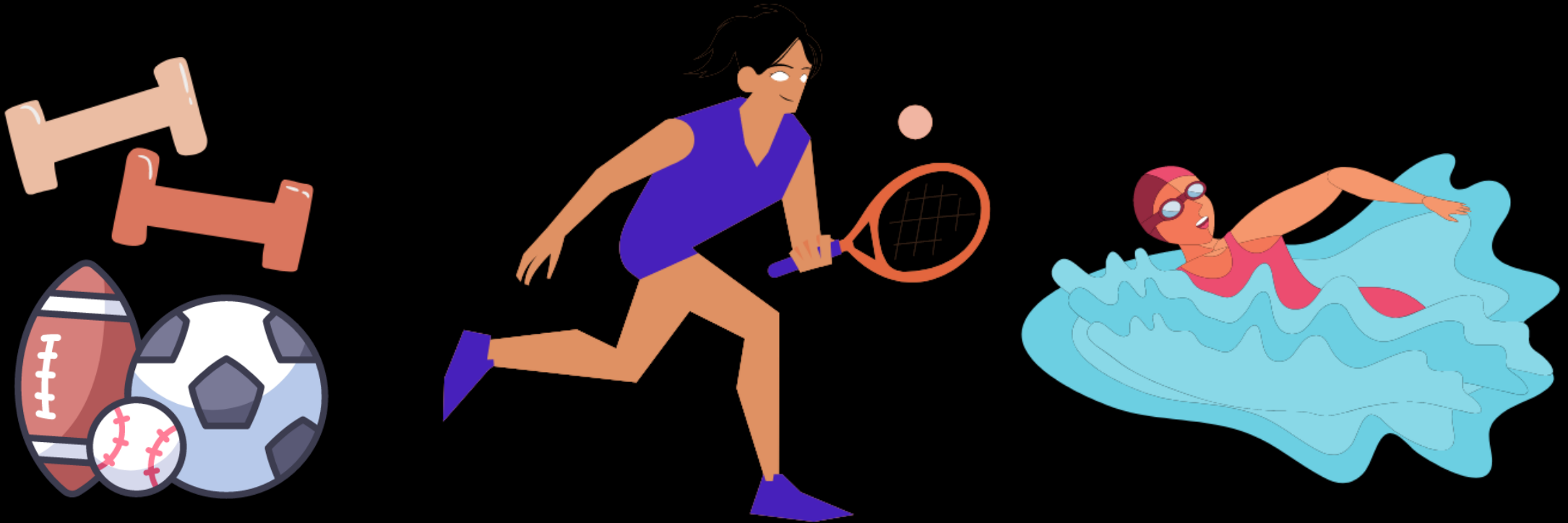


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● Theme 6

Activities with high attentional requirement provide a deeper distraction.

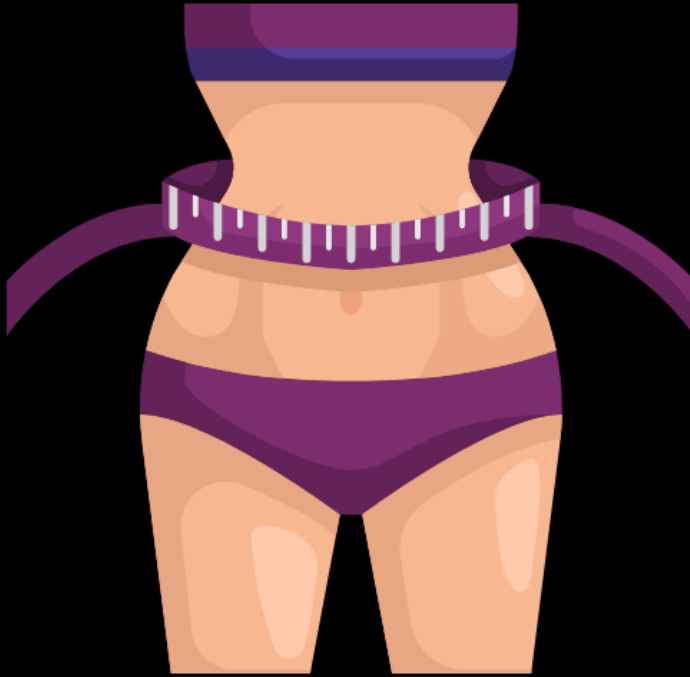


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● Theme 7

The purpose of the activity - enjoyment, self-care, or physical pursuits?

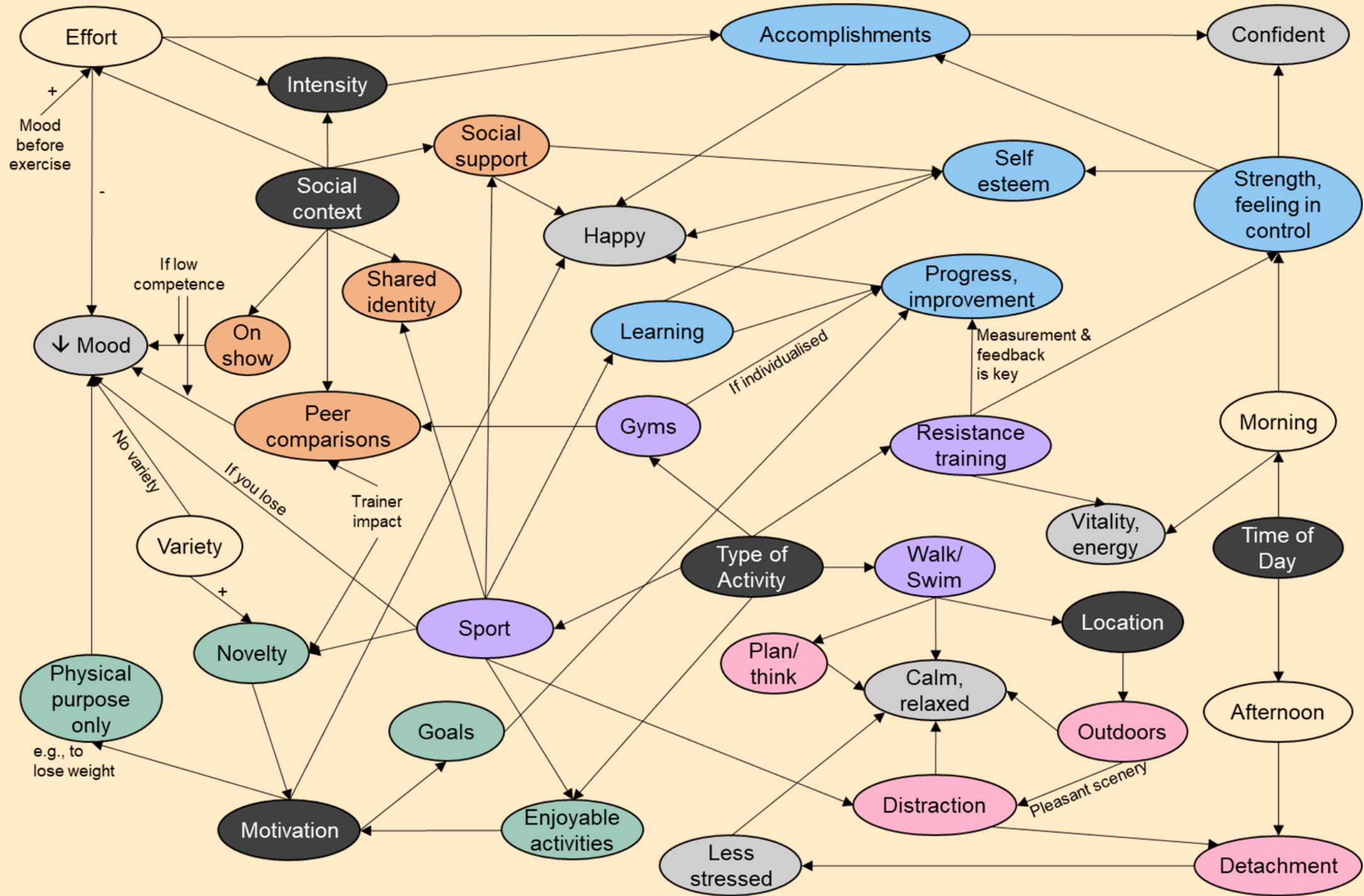


me



White, R. L., Ryan, D., Young, C., Elston, R., & Rossi, T. (2023). How does the context of physical activity influence perceived mood and wellbeing after exercise?. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 24, 100504.







USING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO IMPROVE MOOD AND WELLBEING: KEY TIPS

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES



Physical activity provides people with opportunities to achieve, to improve at things, and to feel accomplished, and this usually leads to happiness, pride, and confidence.

RESISTANCE TRAINING

123

Resistance based activities are particularly great for this because you can experience small improvements consistently

Try setting small goals

Acknowledge when you achieve your ideal number of repetitions

LEARNING



Activities that include learning new skills are ideal to promote accomplishment and confidence

Sports are a great option

So are group classes where you do a variety of activities

OTHER PEOPLE

Exercising with a friend, or in a group context where the other people are supportive, means people can share your accomplishments with you

This can heighten confidence and happiness

WALKING & RUNNING



Walking, running, and cycling (depending on your preference) can create a sense of escape and help give you a break from stress

This is particularly true if you change the scenery to detach yourself from your usual environment

DISTRACTION

An activity that cognitively engages you is best if you feel you need a distraction

Try a new group class for variety... or try a sport.

Something new will require more attention.



WHERE AND WITH WHO?

Exercise alone gives people time to think, plan, and feel calmer, while exercise with others generates laughter, enjoyment, and a sense of community



FRIENDS AND SUPPORTIVE OTHERS

Bringing a friend or important person along can boost the enjoyment you get from an activity and increase its capacity to improve your mood

If you need time to plan and think so you feel calmer, activities that have a low cognitive load are great as they get you moving but also give you clear time alone to think and resolve issues in your mind



A walk with a friend is a great way to debrief, talk, and relieve stress

TIME TO THINK

Walking and swimming are great for thinking



SCENERY

If you don't have someone to walk with, but you don't want to think or ruminate and are looking for a distraction, try walking outdoors where the scenery changes



YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

or try walking in your area to say hi to people



Sometimes people can feel uncomfortable or embarrassed in group exercise settings if they feel they aren't as experienced or as good as other people, or if other people watch them

I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE WATCHING ME

If this happens, online videos from home are a great way to build skill and familiarity. Then try a few different places, classes, or instructors until you find a group that is supportive



WHEN SHOULD I BE ACTIVE?

Morning exercise provides a sense of routine and accomplishment which carries a more confident and energetic person throughout the day; afternoon exercise facilitates detachment from work



MORNING

If you feel a peak in energy or confidence might be helpful, then being active in the morning might be the best option.

If you tend to like structure or experience symptoms of anxiety, morning exercise can also create a routine and help reduce feelings of chaos



EVENING

If you tend to dwell on work problems or find it difficult to enjoy your evenings, exercise after work might be a better option as it can help you to psychologically detach yourself from work

In this case, an activity that cognitively engages you (e.g., there is something clear to focus on and your mind can't wander) is best

Sports are great for this



WHY AM I DOING IT?

ENJOYMENT

If it's something you enjoy doing, it will likely be good for improving mood regardless of the type, intensity, location, or who you're with

FOR PHYSICAL REASONS



Sometimes if people are doing an activity purely to lose weight or to avoid putting weight on for example (only a physical goal), they don't experience improvements in mood



If you can pick even one activity per week, that is your time out (from family, from work), and is purely time for you, this is usually good for mood and wellbeing, because there is no pressure to do a certain amount of exercise, but rather the activity becomes 'me time'

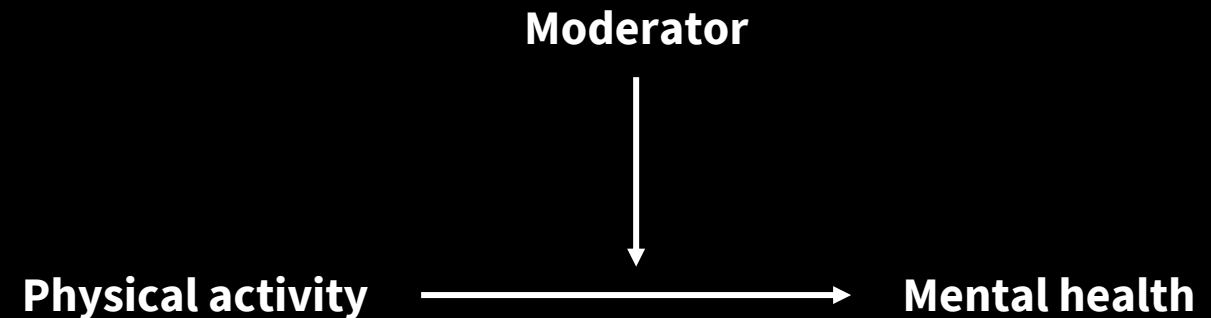
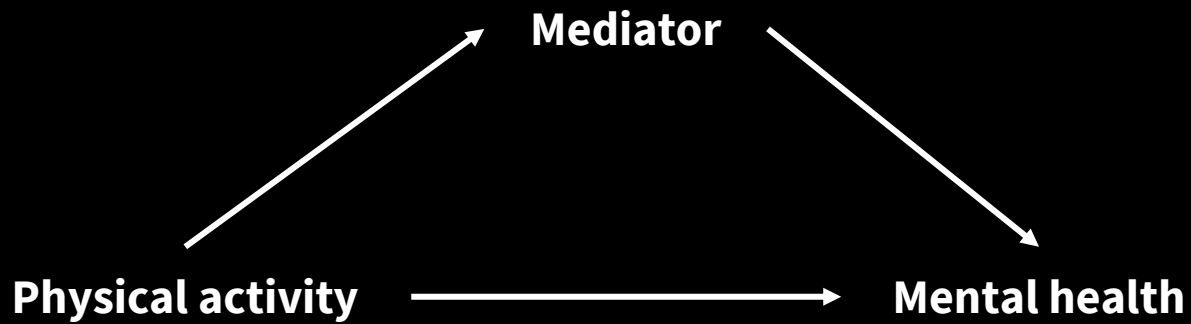
FOR ME

Scan to view the full research findings here.



- How do we optimise effects?

Systematic review of moderators and mediators



● Mediators

- depressive symptoms
- affect
- wellbeing
- self-esteem
- self-efficacy
- physical self-worth
- body image esteem
- physical/sports competence
- Mastery
- sense of control
- emotional regulation
- loneliness
- resilience
- social support
- sense of belonging

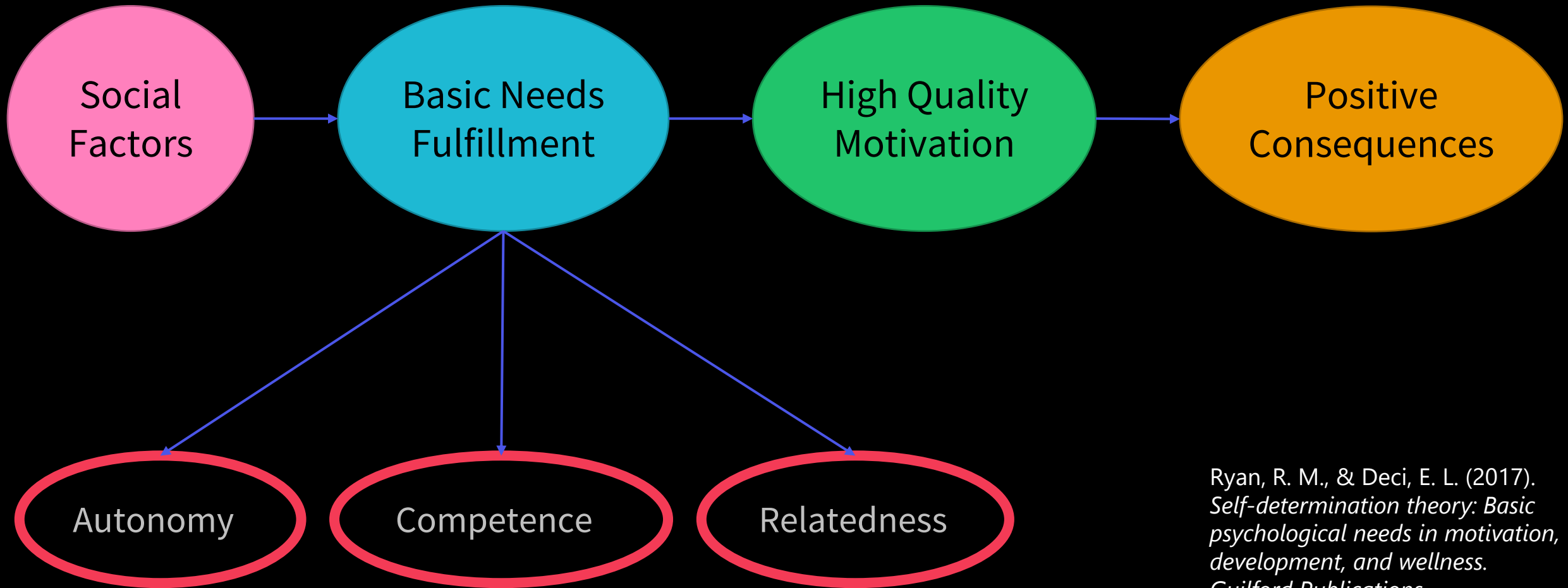


● Moderators

- Social support was the only moderator

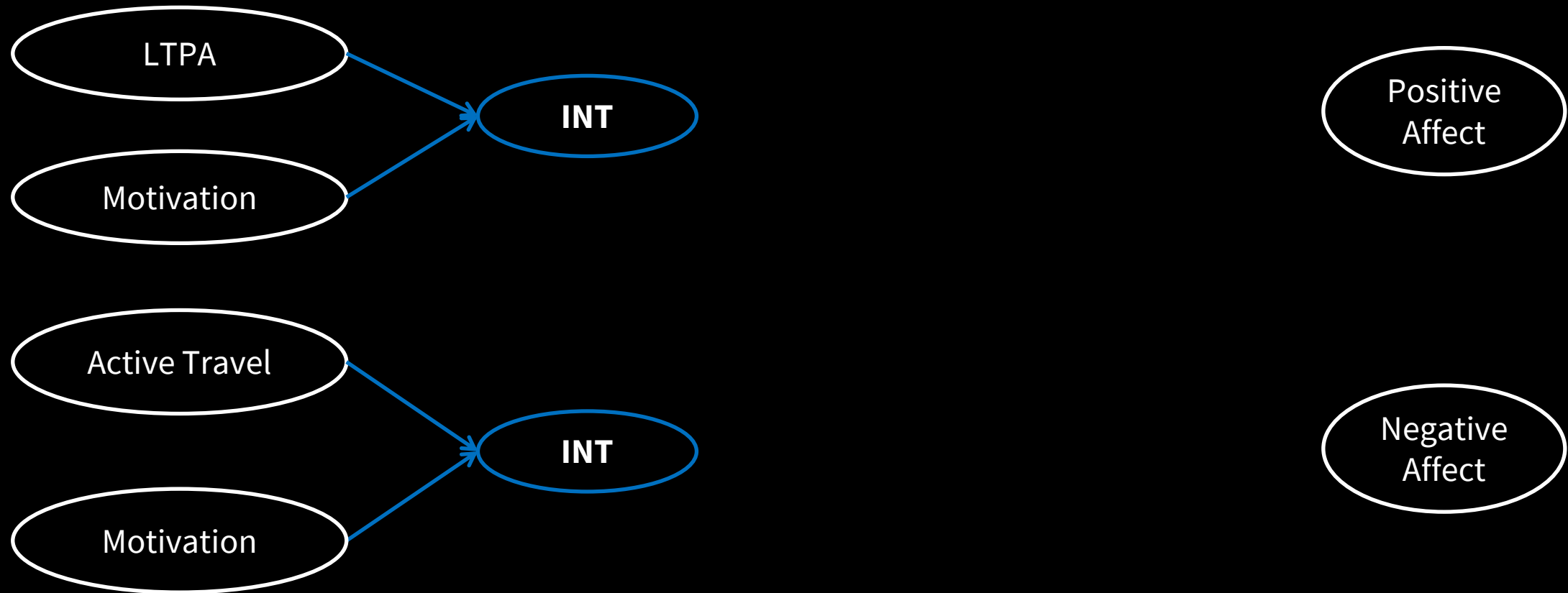


● Developing intrinsic motivation



Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Publications.

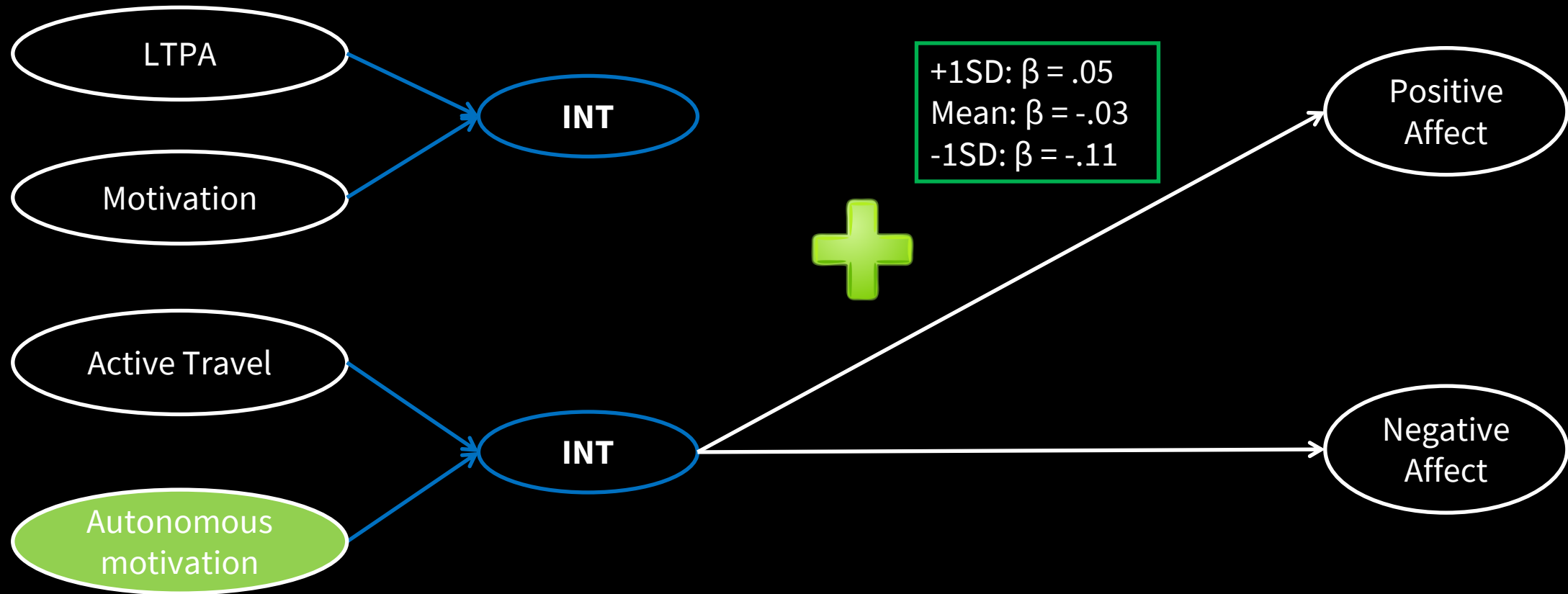
● Motivation: Why are we active?



White, R. L., Parker, P. D., Lubans, D. R., MacMillan, F., Olson, R., Astell-Burt, T., & Lonsdale, C. (2018). Domain-specific physical activity and affective wellbeing among adolescents: An observational study of the moderating roles of autonomous and controlled motivation. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 15, 1-13.



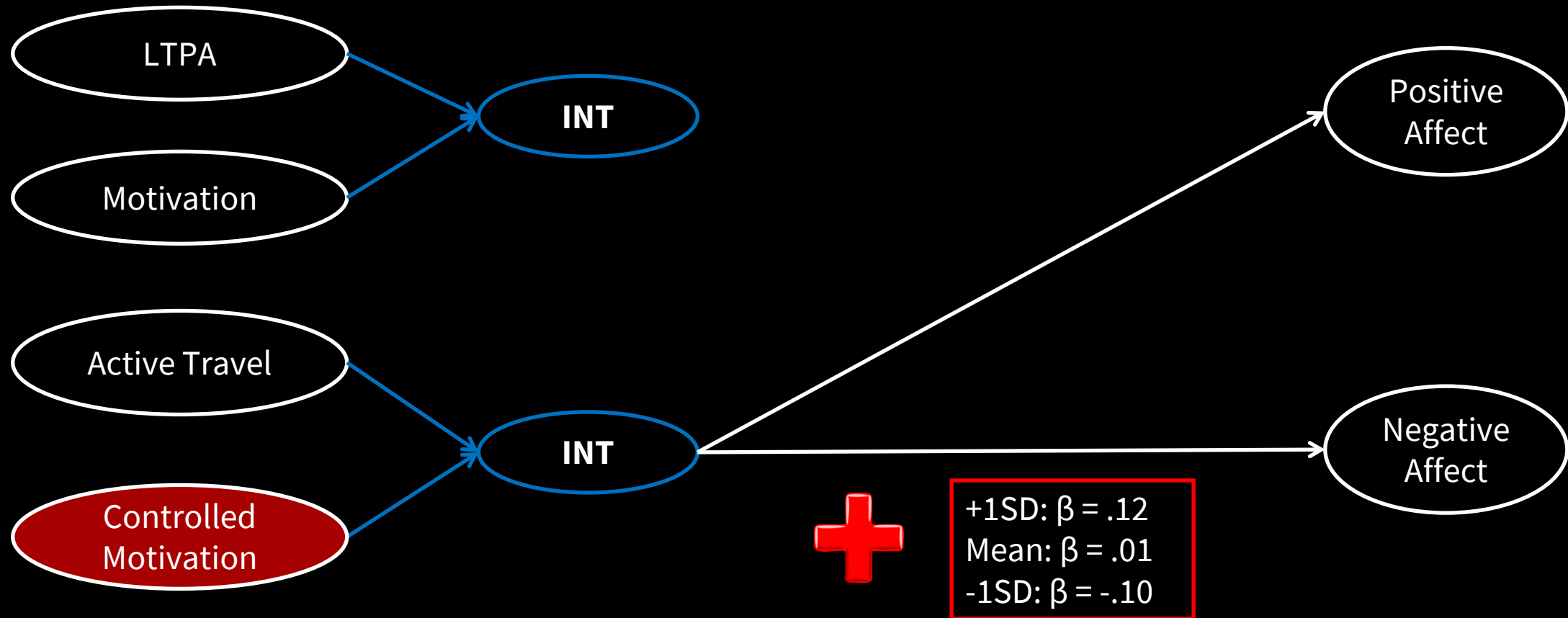
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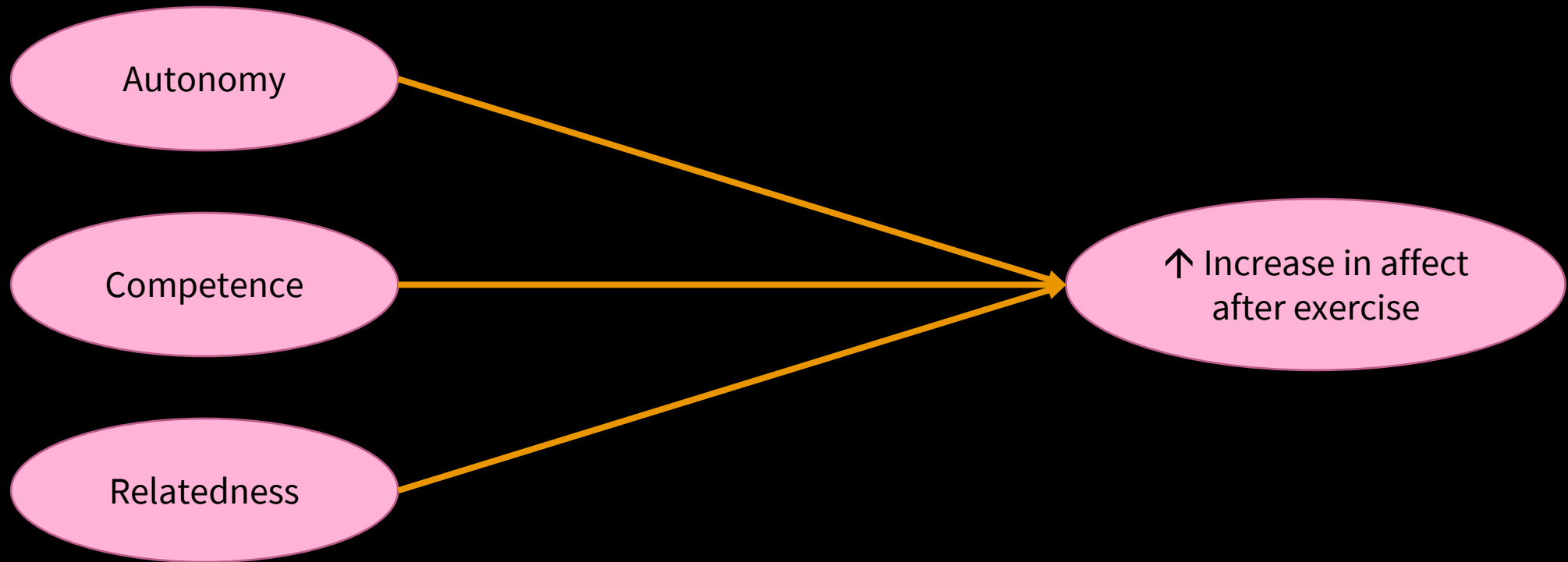
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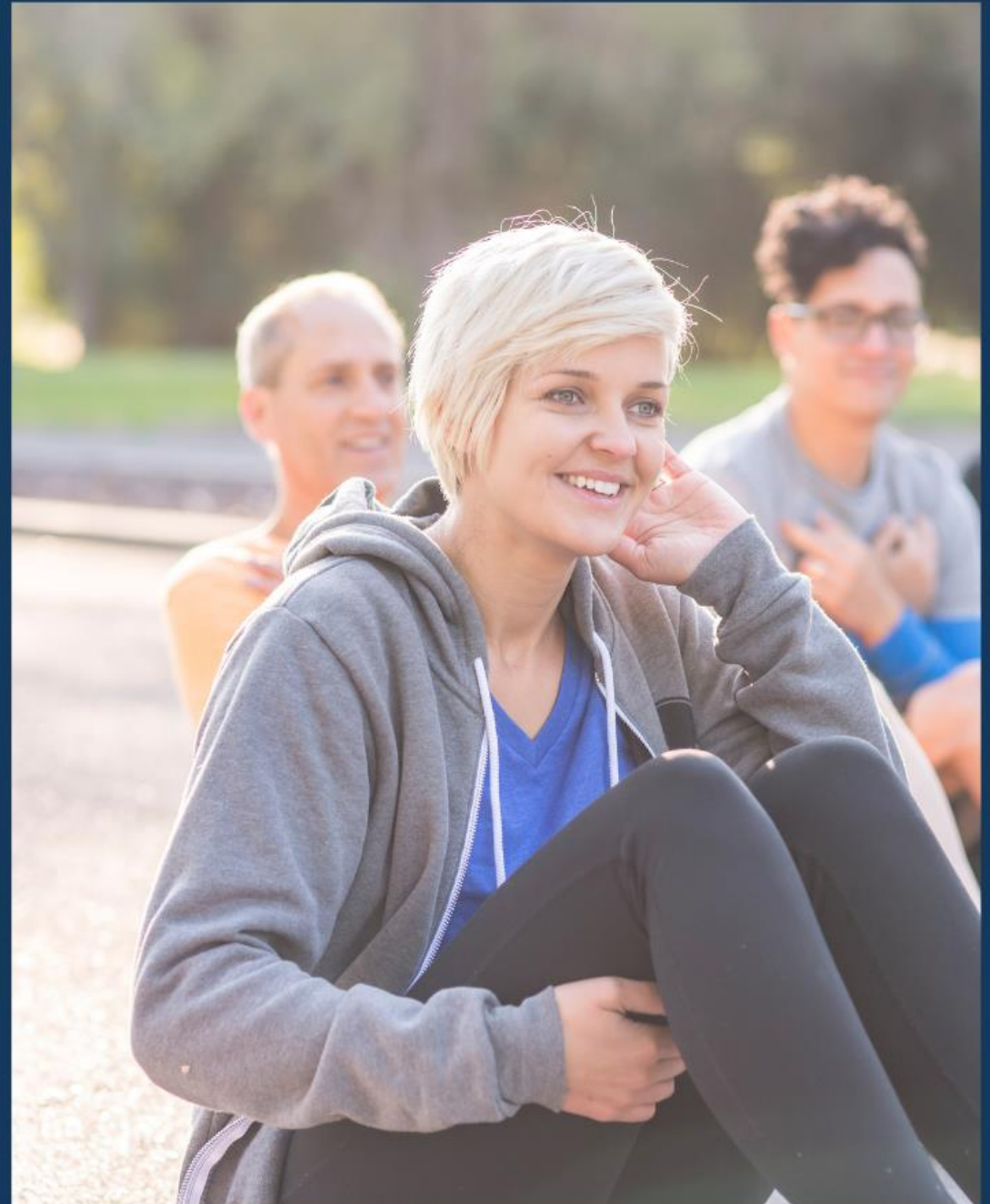
● Basic Psychological Needs



DEVELOPING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

AMONG PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

The sessions will be guided by motivational strategies (e.g., limit peer comparisons, match task to ability, emphasise fun and variety, provide choices) based on self-determination theory tenets, with the goal of supporting basic psychological needs during exercise (autonomy, competence, relatedness).



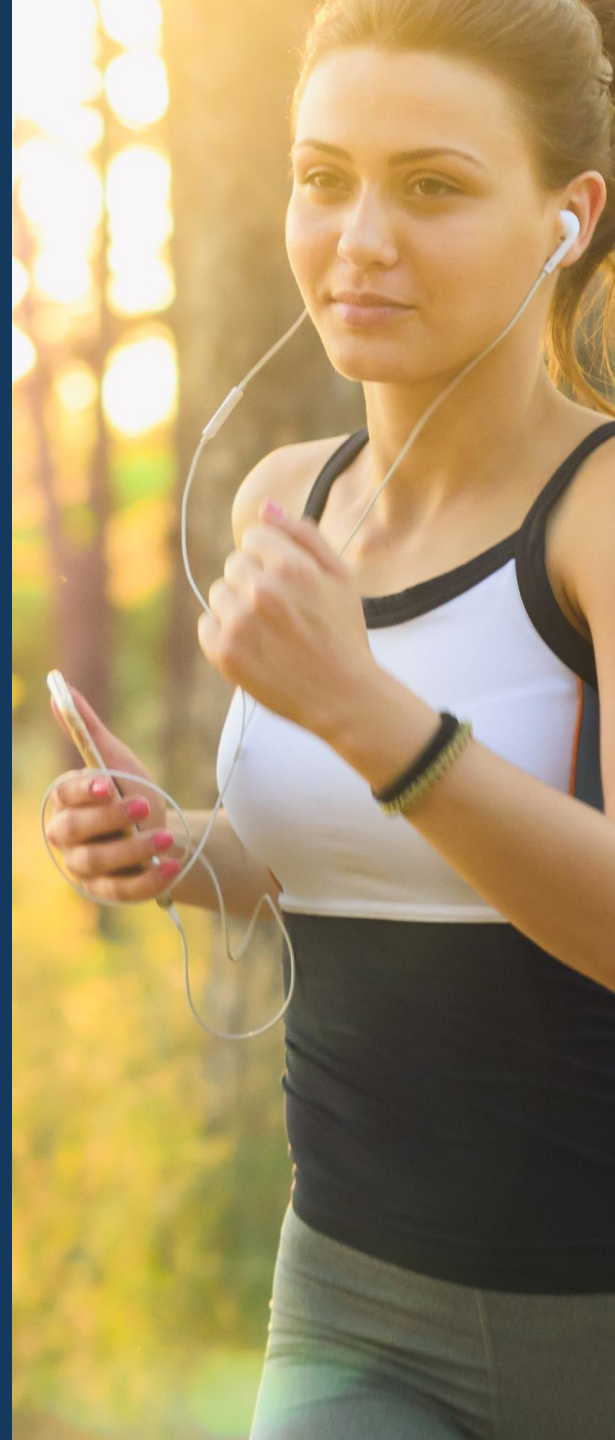
THE 10 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

PROVIDING CHOICE

**PROMOTING A TASK CLIMATE
THAT IS ENCOURAGING OF
INDIVIDUAL GOAL SETTING**

**ENABLING RESPONSIBILITY,
INDEPENDENCE, AND
ACKNOWLEDGING
INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES**

SET OPTIMAL CHALLENGES



**LIMITING THE USE OF
CONTROLLING LANGUAGE**

**PROVIDE COMPETENCE-
BUILDING FEEDBACK BASED
ON EFFORT AND
IMPROVEMENT**

**FACILITATE ENDORSEMENT
OF ACTIVITIES BY ALIGNING
THEM WITH PARTICIPANT
VALUES AND INTERESTS**

**ENABLE GROUP CO-
OPERATION AND
ENCOURAGE PEER-TO-PEER
SUPPORT AND
COMMUNICATION**

PROVIDE STRUCTURE

FOCUS ON ENJOYMENT



**"IT WAS SO
MUCH FUN, I
LOVED IT"**

**"IT JUST MAKES
ME FEEL BETTER,
ABOUT
EVERYTHING!"**

Qualitative study: The role of physical activity context



Infographic summary of results:
Key tips & recommendations



Consensus statement: Optimal promotion of mental health through physical activity



Podcast: Exercise and mental wellbeing | The Mental Wellbeing Show



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