



DEFEAT DEPRESSION GYM/RUNNING GROUP TOOLKIT

Together We Can Make A Difference



Mood Disorders Society of Canada
Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada





A Message from the MDSC Team

Across Canada, gyms and running groups are joining workplaces, community organizations, and volunteers in taking steps — both literal and figurative — to increase support for mental health. The Defeat Depression Campaign funds programs and research dedicated to combating mental illness and breaking down stigma. Operating year-round, the campaign culminates in a national day of action, Defeat Depression Day, held on the last Saturday in May.

Mental illness, including depression, recognizes no boundaries. It affects individuals and families across every demographic. Engaging in physical activities such as walking, running, and fitness training, coupled with proper nutrition and social interaction, can significantly enhance our mental well-being. This philosophy lies at the heart of the Defeat Depression Campaign!

This toolkit has been crafted with you — the gym and running group leaders — in mind. Let's make this campaign a meaningful and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Together, we can foster connection, build team spirit, and normalize conversations about mental health while eradicating stigma. We are so grateful for your participation and your commitment to mental health in Canada.

Sincerely,

Mood Disorders Society of Canada





Welcome to the Defeat Depression Campaign Toolkit! This toolkit provides gyms, fitness studios, and running or walking groups with the resources, ideas, and strategies to successfully organize events, raise awareness, and support mental health in your community.

Why Get Involved?

Promote Wellness Physical activity is a proven way to boost mental health. By participating in the Defeat Depression campaign, your group can champion the link between fitness and mental well-being.

Community Impact Show your members and clients that your organization is committed to supporting mental health awareness and breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Build Connections Strengthen your group's bond while collaborating on a meaningful cause. Together, you'll raise awareness, funds, and hope for those affected by mental health challenges.





How to Participate

Host an Event: Organize a group run, fitness challenge, or class fundraiser where proceeds go to Defeat Depression. Your event can raise awareness while keeping participants active and engaged.

Join an Existing Event: Register as a team for a Defeat Depression walk, run, or event in your area. It's a great way to represent your gym or group in the community.

Raise Funds Together: Set up a fundraising page as a team and encourage your members to support the campaign. Compete with other gyms or groups to see who can raise the most for mental health!

Spread the Word: Use your gym or group's social media and email channels to share information about the Defeat Depression campaign and encourage others to join the cause and support your team.



Event Ideas for Gyms and Running/Walking Groups

For Gyms

For Gyms

1. Charity Fitness Class: Donation-based yoga, spin, or bootcamp classes.
2. Treadmill Relay: Teams complete a set distance with sponsorships per mile.
3. Weightlifting Challenge: Friendly competition with entry fees supporting mental health.
4. Circuit Workout: Group circuits focusing on fitness and mental well-being.
5. Open Gym Day: Free gym access with donations encouraged.

For Running/Walking Groups

1. Fun Run/Walk: Host a 5K or 10K, optionally themed for added fun.
2. Relay for Resilience: Team relay with sponsorships for distance completed.
3. Mileage Challenge: Log group miles over a month with fundraising goals.
4. Steps Challenge: Track collective steps to reach a milestone goal.
5. Hill Challenge: Repeated hill climbs with sponsorships per ascent.

Collaborative Events

1. Run + Yoga: A run followed by a mindfulness yoga session.
2. Awareness Walk: Walk with information booths and shared stories.
3. Scavenger Hunt: Themed run with checkpoints and tasks.
4. CrossFit Challenge: Combine running and gym workouts for endurance.
5. Social Wellness Day: Combine fitness, mental health talks, and wellness activities.

Unique Ideas

1. Cycling Marathon: Keep bikes spinning in a team cycling event.
2. Trail Walks/Runs: Connect fitness and nature on local trails.



'Why I Walk' Wall: Sharing Stories of Hope and Resilience

Mental health touches all of us, whether through our own experiences or those of our loved ones. By talking openly about mental health, we can break down the stigma, foster understanding, and build supportive communities.

To start the conversation, we invite you to contribute to a 'Why I Walk' Wall in your gym or community space. This wall is a place for sharing stories, offering support, and inspiring hope.

Here are some prompts to guide your reflection:

- What inspired you to participate in the Defeat Depression walk?
- How has mental health impacted your life or the lives of those around you?
- Share personal stories or experiences that motivate you to walk.
- Leave a message of hope for others navigating mental health challenges.

Write your message, draw something meaningful, or even attach photos to represent your story.



The Power of Sharing

Every story matters. By contributing to the 'Why I Walk' Wall, you're helping to create a mosaic of support, hope, and resilience. You are helping to send a powerful message:
No one has to face mental health challenges alone.

Join us in building a culture of understanding and compassion, one story at a time



Resources



Marketing and Promotions

- Social Media Graphics: Pre-designed templates for promoting your event online.
- Email Outreach Templates: Ready-to-use emails to invite participants and donors.
- Posters and Flyers: Customizable materials to advertise your event locally.

Fundraising Tools

- Donation Tracking Sheets: Simple forms to record and track donations.
- Fundraising Incentives: Ideas for motivating participants, such as branded merchandise for top fundraisers.
- Corporate Sponsorship Guide: Tips for approaching businesses for event sponsorships.

Volunteer Resources

- Volunteer Roles and Guidelines: Clear descriptions of roles such as registration desk, route monitors, and cleanup crew.
- Volunteer Training Tools: Resources to ensure volunteers are well-prepared.

Post-Event Tools

- Share your images with us!
- Thank-You Notes: Templates to express gratitude to participants, donors, and sponsors.
- Social Media Highlights: Shareable graphics and captions to celebrate achievements.

Contact and Support

For questions or additional support, please contact:

- Email: info@mdsc.ca
- Phone: 913-921-5565
- Website: [DefeatDepression.ca](https://www.defeatdepression.ca)



Sample Social Media Messages

Facebook

1. 🏃 Ready to get moving for mental health? Join my gym/running group as we participate in the Defeat Depression event! 🌟 We're raising awareness and funds for mental health services through fitness and community. Donate or join our team today [link]! #DefeatDepression #MentalHealthMatters #ActiveForMentalHealth
2. 🚶 Every step counts! Our running group is walking/running for the Mood Disorders Society of Canada to support those experiencing depression. Your support can make a huge difference. Donate now to help us Defeat Depression! [link] #Fundraising #SupportMentalHealth #TeamEffort
3. 🤝 Together, we can make a change! Join our gym's fitness challenge or running group's event for the Defeat Depression Campaign to raise awareness and support mental health. Every dollar counts toward better services in our community. Donate or participate [link]. #DefeatDepression #EndStigma

Twitter

1. 🏃 Our gym and running group are teaming up for #DefeatDepression! Join us or donate to support @MoodDisordersCA in their fight for mental health awareness and support. [link] #MentalHealthMatters #FitnessForMentalHealth
2. 🚶 Moving for mental health! Help our gym and running group raise funds for @MoodDisordersCA. Together, we can #DefeatDepression. Donate here [link] #Fundraising #EndStigma
3. ❤️ Proud to support @MoodDisordersCA through fitness! Join our gym/running group in raising awareness and funds for mental health. Every step matters. [link] #DefeatDepression #SupportMentalHealth

Instagram

1. 🏃 Let's lift mental health awareness together! Our gym and running group are proud to support the Defeat Depression Campaign. Join our event or donate through the link in bio! Together, we're building a stronger, healthier community. ❤️ #DefeatDepression #FitnessForMentalHealth #EndStigma
2. 🚶 Running for a cause! 🚶 Our gym/running group is taking part in the Defeat Depression Campaign to support mental health. Join us and make an impact! Donate today – link in bio. 🌟 #DefeatDepression #SupportMentalHealth #CommunityFitness
3. 🤝 Mental health matters! Our gym and running group are raising awareness and funds for the Mood Disorders Society of Canada. Join us or support the cause by donating. Together, we can make a difference! Link in bio. #DefeatDepression #EndStigma #ActiveForMentalHealth

LinkedIn

1. Our gym and running group are proud to participate in the Defeat Depression Campaign with the Mood Disorders Society of Canada. We're raising funds and awareness for mental health through fitness and community events. Join our efforts by donating or participating in our event [link]. Together, we can break the stigma and support those in need. #DefeatDepression #MentalHealthMatters #FitnessForMentalHealth
2. This year, our gym and running group are stepping up for mental health! We're joining the Defeat Depression Campaign to raise funds for the Mood Disorders Society of Canada. Mental health impacts us all, and your support can help improve access to vital services. Donate or join our team [link]. #DefeatDepression #SupportMentalHealth #CommunityFitness
3. Mental health is everyone's business. Our gym and running group are hosting a fitness and running event as part of the Defeat Depression Campaign. Together, we're raising awareness and funds for the Mood Disorders Society of Canada. Join us or donate [link]. #DefeatDepression #EndStigma #ActiveForMentalHealth

Image Templates



Let's use the power of physical fitness to enhance mental wellness across Canada. Join the Defeat Depression campaign today and help us create a healthier, more supportive future for all!



Stay Connected and Get Involved!

Website: defeatdepression.ca

Facebook: facebook.com/DefeatDepression

Twitter: @DefDepression

Instagram: @DefeatDepression.ca



Mood Disorders Society of Canada
Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada

www.mdsc.ca

info@mdsc.ca

613-921-5565



National Mental Health Fundraising Campaign

FUNDRAISING PLEDGE FORM

Location:

Event Date:

Participant's Name:

Address:

Phone: ())

Email:

Postal Code:

I am raising funds for the Defeat Depression Campaign, which provides resources and supports for individuals living with mental illness and their families, and assists the important work of mental health organizations across Canada.

My Fundraising Goal is: \$

Donor's Name <i>(Please print clearly)</i>	Home Address & Postal Code <i>(Mandatory for donations \$25 or more - Tax Receipt)</i>	Email Address	Telephone #	Pledge Amount	Cheque	Cash	Received
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Thank you for your support! Please mail your pledge sheet to 46 Hope Cres., Belleville ON, K8P 4S2. A personal cheque for all cash you have collected is preferred, but donations can also be made online at www.defeatdepression.ca. Please make cheques payable to Mood Disorders Society of Canada. Tax receipts will be generated for donations of \$25 or more.

Defeat Depression Campaign c/o Mood Disorders Society of Canada Hope Cres. Belleville ON K8P 4S2 T: 613-921-5565
info@defeatdepression.ca | Charitable Reg. No. 883984817 RR0001



National Defeat Depression Campaign



#DEFEATDEPRESSION

DefeatDepression.ca

We are all impacted by mental illness. Every family is touched.

Join the thousands of people raising funds to support mental health resources, programs and to support initiatives from coast-to-coast. Register today to set your personal challenge, build a team, and get moving for mental health until May 31, 2025!

Proceeds of this event support mental health resources available to all Canadians through:



Mood Disorders Society of Canada
Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada

Mood Disorders Society of Canada



MIRA AI, the Virtual Mental Health Assistant



Canadian Community Mental Health Network



How: REGISTER or SUPPORT!
When: Registrations open soon!

info@DefeatDepression.ca

 **@DefeatDepression.ca**

 **@DefeatDepression.ca**

Title Sponsor

Participating Sponsors

Supporting Sponsors



