

Targeting Wellness Newsletter

Good News for Good Health!

May 2020

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Calm The Mind And You Calm The Body



- * When you believe in yourself, you have 100% of the people you need on your side. — [Amima Vitam](#)
- * There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. — [Shakespeare](#)
- * What you think, you become.
What you feel, you attract.
What you imagine, you create. — [Buddha](#)

The journey to managing stress in our lives includes the challenge of connecting mind to body. This connection is also crucial for ones overall well-being. Poor physical health can lead to an increased risk of developing mental health problems, and vice versa. Therefore, the choices we make pertaining to one will directly impact the health of the other. Prioritize self-care. This has also been the focus of our current pandemic. Focus on what you can control: sleep, nutrition, exercise, breath, mindfulness, stillness...mental wellbeing.

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May is **Mental Health Month**—What Is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Early Warning Signs

Not sure if you or someone you know is living with mental health problems? Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends

MORE

INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

Go to:

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/what-to-look-for>

And find out more about the types of mental health conditions typically seen.

Go to:

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help>

And find out how you or a loved one can get the needed help.

Resource:
www.mentalhealth.gov

Some Tips To Boost Mental Health

Track gratitude and achievement with a journal. Include 3 things you were grateful for and 3 things you accomplished each day.



Go off the grid. Leave your smart phone at home for a day and disconnect from constant emails, alerts, and other interruptions. Spend time doing something fun with someone face-to-face.

“You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.” - Martin Luther King Jr.

Think of something in your life you want to improve, and figure out what you can do to take a step in the right direction.

Work your strengths. Do something you are good at to build self-confidence, then tackle a tougher task.

Experiment with a new recipe, write a poem, paint or try a Pinterest project. Creative expression and overall well-being are linked.



Set up a getaway. The act of planning a vacation and having something to look forward to can boost your overall happiness for up to 8 weeks!



Sometimes, we don't need to add new activities to get more pleasure. We just need to soak up the joy in the ones we've already got. Trying to be optimistic doesn't mean ignoring the uglier sides of life. It just means focusing on the positive as much as possible.

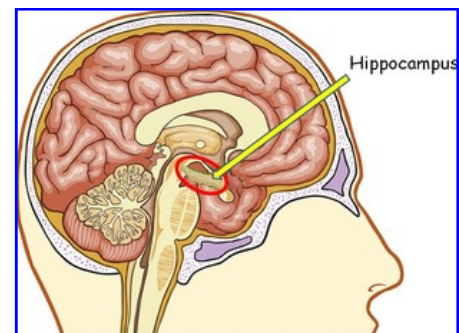
Exercise Can Improve Mental Health

We are all well aware of the effects inactivity has on increasing our risk for weight gain and chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis and early death. Only a third of the population gets the recommended amount per day. We are well aware of the positive effects exercise has on our physical health, but did you know it's power to also improve mental health?

Depression and anxiety rates are at their highest recorded levels across the globe. And now, with the current pandemic, more cases will exist but many will go untreated due to the continued stigma associated with mental health. Granted, increase social isolation (even pre-COVID-19), poor diets, a focus on image and money contribute to this state. However, inactivity is also a key factor.

Exercise stimulates the production and release of those "feel good" hormones such as endorphins and enkephalins, which can help to ease the burden of managing stress. Being in the flow of exercise aids in a temporary escape from current concerns and damaging self-talk, giving your body a break from the negative emotions and cortisol releases.

Studies now show that exercise not only helps in the maintenance of good mental health but it is actually being used to treat chronic mental illness. As a treatment, it is as good as the existing pharmacological interventions for a range of conditions such as mild to moderate depression, dementia, and anxiety and can even reduce cognitive issues in schizophrenia. This concept may not seem very obvious because for many the "mind" and "body" are separate. But there is more and more evidence proving that the two are very tightly connected and what impacts one will impact the other.



Its important to note that the hippocampus, an area of the brain that is involved with memory, emotional regulating and learning, is a critical component concerning mental health. Without getting into all the chemistry, what it boils down to is that exercise increases the volume of this region of the brain in part because of the increased flow of blood that delivers fresh oxygen and nutrients to improve the health of the neurons. This in turn improves and supports the growth and connections between all the regions of the brain.

FOOD
IS THE MOST ABUSED
➡ ANXIETY DRUG ⬅
AND EXERCISE
.....
IS THE LEAST UTILIZED
ANTIDEPRESSANT.

rebeldietitian.us

So what? Well it appears that growth in this area of the brain allows for new memories helping to keep the old memories (a.k.a. negative thought patterns/habits) at bay. It then supports the development of new brain signals that can help keep us from repeating unhelpful behaviors, minimize the resistance to process or even acknowledge new information, and can allow us to be open and aware to new solutions to change.

How much? Although any amount of exercise is beneficial for overall well-being, psychiatrists with Psychology Today report that three or more sessions per week of aerobic exercise or resistance training, for 45 to 60 minutes per session, can help treat even chronic depression. Improvements seem to be noticed after just 4 weeks but training should be continued for 10-12 weeks for the greatest anti-depression effect.

Resource: www.psychologytoday.com



Things You Need To Stop Saying To Yourself

So many of us, myself included, set expectations that sometime sabotage our own success and happiness. Over time, we may have created a “must” list in our minds of the things that must happen in order for us to be happy. Changing the way we think and filtering out those “musts” can and will improve mental health.

I have talked about this somewhat in my weekly emails. We all have a subconscious mind that is programmed with messages we have received all our lives from the time we were a baby to our adulthood. These “messages” become the software that governs our behaviors and feelings every single day. Most of them we are not even aware of; they are so engrained and automatic that we can be doing one thing and focusing on another (example, driving while talking to your passenger). But remember, you can only **focus** on one thing at a time, therefore, multi-tasking is not possible.

Back to the topic at hand...when we are anxious or stressed out, our brain is tempted to “cut corners for self-preservation” (Smith, 2020). This is where the “must” verbiage starts. Musts are those beliefs we have created in our subconscious of how the world should work and how we are supposed to behave in it. Our brain tries to cram every event into one of these preconceived boxes because that is something that is familiar. Remember though, nearly 80% of our daily thoughts are negative, inaccurate or irrational.

Here are a few common “musts” to watch out for. You may have experienced one or two or know someone who demonstrates these needs. Becoming aware, realizing when you are heading down that road of negativity, is key in derailing and stopping the “must” train.



Do you constantly change “your colors” to fit what the external environment expects?

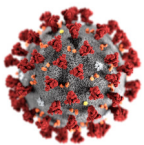
I must be loved by everyone at all times.

It's only human to want to be accepted, loved and praised. But when you adjust your actions and reactions to fulfill this desire, you are losing your sense of self. It's exhausting to constantly change to suit what expectations we *perceive* from others.

I must be successful at everything.

Perfection leads to procrastination. Trying to be perfect in everything you do can inspire fear and anxiety. The most successful people have had numerous failures but saw them as opportunity to grow and learn.

A key to getting rid of this “must” is not to make generalizations when something happens. If something doesn't go right the first time, don't “assume” that it will *always* be this way or will *never* get better.



I must be upset by the things I fear.

With the current pandemic, I think this is a “must” that many of us experienced and may still be experiencing. Hearing and seeing the panic in others, watching it on social media or the news over and over, we caught in a loop and feel that the moment we let our guard down and stop worrying, we will put ourselves in harms way. Obsessing is not the same as examining. When we stop and look at the fear, we can either face it or accept it. Now acceptance does not mean surrendering to that fear. It means focusing on what is in your control and managing your reactions. Therefore, you may not be able to find a cure for COVID-19, but you can arm yourself against its effects by focusing on self-care, those things in your control!



I must avoid all conflict.

I have often heard from those who deal with the public how challenging and stressful it is to deal with difficult people. Our initial reaction is to just cut off or distance ourselves from them because it seems the safest solution in reducing anxiety. But it's only temporary with more emotional reactivity and self-defeating dialogue soon to follow. Facing conflict head on by trying to understand where it's coming from may seem too difficult. But communication is a muscle that must be flexed to attain a calmer and ultimately happier existence. The better you become at being thoughtful and articulate in times of uncertainty and stress, the less that internal dialogue will bother you in the long run” (Smith, 2020).



I must have control over everything.

I think this might be a very common one. I refer again to our current pandemic. So much anxiety resulted from feeling totally out of control of the situation. Helpless. It's not unhealthy to want to feel in control of what happens to you. But life is unpredictable and change is inevitable. Trying to control a moving target only causes more stress. This is a time for resiliency. Being able to cope with the current situation and not run and hide will certainly leave you in a better state of mind with less guilty and self-blame.



Not Quite Ready For Meditation?

Even with all the information out on how beneficial meditation is for ones overall well-being, it doesn't make it any easier for folks to incorporate it into their daily routine. What comes to mind when you hear the word meditate? Probably someone sitting crossed-legged, eyes closed, humming to themselves for too long. Or perhaps sitting or lying without one thought coming to your mind. Meditation or mindfulness is a strategy for directing yourself away from surroundings in a nonjudgmental manner. It can be one moment of awareness. It can be thoughts of what you see or hear.

What if I were to tell you that you could be mindful without sitting down and meditating. Would you try it? Let's explore how:

Listening—of all the ways we communicate, listening is by far the most called upon and also neglected skill. So often, when we hear something we automatically label it, categorize it and store it for later recall. But the key to really listening is taking time to just experience what you are hearing in the moment. As humans, we just want to “be heard”, not necessarily expecting a solution or debate but simply to have our thoughts acknowledged, our purpose validated and our meaning accepted without judgment. In addition, as humans we tend to multi-task. Most of us when we are “listening,” we are really planning our next email or thinking about something we have to do next week or preparing our own response once the person stops talking. Listening takes time and effort but you can learn skills that help; it starts with a clear intention to be a better listener.

How to Practice Mindful Listening: H.E.A.R.

1. **HALT** — Halt whatever you are doing and offer your full attention.
2. **ENJOY** — Enjoy a breath as you choose to receive whatever is being communicated to you—wanted or unwanted.
3. **ASK** — Ask yourself if you really know what they mean and if you don't, ask for clarification. Instead of making assumptions, bring openness and curiosity to the interaction. You might be surprised at what you discover.
4. **REFLECT** — Reflect back to them what you heard. This tells them that you were really listening.

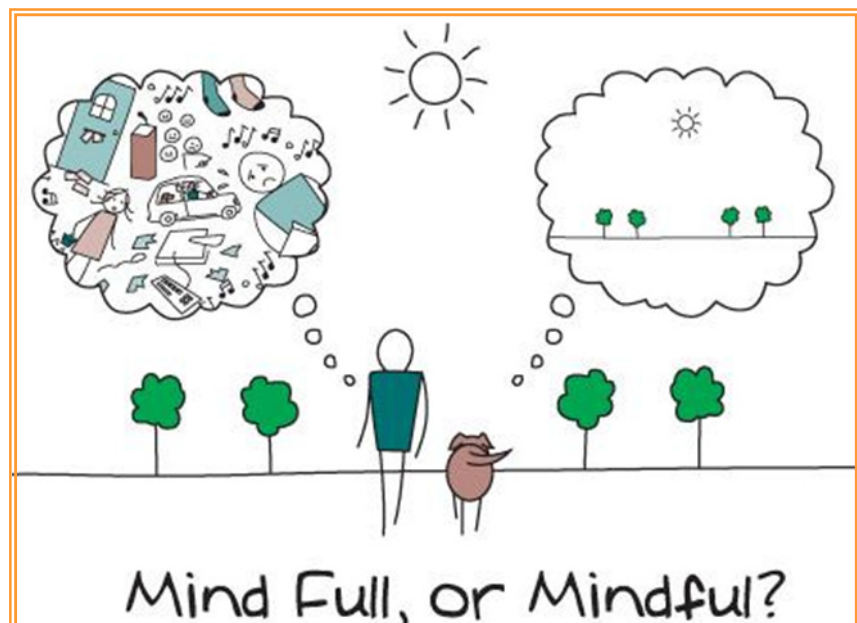
Sensing—we probably have all have experienced eating at our desks or in front of the television/computer. Bringing in all your senses can be very calming and can improve ones relationship with food. The next time you have a meal, take the time to enjoy the smells, look at it, feel the different textures in your mouth. Or go outside and listen to the wind, or birds, or cars at a distance. Smell the fresh air and really feel the temperature on your skin.

Breathing— Simple yet very effective. Sit up straight in your chair. Feet flat on the floor. Pay attention to what it feels like to breathe in and out. Focus on your stomach as it rises and falls. Don't judge yourself if your mind strays to your “to-do” list. Just gently redirect our thoughts back to your breath.

Observing— When you are feeling overwhelmed at work or with life in general, a simple observational exercise could help bring you back to the here and now. Pick an object you use or encounter on a daily basis. Maybe it's a pen or your tooth brush. Look at it with fresh eyes. Slow down while brushing your teeth and pay attention.

If we can learn to be more aware, we just might gain more appreciation for the people and world around us. Take the time to stop, look and listen. Most of these can be practiced anytime, others require a bit more intention.

Mornings and evenings are excellent times to practice mindfulness. Even just a few minutes of calm awareness can give you energy to face the day ahead while some deep breaths before bed can help bring on sound sleep, relieving you of the daily worries.



Sleep Impacts Mental Health

Sleep and mental health are closely connected. Sleep deprivation can affect your psychological state. Those with mental health concerns are more likely to have insomnia and other sleep disorders. Depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder most often have accompanying sleep problems.

Chronic sleep problems affect 50% to 80% of patients typically seen for therapy compared to 10% to 18% of the general public. Sleep issues can include reduced total time spent asleep, fragmented sleep, and sleeping too much. The exact relationship between sleep and mental health is not fully understood. Sleep problems traditionally were understood to be symptoms of mental health conditions, but that is not totally true. A lack of sleep may contribute or even cause psychiatric problems. This has lead therapists to include a focus on improving sleep as part of patient care.

Studies show that sleep builds the cognitive functioning of the brain needed for many aspects of life. When sleep is fragmented or limited, it can hurt executive function* and emotional resilience. Treating sleep problems is not easy. What works for one person may not help another. Sleep hygiene can help.

**Executive Function:*

This frontal lobe area of the brain helps you to get things done through:

- Managing time
- Paying attention
- Switching focus
- Planning & organizing
- Remembering details
- Knowing what's appropriate to say and when to say it.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Stick to a sleep schedule—go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine several hours before bed
- Don't exercise too late in the day, unless it's a gentle yoga or stretch
- Avoid large meals
- Avoid drinking even water too close to bed so you don't have to get up to use the bathroom in the middle of the night
- Don't take a nap after 3pm
- Relax before bed by reading, journaling, taking a hot bath
- Create a good sleeping environment. Get rid of distractions such as noises, bright lights, an uncomfortable bed, or a TV or computer in the room.

Shift workers have a unique situation which requires more attention. Some things are not in your control.

- If possible, try not to work a number of night shifts in a row. Sleep deprivation can accumulate over several nights. Recovery is faster if you limit night shift and schedule days off in between.
- Avoid frequent shift rotations. Staying on one schedule, even if at night, is better to help your body adjust.
- Keep your work area brightly lighted to promote alertness. Your circadian rhythm is controlled by a part of the brain that is influenced by light.
- Wear wraparound sunglasses on the drive home from night shift
- Get blackout blinds or heavy curtains.
- Explain to your family the importance of quietness and no interruptions. You'll be a better partner/parent if you are well rested!

Resilience & Adaptability



Resilience is defined as the power to recover and return to original form or position after being bent, compressed or stretched. It's the ability to bounce back from unexpected, unpleasant or challenging situations. Dealing with adversity on an emotional and psychological level in order to help us deal with it in a practical way.

Here is an important thing to keep in mind. One can cope (be resilient) to a given situation but not necessarily be able to move on. Coping is vital, no question about it. But it's also important to learn to move beyond the current situation to gain strength and wisdom for the next time. That is where adaptability enters.

Adaptability is the ability or willingness to change. The skill to alter oneself or responses, to **fit** the needs of the changed circumstances or environment. It demonstrates the gift to learn from one's experience and improve the "fitness" of the learner as a more fierce competitor should the condition require attention again.



A big difference between resilience and adaptability is that one continues on the journey from merely coping to actually changing by looking at the situation as a challenge to learn from, enabling personal growth to occur.

How Do We Gain Skills for Both?

Resiliency improves through self-care:

- Getting enough sleep (7-9 hours every night)
- Getting enough exercise (minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week)
- Eating nutritional foods, eat mostly whole and natural foods
- Meditation, mindfulness, mind-body connection (yoga, tai chi), music, nature, becoming more aware

Adaptability strengthens through:

- Letting go of how "good" it used to be. Letting go of what is "owed" you, holding on only brings grief.
- Accept. Change is not something that happens to us. Change is something that is happening all the time. It's just a natural law of life.
- Think in YES's not in NO's—meaning start to think more about possibilities than impossibilities. Don't let fear of failure hold you back. Learn to question more to gain the knowledge and skills to change.
- Set new goals and go after them.
- Focus on controlling your own actions not those of others. Remember, let go of your "must" to avoid conflict or be in total control.
- Connect: Find a reliable support group in friends, family, colleagues



Diet and Depression

People know the relationship nutrition has to their physical health, but few people realize that there is a connection between nutrition and depression. Depression is thought of as strictly a biochemically-based and emotionally rooted condition, yet research has shown that nutrition can play a key role in the onset of depression as well as increase its severity.

It's no surprise that when you look at the nutritional intake of the general population in America, essential vitamins, minerals and omega-3 fatty acids are notably lacking. When the diets of patients suffering from mental disorders are tested, these micronutrients are severely deficient.

This increased understanding has given rise to a concept called "nutritional psychiatry". Physicians in general, let alone those specializing in mental health, have little to no training when it comes to nutrition. Doctors aren't paid to ask questions about your diet. They have maybe ten minutes to spend with each patient, just enough time to write a prescription.

Many of the antidepressant drugs offered cause side effects (note: nearly every pharmaceutical drug has a side effect but that's a topic for another time). Side effects tend to cause patient noncompliance which could lead to increased risk of suicide. Perhaps if we could help people reshape their diet to include foods that offer all the essential vitamins and minerals they lack, is it possible that we could start to "heal" from depression symptoms and even prevent others from getting depressed? Don't get me wrong, there is a place for medication and because there is no direct evidence yet that diet can improve depression, it can be part of the treatment plan but should not be considered a substitute for medication.

Even with that said perhaps using natural and whole food as a starting point for patient care could at least be part of the treatment discussion. Currently it isn't even considered. And this goes for all chronic diseases too. The acronym for the standard American diet isn't S.A.D. for nothing. Not only are the choices we make causing more chronic disease, it is now connected to our mental health. I would say that is very S.A.D.!!!

3 ways diet impacts your mental health

Brain development

What we eat supports the development of protein-building blocks, enzymes, brain tissue and neurotransmitters that send information from the brain to all parts of the body.

Supports brain growth

Certain nutrients such as omega-3s and zinc boost levels of brain protein which helps increase connections between brain cells. These nutrients can be derived from whole food such as chia seeds, brussel sprouts, walnuts, hemp and flaxseeds. A diet high in saturated fats and refined sugars have a negative impact on brain protein.

Improves Microbiome (in the gut)

A healthy gut, a healthy mind. Trillions of good bacteria live in the gut. They defend us against germs and keep our immune system in check, resulting in a reduction of inflammation. Reduced inflammation positively impacts mood and cognition.



Interested in learning more about how nutrition can impact your overall well-being? Read Dr. T. Colin Campbell's 2nd Commentary called **The Path to Recovery through Nutrition: Our Most Important Defense Against COVID-19**. Dr. Campbell is a bio/nutritional researcher with over 60 years of experience in the field of nutritional science. His studies have shown where a low protein, whole food, plant based (WFPB) "diet" can comprehensively prevent, and sometimes even reverse a broad range of chronic degenerative diseases. His recent article focuses on how this may act in a similar way to minimize viral diseases. He is not claiming that it will prevent you from contracting COVID-19 or any other virus, but it will definitely strengthen your immune system, providing you with the means to improve your chances of recovery. Sign up for the next 10-day Global Jumpstart with starts May 10th. Find out more at: <https://plantpurecommunities.org/the-path-to-recovery/>

Cheesy Brussels Sprouts and Mushrooms



Yields 4—half cup servings.

Calories: 122

- Fat 8g
- Saturated Fat 2g
- Protein 4g
- Carb 9g
- Fiber 3g
- Sugars 2g
- Added sugar 0g
- Sodium 229mg
- Calcium 7% DV
- Potassium 8% DV



Directions:

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over high.* Add Brussels sprouts; cook until browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Add sliced cremini mushrooms; cook until tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in minced garlic, fresh thyme, kosher salt, and black pepper; cook 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in whole-wheat panko and white wine vinegar; top with grated Parmesan cheese.

Note*: you can sauté without oil by using a few drops of broth or water. It works perfectly and tastes great!

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 cups halved Brussels Sprouts (8 oz.)
- 2 cups sliced cremini or baby portabella mushrooms (4 oz.)
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons whole-wheat panko
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese



Health Benefits:

Brussels Sprouts are a powerful member of the cabbage family. They are known for their ability to enhance DNA repair in cells and help block the continued growth of cancer cells.

These little power houses are loaded with vitamins and antioxidants. They are rich in Vitamin K, which is necessary for blood clotting and bone health. They are high in Vitamin C, an antioxidant that helps promote iron absorption and is involved in tissue repair and immune function.


They are also high in fiber which helps support gut health.

They are one of the best plant sources of omega-3 fatty acids which have been shown to reduce blood triglycerides, slow cognitive decline, reduce insulin resistance and decrease inflammation.

abbondanza! Here's to your health!

Tonglen* for Mothers

* **Tonglen** is a traditional Buddhist practice of compassion. In order to have compassion for ourselves, we cultivate it for others. We take in the difficult parts of mothering, for ourselves and for all mothers and send out compassion and love.



I breathe in the daily frustrations
small as they are, big as they can seem
I breath out patience for us all.
I breathe in the loneliness
of days spent mothering on our own
I breathe out connection
community, compassion.
I breathe in the brokenness
not being enough in the world
I breathe out wholeness
leaving ideals behind, truth.
I breathe in the boredom
diapers, cooking, same every day
I breathe out simple pleasure
swings, finger painting, rocks.
I breathe in the exhaustion,
the worry, the fear
I breathe out the calm energy, excitement.
I breathe in the rage
at your plight, your place, your life
I breathe out peace
contentment, courage.
- DeLona Campos-Davis

The real meaning of the words unconditional love, selflessness and committed for life isn't written in a dictionary, but in the hearts of ever mother! Happy Mother's Day. Honoring all moms, grandmoms, great-grandmoms, single moms, Godmothers, Aunts, Sisters heck.....
ALL women!