

IBEAM

Ideal Body Environment And Mind

Our lifestyle and habits can directly impact our mental health.

If we don't take care of our mental health, our physical health can suffer and vice versa. Just like we should exercise our bodies to keep our hearts, lungs, and other vital organs healthy, we also need to take care of our brains. Taking care of our brains is referred to as mental wellness.

Activities that support mental wellness

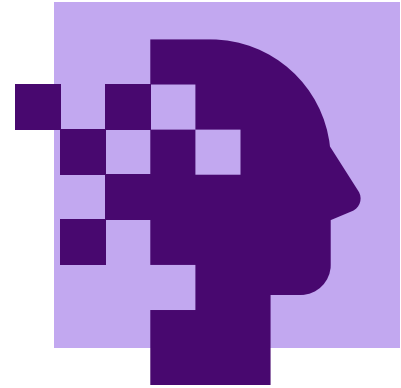
There are certain behaviors and lifestyle habits that promote mental wellness and can decrease the risk of developing mental health issues:

Enhance social support and connectedness

- Loneliness and feelings of disconnectedness are serious threats to mental health. Make time to regularly connect with friends and family members, even if it's a telephone call or text. Engaging in social activities like book club or group gym classes can also have a positive effect on mental health. Staying socially connected can also prevent the onset of depression. Remember, quality relationships are more important than quantity.

Manage your stress

- Stress is the body's way of responding to the mental and physical demands of life. Common events or situations that cause stress include daily responsibilities and commitments like work, school, and family. Moderate to high stress situations include traumatic events, the loss of a loved one, illness or another event that significantly alters your life. There are several activities and actions that can be taken to relieve and reduce stress:
 - Identify stressors (things that cause stress) and write a list designating which ones can and cannot be controlled.
 - Work toward finding solutions. For the controllable stressors, write out methods to alleviate or remove those stressors. For the stressors that cannot be controlled, know that you CAN control how you react to those. Imagine a scenario where you react differently to a negative stressor - does the situation work out for the better in your mind? Try it in real life. Remember, you don't have to find solutions alone. Therapists are trained in helping us find tools to manage stress.
 - Set a timer for 5, 10, or 15 minutes each day to try one of many relaxation techniques like mindfulness meditation, breathing exercises, or progressive muscle relaxation. Test them out to find the relaxation technique or combination of techniques that works best for you.
 - Keep a planner that organizes work and home tasks that must get done. Check items off as they are accomplished. Remember it's important to schedule fun and enjoyable activities into your calendar too.



Video two: Taking care: A look at mental wellness

Main points

1. Main Points
2. Our lifestyle and habits can directly impact our mental health.
3. Factors that support mental wellness and activities we can all do:
 - Social connectedness
 - Stress management
 - Take care of the body
 - Life skills/Resilience
 - Help-seeking

Take care of your body with proper diet, exercise and sleep.

- Not only does eating healthy and nutrient rich foods help keep your body in good working order, eating well can also positively affect your mood. Follow these four main guidelines to increase energy and boost overall wellness:
 - Eat plenty of whole foods. This includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and reduced fat dairy products.
 - Protein is a cornerstone of the human diet and a major component of our bodies. Obtain protein by eating lean meat, eggs, fish, beans and nuts.
 - Limit the amount of sugar, salt, saturated fat and trans fats ingested. These are abundant in processed foods.
 - Caffeine and alcohol can worsen or trigger anxiety. It's best to drink water to stay clear, focused, and hydrated.
- The current recommendation for exercise for the average adult includes 75-150 minutes of vigorous exercise each week. Another recommendation is to vary and balance the type of exercise between cardiovascular, strength training, and stretching. Workers in the construction industry likely get more exercise than their office job counterparts.
- Sleep is critical. Health care practitioners recommend getting between seven and nine hours of sleep each night to help us perform optimally at our everyday lives. In fact, lack of sleep due to stress or other issues can lead to serious physical and mental health problems. Here is a short list of tips for getting the recommended amount of sleep:
 - Set a bedtime and adhere to it. Your body loves consistency when it comes to sleep.
 - Turn off the screens one hour before bed. Use this time to relax away from the stimulants and prepare your body for sleep.
 - Try to de-stress before bed. Many hours of sleep are lost to restless minds preoccupied with work or other stressful events. Meditate, do some light stretching, listen to soothing music quietly, or take a hot shower or bath. Find what works best to put you at ease and in a restful state.
 - Exercising earlier in the day can help prepare you for restful sleep. Avoid rigorous exercise right before bed.
- Manage any existing physical health problems:
 - Mental and physical health are deeply interconnected, and it's important to deal with any health issues that may be restrictive. If health issues are a major life stressor or a factor of depression, a therapist can help you adjust to a new physical reality.



Life skills

- Boost self-esteem:
 - Self-esteem or the level of confidence in your ability to accomplish goals provides an important protective quality to our mental wellbeing. It's the lens through which we view our self-worth from day-to-day, and it can affect how we respond to different situations. Avoid letting self-esteem spiral out of control after an experience of failure or rejection. Have self-compassion. If we let negative life circumstances deteriorate our self-esteem we may question our worth, in turn creating a false sense of doubt that prevents us from taking advantage of life's opportunities.
- Increase resilience to adversity by changing thoughts and behavior. A couple tools to start include:
 - Addressing emotional pain. Be mindful of what experiences in life cause emotional pain. Some common feelings that may indicate emotional pain include feelings of grief, anger, rejection, or failure. Although we can't always control the cause of our emotional pain, we can practice techniques to treat it. Letting emotional pain last too long can lead to depression and other mental health conditions.
 - Avoiding repetitive negative thoughts. Disrupt repetitive thinking or overthinking about distressing or negative events in daily life by finding a positive distraction. Do something that requires concentration to help prevent dwelling on events and situations that are uncontrollable or in the past. A cycle of repetitive negative thinking can lead to depression and other medical issues.

Ask for help when it is needed

- No one has to do anything in life alone. If anyone has trouble coping for any reason, it is critical to reach out to others. Primary care doctors can provide referrals to therapists or other physicians that can address troubles in the body and mind. Family and friends can provide support and empathy.

If you are worried you may be experiencing a mental health crisis or having thoughts of suicide, call, text or chat 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.



Preventing mental illness requires practice and repetition of healthy lifestyle changes. Sometimes, life gets in the way of these and that's okay. Improving overall health is a lifelong journey and any small adjustments could result in significant benefits.

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About SAVE

SAVE is the nation's leading nonprofit agency working to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, reduce stigma, and serve as a resource to those touched by suicide. For more than 30 years SAVE has been at the forefront of suicide prevention and is the world's leader in developing safe messaging standards, practices and awareness campaigns on suicide prevention. We developed an evidence-based program for suicide prevention, numerous best practice tools and a peer support program to help those in crisis. SAVE also conducts professional training, education, technical assistance and provides consultation to businesses, organizations, communities and governments on all aspects of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention (grief after suicide).

About WTW

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