PSA.......May, 2022

Healthcare Ministry

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Caring for Your Mental Health

Overview

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, act, make choices, and relate to others. Mental health is more than the absence of a mental illness—it's essential to your overall health and quality of life. Self-care can play a role in maintaining your mental health and help support your treatment and recovery if you have a mental illness.

About Self-Care

Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. When it comes to your mental health, self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy. Even small acts of self-care in your daily life can have a big impact.

Here are some tips to help you get started with self-care:

- **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged if you can't do 30 minutes at one time.
- **Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.** A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Also, limit caffeinated beverages such as soft drinks or coffee.
- **Make sleep a priority**. Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so reduce blue light exposure from your phone or computer before bedtime.
- **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy activities you enjoy such as journaling.
- **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- **Practice gratitude.** Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down at night, or replay them in your mind.
- **Focus on positivity**. Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- **Stay connected.** Reach out to your friends or family members who can provide emotional support and practical help

Self-care looks different for everyone, and it is important to find what you need and enjoy. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you. In addition, although self-care is not a cure for mental illnesses, understanding what causes or triggers your mild symptoms and what coping techniques work for you can help manage your mental health.

For other ideas for healthy practices for your mind, body, surroundings, and relationships, see the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Wellness Toolkits.

Information Source: https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health

HEALTHY EATING

What we eat can also impact our mental health. Below are some foods that can have a positive impact on our mental well-being. Try to include some of these in your diet to help insure better mental health.

Mixed Vegetables: More Colors, More Benefits

The more colorful mixture of veggies on your plate, the more likely you are to reap a variety of nutritional benefits, so pile them on! For maximum benefit, choose very colorful vegetables like dark leafy greens, peppers, carrots, and butternut squash. If you think you don't like a particular healthy vegetable, try different preparation methods. Instead of baking sweet potatoes, grate them into a potato pancake. If you don't like cooked kale or spinach, buy tender baby leaves, and serve as a bed of greens under a portion of seafood or chicken. And if you don't love broccoli or cauliflower steamed, you may love it roasted.

Dark Chocolate: Light Mood

Surprise, surprise! Chocolate is not just for dessert. An ounce or two of grated dark chocolate is the secret ingredient in many of the best chili dishes. On the sweeter side, add grated dark chocolate to fruit smoothies, or to banana or zucchini bread batters. Melt dark chocolate to use as a sweet drizzle or dip for fresh fruit. "Dark chocolate-covered almonds are one of our favorite snacks at the Brain Food Clinic," says Elkrief. "You get the double benefit of brain-boosting vitamin E from the almonds, along with some magnesium from the chocolate, which also helps stimulate brain growth."

Fruit Salad: A Bowl of Happiness

All fresh fruit—but especially apples, grapes, blueberries, and strawberries—are packed with antioxidant vitamins and other plant substances known to protect your brain from diseases, enhance cognition, and potentially improve your mood, behavior, and overall brain function. [9, 11] Like veggies, each type of fruit provides slightly different benefits, so your best bet is to toss up a fresh fruit salad that combines a variety of different fruits and berries. Fruit salad doesn't need a dressing, but you can dress it up with chopped fresh or dried mint, or sweet spices like ginger, nutmeg, and cinnamon, along with chopped nuts.

Information Source: https://www.psycom.net/10-recipes-for-better-mental-health/?slide=8#slide