

Wellness Newsletter

Mental Health Matters



May 2024

ISSUE #8

"Educate for Wellness, Knowledge for Life"



— MAY — Mental Health Awareness Month

"Mental health...is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going." - Noam Shpancer

Let's talk about Mental Health

As we enter Mental Health Awareness Month, it's crucial to acknowledge the profound impact mental health has on our lives, both personally and in our professional endeavors. Despite strides made in understanding and destigmatizing mental health issues, there remains a common reluctance to openly address them in the workplace. This reluctance is fueled by various factors such as fear of judgment, worries about job security, and societal norms equating mental health struggles with weakness. Nonetheless, it's vital to challenge these misconceptions and cultivate a supportive environment where employees feel safe to seek help without facing repercussions or criticism.

Recognizing that mental health is as important as physical health and prioritizing it contributes to a more productive and compassionate workplace culture. By fostering open dialogues, offering resources, and actively supporting employees in their mental health journeys, we can dismantle the walls of stigma and establish a workplace where everyone feels valued and upheld. This Mental Health Awareness Month, let's pledge to nurture a culture of empathy, comprehension, and proactive assistance for mental well-being. When we prioritize mental health, we empower individuals to thrive both personally and professionally.

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What is Environmental Wellness?



Environmental wellness revolves around how we interact with the world around us, highlighting the balance between ourselves and our environment. It's about realizing how our health is linked to the health of the planet and making choices that support both. This includes things like conserving resources, reducing our impact on the environment, and encouraging eco-friendly habits. It's also about enjoying and respecting nature, whether that means spending time outdoors, gardening, or getting involved in environmental causes. It's about understanding that we're all connected to the Earth and taking care of it for the benefit of ourselves and future generations.

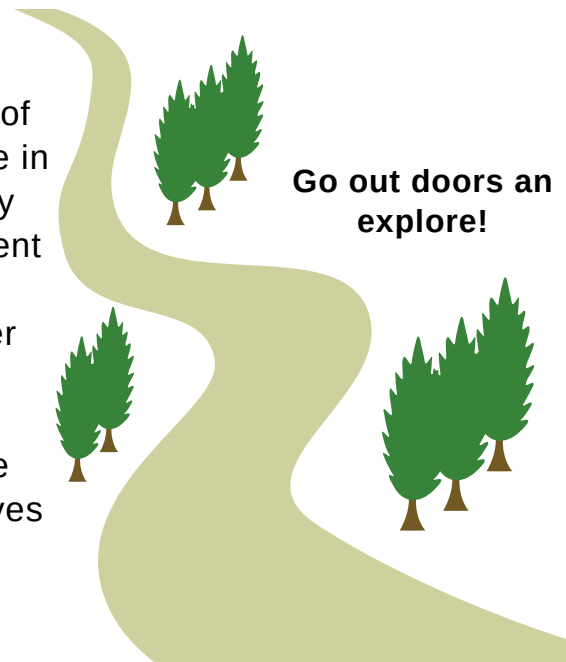


Does environmental wellness help our mental health?

Environmental wellness plays a crucial role in shaping mental health, as the quality of our surroundings significantly influences our psychological well-being. When we engage in activities that promote environmental wellness, such as spending time outdoors or participating in conservation efforts, we often experience a sense of calmness and connection with nature. Research suggests that exposure to natural environments can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while also enhancing mood and overall psychological resilience. By fostering a harmonious relationship with the environment, individuals can nurture a positive mindset and improve their mental health.



Practicing environmental wellness encourages a sense of purpose and responsibility, which are essential components of psychological well-being. When individuals actively participate in eco-friendly behaviors, such as recycling or reducing energy consumption, they often experience a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. Environmental sustainability can provide individuals with a sense of belonging and community, further bolstering their mental health. By recognizing the interconnectedness between personal wellness and environmental stewardship, individuals can cultivate a more holistic approach to mental health that benefits both themselves and the planet.



Go out doors an explore!

Connecting with Nature

Connecting with nature is like giving your mind a breath of fresh air. Being outdoors, surrounded by trees, grass, and open skies, has a powerful impact on mental health. One big reason is that nature helps reduce stress. Just being in a natural environment can lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, in your body. When you're surrounded by greenery or by the calming sound of flowing water, it's like hitting the reset button for your mind.



9 Helpful Tips

Take regular nature walks

Whether it's a stroll through a local park or a hike in the mountains, spending time walking in nature can help clear your mind and reduce stress.



Practice outdoor mindfulness

Find a quiet spot outdoors and engage in mindfulness practices such as deep breathing or meditation. Focus on the sights, sounds, and sensations around you to cultivate a sense of calm and presence.



Gardening therapy

Get your hands dirty and spend time tending to a garden or growing plants on your balcony. Gardening has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression while fostering a sense of accomplishment and connection to nature.



Outdoor exercise

Take your workout outside! Whether it's running, cycling, or doing yoga in the park, exercising outdoors can boost your mood and energy levels while providing the physical benefits of activity.

Nature photography

Bring a camera or smartphone with you on your outdoor adventures and capture the beauty of nature through photography. Focusing on finding and framing natural scenes can enhance mindfulness and appreciation for the world around you.



Picnics and outdoor meals

Pack a picnic basket and enjoy a meal outdoors with friends or family. Eating in nature can elevate mood and social connection while providing a refreshing change of scenery.



Nature-inspired art and crafts

Channel your creativity by engaging in nature-inspired art projects such as painting landscapes, making leaf rubbings, or crafting with natural materials. Creative expression in nature can be therapeutic and uplifting.

Nature immersion

Take a break from screens and digital devices by unplugging and immersing yourself fully in nature. Disconnecting from technology and reconnecting with the natural world can reduce mental clutter and increase feelings of relaxation and rejuvenation.



Volunteer for outdoor conservation

Get involved in environmental stewardship by volunteering for conservation projects in your community. Contributing to the preservation and restoration of natural habitats can foster a sense of purpose and fulfillment while benefiting mental health.

Fitness Tip



How physical activity supports mental health

Physical activity isn't just about keeping your body fit; it's also a major player in boosting your mental health. When you get moving, your brain releases chemicals like endorphins, which are basically natural mood lifters. Ever notice how after a good workout, you feel more energized and happier? That's the magic of endorphins kicking in. Plus, physical activity can help reduce levels of stress hormones like cortisol, giving you a sense of calm and relaxation.

Engaging in regular physical activity can also improve your sleep quality. When your body gets tired from moving around during the day, it's more likely to fall into a deep, restorative sleep at night. And we all know how important a good night's sleep is for our mental well-being. Better sleep means you wake up feeling refreshed and ready to take on the day, which can positively impact your mood and ability to handle stress.

Physical activity can boost your self-esteem and confidence. Setting and achieving fitness goals, whether it's running a certain distance or mastering a new yoga pose, can give you a sense of accomplishment. As you see progress in your physical abilities, you start to believe in your own capabilities more. This can translate into other areas of your life, making you feel more empowered and resilient in the face of challenges.

Find activities you enjoy, whether it's dancing, hiking, or playing a sport, so you're more likely to stick with it.

- Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days of the week.
- Mix it up with different types of workouts to keep things interesting and prevent boredom.
- Don't forget to listen to your body and give it rest when needed to avoid burnout or injury.



Stay
ACTIVE



Let's talk about creating Healthy Habits!



Creating healthy habits is a transformative journey that begins with a clear understanding of your wellness goals and a commitment to small, consistent actions. Start by identifying areas of your life where you'd like to make positive changes, whether it's improving your diet, increasing physical activity, or reducing stress. Break these broader objectives into specific, manageable tasks that you can incorporate into your daily routine.

For example, if your goal is to eat healthier, start by adding more fruits and vegetables to your meals or swapping out sugary snacks for healthier alternatives. Consistency is key to forming habits, so strive to practice these behaviors regularly, reinforcing them with positive reinforcement and self-compassion along the way.

Maintaining these healthy habits requires ongoing effort and dedication. It's essential to stay flexible and adapt your strategies as needed, especially when faced with challenges or setbacks. Recognize that progress may not always be linear, and setbacks are natural parts of the journey towards better health. Instead of dwelling on setbacks, focus on learning from them and recommitting to your goals with renewed determination.

It is important to surround yourself with supportive individuals who can provide encouragement and accountability. Don't hesitate to seek out resources or professional guidance when needed. By prioritizing consistency, resilience, and self-care, you can create sustainable healthy habits that contribute to a happier, more fulfilling lifestyle.



Here are four tips to assist you in establishing healthy habits:



Start Small and Be Specific:

Tip: Begin with small, manageable changes that are easy to incorporate into your daily routine. For example, instead of saying "I will exercise more," commit to "I will walk for 10 minutes after lunch every day."

Why It Helps: Small changes are less overwhelming and easier to maintain, leading to gradual and sustainable improvement.

Set Clear and Achievable Goals:

Tip: Define clear, specific, and realistic goals. Use the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. For instance, "I will drink 8 cups of water daily for the next month."

Why It Helps: Clear goals provide direction and a sense of accomplishment as you reach them, keeping you motivated.



Track Your Progress:

Tip: Keep a journal, use an app, or create a chart to track your habits and progress. Record what you did, how you felt, and any observations.

Why It Helps: Tracking progress allows you to see your improvements over time, identify patterns, and stay accountable.



Be Patient and Persistent:

Tip: Understand that creating new habits takes time and setbacks are a normal part of the process. Be patient with yourself and persist even when progress seems slow.

Why It Helps: Patience and persistence help you build resilience, making it more likely that your new habits will stick in the long term.



SUPERSTAR Fish

Fish is delicious! There are many varieties to explore, each with its own unique texture and flavor. The following fish have great nutrition and safety profiles and are considered eco-friendly - being responsibly caught or farmed and not overfished.

Alaskan Salmon. Both wild salmon and farm salmon are great for your diet, but if budget allows, the wild variety may contain more omega-3s, vitamins and minerals.

Cod. This flaky white fish has a mild flavor and is packed with protein, B vitamins and minerals.

Herring. A single three-ounce serving contains a whopping 20 grams of protein and contains many other key nutrients.

Mahi-mahi. A tropical firm textured fish that is also called dolphinfish, but is completely different from the mammal dolphin!

Northeast Atlantic Mackerel. This oily fish is one of the healthiest available.

Rainbow Trout. These salmon relatives are largely farmed in the U.S. market where operations are held to strict environmental standards.

Sardines. An oily fish rich in many vitamins. The canned version is easy to find.

Striped bass. A firm and flaky texture full of flavor, and sustainable either farmed or wild.

Tuna. It's recommended to limit yellowfin, albacore and ahi tuna because of their high mercury content. When buying canned tuna, choose light tuna ("chunk light"), which is almost always the lower-mercury species called skipjack.

Arctic char. The meat is firm, with fine flake and flavor resembling something between salmon and trout.

5 easy tips that can make a positive impact on your everyday life:

1. **Stay Hydrated:** Make sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Keeping hydrated helps maintain bodily functions, improves cognitive function, and boosts energy levels. Keep a reusable water bottle with you as a reminder to drink water regularly.



2. **Practice Gratitude:** Take a moment each day to reflect on things you're grateful for. Gratitude has been linked to increased happiness and overall well-being. It can be as simple as jotting down three things you're thankful for in a journal before bed or expressing gratitude to someone in your life.



3. **Move Regularly:** Incorporate movement into your daily routine, even if you have a sedentary job. Take short walks during breaks, stretch regularly, or opt for stairs instead of elevators when possible. Small bursts of physical activity throughout the day can improve mood, reduce stress, and increase productivity.



4. **Unplug Before Bed:** Create a relaxing bedtime routine that doesn't involve screens. Turn off electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops at least an hour before bedtime. Instead, engage in calming activities like reading a book, meditating, or practicing deep breathing exercises to promote better sleep quality.



5. **Plan Ahead:** Spend a few minutes each evening planning for the next day. This can include setting out clothes, packing lunches, or creating a to-do list. Planning ahead reduces morning stress and helps you start the day on a more organized note, increasing productivity and reducing the likelihood of feeling overwhelmed.



Featured Recipe of the Month

BLACK BEAN QUINOA BOWL



Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- Pinch of salt
- ½ cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- ½ small banana, sliced
- 1 tablespoon chocolate-hazelnut spread
- Pinch of flaky sea salt

Directions

Bring water and a pinch of regular salt to a boil in a small saucepan. Stir in oats, reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid is absorbed, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and let stand 2 to 3 minutes. Top with banana, chocolate spread and flaky salt.

Ingredients

- ¾ cup canned black beans, rinsed
- ⅔ cup cooked quinoa
- ¼ cup hummus
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- ¼ medium avocado, diced
- 3 tablespoons pico de gallo
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Directions

Combine beans and quinoa in a bowl. Stir hummus and lime juice together in a small bowl; thin with water to desired consistency. Drizzle the hummus dressing over the beans and quinoa. Top with avocado, pico de gallo and cilantro.

Sweet Treat of the Month

CHOCOLATE BANANA OATMEAL



Health Tip of the Month

Eye Care

If you work with screens for extended periods, follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. Additionally, consider using blue light filters or adjusting screen brightness to reduce eye strain.



Fitness Tip of the Month

Watch your posture

Poor posture can increase fatigue and strain your muscles. Sit tall. Be sure the monitor and keyboard are in alignment and that you aren't forced into awkward or straining positions to reach your tools.



Quote of the Month

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.

-Oscar Wilde

be the best
version of
yourself

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DAYS TILL

SUMMER

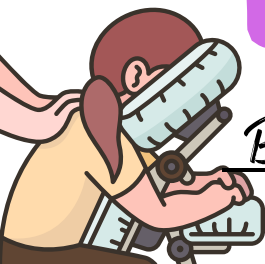


THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING THE



HEALTH FAIR!

Big congratulations to the winners of the raffle!



Rhodora Tan
Violeta Jacinto
Edmund Bangdong
Nicholas Gomez

Maria Moreno
Evelia Laurian
Melanie Baker
Veronica Reyes

Alyssa Rosetti
Ivania Rivera
Giselle Gutierrez
Jim Celoni

