



WHAT'S INSIDE

QUESTION & ANSWER

Meditation

EXERCISE ANYWHERE

Ankle Circle

MIND MATTERS

Tech Therapy

CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH

Hydrate

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Brainpower

RECIPE

Overnight Oats

IN THIS ISSUE

- May is Mental Health Awareness month. Check out the main article below for insight into the stigma surrounding mental illness and for suggestions on how you can help to reduce it. The Mind Matters section discusses the pros and cons of app-based therapy.
- As we move into the summer months and temperatures increase, remember to hydrate. Check out the Did You Know section and the Challenge of the Month for information on why proper hydration is necessary and how to estimate the amount of water you should drink each day.

SWWC
LIVE WELL

CHOOSE EMPOWERMENT OVER SHAME

By: Julia Miller

Do you know anyone struggling with a mental illness? Every year, 1 in 5 adults in the U.S experiences a mental illness. There are many different 'reasons' why mental illnesses develop: genetics, the result of childhood trauma, overwhelming stress and other times we simply do not know. These reasons are some of the same reasons other health problems arise like cancer, arthritis or diabetes. So why are mental illnesses perceived differently? The reason is: Stigma.

What are the effects of stigma?

Shame, disgrace, isolated - these are feelings associated with the concept of stigma. Stigma leads to prejudice against people with mental illness. When you are fighting a mental illness you may feel loneliness, shame and hopelessness. These are the same feelings you get from stigma - fear of being misunderstood, isolated, and humiliated, especially if you are not getting treatment.

Mental health needs are not unlike the needs of those fighting cancer and other diseases, where support from family, friends and the community is crucial. You cannot have health without mental health - so let's break the stigma and let those dealing with mental illness heal openly with full support.



What can you do to reduce stigma?

- You can make a difference by simply recognizing that having a mental illness is not anyone's fault.
- Educate yourself and others about the stigma and stereotypes of mental illness.
- Be mindful of your attitudes and behaviors - recognize your judgmental thinking.
- Choose your words respectfully.
- If you know someone fighting a mental illness, focus on that person as a whole and not just their disease.
- Offer support and encouragement - treat everyone with respect, illness or not.
- When reaching out to someone with a mental illness, ask the person what they need from you to best support them. Then, most importantly, follow through with those requests.
- Last but not least, be inclusive - to EVERYONE. Kindness matters. Words matter.

A personal note from the author:

"In my experience I have come across a lot of stigma around mental illnesses. I have silently struggled with multiple mental illnesses for years. I thought I was the only one of my kind, that no one else in this world had the thoughts and feelings my brain had. A year ago I decided enough was enough and that I was going to fight for my life back."



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know the human body is made up of over 50% water? Proper hydration will do more than quench your thirst, it also carries waste out of the cells, regulates internal body temperature, lubricates joints, cushions vital organs and can positively impact your mood and productivity. Divide your body weight (in pounds) in half and aim to drink that number in ounces of water each day.

By: Hayley Jones

Q: HOW CAN I START MEDITATING?

A: Meditating can be as simple as focusing your breath. Let's talk about some benefits of meditation and a couple meditation activities you can try.

You may have heard that meditation can provide many physical and emotional benefits such as:

- Decreased blood pressure and heart rate
- Decreased stress
- Improved mood and focus

A great way to start practicing meditation is to focus the mind on your breath.

1. Start in a seated or laying position where you do not feel discomfort but are not completely relaxed. Close your eyes.
2. Bring all your awareness to your natural breathing pattern. Slowly lengthen your breath by inhaling to the full capacity of your lungs and then exhaling all the air out from your lungs.
3. Complete this as long as you would like, keeping focus on your breath.

Another way to introduce meditation to your day is to try a body scan meditation:

1. Find a comfortable position and close your eyes.
2. Starting at your feet and moving up to your head, bring all your attention to different parts of your body.
3. Notice how each part of your body feels. Do you feel any sensations, temperature differences, tension or pain? You do not have to try to change anything, just simply notice.



EXERCISE ANYWHERE

Regular movement is fundamental to good health. Moving or changing postures every 30 minutes is recommended. Exercise Anywhere provides you with basic stretching and strengthening exercises to incorporate throughout your day.

Ankle Circle



Sitting tall, extend one leg. Slowly move foot in a circular motion. Complete circles in each direction.

A NEW TYPE OF THERAPY

By: Leigh Pomnitz

Roughly 20% of Americans experience a mental illness each year, yet nearly half of those mental illnesses go untreated. Why do people not seek treatment? Each situation is different, but some reasons might include:

- Treatment costs may not be covered by insurance.
- The price of treatments can be high.
- Schedule conflicts limit access to in-person appointments.
- Lack of transportation to and from in-person appointments.
- Finding a therapist that matches the client needs and personality can be difficult.
- The social stigma of mental illness can prevent people from seeking help.

App-based therapy is becoming more common, and in some cases possibly more helpful, for those suffering from mental illness. App-based therapy allows people to chat with a therapist via their mobile device or computer, either through text messages or a video call.

Benefits of app-based therapy:

- It could be more affordable than conventional in-person therapy.
- The flexibility of where and when sessions take place can be beneficial to those with a busy schedule.
- You can remain somewhat anonymous if you are concerned about others knowing you are going to treatment.
- Transportation to an appointment is not needed.
- There is a greater pool of professionals to meet which may make it easier to find the right fit.

Drawbacks of app-based therapy:

- A smart phone, computer and access to the internet is needed, which might not be available to everyone.
- In some cases, virtual therapy may be more expensive than in-person therapy sessions.
- Removing the in-person interaction might alter communication or the session's effectiveness.
- There is currently not much research about the long-term impacts of app-based therapy.

Two of the most common apps are BetterHelp and Talkspace. While more research is needed regarding app-based therapy, preliminary research shows the apps are helping to break the mental health stigma and are encouraging more people to seek help.



QUICK CLICK

BETTERHELP

BetterHelp is an online counseling platform offering unlimited access to licensed therapists for \$40-\$70 per week. Their counselors specialize in specific issues, such as depression, anxiety, grief, relationships, parenting, addictions, trauma, LGBT matters, and more. BetterHelp is confidential, HIPAA compliant, and makes professional counseling easily accessible through a computer, tablet or smartphone.

By: Leigh Pomnitz

CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH

STAY HYDRATED

By: Julia Miller

As the weather warms up, you need to drink up. This month, challenge yourself to drink half of your body weight (in pounds) in ounces of water every day. Keep track of how many days you complete this – aim for seven days in a row! Also, note how you feel when you start to drink more water. Try to make this a part of your everyday routine and remember to drink more water when you are exercising, sick, outside or at high altitude.

BOOST YOUR BRAINPOWER

Fueling *your brain* is just as important as fueling your body. That quote your parents told you about ‘you are what you eat’ may actually hold some truth to it! You can improve memory, learning, and cognitive function by incorporating certain foods into your diet. Here is a list of food items that hold brain-boosting benefits:

GREEN VEGGIES: Research suggests plant-based foods like leafy greens could help slow age-related cognitive decline by up to 40%.

Examples: Broccoli, cabbage, kale, collard greens, spinach

Try this: For your next sandwich wrap, substitute lettuce or spinach instead of a tortilla.

FATTY FISH: Unsaturated fats (omega-3 fatty acids) are abundant in fatty fish. These types of fats may improve memory and can help protect your heart.

Examples: Salmon, tuna, sardines mackerel, herring, cod, pollack

Try this: Substitute fish for other meats 1-2 times per week or try salmon tacos. Don’t like fish? Get omega-3’s via nuts, avocado, chia seeds or plant seed oils instead.

BERRIES: The natural coloring in berries are called flavonoids and can help improve memory. The darker the berry, the more flavonoids it has.

Examples: blackberries, blueberries, cherries, raspberries

Try this: Add berries into oatmeal or use them to make a smoothie!

WALNUTS: Heart health and cognitive function are a few things walnuts help promote.

Try this: Add to oatmeal/salad for an extra crunch or add to stir-fry for extra protein.

WHOLE GRAINS: Whole grains are a great energy source for the brain! The brain mainly functions from carbohydrates (glucose), which whole grains are packed full of.

Examples: Brown rice, barely, quinoa, whole grain pasta, whole grain bread

Try this: Substitute whole wheat pasta in spaghetti or make a taco bowl using quinoa or brown rice.

FEATURED RECIPE

BLUEBERRY AND WALNUT OVERNIGHT OATS



Nutritional Info

Calories	514
Fat (g)	24
Carbohydrates (g)	61
Protein (g)	20

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup frozen blueberries
- 1/2 banana
- 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/3 cup milk of choice
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts, divided
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1/3 cup rolled oats
- 1/8 tsp vanilla extract, optional
- 1 Tbsp chia seeds, optional

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place blueberries, banana, yogurt, milk, 3 Tbsp walnuts, honey, and vanilla in a blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Pour the blueberry-walnut mixture into a bowl and stir in the oats and optional chia seeds.
3. Pour the mixture into a jar or small serving container.
4. Top with remaining 1 Tbsp walnuts, cover, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.
5. Serve cold straight from the refrigerator.

PREP TIME: 10 MINS

SERVES: 1