

Feature Article

Using Your Mind to Heal Your Body

When you're ill or in pain, taking time to look at your habits, diet and attitude may provide insight into what ails you.

"Clearly, the more active you become on your own behalf, the more likely you'll do well," says James S. Gordon, M.D., director of the Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Washington, D.C., and author of "Manifesto for a New Medicine." "Thinking about your illness, what may have caused it and what you can do to speed your recovery, may minimize your need for drugs and surgery because doing so maximizes your capacity for helping yourself."

The following tips may help you move faster from diagnosis to recovery by using your mind to get more involved in your care.

Strive for self-awareness

Heredity and infections cause many illnesses. But some conditions are part psychological, part behavioral, and people often play more of a role in causing health problems than they realize.

Asking yourself questions can help you get at the root of a health problem and on the road to recovery. Start with: How did this condition come about? Is there something going on in my life that could be causing it?

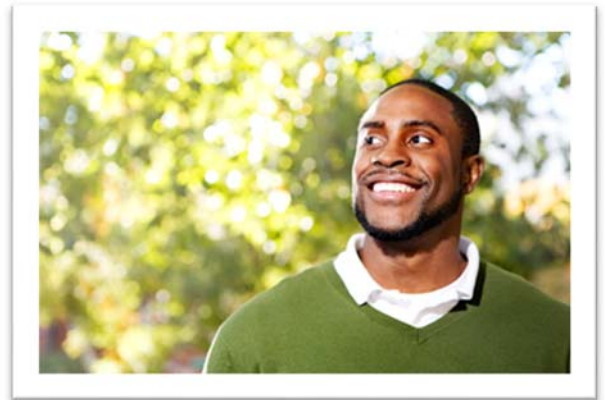
If you suffer from chronic neck pain, for instance, there may be a connection between your pain and the way you sit hunched over your desk all day.

Look at your diet

Take a close look at your diet and eating habits as the next step in the process. An unhealthful diet can cause many health problems, including diabetes, chronic heartburn, heart disease and general malaise.

"Many people eat too much and are overweight as a result," Dr. Gordon says. "And, there's increasing evidence that obesity predisposes you to a variety of illnesses and that maintaining a healthful weight can contribute to longevity."

There are also some common foods many people are sensitive to, such as coffee, milk and red meat, as well as food additives and preservatives.



"Depending on your symptoms, you might consider eliminating these foods for a while to see if your symptoms diminish," Dr. Gordon says. "As a general rule, I suggest people who want to eat more healthfully include large quantities of fiber-rich raw fruits and vegetables in their diets, as well as a morning helping of wheat and oat bran."

Focus on the possible

If you're diagnosed with an illness, take steps to learn about it, including the range of symptoms and outcomes.

"The dominant mode in traditional medicine is to focus on the disease and all the terrible things that might happen," Dr. Gordon says. "If you're diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, for example, you would be told it's degenerative and that, in most people, the disability worsens and becomes permanent."

By accepting this prediction, the disease and your fears about it can take over your life."

As an alternative, stay focused on the best possible prognosis instead of the worst-case scenario.

You may also want to investigate alternative treatments. "If you do some research, you may find a treatment that will at least be a complement to your conventional therapy," Dr. Gordon says.



This Month's Webinar: Master Your Mind—Emotional and Physical Health Connections

You get upsetting news and suddenly feel sick to your stomach. You're nervous about a big meeting and you begin to sweat, your heart races. Examples of the mind-body connection are endless. Particularly helpful for those living with chronic illness or other health challenges, this dynamic session provides strategies that employ the mind to lessen chronic pain, reduce depression associated with physical ailments, improve health outcomes, and more. You'll learn about the latest research findings and gain techniques to help you feel your best, both mentally and physically.

Watch this webinar any time throughout the month of June when you log in to IMPACT on the Web at www.MyImpactSolution.com.

Monthly Highlights



Understanding Alzheimer's Disease

Did you know June is Alzheimer's Awareness Month? Alzheimer's is a

disease that causes changes in areas of the brain that control memory and reasoning. Why the disease develops is not yet fully understood. At present, it has no cure. But proper care can help most people with Alzheimer's live a comfortable life for many years. Visit the Emotional Wellbeing Tile to learn more!



Factors to Consider When Setting Your Investment Goals

There are many factors to consider before setting your investment goals. Visit the Financial Tile to learn how to evaluate your status.

Visit www.MyImpactSolution.com

**Forgot your login information?
Give us a call at 800-227-6007.**

Eldercare Spotlight

Managing Stress-Related Eating

Caregivers are often advised to practice self-care, and for many, indulging in food can feel like an effective way to find relief from feelings of stress or depression. While it can be challenging to change eating habits, there are steps you can take so that eating fills biological rather than emotional needs:

- Clean out your cupboards and fill the shelves with healthy snack alternatives
- Develop emotional awareness: consider what emotions compel you to eat and then devise a plan to address these emotions head-on
- Eat when you are physically hungry rather than deny yourself, and enjoy the food you eat
- Try meditation: simple deep breathing can be done almost anywhere, and is a more positive form of stress relief
- Seek connection with other people, not with food
- Celebrate success: remind yourself frequently of all of the positive changes you are making



If you would like more information on how your EAP can be of assistance, give us a call today at 800-227-6007.

Contributed By: Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging

Information in IMPACT on Wellness is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional.

You can contact IMPACT Solutions for professional counseling and guidance 24 hours a day at 800-227-6007.

Depression Awareness

Did you know... that 1 in 10 people will deal with depression at some time in their lives?

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Most people experience ups and downs in life. Sadness is a normal reaction to events such as the loss of a loved one or a setback at work. But if feelings of emptiness or despair take hold and are interfering with your ability to function or enjoy time spent with friends or family, you may be experiencing depression. Sometimes it's hard to identify depression while you're experiencing it. Seek help if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, pessimism and/or helplessness
- Insomnia or excessive sleepiness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies you previously enjoyed
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

IMPACT offers confidential professional counseling as well as depression and suicide awareness information on the web where you will find resources, assessment tools, fact sheets, and guidance on how to get help.

