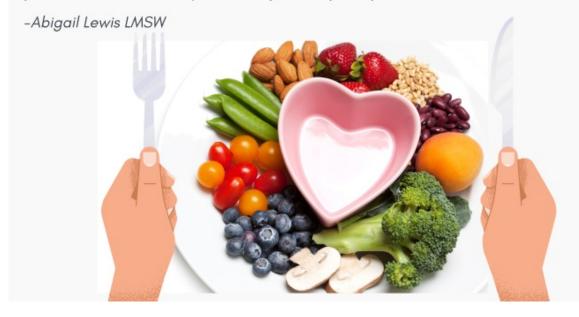## NUTRITION & MENTAL HEALTH

March is nutrition month. We all know that healthy food is good for our bodies, but what we eat has a significant impact on our mental health as well. A 2022 study found that following the Mediterranean diet for 6 weeks was helpful in reducing symptoms of depression, as compared to the control group. The Mediterranean diet is a traditional diet that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, fish, whole grains, and healthy fats. A 2019 review of the literature found that eating fruits and vegetables is associated with positive impacts on psychological health. Daily vegetable consumption helps reduce symptoms of depression as well.

Changing your diet can feel overwhelming. Food plays a large role in our lives. From family recipes to favorite restaurants, the anxiety from changing everything about what we eat can make us want to change nothing. If a diet overhaul does not sound appealing, maybe start with one meal a day. Or try following the 80/20 rule. If 80% of what you eat is healthy, 20% can be whatever sounds good. Or make it a goal to get 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day. I find it easier to try to add veggies in my diet than to try to take ice cream out! The idea is to do your best and try to be aware of how your nutritional intake impacts both your body and your mind.

–Abigail Lewis LMSW

THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Sleep is perhaps one of the most overlooked factors when it comes to maintaining and prioritizing mental health. "During sleep, the brain works to evaluate and remember thoughts and memories, and it appears that a lack of sleep is especially harmful to the consolidation of positive emotional content. This can influence mood and emotional reactivity and is tied to mental health disorders and their severity, including the risk of suicidal ideas or behaviors".

The more we discover about the importance of sleep and mental health, the more we come to find that it is a bidirectional relationship. This means that while poor sleep quality can have a negative impact on your mental health, mental health disorders tend to make it more difficult for those afflicted to get quality sleep. If you or someone you know feel you can relate to this never-ending cycle, please do not hesitate to reach out and schedule an appointment with us.

Mental Health and Sleep | Sleep Foundation

Useful Tips & Tricks to Assist in Sleep Quality
1. Stick to a sleep schedule
2. Pay attention to what you eat and drink
3. Create a restful environment
4. Limit daytime naps
5. Include physical activity in your daily routine
6. Manage worries

Contact Us!

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