

Holistic Healing Hints

At AAFS, we encourage our clients to think holistically in being a participant in their own healing. Being proactive in your health can also give one a sense of empowerment and help to regain control of one's emotional, mental and physical well being. For clients that are battling anxiety and depression, we recommend our clients incorporate mindfulness, movement, and exercise into their daily health routine. With that said, here are some strategies to help on your road to healing:

1. Address your diet. The mind and body are inextricably linked together, and the health of one affects the health of the other. If you are eating a lot of highly processed foods and sugar, try instead to focus your diet around fresh vegetables and fruits, lean proteins, and whole grains. Often appetite is impacted by depression. If you find yourself losing your appetite, try carrying around snacks and/or leaving them around where you will frequently walk by them. Grab a handful here and there. Try eating healthy snacks, particularly high protein snacks such as jerky and nuts (almonds or cashews are a better choice than peanuts). If you tend to overeat, make sure you are not eating while distracted, i.e. in front of the TV, and set a time in the evening past which you don't eat any more.
2. Try natural supplements. Start with a good food based multivitamin, and a calcium supplement, particularly if you do not eat a lot of calcium rich foods. Add a fish oil supplement or flax seed which are rich in Omega 3 fatty acids. Fish oil has anti-inflammatory properties and cardiovascular benefits, along with benefits to brain health. L-Theanine is a good anti-anxiety supplement to try, in conjunction with 5 HTP (hydroxytryptophan), which is a natural antidepressant and precursor to the brain neurotransmitter serotonin, responsible for mood regulation.
3. Exercise. Check with your doctor to determine an appropriate exercise program for you. The ideal exercise program that will help alleviate depression focuses on cardiovascular exercise. What you want is to choose activities that will raise your heart rate for a sustained period of time so that endorphins are released.
4. Talk out your problems. A professional counselor you are comfortable with and with whom you have a rapport can be an excellent resource. You will get an unbiased and trained perspective on your issues. Also, confiding in close friends and family can give you the emotional connection and support you need to overcome your depressive symptoms. Take time out for your yourself but remember not to isolate yourself.
5. Take small steps each day to honor and care for yourself. Create a list of multiple small pleasures you enjoy. Each day, make it a point to do one of those things for yourself. When you complete an activity, cross it off your list. When the list is exhausted, make a new one.
6. Six reasons to get your eight hours of sleep.
 - Learning and memory: Sleep helps the brain commit new information to memory through a process called memory consolidation. In studies, people who'd slept after learning a task did better on tests later.
 - Metabolism and weight: Chronic sleep deprivation may cause weight gain by affecting the way our bodies process and store carbohydrates, and by altering levels of hormones that affect our appetite.
 - Safety: Sleep debt contributes to a greater tendency to fall asleep during the daytime. These lapses may cause falls and mistakes such as medical errors, air traffic mishaps, and road accidents.
 - Mood: Sleep loss may result in irritability, impatience, inability to concentrate, and moodiness. Too little sleep can also leave you too tired to do the things you like to do. Research has also shown that lack of sleep has been linked to symptoms of mental and emotional disorders so getting enough sleep is essential to recovery.
 - Cardiovascular health: Serious sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, increased stress hormone levels, and irregular heartbeat.
 - Disease: Sleep deprivation alters immune function, including the activity of the body's killer cells. Plenty of sleep may also help fight cancer, colds, the flu and many other ailments and diseases.
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Additional Resources:

www.partnersinresilience.com
<http://www.weightandwellness.com/>
<http://ptsd.about.com/od/selfhelp/tp/mindfulexercises.htm>
<http://www.livingwell.org.au/Tipsforlivingwell/Mindfulnessexercises/Creatingyourownmindfulnessexercise.aspx>
<http://www.webmd.com/diet/guide/vitamins-and-minerals-good-food-sources>
http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Can_taking_a_multi-vitamin_such_as_One-a-Day_for_Women_cause_dizziness#ixzz1P5CqqjYI
<http://www.sam-e-supplement.com/>
<http://www.nordicnaturals.com/>
<http://www.nutrikey.net/>
<http://www.stonyfield.com>
<http://www.rainbowlight.com/>