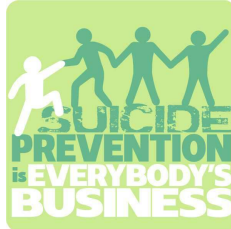




February 2017

Suicide Awareness

At some point, many people may feel life is no longer worth living and consider suicide. Most people choose to live because they realize the crisis they are facing is temporary and that death is final. But sometimes a person feels he or she cannot escape the crisis. They may feel an utter loss of control.



The feelings and thoughts someone may experience can include: I can't stop the pain, can't think clearly, can't make decisions, can't see any way out, can't sleep, eat or work, can't get out of depression, can't make the sadness go away, can't see themselves as worthwhile, or can't seem to get control.

If you experience these feelings, recognize there are other options:

- ◆ Realize depression and hopelessness blur your viewpoint and diminish your ability to make good decisions.
- ◆ Remember that feelings of suicide are the result of problems that can be treated.
- ◆ **SEEK HELP!**
- ◆ If you have a mental health specialist, call them. Otherwise call:
 - the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).**
 - **Call the same number and press 1 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line.**
- ◆ **Call 911 or your local emergency number.**
- ◆ Reach out to a close friend or loved one.
- ◆ Contact your minister or someone else in your faith community.

Here are additional suggestions on how to help and talk with a person who is threatening suicide:

- ◆ Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- ◆ Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- ◆ Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- ◆ Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- ◆ Don't dare him or her to do it.
- ◆ Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- ◆ Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- ◆ Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- ◆ Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills. Seek professional help through local or national suicide prevention resources.



HEADSPACE

Tech Corner

Headspace: Guided Meditation and Mindfulness

- ◆ Meditation made simple.
- ◆ Guided meditation is suitable for all levels from Headspace.
- ◆ Meditation can help improve your focus, exercise mindful awareness, relieve anxiety and reduce stress.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/headspace-guided-meditation/id493145008?mt=8>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.getsomeheadspace.android&hl=en>

Detachment – A Stress Management Technique

- Unplugging or detaching from our busy, stressful lives helps us build “resilience” or the ability to better cope with what life throws at us.
- Taking a vacation is an example of detachment.
- Another way that you can detach is called “flow activity.” These are meaningful, fun, goal-directed activities that can absorb your complete attention.
- A few examples of flow activities include: reading for pleasure, photography, gardening, dancing, or doing arts and crafts like painting and needlework.
- In today’s busy and stressed world, it’s easy for us to fall into an “eat-sleep-work-repeat” routine.
- Participating in flow activities 2-3 hours a week can significantly increase your happiness and lower your stress.

Give it a try!



The Connection between Your Meals and Your Mood



What you eat affects how your brain works. Studies show a diet high in refined sugar and other types of very processed foods actually decreases brain function. It may even lead to a worsening of mood related conditions like depression.

So aim to eat a healthy, well balanced diet! Here are a few examples of foods that can boost your mood:

- **Nuts** – they contain magnesium, a mineral that helps keep levels of a key stress hormone low.
- **Broccoli** (or other foods high in folic acid) – the folic acid helps reduce stress.
- **Whole grains** – complex carbohydrates like those found in whole grain muffins help increase your levels of the mood boosting hormone serotonin.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** – these can be found in fatty fish like salmon and tuna. They help increase communication between brain cells which improves your ability to manage stress.
- **Dark Chocolate** – don’t go wild, but dark chocolate does wonders to help you produce mood boosting endorphins.
- **Milk and yogurt** – these, as well as other foods like nuts, seeds, chicken, turkey, and oats contain tryptophan. Our body converts this into the mood-raising chemical serotonin.

Upping Your Exercise to Lower Your Stress

- Any type of exercise – from taking a walk to kicking a ball – can help lower your stress.
- Done regularly, exercise improves your overall health and increases your energy.
- Not exercising can make you feel sluggish, lower your productivity and decrease your drive to solve problems.
- Working out has the opposite effect. It helps increase your self-confidence and motivation.
- Exercise increases the “feel good” chemicals produced in your brain called endorphins.
- Regular exercise also lowers the symptoms of anxiety and mild depression.
- Finally, good quality sleep is often hard to get when you’re experiencing stress, anxiety and depression. Exercise helps improve your sleep.

