



EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

MOVING LIVES FORWARD

THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

When we talk about our body and mind, we often separate them into two distinct categories. We tend to think of certain ailments only affecting our physical health, while certain moods and feelings only affecting our mental health. The fact of the matter is, mental and physical health are fundamentally linked and work very closely to influence every aspect of a person's life. (Canadian Mental Health Association). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as: a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity; The WHO states that "there is no health without mental health." (Canadian Mental Health Association). Let's think about this for a moment...when we have a period of time when we feel overwhelmed, anxious or down, we tend to feel depleted of energy. The thought of doing any type of physical activity can seem daunting and something we are not interested in it at all. Also, if we have a physical injury or illness, the idea of not being able to work or being physically limited can cause us to feel sad, frustrated and alone. These are just a few examples of how something that we think of as more physical affects our mental state, and how something we are experiencing mentally can impact our physical health. Another example of this connection is how depression alone can cause chronic fatigue, insomnia and increased sensitivity to aches and pains due to abnormal function of neurotransmitters in the brain (Blue Cross and Blue Shield). An important fact to think about is how having poor mental health can inhibit our abilities to fight off certain illnesses, and can interfere with our ability to make healthy choices and decisions (when you're

stressed...do you tend to choose the healthy plate of veggies or the bag of potato chips?) This information can seem like a lot to unpack, but it's important to really consider how our minds and bodies work together to determine our overall well-being.

Both the mind and body can do amazing things and tend to be very resilient in the face of adversities. This means that it is never too late to take care of ourselves, love ourselves and give our minds and bodies grace (especially during times of change and uncertainty). Here are some tips to help you get on the path to having a more positive mind and body connection:

- **Exercise regularly.** Exercise can release feel-good brain chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that can ease depression and anxiety.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Diets loaded with processed, high-calorie and low-nutrient foods have been linked with increased depression and anxiety. Avoid skipping meals, which can lead to fatigue and unhealthy snacking. Try to include fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, fish and healthy fats, like avocados, into your meals. This will be helpful for increased brain function.

Cheryl's Corner of Caring
"Be the energy you want
to attract."
(Amanda Cerny)

THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

- **Maintain a normal sleep schedule.** Not getting enough sleep has been linked with depression, anxiety and stress. The recommendation for adults is seven or more hours of sleep per night. If you're having trouble falling and staying asleep, try one of the following:

- * relaxing before bed,
- * lowering your caffeine intake, or
- * setting a more strict schedule for bedtime.

- **Get support.** Your social circle is also a vital aspect to preventing a decline in mental health. But mental health can be a difficult topic to discuss with peers. This often prevents people from seeking help. Don't be afraid to reach out to friends and family for support. (Blue Cross and Blue Shield)

- **You can also check out these websites** for more information about taking care of your physical and mental health:

- * <https://www.mhanational.org/taking-good-care-yourself>
- * <https://www.inc.com/rhett-ower/11-ways-to-take-care-of-yourself-every-day-for-a-happier-mind-and-body.html>
- * <https://www.verywellmind.com/why-you-should-take-care-of-your-body-and-your-health-3145077>

Sources:

<https://blog.bcbsnc.com/2019/05/mental-health-affects-physical-health/>

<https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/connection-between-mental-and-physical-health/>

MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



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Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson,
Lincoln & Yuma

For additional support during
the COVID-19 Pandemic you
can call Centennial's
**COMMUNITY
SUPPORT LINE**

You can do this by calling your
nearest Centennial office:

Akron - 970.345.2254

Burlington - 719.346.8183

Cheyenne Wells - 719.346.8183

Elizabeth - 303.646.4519

Fort Morgan - 970.867.4924

Holyoke - 970.854.2114

Julesburg - 970.474.3769

Limon - 719.775.2313

Sterling - 970.522.4392

Wray - 970.332.3133

Yuma - 970.848.5412

Contact your local Centennial Mental Health Center for assistance with any Early Childhood need.

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