

THE HEART-MIND CONNECTION

FEBRUARY 2023

The *American Heart Association* (AHA) has been doing considerable research to determine the significance between heart and mental health. They have found substantial evidence to prove that each plays an important role in how the other functions.

“For example, studies show people with depression are at greater risk for heart attacks and strokes, whereas people who report feeling optimistic have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke. Adults who report having a greater sense of purpose in life engage in lifestyle behaviors that reduce heart health risks, such as smoking less, staying more physically active, and maintaining better blood glucose control, according to research cited in the statement,” (American Heart Association News, 2021).

With these findings, we now know that adding interventions to help people cultivate positive mental health can significantly impact improving heart health. Below are some tips on how you can start working to improve your heart and mental health today!

Add meditation to your routine:

Recent studies have offered promising results about the impact of meditation's impact on reducing stress, blood pressure, and risk of heart-related death (AHA, 2022).



A few tips to get you started on your meditation journey include:

- Block out a time to meditate each day- 5 to 10 minutes to start is great
- Do your best to sit quietly while concentrating on taking slow, deep breaths
- To enhance the experience, try adding peaceful music or white noise
- Be kind to yourself (Insider, 2022)

Improve stress management: Building skills to manage the stress in your life can lower your exposure to cortisol and other stress hormones that increase your risk of developing anxiety, depression, heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke. Ways to manage your stress include:

- Fostering healthy friendships and talking with friends and family
- Keeping a journal to write down your thoughts or what you're grateful for
- Prioritizing what you need to accomplish and removing tasks that aren't necessary
- Taking time for hobbies, such as reading, listening to music, or watching your favorite show or movie (Mayo Clinic, 2021)

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Make lifestyle improvements:

Start small. “.... making small, manageable daily improvements adds up to better overall health. Even small changes like adding more fruits and vegetables to your plate or walking around the house can help. Try to find physical activities you enjoy that can help you stay motivated,” (Harvard Health Publishing, 2021).

Seek professional help: Mental health is essential to everyone’s overall health and well-being, so just like other areas of your health, you may at times need to seek additional support from a professional. There are various ways someone can receive the support they need, including individual or group therapy, teletherapy, support groups, and much more. Mental health support has been proven to help reduce stress and improve the quality of life for those it serves by helping provide a space to identify problems, build coping skills, and find unbiased support.



If you or someone you know is struggling with a recent heart-related diagnosis or a decline in mental health, our program wants you to know we are here to help. Whether through our program, or another service, our team works to identify and address the emotional needs of those in our community and provide support.



OUR PROGRAM

We are designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety.



ANYONE CAN REFER

Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community referrals.



WE ARE DEDICATED

We are your local mental health experts dedicated to improving the quality of life for the patients we serve.



Call us today at:



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