

Want to take better care of your mental health? Here are 5 tips to get started.

Asha Upakrwoth, LMSW

Our mental health is the driving force to our overall well-being. When we do not take care of our mental health other areas of our body and or mental capacity will be affected. For example, if we are overly stressed mentally, we can develop health issues, eating concerns, decreased sleep which can all affect our decision-making skills and how we relate to others. Below are 5 practical ways to take care of our mental health.

1. Create a Healthy Work-Life Balance:

Majority of Americans find it difficult to create a healthy work/ life balance due to having to provide for ourselves and our family, the rising cost of living expenses, as well as the mindset of "being busy equals success". However, with always being busy, our mental health is affected.

It is important to create a healthy work/ life balance that allows times for breaks, mental health days, and time to just be. When we are able to create a healthy work/life balance, we find that we have time to spend with our families and or friends, time to create or engage in hobbies and or activities, and leisure time to just be in the present moment. A healthy work/ life balance can lead to decreased work-related stress and increased self-awareness.

2. Self-Care

When we engage in self-care, we are able to do things that brings us joy, peace, and a sense of happiness. Taking time away from our busy life has a positive effect on our mental health and allows us to give our brain a rest and engage in activities that we enjoy. When we are able to engage in activities that we enjoy our brain releases a hormone called dopamine which as a result increases our mood and we find that we are happier and relaxed. When we are happier and relaxed, we are able to naturally decrease stress and anxiety which can wreak havoc on our nervous system and mental health.

3. Quality Sleep

Quality sleep is essential for our mental health. Quality sleep allows our brain to rest and restores our brain cells in order for us to have another productive day. When we are overwhelmed, stressed, or anxious it can increase insomnia which does not allow us to fall asleep, stay asleep, and or have good quality sleep. It is important to create a relaxing nighttime routine that will increase sleep. For example, taking a hot shower or bath, reading a book, listening to calming music, prayer, and or drinking a hot cup of decaffeinated tea. It may take time for us to develop a healthy nighttime routine, but once we do it will increase our quality of sleep which will increase our mental health.

4. Lifestyle Changes

Lifestyle changes such as eating a well-balanced diet can improve cognition and increase your ability to focus. Along with eating healthy it is important to exercise which can reduce stress, depression, and anxiety symptoms. Exercise also helps increase blood circulation to our brain and other organs in the body. Exercise also decreases insomnia which helps you have a deeper more restful sleep which leads to better mental health.

5. Talk to Someone

It is also important to have community or have someone to talk to. Having someone to talk to helps relieve stress and can increase your mood. When we talk about our mental health it helps us find perspective in our situations in return allows us to have better mental health. It is also okay to seek additional counseling services from providers like Wedgwood Christian Services.