

Centerstone presents "Four Steps to Improved Mental Health" in honor of Mental Health Month

by Jennifer L. Craig
May 22 2017 4:01 PM



May is Mental Health Month, designed to raise awareness of mental health conditions and to improve wellness for all. One in five Americans has a treatable mental illness, and we all experience stress. The American Academy of Family Physicians reports two-thirds of visits to family physicians are due to stress-related symptoms. Clearly, we must

consider our mental health along with physical health and recognize how they impact each other.

Mental health is more than taking care of yourself “from the neck up.” The connections between physical and mental health are compelling. It’s remarkable how treating your body right contributes to a well-toned mind. Now is an ideal time to adopt the following four lifestyle habits to ensure you are taking care of your “whole- person health.”

Be active – Regular exercise and physical activity can help prevent and improve health issues, such as high blood pressure and diabetes. They’ve also been shown to help reduce anxiety and improve mood. One study showed people who exercised regularly were 25 percent less likely to develop depression or anxiety in the following five years. Whether it’s a walk outside, a trip to the gym or mowing the lawn, being active supports your mental and physical health.

Be nourished – You’ve likely heard “you are what you eat.” It’s a nice reminder since what you eat can impact your waistline as well as your mental health. Your dietary choices affect how your brain functions and can even influence your mood. Eating a balanced diet that incorporates whole grains (oatmeal, brown rice), lean protein (nuts, eggs, grilled chicken) and fruits and vegetables will nourish your body and mind.

Be rested – Sleep serves as your body’s reset button each evening, and a good night’s rest supports mental and emotional resilience. The Sleep Health Foundation notes “chronic sleep disruptions set the stage for negative thinking, depression, anxiety and emotional vulnerability.” Establishing regular sleep habits—a consistent bedtime and wake time, putting aside electronics and creating a comfortable sleeping space—rewards body and mind.

Be first – Self-care is an important practice for overall wellbeing. Take active responsibility for your physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health. That may mean spending time alone to recharge, exploring personal interests or saying “no” to something instead of overcommitting once again. It isn’t “selfish” to be concerned with self-care. You can’t help others power through life when you’re completely out of batteries.

Embrace the idea of whole-person health by trying out lifestyle habits that promote mental and physical wellness at the same time. Integrating care for your body and your mind is essential to overall wellbeing. Centerstone, a mental health and addiction services provider, supports individuals through whole person, coordinated care. For more information, call 888.291.4357 or visit [centerstone.org](https://www.centerstone.org).