

Healthy mind, healthy life



Many researches with clinical trials show that people with a mental health condition are more likely to have a preventable physical condition such as stroke, hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. However, with the negligence of the importance of mental health in our society and education system, many of us failed to associate this as a risk to our physical health.

When it comes to 'health', some would choose to acquire a healthier diet with more vegetables and less meat, or taking supplements to ensure adequate nutrition, while some would try to enhance their cardiorespiratory function through fitness and aerobic exercises. It is true that today's urbanites pay more attention to health than ever before, but most people focus merely on their physical health and try their best to enhance their immunity, and ignore the importance of having a healthy mental state. In fact, according to the World Health Organization's definition of 'health' in 2014, the overall health of an individual includes physical, psychological and social harmony. In other words, if a person's mental state is not healthy enough, even if he/she has a strong physique, it cannot be called a "healthy" state as a whole.

Genetically speaking, studies has found that the genes that make one develop a mental health condition may also play a part in physical conditions. Mental illnesses like depression and anxiety can come with headaches, fatigue and digestive conditions, and anxiety can create an upset stomach, palpitation, constipation or diarrhea. Other symptoms include insomnia, restlessness and difficulty

Written by: Dr. Wong Wing Kun, Charlotte, Specialist in Psychiatry.

Disclaimer:

1. The content only represents the personal views of the author and does not represent the position of DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited (the "Bank").
2. Although the information contained herein has been taken from sources that are believed by the author to be accurate as at the original publication date appearing on this document, the Bank makes no warranty or representation as to the correctness, completeness or accuracy of the contents. Any use of, or reliance on, the contents of this document shall be at your own risk. The Bank accepts no liability whatsoever for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from or in connection with any use of or reliance on this document or its contents.

concentrating etc. The above finding provided us a closer look on the biological connection between mental and physical health, and a foundational support of why taking care of your mental health is vital.

Taking further to clinical experiences, those who are suffering from mental health condition may have low motivation in which may affect their vitality or motivation to take care of themselves. For example, the pessimism and low self-efficacy of patients with depression and psychosis may have a lower motivation to live but following the treatments given by the professionals will be helpful for their condition. They generally would have a lower motivation to exercise, and tend to resolve difficulties encountered throughout the treatment in less adaptive ways, making it more challenging to maintain selfcare behaviors. It has been seen that patients with depression and obesity tend to vent their negative emotions by binge-eating. Binge-eating and exercises insufficiency aggravates chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Having a mental health condition does not mean it is inevitable to develop a physical condition. But fear not, there are several things you could do to stay mentally and physically well. First of all, it is important to know how to deal with stress. We face a lot of challenges in our daily lives of work, family and interpersonal relationships. Do not deny your feelings even when you are stressed, find an appropriate channel to vent the pressure. Everyone has their own way to relieve stress. For example, go for a walk to stay away from the hustle and bustle, put away your mobile phone, clear your mind, and slowly submerge yourself in the atmosphere and appreciate the scenery. Relieving stress is not as complicated as you think, there is no need to use alcohol and cigarettes, or shopping spree as an exit.

Life has its ups and downs. It is inevitable to encounter setbacks, such as suffering from a long-term illness or experiencing the deceased of a loved one. In the face of setbacks, you will also experience great pressure or even emotional breakdowns. Most importantly, however, is that we don't suppress our emotions and understand that sadness is a normal reaction towards the incidents, but not a sign of self-blame or cowardice. After being sad, we need to readjust our mentality. Although we cannot change what has happened, we can control our view towards things. Positivity is important for maintaining mental health.

Cultivating personal interests and hobbies are also good ways to maintain mental health. You can use your spare time to learn new things, and put the attention on things you like, such as cooking, sport, language or art-related interests etc. Being a volunteer and care for those in need can also

Written by: Dr. Wong Wing Kun, Charlotte, Specialist in Psychiatry.

Disclaimer:

1. The content only represents the personal views of the author and does not represent the position of DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited (the "Bank").
2. Although the information contained herein has been taken from sources that are believed by the author to be accurate as at the original publication date appearing on this document, the Bank makes no warranty or representation as to the correctness, completeness or accuracy of the contents. Any use of, or reliance on, the contents of this document shall be at your own risk. The Bank accepts no liability whatsoever for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from or in connection with any use of or reliance on this document or its contents.

help. During the process of helping others, you gain satisfaction too.

It is equally important to maintain good interpersonal relationships. When you are busy at work and family affairs, it is recommended to arrange an appropriate amount of time with your friends and family. You share the joy with your family and friends when you are happy, but when you are upset, try not to conceal yourself, and talk to your trusted ones about it. Even if you don't want to talk about your feelings with them, there are many emotional support services in the community. You can talk to a mental health professional such as a psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist or a social worker, and they could jointly come up with a solution to your problem.

Regardless of whether you have been diagnosed with a mental illness or not, everyone is responsible for taking care of their own mental health condition. Give yourself breaks when appropriate, do more exercise, have a balanced diet, cultivate more new interests, spend more time with your beloved ones. Staying healthy both mentally and physically is the key to a happy life.

Written by: Dr. Wong Wing Kun, Charlotte, Specialist in Psychiatry.

Disclaimer:

1. The content only represents the personal views of the author and does not represent the position of DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited (the "Bank").
2. Although the information contained herein has been taken from sources that are believed by the author to be accurate as at the original publication date appearing on this document, the Bank makes no warranty or representation as to the correctness, completeness or accuracy of the contents. Any use of, or reliance on, the contents of this document shall be at your own risk. The Bank accepts no liability whatsoever for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from or in connection with any use of or reliance on this document or its contents.